

# MATTHEW

## Author :

Matthew was one of the original disciples of Jesus Christ. His other name was Levi and he was a tax collector when Jesus called him into His service. See Matt 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32. He himself does not tell us that he wrote this Gospel, but that has been the firm belief of Christians from the first century onwards. When thinking of the authorship of any of the books of the Bible we should keep in mind that God Himself is the real author of them all, making use of human instruments whom He prepared in every way to write just what He wanted them to write. See 2 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Pet 1:21. Often the human authors did not identify themselves. Their object was not to point men to themselves but to the one true God who inspired them. Each of them would have agreed with the writer of psalm 115 when he said "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name be the glory" (Ps 115:1).

## Date :

Some years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, about the middle of the first century A.D. The exact year is unknown.

## Theme :

Matthew, writing of the birth and life, teachings and deeds, death and resurrection of Jesus, presents Him as God's Anointed One who had been promised in the Old Testament, as the great King who brings in God's kingdom. In this Gospel there are about 60 references to Old Testament prophecy, and about 40 actual quotations from the Old Testament. Some key words, used many times, are "king", "the kingdom of God", and "fulfilled."

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**1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham begot Isaac; and Isaac begot Jacob; and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers; 3 And Judas begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and Perez begot Hezron; and Hezron begot Ram; 4 And Ram begot Amminadab; and Amminadab begot Nahshon; and Nahshon begot Salmon; 5 And Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab; and Boaz begot Obed by Ruth; and Obed begot Jesse

6 And Jesse begot David the king; and David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah; 7 And Solomon begot Rehoboam; and Rehoboam begot Abijah; and Abijah begot Asa; 8 And Asa begot Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begot Joram; and Joram begot Uzziah; 9 And Uzziah begot Jotham; and Jotham begot Ahaz; and Ahaz begot Hezekiah; 10 And Hezekiah begot Manasseh; and Manasseh begot Amon; and

**1:1** The name "Jesus", like the Hebrew name Joshua, means "the LORD (Jehovah) saves." The word "Christ" is from the Greek language and means "anointed one." Its meaning is the same as "Messiah" taken from the Hebrew. One great purpose Matthew had in writing this Gospel was to show that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

The Messiah was to be anointed by God – that is, set apart and consecrated by God, to fulfill the promises of the Old Testament. He was to be prophet, king, and priest (Deut 18:15; 2 Sam 7:11; Ps 2:2-9; 89:27-29; 110:1,4; Isa 7:14; 9:6,7; 11:1-9; 52:13-53:12; Zech 6:12,13).

According to the Old Testament the Messiah had to be a descendant of Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, and of David, Israel's greatest king. To show that this was true of the Lord Jesus, Matthew gives this genealogy. Genealogies were a matter of public record and could be checked by any Jew who wished to do so.

As used in the Bible the word "son" may indicate a variety of relationships. Sometimes, of course, it means a literal son, but it may also mean a grandson, or a disciple, or a person much loved, or a descendant. Here it means that Jesus as to His human nature was descended from David who lived a thousand years before Him, and from Abraham who lived nearly two thousand years before Him.

**1:2** "Isaac" – Gen 21:3,12.

"Jacob" – Gen 25:26.

"Brothers" – Gen 29:35. The Messiah was to come through the line of Judah (Gen 49:10; Ps 89:27-29. David was a descendant of Judah). So Matthew passes over the other sons of Jacob.

**1:3** "Tamar" – Gen 38:27-30. "Ram" – 1 Chron 2:9,10.

**1:5** "Rahab" – Josh 2:1-21; 6:25.

"Ruth" – Ruth 4:13-22. The stories of Rahab, a Canaanite, and Ruth, a Moabitess

Amon begot Josiah; 11 And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time *the Jews were* carried away to Babylon.

12 And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel; 13 And Zerubbabel begot Abiud; and Abiud begot Eliakim; and Eliakim begot Azor; 14 And Azor begot Zadok; and Zadok begot Akim; and Akim begot Eliud; 15 And Eliud begot Eleazar; and Eleazar begot Matthan; and Matthan begot Jacob; 16 And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

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

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this:

(both of whom were of nations other than Israel), reveal something of God's wonderful grace and mercy toward sinful people. They were both transformed by God's grace and were brought into the family line of the Messiah.

**1:6** "David" – 1 Sam 16:1; 17:12.

"Solomon" – 2 Sam 12:24.

"Wife" – Bathsheba. The story of David and Bathsheba (found in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12) teaches us again of God's great grace in overcoming human depravity and sinfulness.

**1:8** "Uzziah" – his father was Amaziah. Joram (Jehoram) was his great-great-grandfather. In the Bible the words "begot" and "father" (like the word "son") are used to express a variety of relationships, such as grandfather and forefather. Here it means ancestor.

**1:11** Josiah was the grandfather of Jeconiah (Jehoiachin).

"Babylon" – 2 Kings chapters 24 and 25.

**1:16** Notice Matthew's careful use of language here. Mary was the mother of Jesus, but Joseph was not His father, except in the legal sense. The rest of the chapter makes this clear. It was enough for Matthew to show that in the legal sense Jesus was David's descendant. Luke's purpose in his genealogy (Luke 3:23-38) may have been to show that Jesus was a physical descendant of David through Mary.

**1:17** "Exile to Babylon" – see 2 Chronicles chapter 36. Matthew left out some names from this genealogy – kings Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah and Jehoiakim. It was not necessary to list all the names in the ancestral line of the Lord Jesus to show that He was descended from David and Abraham. Matthew divided this genealogy into a series of fourteens, possibly for ease of memorizing. Such divisions of names for such a purpose was no new thing among the Jews.

**1:18** "Betrothed" – engagement to be married was very binding in Israel. After engage-

After his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a righteous *man* and unwilling to make her a public example, intended to release her *from her vows*, secretly.

20 But while he was thinking about these things, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for what is conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will give birth to a son, and you shall call his name JESUS, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 Now all this took place so there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken by the Lord through

the prophet, saying,

23 See, the virgin will be with child,  
and will give birth to a son,  
and they will call his name Emmanuel,

which is, being translated, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph, after he was aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took her as his wife. 25 But he did not know her until she had given birth to her firstborn son. And he called his name JESUS.

**2** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, suddenly wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem,

ment the man and woman did not live together until after the actual marriage ceremony, but engagement legally bound them together and they were even called "husband" and "wife."

"Holy Spirit" – Jesus was the Son of God. Joseph was His legal father, but God was His real father. That is, His human nature was produced in Mary by the creative power of the invisible Spirit of God (v 20; Luke 1:35). This does not mean that God came to Mary in some physical form, some kind of incarnation. This was not necessary and it did not happen. The Lord Jesus had a divine nature and a sinless human nature joined together in one personality. He was both fully God and fully man.

Notes and other references on the Holy Spirit at 3:11,16; Gen 1:2; Luke 1:15,35; 4:1; 11:13; John 1:33; 7:39; 14:16,17,26; 16:7,8; 20:22; Acts 1:5,8; 2:4,38; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:14; Eph 5:18.

**1:19** "Righteous" – the Greek word here means "just, honorable and fair in one's dealings with others, and upright and pious in one's attitude toward God and God's Word." Joseph believed Mary was guilty of adultery and felt he had to divorce her. But he wanted to treat her with compassion because he was a good man and doubtless still felt affection for Mary. In the case of Mary we can learn that those who do the will of God may be misunderstood, falsely accused, and brought into danger. The penalty for adultery under the law of Israel was death (Deut 22:23,24).

**1:20** Note on angels at Gen 16:7. The Greek word translated "angel" means "messenger." Here it indicates a spirit being from heaven.

"Suddenly" – the Greek word here is the word for "see" and is translated "behold" in the KJV. Speakers and writers of modern English do not use "behold" except occasionally in the phrase "lo and behold." In Greek it was used to call attention to what follows and need not be translated literally. Sometimes we have put the word in the past tense, sometimes used the word "suddenly," etc. See also the note at Gen 1:29.

"Lord" – this is a translation of the Greek word "kurios." In the Greek New Testament

"kurios" is used in two ways. It is used to translate the word Jehovah, a name for God found in the Old Testament more than 6,000 times (see note at Ex 3:14,15). It is also the ordinary Greek word for Lord or master or owner or one in authority. See also the note at Luke 2:11.

**1:21** "JESUS" – v 1. The Lord Jesus came to save sinful men, not to destroy them (Luke 19:10; John 3:17). He came to release them from the penalty and power of their sins and to bring them into a state of eternal righteousness, blessedness, peace and joy in God's presence (Luke 4:18,19; Acts 26:18). This is what salvation is. He saves people *from* their sins, not *in* their sins. His people are all those who receive Him by faith as Lord and Savior (John 1:12,13), all those whom God has given to Him (John 6:37; 17:6).

**1:22** Much of the New Testament records events which were a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. This is a strong reason to believe in the full divine inspiration of the Bible. For a list of some of these prophecies see the back of this Bible. Notice that God Himself spoke through the prophets. See 2:15; 4:4; 15:4; 22:43,44; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25; Heb 1:1,5,8,10,13; 3:7; 4:3,7; 5:5,6; 7:21; 8:8; 10:5,15; 13:5. See also 2 Pet 1:21; 2 Tim 3:16.

**1:23** "Emmanuel" – Isa 7:14. Matthew quotes from the Old Testament nearly 50 times to prove that the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus were firmly rooted in Old Testament prophecy. The life of Jesus on earth was the life of Immanuel, God incarnate, revealing God's nature and works in all their beauty and glory (John 1:1,14,18; Col 2:9; Heb 1:3).

**1:24** Joseph showed he was a righteous man (v 19) by his immediate obedience to God's command. Indeed, there is no true righteousness that does not result in obedience to the true and living God.

**2:1** Bethlehem was a small town about 8 kilometers south of Jerusalem. It was the home town of king David, and is referred to many times in the Old Testament (Gen 35:19; Ruth 1:19; 1 Sam 16:4; Micah 5:2). For Jesus to be born there Mary and Joseph

2 saying, "Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him." 3 When Herod the king heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. 5 And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea. For thus it has been written by the prophet:

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

had to travel from Nazareth (Luke 2:4), about 120 kilometers north of Bethlehem. "Herod" – there are several Herods mentioned in the New Testament. They were all related to each other and all descended from this Herod, sometimes called Herod the Great. He was not a Jew but an Edomite (Edomites were descended from Esau. See Gen 25:25,30). He was appointed king of Judea by the emperor of Rome.

"Wise men" – or "magi," the name given by Persians and Babylonians to a religious and priestly class of people which included astrologers and astronomers, interpreters of signs, and such like. They were regarded as wise men with special secret knowledge. The minds of the best of them were a mixture of knowledge and superstition. Here is the first time after Jesus came to earth that people of another nation and religion recognized His greatness and came to worship Him. They were the first of a great multitude to come.

Christ's Gospel is for all men. He is the Saviour of all who trust in Him, regardless of nationality and background (28:19; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47; John 3:16).

**2:2** It is evident that these magi had some knowledge of the Old Testament and its promises of a coming King who would be the Saviour of His people (Isa 9:6,7; etc). This knowledge was probably gained by contact with Jews who lived in various countries of western Asia after the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century BC. See the books of Esther and Daniel. The magi could have calculated the general time of Christ's birth from the prophecy in Dan 9:25-27 (which had been given to Daniel in Babylon).

We are not told what kind of "star" the magi saw or how they came to believe it announced the birth of Christ. The author of these notes believes that it was a heavenly body or other light in the sky specially created or given by God for this occasion. Its movement is evidence for this. It went due west, then due south for a few miles, and then stopped over a single house in Bethlehem, evidently low enough in the sky to indicate that particular house and not any other. No ordinary star or planet behaves like this. It is also reasonable to believe

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, found out from them the exact time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and search carefully for the young child. And when you have found *him*, bring me word again, so that I too may come and worship him.

9 When they had heard the king, they went away, and now the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them until it came and stood over the place where the young child. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced, with exceedingly great joy. 11 And when they came into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and prostrated themselves and worshipped him. And

that God convinced these magi by His Spirit that this heavenly body was somehow connected with the birth of Christ. See note at v 12.

The magi did not come merely to see Christ, or to satisfy their curiosity, or to engage in philosophical discussion about Him. They came to bow lowly before Him, to honor and adore Him.

**2:3** God had revealed a truth to the far-off magi which the king and people in Jerusalem, 8 kilometers from Bethlehem, did not know. The fact that they were alarmed instead of happy to hear this good news reveals their depraved spiritual condition. They were not ready for the coming of the Messiah, God's "anointed one."

**2:4** Note on priests at Ex 28:1. The chief priests were in charge of the temple worship and were the religious leaders of the Jews.

"Scribes" – these were scholars who interpreted the law of Moses to the people.

**2:5,6** This wonderful prophecy, giving the exact place of Christ's birth about 700 years before the event, is found in Micah 5:2. Observe that these religious leaders and scholars knew that the Messiah would come and knew the place of His birth. But they made no effort, it seems, to find Him or to honor and worship Him. It is not what men know which makes them acceptable to God. The state of their hearts with their motives and desires is all-important.

**2:8** Herod's purpose was evil (vs 13,16). But he, like many people since then, used a cloak of seeming piety to hide the wickedness of his heart.

**2:9** "Stood" – no star or planet on its own could stop in the sky over a place, as this one did. This was a special work of God.

**2:11** The Lord Jesus was no longer in the stable where He had been born (Luke 2:7). Many months may have passed since His birth. Observe whom they worshiped – not Mary the mother of Jesus, but the Lord Jesus Himself. And they brought their gifts to Him, not to her.

"Worshipped" – the fact that God brought these men to worship Christ, and recorded it for our instruction in His Word, tells us that Christ is God – only God is worthy of

opening their treasures, they presented gifts to him: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned by God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they went away to their own country by another way.

13 And when they had left, suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up, take the young child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word. For Herod will look for the young child to destroy him."

14 When he got up, he took the young child and his mother at night and left for Egypt. 15 And he was there until the death of Herod, so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken about the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent *men* out, and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all of its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had found out accurately from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

18 "In Ramah a voice was heard,  
lamentation, weeping, and great  
mourning,  
Rachel weeping *for* her children,  
and refusing to be comforted,  
because they are no more."

19 But when Herod was dead, suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Get up and take the young child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are dead."

21 And he got up and took the young child and his mother, and came to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And having been warned by God in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. 23 And he came and lived in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He will be called a Nazarene.

**3** In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

worship (see 4:10). And God often commanded that men should worship no one but Himself (Ex 20:2-5). See other references which show that Christ is God at Phil 2:6 and Luke 2:11.

**2:12** "Dream" - Gen 15:12,13; 20:3; Num 12:6; Dan 7:1; Acts 2:17. Since God revealed truth to these men after their arrival in Bethlehem, it is not unreasonable to think He did the same before they started on their journey there.

**2:13** "Lord" - note at 1:20.

"To destroy him" - King Herod did not want any rivals to the throne, and the wise men had spoken of the king of the Jews (v 2). Herod was the kind of man who would kill his own sons if he thought they were a threat to his power. Behind Herod's evil intention stood Satan, the great enemy of God and man, trying to destroy the Messiah and so prevent Him from bringing salvation to men. But God knows how to work out His purposes and He infallibly does so (Isa 46:9,10; Rom 11:33-36).

**2:15** Again it is emphasized that it was God Himself who spoke through the Old Testament prophets (1:22). See note at Hosea 11:1.

**2:16** This verse suggests that Jesus may have been many months old when the magi came. To make sure of killing Him Herod thought it necessary to kill all male babies up to the age of two.

**2:18** Note at Jer 31:15.

**2:23** Nazareth was the town of Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:39). It was a small and insignificant town (John 1:45,46). A Nazarene was a person of Nazareth, so the name came to mean a person who was considered a

nobody. Calling Jesus a Nazarene fulfilled the meaning of the prophets who revealed that Christ would be despised by men. See Ps 22:6; Isa 53:3. Some scholars connect the name "Nazarene" with the Hebrew word "netzer", which means "Branch." This was one of the names of the Messiah (Isa 11:1; etc). There is no connection between the words Nazarene and Nazirite. See note at Num 6:7,8.

**3:1** Matthew passes over nearly thirty years of Christ's life and begins to write of the time when He was about to begin His ministry. Other references to John the Baptist-11:2-14; 14:1-12; Mark 1:2-8; 6:14-29; Luke 1:5-25,57-80; 3:15-18;7:18-23;John 1:6-8,15-35;3:22-36; 5:33-35. The wilderness or desert of Judea was an area east of Jerusalem and Bethlehem running down to the Jordan river and the Dead Sea.

**3:2** "Repent" and "repentance" are very important words in the Bible. Noun and verb together are used more than 70 times. Repentance means a complete change of mind and heart which produces a change in behavior. As John and the Lord Jesus and His disciples used the word it means to turn to God from wrong thinking and wrong doing and accept God's Word and God's will as the rule of life. True Biblical repentance results in sorrow for sins committed and a desire to be free from all sin. For those who have been rejecting Christ it means to turn to Him and receive Him as Lord and Saviour.

Repentance is linked with that true faith which receives salvation. A person without repentance is without true faith and so without salvation. See Luke 13:3; 24:47; Acts

3 For this is the one who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying,

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
Prepare the way of the Lord.  
Make his paths straight.

4 And John himself had his cloak of camel's hair, and a leather belt around his waist. And his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around Jordan, went

17:30,31. The person who is not willing to turn from all his sins – especially the sin of not trusting in Christ and putting others or other things above him–will not know salvation from his sins. John preached repentance because the people of Israel were sunk in sin and unbelief and were not ready to receive the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their condition was like that described in Isa 1:4; etc. For other notes on repentance see v 8; Luke 13:2,3; Acts 2:38; 17:30.

"Kingdom of heaven" – see 4:17.

"Near" – because the King of heaven (the Lord Jesus) was about to appear and begin His ministry. John was referring to a new and greater manifestation of God's kingdom than was known in Old Testament days.

**3:3** This quotation is from Isa 40:3 and speaks of John's ministry of preparation for Christ.

"Lord"–the Hebrew of Isaiah is "Jehovah." See notes at 1:20; Ex 3:14,15; Luke 2:11. **3:4** Plain clothing, simple food, and a humble style of living were the usual marks of God's true prophets. They avoided the materialistic outlook and love of ostentation seen in many religious leaders today.

**3:6** The word "baptized" comes from the Greek word "baptizo." A famous Greek-English dictionary gives its meaning thus: "Dip, immerse. . .plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm" (Arndt and Gingrich. Other dictionaries and lexicons are in substantial agreement with this definition).

John's baptism signified repentance and the forgiveness of sins, but it did not produce them. See also Mark 1:4; etc. No water ceremony of any kind or in any place can take away sin or change men's hearts. Only God can do so. And He does so when men receive His Son by faith (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8; 5:24; Acts 13:38,39).

**3:7** "Pharisees" – a strict, conservative, very religious sect among the Jews. They emphasized the law of Moses and the religious traditions that had come down from previous generations. Many of them were very self-righteous and separated themselves from others, thinking they were holier than anyone else (the name "Pharisee" came from the Hebrew word "pharash" which means to separate or set apart). But their deeds did not match their words and Jesus severely condemned them for their hypocrisy (chapter 23). In the New Testament they are

out to him, 6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his *place of baptism*, he said to them, "Brood of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think of saying to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for *our father*.' For I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 10 And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.

usually seen in opposition to the Lord Jesus.

"Sadducees" – another powerful sect among the Jews. In theology they were liberal, denying truth plainly taught in the Old Testament. See Acts 23:8. They were mostly from the priestly class and were in charge of temple worship in Jesus' day, but their minds were more taken up with the things of this world than the things of God. The origin of the name "Sadducee" is unknown.

"Vipers" – God had given John great insight into the character of these people. They were the religious leaders of Israel, but in John's eyes (and God's eyes) they were like poisonous snakes, injecting their venom into the life of the nation. Compare 12:34; 23:33; Ps 58:4; 140:3; Rom 3:13. The Bible reveals that sometimes the very worst of people rise to the highest place in religious leadership. See Jer 6:13; 23:11; Ezek 34:1-6.

"Wrath" – they who are not saved from their sins will have to face God's anger against their sins. Compare John 3:36; Rom 1:18. Notes on God's anger at Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; etc.

**3:8** "Fruit" – see also Acts 26:20. Fruit worthy of repentance means such things as ceasing from evil, learning to do good, making restitution to others when wrong has been done to them, restoring what is stolen, etc. In short, true repentance results in a new way of living that will be the reverse of the former ways (see 2 Chron 33:1-20; psalm 51; Isa 1:16-20; Ezek 18:30-32; Luke 3:10-14; 19:7-9; Acts 2:36,37; 9:1,2,19-22).

**3:9** See John 8:39,40. The story of Abraham is in Genesis chapters 12-25. The mistake John pointed out here is a common one among religious people everywhere – thinking that God accepts them and regards them as His people because they are of a certain religious community or sect, or because they can trace their ancestry back to some famous religious leader. Abraham was a man of God but that did not make all his descendants men of God. Now a person is not a true Christian simply because his parents or grandparents were true Christians. An individual's own faith and deeds and character are the important things in God's eyes, not who his or her ancestors were.

**3:10** John meant that God was about to judge the nation. The Messiah was about to



So every tree that does not produce good fruit is being cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I indeed baptize you with water for repentance. But the one who comes after me is mightier than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and *with* fire. 12 His winnowing fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor, and gather his wheat into the barn. But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 But John *tried*

appear. The people were like individual trees in the forest of Israel. Compare 7:17-20; Luke 13:6-9; Ps 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12; Eccl 11:3. "Fire" - 5:22; 7:19; 13:42; 18:8,9; Rev 20:15; 21:8.

**3:11,12** "For repentance" - this does not mean that John baptized them so that they would obtain repentance. If they had not already repented he would not have wanted to baptize them. The Greek word translated "for" (eis) also means "in", "into", "unto", "concerning", "about." John's baptizing work concerned repentance, pointed to repentance, and was a symbol of repentance. But it did not produce repentance, which is something only the Spirit of God working in the hearts of men can produce. See also the note at Acts 2:38.

"One who comes after me" - John was referring to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, and he recognized how far beneath Him he was. True men of God do not claim to be God but humble themselves in the dust before God. The closer a person is to God the less he will think he is worthy to stand before God. No man was greater than John (11:11), but John thought he was unworthy to carry Christ's sandals. He knew that all he could do was baptize in water, but that Christ could bring people into the depths of God's life-giving Spirit. And water baptism is nothing without the Spirit baptism Jesus gives. It is God's Spirit who gives spiritual life to people (John 3:5-8; 6:63; 7:37-39). Note on Spirit baptism at Acts 1:5.

"Baptize. . .with fire"-here may refer to God's purging of His people as in Mal 3:2-4. Fire there means a divine energy that would enter them and give force and power to witness to the truth (compare Jer 20:9). Or fire here could signify God's anger in judgment against sin (v 7. Compare Deut 32:32; Isa 30:30; 2 Thess 1:7,8). This second interpretation seems more likely. The wheat (God's true people) will be baptized with the Holy Spirit; the chaff (those not God's true people - Ps 1:4) will be baptized with fire. John was a model for all preachers of God's Word. He lived very simply, did not engage in religious politics, sought no fame or material possessions, was humble but bold as a lion. He emphasized certain great truths all preachers should emphasize:

God's anger against sin

The need of repentance and a change of

to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

15 And Jesus, answering, said to him, "Permit *it* now, for in this way it is proper for us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he permitted him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, immediately went up out of the water. And suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

17 And now a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

life-style

Personal relationship with God not based on ancestry

Coming judgments against evil men, but the future blessedness of God's true people (v 12)

The supremacy of the Lord Jesus above all

And the giving of God's Spirit to those who repent and believe the gospel of Christ.

Do those of us who are preachers desire God's approval? Let us do as John did.

**3:13-15** Jesus was now about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23). John's baptism spoke of repentance and confession and forgiveness of sins (vs 6,11; Mark 1:4). The Lord Jesus was the sinless Son of God (Luke 1:35; John 8:46; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22). He did not need forgiveness. Why, then, did He come to be baptized by John? Commentators have suggested several reasons. The only reason Jesus Himself gave is in v 15 - "to fulfil all righteousness." What was right for His disciples to do, He did. He also partook of the Passover feast, thought the elements spoke of what He would do for them, not what He needed for Himself (Luke 22:14,15).

Baptism for Him was an act of humble obedience to God's righteous will, and in taking it (as in His whole life) Jesus was an example to all His followers (compare 11:29; 16:24; John 13:15; Phil 2:5; 1 Pet 2:21). Though He was sinless He took the place of sinners, was our representative and substitute. He pointed the way we should go, did what we should do, lived as we should live, and, at last, as our substitute, He took all our sins upon Himself and was baptized into suffering and death (Luke 12:50). He died the death we deserved to die.

In other words all He did, including being baptized, was a fulfillment and manifestation and glorification of God's righteousness. And baptism was but a picture of His death, burial, and resurrection which were for the purpose of making people righteous.

**3:16,17** The God revealed in the Bible, the true and only God, is a Trinity. That is, in the one Godhead there are three persons. Each of the three is spoken of in these verses. Jesus the Son is coming out of the water, the Spirit of God descends on Him,

**4** Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights,

afterwards he was hungry. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

and God the Father speaks from heaven. The Son is not the Father, or the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Son or the Father. The three are distinct from each other but are perfectly united as one God in essence, character, mind and heart. So there are not three Gods, but one only. See also 28:19; John 5:30; 14:26; 16:15; 1 Cor 12:3-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 2:6; 4:4-6; Rev 1:4,5. For Old Testament indications of this truth see Gen 1:26; 16:7; etc. The Old Testament speaks of the Father (Ps 89:26), the Son (Ps 2:12), and the Spirit (Gen 1:2), but reveals that there is but one God (Deut 6:4; Isa 44:6; 45:18).

God's Spirit is not a mere influence or impersonal power coming from God, but is a divine person. Notes at John 14:16,17,26.

In those days the dove was a symbol of innocence and harmlessness and gentleness (10:16). Since then it has become a symbol of peace.

Jesus had been conceived by the Spirit of God (1:18), and lived His whole life up to His baptism indwelt by the Spirit. At His baptism He was anointed by the Spirit for the ministry He was about to begin. In His life and ministry He laid aside His own divine powers and privileges and depended on God the Father for everything.

This anointing of God's Spirit enabled Him to accomplish all He accomplished. See 12:28; Luke 4:18,19; John 4:24; 5:19,30; 6:38; Acts 10:28; Phil 2:7,8; Isa 11:1-5. If this was the way of the Lord Jesus we should not vainly imagine that without God's empowering Spirit we can live as we ought or serve God as we ought.

**3:17** God here calls Jesus His Son. See Isa 9:6; Luke 1:32,35; John 1:1,14,18; 5:18-23. This means He fully shared the nature of God, as no one else can. He is God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). The Father was well pleased with Him because He was without sin of any kind, because He obeyed Him in everything, because He made it the whole business of His life to please the Father. See John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22.

**4:1** "Devil" - the Greek word for devil (diabolos) means one who accuses or slanders. It is another name for Satan, the chief of demons. Notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1; John 8:44; 2 Cor 11:14.

In the New Testament we see that there are two unseen kingdoms which oppose one another - God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom (12:22-28). Satan tries to destroy God's kingdom, and tempting others to evil is one method he uses. In studying the temptation of Jesus we can learn a great deal of what Jesus is like, what Satan is like, and how we can gain victory in temptation.

The Lord Jesus had just been anointed

for His great ministry by the Spirit of God. The kingdom of heaven was at hand and the King was anointed. However, the Spirit did not lead Jesus to ascend some earthly throne, but led Him into the desert to be tempted or tested (the Greek word can mean both). Is this the way to bring in a great kingdom - by fasting and hunger and temptation? Not man's way surely, but God's. His kingdom is spiritual. The character of the King had to be tested and approved, and the great enemy of God's kingdom, Satan, had to be defeated. This temptation demonstrated that Jesus was fully obedient to the Father and truly pleased Him in all things.

It may help us to understand the temptation if we recognize two facts: it was His human nature that was being tempted, not His divine nature (as God He could not be tempted to do wrong - James 1:13); and Jesus was tempted as the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45-49). The first Adam was the progenitor of the human race and its representative. Jesus is the progenitor of a new kind of people (Rom 5:12-21). When tempted Adam fell and dragged the whole of humanity into sin with him. Jesus resisted temptation and made it possible for man to arise with Him. The fact of Jesus' temptation as a man is stated in Heb 2:18; 4:15.

**4:2** Compare Ex 24:18; 34:28; Deut 8:2; 1 Kings 19:8. In the Bible the number 40 is connected with a time of trial and preparation.

**4:3** "Tempter" - 1 Thess 3:5; 1 Cor 7:5. Satan wants men to sin so that he can gain power over them, so he makes evil suggestions and tries to stir them to yield to them. This temptation was for Jesus to use God's power for His own needs, without a word of instruction from God the Father.

All men need food and there is nothing wrong with trying to provide food for oneself. Temptation comes about the way to do this. For men may listen either to the voice of the devil or to the Word of God. As God's Son the duty and privilege of Jesus was to trust His Father to meet His needs and to act only on the Word of the Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; Heb 10:5-7).

Far better to suffer hunger in the will of God than to fill one's belly in obedience to a suggestion from Satan. And this applies to all that men need, or think they need, in this world. God has His way for men and the devil has his ways. The devil tempts us to doubt God's provision and to take matters into our own hands and to provide for ourselves regardless of the means. Compare 6:25-33; Luke 12:16-21; Phil 4:19. Compare this temptation with Gen 3:1-6; Ex 16:1-3,28; Ps 78:17-19.

4 But he answered and said, "It is written,  
Man shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from  
the mouth of God."

5 Then the devil took him up to the holy city,  
and had him stand on a pinnacle of the temple, 6  
and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw  
yourself down, for it is written,

He will give his angels a command

concerning you,  
and they will bear you up in *their* hands,  
so that you will not at any time strike  
your foot against a stone."

7 Jesus said to him, "Again, it is written,  
You shall not test the Lord your God."

8 Again, the devil took him up on an exceedingly  
high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of  
the world, and the glory of them, 9 and said to him,  
"All these things I will give you, if you will fall down

**4:4** The Lord Jesus in His fight against Satan used the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. And He put up the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of Satan (Eph 6:16,17).

"It is written" – Deut 8:3. Jesus knew God's Word, understood it, loved it, believed it, and was determined to obey it at any cost. So He was able to overcome temptation and defeat the devil. In this, as in everything, He is an example to us. The importance of knowing the Bible, believing it and obeying it, cannot be overestimated. Those who are ignorant of it will often be unable to recognize Satan's temptations, and they will be without their chief weapon if they do recognize them and wish to fight Satan.

"Every word that comes from the mouth of God" – where are these words to be found? Jesus was referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. Notice the importance Jesus put on every word God has spoken. In other things Jesus said we can see that He believed in the full divine inspiration of the Old Testament and of His own words, and we have His promise that God's Spirit would guide His apostles into all truth (so that what they wrote would also be completely true).

He said that not the smallest part of a single letter of the law of Moses would pass away until all of it was fulfilled (Matt 5:18). He taught that words written by David were "by the Holy Spirit" of God (Mark 12:36). He said that what was spoken to the leaders of Israel was "the word of God", and that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He assured us that His own teachings had come directly from God the Father in heaven (John 12:49; 14:24). He said that the Holy Spirit of God would lead His apostles "into all truth" (John 16:13), and His apostles taught that all the Old Testament Scriptures were given "by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16), and that Old Testament prophecy came through holy men of God who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). They also knew that they were of the truth and wrote the truth.

**4:5** "Holy city" – Jerusalem.

**4:6** Satan too can quote from the Bible. He will try to use the sword of the Spirit against us. He will deny that the Bible is God's Word if it suits His purpose. Or he will say it is God's Word and then pervert its meaning, if that suits his purpose. And He has many

willing helpers in the world – 2 Cor 11:13-15; Gal 1:7. Satan will take his quotations from the Bible out of context and misapply them.

The words of v 6 are taken from Ps 91:11,12. They were given to those who live in God and who accept God's rule over their lives (Ps 91:1-9). The promises there were not given to those who act as they please for their own purposes apart from God. It is never wise to follow a suggestion of the devil, especially when he quotes from the Bible. His aim will always be to get us to act on our own apart from God's guidance, to have us attempt things for our own reputation or pleasure or profit, and not for God's glory.

Each of the three temptations Satan brought against Christ had to do with Christ's complete submission to God's will. Christ came to glorify God, not to win fame and name for Himself. It was not for Him to perform some spectacular miracle without moral purpose.

**4:7** See Deut 6:16. Men should not get themselves into difficulties and dangers by their foolishness and presumption, expecting God to miraculously deliver them. It is man's business to believe God and obey Him, not to try to force God to do miracles. There is a big difference between presumption and faith. Observe that Jesus used a Scripture rightly interpreted to counter Satan's misapplied use of Scripture. For a proper understanding of the Bible, Scripture must be compared with Scripture, and any Scripture should be studied in its context.

**4:8,9** Here Satan revealed his secret desire – he wants people to worship him. He is the "god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4). As such he wants people to honor him and bow to him and obey him. And men do so, some knowingly, some unknowingly. See Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20; Rev 9:20. To accomplish this he is active in all matters on earth, both secular and religious.

One way he attracts people to himself and his ways is to offer them worldly possessions and power. He can give these things because in a sense they came into his power when he caused Adam to sin. Adam was God's person to rule the earth (see Gen 1:27,28). He was the father and representative of the human race. Satan succeeded in gaining a large measure of control over the human race because of Adam's fall into sin. Compare Luke 4:6;

and worship me.”

10 Then Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan. For it is written,

You shall worship the Lord your God,  
and you shall serve only him.”

11 Then the devil left him, and, at once, angels came and ministered to him.

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been thrown into prison, he went to Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and lived in Capernaum, which is by the lake, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zebulun and the land of

Naphtali,

the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles:

16 The people who sat in darkness have  
seen a great light,  
and on those who sat in the region and  
shadow of death light has dawned.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

18 And Jesus, walking by the lake of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 And immediately they left *their* nets, and followed him.

John 12:31; Eph 2:1,2; 2 Tim 2:26; 1 John 5:19.

For only a little of this world’s wealth or glory or power a great many people are willing to abandon righteous principles, reject God’s truth, and follow the way of lies and deceit and selfishness and injustice, which is the way of Satan (it is a very sad thing that some of these call themselves Christians).

The difference between Christ and them is seen in this: they will abandon all principles of righteousness to gain a small piece of land, but Christ would not abandon a single principle of righteousness to gain the whole world. Christ scorned all that Satan offered. He remained determined to be true to God the Father, and do the Father’s will, though it meant poverty, suffering, and death. He is our example.

**4:10** See Deut 6:13. This sets forth the limit of true worship. Only The Lord (Jehovah – Ex 3:14), the God of the Bible, the Creator of the universe, the only God there is, is worthy of worship (notes at Ex 20:1-6). A clear command of God in the Bible was enough for Jesus. It meant for Him immediate, absolute, permanent obedience. And any suggestion that would lead Him away from that was to be utterly rejected. He is our example in this too. The fact that Jesus accepted worship from others and that God told angels to worship Jesus reveals that Jesus is the incarnation of God (28:17; John 20:28; Heb 1:6).

**4:11** Compare Jam 4:7. See Luke 4:13. Satan had to leave for the time, but would return when he could. See here something of the work of heaven’s angels. See Heb 1:14.

**4:12** 14:3.

**4:13** Capernaum was a town on the north-west shore of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus made it His home for some time during His ministry in the province of Galilee (Mark 2:1; 9:33).

**4:15,16** See Isa 9:1,2. The great light was the Messiah, the Lord Jesus – Luke 2:32; John 8:12; 12:46.

**4:17** “Repent” – see note at 3:2.

“Kingdom of heaven” – this phrase is found only in Matthew. Mark, Luke, and John all use the similar phrase “kingdom of God.” The teaching about God’s kingdom is a very important one in the New Testament. It is referred to nearly 50 times in Matthew and about 140 times in the NT as a whole. Some important references are 5:3-10; 6:10,33; 7:21; 13:11; 16:28; 18:3,23; 21:43; 24:14; 25:34; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:3,6; 14:22; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9,10; 15:24,50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 1:13; Heb 1:8; 12:28; Rev 1:9; 11:15; 12:10.

Kingdom of “heaven” indicates a rule that is spiritual and heavenly, having its source in heaven. Kingdom of “God” means God’s rule among men or in men’s hearts. Sometimes God’s kingdom means the outward sphere of His rule, sometimes the inner spiritual rule in the hearts of His believers. Both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus spoke of the kingdom as being “near.” This was because Jesus the King from heaven was on the scene and His ministry was beginning (2:2; 21:5). So there would be a new and greater manifestation of God’s rule than was known in Old Testament days (see the note on God as King at Ps 47:2; also the note at Gen 50:20; etc).

**4:19** Being “fishers” of men does not mean catching men for one’s own purposes. The work of Christ’s disciples was (and is) to bring men from sin to Christ and eternal salvation. This is the greatest and noblest work on earth. Observe that it is Christ who makes His disciples “fishers of men” – it does not come out of their own hearts and they cannot accomplish it themselves. Christ makes them that as they “follow” Him – as they take His way, obediently listen to His instructions, and receive the Spirit He gives. From the book of Acts and the letters of the apostles we can see what fishers of men they became.

**4:20** Observe the power and authority of Jesus’ call to these men, and their immediate obedience. Here is another example of God’s sovereign choice of some from among men to be His servants (Mark 3:13,14; John 15:16; Acts 22:14,15; Gen 12:1; Ex 3:4,10;

21 And going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother. *They were* in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 And immediately they left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 And Jesus went around all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and disease among the people. 24 And his fame spread all

Josh 1:2; Jer 1:4,5).

**4:21,22** The Lord Jesus did not chose His disciples from among the priests in the temple, the learned teachers of the law, the wealthy, or the politically or socially powerful. He chose ordinary people in ordinary jobs, and then made them extraordinary in the work of God's kingdom. Compare 1 Cor 1:26-29. This is still the method of the Lord Jesus.

**4:23** "Synagogues" – these were buildings erected by the Jews throughout the land of Israel for the purpose of worship, prayer, and religious instruction and for judging cases related to the law God gave through Moses. They were centers of the religious life of the Jews. The Lord Jesus taught the Word of God in synagogues when their leaders were willing.

Also He preached to crowds on streets or hillsides or wherever they gathered around Him. His message was the good news that God was establishing His rule in human hearts. And He healed every kind of disease, sometimes with a mere word or touch. He did not do miracles for Himself (v 1-7), but in compassion did a great many for others. This was His three-fold ministry as the Messiah of Israel.

Let us learn that teaching and preaching God's truth is very honorable work, one that the Son of God Himself was happy to do. Let us learn also that He set out to help individuals in every way – body, soul, and spirit. He did not preach to suffering people without doing what He could do to relieve their suffering. He is our example.

**4:24** "Syria" – the land north and northwest of Galilee. It was occupied for the most part by non-Jews.

"Demon-possessed" – possession by demons is referred to frequently in the accounts of Jesus' ministry. Sometimes the New Testament calls demons "unclean spirits" or "evil spirits." The Bible does not reveal where they came from or how they became demons, but there are hints that may lead us to believe they are fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion against God (12:24; 25:41; Rev 12:3). The Bible nowhere suggests that they are the spirits of human beings who have died.

Demon possession is more than demonic influence on individuals from without. It means the taking over of the bodies of individuals by evil spirits who then live in them. The Lord Jesus had absolute authority over

over Syria. And they brought to him all who were in the grip of various diseases and acute pains, and those who were demon-possessed, and epileptics and paralytics. And he healed them. 25 And great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea, and *from* beyond the Jordan, followed him.

**5** And seeing the multitudes, he went up on a mountain, and when he was seated, his

all demons and cast them out of people with a word of command (8:16,28-32). See note also at Lev 17:7.

**4:25** Decapolis was a region east of the sea of Galilee and the Jordan river.

**5:1** The following teaching of Jesus up to 7:28 is called "The Sermon on the Mount" because Jesus preached it on a mountain side. He had spoken of the nearness of the kingdom of heaven (4:17), and had preached "the good news of the kingdom" (4:23). This sermon shows what Jesus meant when He commanded people to repent. It reveals what entering God's kingdom means, both in one's inner experience and outward behavior. It reveals principles which operate in the Kingdom, and those things which exclude people from the kingdom.

The sermon begins (both in Greek and English) with the word "blessed". So we can say the sermon sets forth the blessed life – who the blessed are and how they should behave. The blessed are those in the kingdom of heaven (5:3). This sermon does not give specific instructions as to how to enter God's kingdom but shows what sort of people are in it, and what they should seek to become and do.

This sermon, for the most part, is for disciples of the Lord Jesus, not for everyone (v 2. But see the note there). Those who will not receive Him as their one teacher and guru, and learn from Him in all things, will not truly understand this sermon or be able to practice it. This is for those who have entered God's kingdom through faith in the Lord Jesus, and those who are not in it cannot really put it into practice (though they may pick out a verse here and there and seem to live according to it). Any attempt they make will be imitation and not reality.

Corrupt and fallen human nature cannot keep God's spiritual holy laws (Rom 8:6,7). And fallen human nature is what we all have by birth – see notes at Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9,23. To keep the laws and principles of God's kingdom, we need to be changed, given new, spiritual life, and receive God's Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus gives the Spirit to those who repent and receive Him by faith (3:11; John 7:37-39; 14:16,17).

Only by living in the Spirit can we practice these spiritual principles. See Gal 5:16-25. The more we are controlled by God's Spirit the more possible it will be to live as Christ

disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

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

taught. Without God's Spirit it is impossible to be truly spiritual, and all men do not have God's Spirit (John 14:17; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 2:14; Jude 19).

We cannot become God's children and spiritual people by trying to live according to the Sermon on the Mount. But if we are God's children we should set out by His Spirit to live according to it. For here Jesus is setting forth what it really means to be a child of God, a true believer in Himself, a real disciple. See the note on "disciple" at 10:1.

In interpreting this sermon we should always keep in mind that it is set in the context of the whole Bible, that we cannot understand it if we ignore this fact, and that the better we understand the Bible as a whole, the better we can understand this sermon.

**5:2** "Them" means His disciples – those who had left all to follow Him and learn from Him (see note at 10:1). However, it seems clear from 7:28 that many other people besides His small number of disciples came up where they were on the hillside and heard Jesus speak. Some of Jesus' words, especially toward the end of these instructions, seem meant for them as well.

**5:3** "Blessed" – this is a translation of a Greek word meaning happy. However it does not mean here a feeling of happiness in the heart, but a happy state, a blessed condition, one that will mean at last eternal joy in God's presence. This word is used 50 times in the Greek New Testament – 28 times in Matthew and Luke alone, 7 times in the Revelation (see references at 11:6). Twice it is used of God – 1 Tim 1:11 and 6:15, and speaks of the perfection of bliss of the Eternal One. The word when used in the NT of people speaks of spiritual blessing, the blessing that comes to those who are in God's kingdom and ruled by God. They have a share in God's happy condition.

This does not mean that the blessed in God's kingdom on earth will never know sorrow or will always experience the emotion of happiness. The fullness of their joy awaits the future. But they have a foretaste of it now, for God shares His joy with His people (John 15:11; 17:13; Rom 14:17; 15:13). True blessedness comes only when we are linked with the true God and His blessedness. The whole Bible was given that men might know of this and come to share it.

See other notes on "blessed" at Luke 11:28; Acts 3:26; Gal 3:14; Eph 1:3; Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Deut 28:3-14; Ps 1:1; 119:1. Who are the blessed in this world? The rich? The proud and powerful? Those who are self-confident and feel very good about themselves? That is the way men think, but God's thoughts are different from theirs (Isa 55:8,9; Luke 16:15).

He says the blessed ones are those who are "poor in spirit." This means those who

know their spiritual poverty and are humbled before God because of it. Why are they the blessed ones? Because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Repentance is necessary to enter God's Kingdom (3:12; 4:17). The poor in spirit are the ones who repent. They do so because they are convicted of their sins, they see the poverty of their spiritual condition, and they know they have no righteousness, no merit to plead before God. So they humble themselves in the dust before the Lord Jesus and receive Him into their hearts and lives.

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

This is put first of the blessings because this is the way into God's kingdom and the only way. And they who are in God's kingdom, every one of them, have experienced this, and so Jesus calls them blessed. These blessed ones are not those who think highly of themselves, but those who think lowly of themselves. See Luke 18:10-14. Other examples – Gen 18:27; Num 12:3; Job 40:4; 42:5,6; Ps 32:5; 40:17; 51:1-5; 90:8,9; Isa 6:5; Jer 3:25; Dan 9:3-6,20; Rom 7:18-25; Eph 3:8; 1 Tim 1:15. See the opposite of all this in Luke 18:9; Acts 8:9; Rev 3:17. God puts very great value on this quality of humility (18:2,3; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Jam 4:6).

The poor in spirit have true enlightenment – in some measure they see themselves as they really are and God as He really is. Far from thinking they are God (as some people like to do), they feel themselves to be among the worst of people and worthy of no good thing from God. Only God's grace can produce this quality in us. We certainly do not have it by nature. Neither this nor the quality of meekness (v 5) has anything to do with a natural sense of inadequacy, or timidity, or a feeling of inferiority.

**5:4** This is like saying "sad people are really the happy ones." We can see from the place Jesus gives to mourning here in this sermon that it is basic to His whole teaching, that it is a foundation stone on which His kingdom is built.

This verse is linked with the preceding one. Those who see their spiritual poverty, their sin and sinfulness, will feel sorrow, will grieve that they are such sinners. And they may, for that matter, lament the sad fallen condition of the whole human race. Jesus is not talking about the sorrow of this world, the selfish sorrow that people feel because they can't get what they want, or because they experience losses, or because their hopes are dashed. That kind of sorrow works death (2 Cor 7:10).

The sorrow of those in God's kingdom is a godly sorrow that works repentance, and so it leads to the happy condition of God's kingdom. Compare Jam 4:8-10. See godly sorrow at work in psalm 51. Such people will know God's own comfort to some extent now (Isa 40:1,2; John 14:1; 16:33; 2 Cor 1:3-5), and know it fully and eternally hereafter

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

6 "Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst

after righteousness, for they will be filled.

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

(Luke 16:25; Rev 21:4).

**5:5** Meekness is not weakness. In fact, it is great strength of character. It is a quality of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Himself (11:29; 21:5; 2 Cor 10:1), and we see what it means by looking at His life. Meekness is consistent with the character of a spiritual soldier mightily fighting the battle for truth and opposing sin and Satan (Eph 6:10-17).

Meekness is a person humbly accepting the circumstances God has brought him into. It is to be willing to suffer for God, to be slighted or despised without rage and retaliation (see 1 Pet 2:21-23). The meek are those who submit to God's will, God's rule over them, and endure what must be endured for His sake (compare 26:39,42; John 18:11). The meek bend their necks to bear Christ's yoke and are willing to learn from Him (11:29; Luke 9:23).

Such people are the spiritually strong of the earth now, the blessed ones who will inherit the whole earth later. The greedy and the grasping, the self-assertive, the self-willed seekers after power and property and prestige will have no part in this earth when God gives it to the meek. Compare Ps 37:1,11. That whole psalm shows the difference between those who are meek and those who are not.

How is meekness to be obtained? The same way the other spiritual qualities are obtained – they can be produced only by the Holy Spirit as we yield to God. He does this by giving people a proper view of themselves and of others, and a proper attitude toward God.

**5:6** Righteousness is a great word of the Bible. The words "righteousness," "righteous," and "righteously" are used more than 500 times. These words mean whatever is right and just and true and good in God's eyes. Righteousness is opposed to all wrong and injustice and crookedness. God, His Kingdom, His aims and purposes, His works, His dealings with men, are all absolutely righteous (Ezra 9:15; Ps 11:7; 19:9; 36:6; 97:2; 145:17; Dan 9:14; John 17:25). And He requires men to be righteous if they would be in His Kingdom and His heaven.

This verse does not say blessed are those who hunger and thirst after pleasure or money or even spiritual experience. Sinful men (which is what we all are by nature) need righteousness more than anything else, and it is that which they must seek if they are going to exist in a happy state with God forever. What we desire and seek reveals what kind of people we are. Those who have become the children of God by faith in Christ (John 1:12,13) will desire righteousness. They will want to be righteous themselves and to see righteousness prevail on earth. God's Spirit will produce this desire in them.

If this is not our experience, at least to some extent, then we may be sure we know nothing of God's righteous kingdom. A person who has no hunger for food, no thirst for water is very sick indeed. Those who have no hunger and thirst for righteousness are spiritually dead.

The Bible does not teach renunciation of desire. On the contrary, it teaches us to have right desires and to desire passionately, hungrily, thirstily for right things. The kingdom of God is not for the self-satisfied but for the desperate, the aching, the one who wants it like the body craves for food and water. Those content with what they are, and willing to behave as everyone else in the world, will never know what true blessedness is.

See psalm 119 for an example of a man who hungers and thirsts for righteousness. To seek for righteousness means to hunger and thirst for the righteous God (see Ps 42:1,2; 63:1), and for a continual fellowship and right relationship with God. It is to hunger to be like the Lord Jesus who is the altogether Righteous One (Acts 3:14; 1 Pet 2:21,22; 3:18; 1 John 2:1). It is a strong desire to be finished with all that is dark, low, unworthy of God, and unholy. Such people will be filled. When? Progressively now in this life (2 Cor 3:18; Eph 4:24; Phil 3:12). But completely at Christ's return (Rom 8:29,30; Eph 5:25-27; 1 John 3:1-3).

**5:7** This verse does not teach that God will be merciful to us, save us and bring us into His Kingdom, because we are merciful to others. The mercy that saves sinners has nothing to do with whether or not they were previously merciful. See Acts 9:1-6; 1 Tim 1:13,14. Salvation comes only by repentance and faith in Christ (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:3-6).

But those who are saved by God's mercy should show mercy to others. And such will have God's mercy following them all the days of their lives (Ps 23:6). This verse sets forth a spiritual law of God's kingdom which is taught elsewhere in the Bible (6:14,15; Ps 18:25,26; Gal 6:7). God does not lay aside spiritual laws with men after they experience His mercy and enter His kingdom. If people will not be merciful to others, what right have they to expect God to be merciful to them? This verse shows what real Christians should be, and indeed, what they are, to some extent. When God saves men He begins to make them what they should be. If we are not being made merciful, we reveal that He has not changed us and brought us into His merciful kingdom.

What does it mean to be merciful? It is more than to have feelings of compassion – it is to perform kind and helpful acts towards those in need (Luke 10:37; Eph 4:32; Heb 6:10; Jam 3:17). It means to forgive those who offend us and to do good

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

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

to them. Compare 18:21-35; Luke 10:30-37. The supreme example of all this is the Lord Jesus Himself.

**5:8** To be pure in heart does not mean to be sinless now. If it meant that, then no one on earth would ever "see God." See 7:11; Rom 7:18; Gal 5:16,17; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8. Jesus taught all His disciples to pray "forgive as our sins" (Luke 11:4).

The Greek word translated pure can mean clean. It can also mean without adulteration – one thing without mixture. "Pure" milk is milk not mixed with water or anything else. "Pure" grain is grain with the chaff removed. "Pure" can also mean free from defilement and guilt. So a pure heart (that is, the inner state of a person) is one that is guilt-free, sincere, upright, without hypocrisy, undivided in its aims, motives and devotion, without a mixture of deceit, darkness, etc. See Jam 4:8. It is a heart fully set on God and righteousness (compare Ps 86:11; 1 Kings 15:14; 2 Chron 16:9).

To try to make the outer things of our lives pure is not enough (see 23:25-28). God wants us to be pure inwardly (Ps 51:6,10). It is the heart God and His people must deal with. He gives an undivided, clean heart. They must guard the heart above all (Prov 4:23; 2 Cor 7:1). The whole message of Christ aims at this very thing – purity, oneness of heart, and the vision of God. Purity of heart begins with repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 15:9). The Lord Jesus, because of the sacrifice of Himself for sinners, purges the conscience and purifies the inner person (Heb 9:14; 10:22). After that believers must walk in the light and renounce all God shows to be wrong (1 John 1:5-7).

"See God" – now believers in Christ have spiritual enlightenment and know God (John 9:39; 17:2,3,6; Acts 26:17,18; 2 Cor 4:4-6; 1 Pet 2:9). They see Him with their spiritual eyes. But eventually they shall see Christ in His divine glory (1 John 3:1-3; 1 Cor 13:12; Rev 22:3).

**5:9** Peace is another great word in the Bible, used nearly 250 times. The word appears 90 times in the New Testament, and in every book except 1 John. What does it mean to be a peacemaker? It is wanting peace, striving for peace in God's way. It does not mean trying for peace at the cost of truth or righteousness or justice. It is not saying "peace, peace" when there is no peace (Jer 6:14). It is not compromising with evil. True peace must be based on righteousness, and so there can be no peace to the wicked (Ps 85:10; Isa 32:17; 48:22).

What causes struggles, quarrels, fighting, wars between individuals, families, and nations? Sin – Gal 5:19-21; Jam 3:16; 4:1,2. What makes for peace? Setting men free from the bondage of their sinful

10 "Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when *men* revile you, and persecute *you*, and say all kinds of evil against

nature. Anything which promotes that – teaching men the truth of God, showing them how to be reconciled with God, etc – eventually makes for peace, if men respond. Peace with God and the peace of God in the heart will mean peace with others. God in Christ was the great peacemaker. See 2 Cor 5:18-21; Eph 2:14-18; Col 1:21,22.

Human peacemakers must understand that the real problem is sin, and the real remedy is Christ's Gospel. Peacemakers must also have the qualities in the preceding beatitudes. When men are like that they will take a strong stand for truth and righteousness and faith (Eph 6:10-17; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; Jude 3), but they will also try to live at peace with everyone and to promote peace between men (Rom 12:18; 14:19; 1 Cor 7:15; Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 3:11).

Why shall peacemakers be called the children of God? Because God is the God of peace (Rom 15:33; Heb 13:20), and He was willing to bear any cost, go to any lengths agreeable with righteousness, to bring men into peace with Himself. When men are like Him in this, they shall be recognized as what they are – the children of the God of peace (v 16).

**5:10** This is the last beatitude – vs 11,12 add to it but do not give a new one. This blessing may sound strange to men in general, but it is true for all that.

"For righteousness' sake" – not for political or social or religious reasons, not for reasons of color, caste, creed, or because of fanaticism or error. Persecution for righteousness marks out the children of God from others (John 15:20,21; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 4:14-16). They are blessed because they are in the happy condition of being on God's side, of standing for God's righteousness and loving it enough to suffer and die for it. This is a blessed state indeed. Persecution comes to such people because the world is full of evil desires, pride, and hatred for the truth.

Sinful men do not want righteousness. They fight those who are for it, and resist the God of righteousness – John 3:19,20; 7:7; 15:18,24; Rom 1:29-32; 8:7; 12:2; 1 John 2:16; 3:12; 5:19 (remember that they persecuted and killed the righteous Son of God – Acts 3:13-15). The disciples of Jesus were righteous peacemakers, but they were despised, beaten, stoned, jailed and killed (Acts 5:40; 7:57,58; 12:1-4; 14:19; 16:22-24; 2 Cor 11:23-26; 2 Tim 3:10-12). Yet they were the blessed ones in the earth, and the kingdom of heaven was theirs. Their afflictions and troubles were for a little while, their blessedness is eternal (2 Cor 4:17,18).

**5:11** This is a continuation of the blessing in v 10. Jesus here shows that to be persecuted for righteousness is to be persecuted for Him. One way men persecute the



you, falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven. For in this way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste, how can it be made salty *again*? Then it is good for nothing, but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand. And it gives light to all who are in the

righteous is by lying about them and slandering them. But to be the kind of people the wicked hate actually is to be in a blessed condition.

**5:12** Being able to rejoice in persecution comes from the knowledge that to be persecuted for righteousness and for Christ, works good for His people. Compare Rom 8:17,18; 2 Cor 4:17,18; 1 Pet 1:6,7. The fact that God will reward His servants is seen often in the New Testament (10:41,42; 16:27; Mark 9:41; Luke 6:35; 1 Cor 3:8,14; Col 3:24; Heb 10:35; 2 John 8; Rev 11:18; 22:12).

"Before you" – see 23:34-37; Acts 7:52; Heb 11:35-38. Rejoicing in tribulation was a mark of the apostles – Acts 5:41; 16:22-25; Col 1:24; 1 Pet 4:13.

**5:13** God's people are the "salt" of the earth, not the "pepper" or the "sugar." The "you" here are those in God's kingdom, those who have the qualities set forth in vs 3-12, especially those who suffer for righteousness and Christ. But such people as "salt" do not make the world tasty to God! The meaning is different here. Salt preserves things, and God's people preserve the world from becoming totally corrupted, and from being destroyed by God's anger (compare Gen 18:26; 19:22).

"Trampled underfoot by men" – Christianity without the qualities listed in vs 3-12 is useless and deserves to be rejected and destroyed (Luke 14:34,35).

**5:14-16** The people described in vs 3-12 are a new creation of God to give spiritual light on earth. Christ was that light while He was on earth (John 8:12; 9:5). Now His followers are "children of the light" and must shine forth with His light which is in them (John 12:35,36; Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 4:4-6; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5).

**5:16** This is the best way to let light shine – not good talk, not good intentions, but good deeds. Many boast of enlightenment who are never kind or helpful to others, and who never glorify God by anything that they do. Such a boast from such people is an abomination to God.

"Father" – this is the name Jesus used above all others for God (about 170 times. The whole New Testament has the name above 350 times). It indicates that God is a person who loves, cares, protects, and provides as an ideal father should. The

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

17 "Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have come, not to destroy, but to fulfil *them*. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle will pass away from the Law until all is fulfilled. 19 Therefore whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches *men to do* so, he will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches *them*,

name indicates also that He has spiritual children (v 9; John 1:12,13). We should do good that men might praise Him, not ourselves (compare 1 Cor 10:31).

**5:17** "The Law and the Prophets" was a term the Jews used to mean the whole Old Testament. The Lord Jesus is saying His teaching was in harmony with the OT, that its laws, types, sacrifices, prophecies pointed to Himself. All its spiritual principles, the full measure of its righteousness is fulfilled by Him. He came to accomplish the whole will of God revealed there. He is the fulfillment of all that the law and the prophets pictured, described, foretold, and promised (of course, this does not mean that all that is in the prophets was fulfilled at His first coming).

With Jesus now on the scene, the Old Testament is a more glorious book with its profound meaning brought to light; without Him it would be unfulfilled and void of much of its meaning. See Luke 24:27,44; John 1:45; 5:39,46; Acts 3:24-26; 13:27; 1 Pet 1:10,11. The whole book of Hebrews shows some of the ways in which the Lord Jesus fulfilled the OT.

"I have come. . .to fulfil them" – this is one of many reasons why Jesus came from heaven to earth. See also 9:13; 10:35; 20:28; Luke 19:10; John 6:38; 9:39; 10:10,11; 12:46.

**5:18** See how Jesus puts His stamp of approval on the Old Testament. See also 4:4; 15:3-6; 22:43; Luke 24:44; John 10:35. He obviously regarded it as the Word of God inspired by God's Spirit. Compare 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 1:1,2; 2 Pet 1:21. He was God incarnate and knew all things, so we should hold the same views of it that He had.

**5:19** Here again it is clear that from v 3 Jesus has been talking about those in God's kingdom, those who have become God's children by a new spiritual birth. We cannot enter God's kingdom by trying to keep the law He gave through Moses (Acts 13:38,39; Rom 3:21,28; 8:3; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:4-7). But after entering it there are spiritual principles which will be at work. These are His own commandments. "Least of these commandments" – we can hardly think that He is referring to the Ten Commandments of the Law, for there was no "least" among those commandments. There is much reason to think that He is referring to His own commandments, two of

he will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will absolutely not enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of olden times, You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to the judgment. 22 But I tell you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause will be in danger of the judgment; and whoever says to his brother, 'Empty fellow', will be in danger of the Council; but whoever says, 'You fool', will be in danger of hell fire.

23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there

which He has already given (vs 12,16), others which He was about to give.

**5:20** "Pharisees" – 3:7. Here Jesus teaches plainly that not all people, and not all religious people, are in God's kingdom. A certain kind of righteousness is insufficient. This is self-righteousness, the sort of righteousness people try to gain by trying to keep the law or by doing what they consider good works, the kind of righteousness we see in the Pharisees (23:1-28; Luke 18:10-14. See also Rom 10:1-4; Phil 3:7-9). The Pharisees and scribes (teachers of the law) were the religious leaders of the people, but the righteousness of the very least believer in Christ exceeds theirs, and must do so.

What is this righteousness that God requires if people are to be in His kingdom? It is a righteousness by faith in Christ which links believers with Christ and brings His Spirit into them. They become both righteous before God and changed inwardly so that righteous living is possible to them (Rom 3:24; 5:1-5; 8:3; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22-24). The rest of the Sermon on the Mount contrasts this righteousness which God approves with that which He rejects. Righteous behavior which comes out of a changed heart will be vastly superior to that which is produced by sinners from their own natures. Indeed, what kind of righteousness could sinners ever produce even by their mightiest efforts? See Isa 64:6.

**5:21-26** "Murder" – Ex 20:13. The law teachers and Pharisees would have restricted this commandment to the outward act of murder. Jesus speaks of the inner attitudes of the heart which can result in murder, of uttering words murderous in their contempt. He says the wrong sort of anger is like murder in the heart, and the person guilty of it is as much worthy of hell as the literal murderer (v 22). So men should be very careful in any matter, legal or otherwise that could result in anger, hate, the heart given to murderous thoughts. See 1 John 3:15.

**5:22** "I tell you" indicates that Jesus is speaking with absolute authority as the Messiah and Son of God.

before the altar, and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

25 "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way *to court* with him, so that this adversary will not at any time hand you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I say to you, you will by no means get out of there, until you have paid the last copper coin.

27 "You have heard that it was said to those of olden times, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 And if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw *it* from you, for it is better for you that one of your parts is lost than

"Brother" – in the Bible this word is used to indicate various relationships. As well as a literal brother it may mean a fellow Jew, a fellow Christian, a fellow man.

"Empty fellow" – the Greek has "raca" – a word of contempt probably meaning empty, brainless or worthless.

"The Council" – the Sanhedrin. This was the Jewish High Court. There were 71 members of it made up of chief priests, elders and teachers of the law.

"Fool" – it is plain from this verse that to be in danger of hell one does not need to commit what men consider serious crimes. The Lord Jesus is pointing out the importance of the state of the heart.

"Hell fire" – 3:12; 7:19; 13:40,42; 18:8; 25:41; Rev 20:15; 21:8. "Hell" in Greek here is Gehenna. Note at Mark 9:48.

**5:24** The implication is that God will not accept our worship and gifts if there is something wrong in our relationship with others (especially with fellow children of God) that is our fault and that we can put right. If we make no attempt at reconciliation we give opportunity to the kind of anger that is like murder in the heart. That is why He begins these verses with the word "therefore."

**5:25,26** Here is another way in which God's people should live in peace with others. Hostility and quarrels over money or property are to have no part in their lives (vs 44,45). The Lord Jesus commands His people to reach an agreement with their opponents who want to sue them in court. If they do not obey, God will see to it that they have a great deal of trouble. Compare 1 Cor 6:1-8.

**5:27-30** "You shall not commit adultery" – Ex 20:14. Again Jesus goes beyond the literal command of the law and emphasizes the inner thoughts of the heart. When they abstained from outward acts of sin, the Pharisees thought themselves very good people and righteous in God's eyes. They were not careful about the inner life, the state of the heart (23:25-28). One reason God's children experience poorness of spirit, mourning, etc is because they know the very desires that rise in their hearts show how

*that* your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you. For it is better for you that one of your parts is lost than *that* your whole body be thrown into hell.

31 "It has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for the cause of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.

33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to those of olden times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your vows to the Lord.' 34 But I

sinful they are by nature (see Rom 7:7,8). All Jesus' teaching in this sermon, including these verses, is pointed at making people "blessed" – people with the qualities of vs 3-12.

"In his heart" – He is not teaching that those with lustful thoughts might just as well commit acts of adultery. He is not teaching there is no difference between inward thoughts and outward action. Outward acts of sins are far more damaging to others and to ourselves than inward desires. Hate of a brother is evil in itself, but the act of murder goes beyond that and robs the brother of life. Lust is evil, but adultery further pollutes oneself and drags another into sin, with all the evil results that will come from that. If one lusts one might just as well sin outwardly is a lie of Satan. Jesus' emphasis is on watching the heart as well as the outward action.

In vs 29,30 Jesus is not teaching the literal mutilation of the body as an aid to holiness. He knew, as we do, that it is not physical eyes or hands that offend or lead us into sin, and that gouging out an eye or cutting off a hand would not make us better people or less likely to sin. If the right eye is plucked out, the left remains. If both are plucked out the imagination of the sinful heart remains (15:19,20; Gen 8:21; Jer 17:9).

Sin is in the heart and the heart must be dealt with by full repentance and a complete break with the old life. Jesus is speaking in a striking way to emphasize an exceedingly important truth – a person should do anything necessary to keep out of hell, he should cut himself off from any sin, any temptation, any hindrance to entering God's kingdom. The person who will not do this does not value the kingdom of God as he ought, or fear the anger of God as he ought. Paul taught that lusts and sinful acts were like members of the body and must be put to death. See Col 3:5; Rom 8:13.

**5:31** "Divorces" – see also 19:3-9; Deut 24:1. Jesus' teaching is plain: there is only one reason that makes divorce acceptable to God – sexual immorality on the part of one of the married couple. Even then Jesus does not demand divorce but only permits

say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is God's throne, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King, 36 And you shall not swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your 'yes' be yes, and your 'no' be no, for whatever is more than this is from the evil one.

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you that you should not resist evil, but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take away your coat, let him have *your* cloak also. 41 And

it. Remember this teaching is for those who have, to some extent at least, the qualities seen in vs 3-12. How can a person with those qualities divorce his wife or cast off a husband for any reason except the most serious offense? And even then there must be no haste to do so, but remembrance that both are sinners whom God has forgiven. Compare 6:14,15.

**5:33-37** "Swear" – refers to the voluntary (and often very careless) use of oaths in every day life to convince others that one is telling the truth. See also Jam 5:12. Jesus tells us to be men of our word, absolutely truthful in all we say and promise. As Jesus' disciples we must never say yes when we mean no, or say no when we mean yes. Lying and deception are hateful to God and have no place in God's kingdom. See notes at Ps 5:6; 15:2; Prov 6:16-19; Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9,10. And as God's children we should never take God's name in vain or use it lightly, but show proper reverence for His name and all that pertains to Him (Ex 20:7).

**5:37** "The evil one" – or it could be translated simply "evil." Lying, swearing, and using God's name in vain have their origin in the evil one, Satan (John 8:44), but come also from the evil in people's hearts and minds.

**5:38** Ex 21:24,25; Lev 24:20. That was the rule for the society, for the nation. It was a principle of perfect justice.

**5:39-41** "You" in these verses are Christ's disciples. He is speaking of a principle that should reign in the spiritual kingdom He sets up in His people's hearts. It has nothing whatever to do with how a nation governs itself. Governments must resist evil (see Rom 13:1-7). The principle here concerns the relationship of Christ's individual disciples to those who wrong them, not to the state's relationship to individuals, or to other states. Those in Christ's kingdom are to show forth the qualities of vs 3-12.

The desire for revenge is deeply rooted in man's sinful nature. Some people kill others for some insult or slight injury. One purpose of the law of Moses (Ex 21:24,25) was to prevent such a thing and promote perfect justice. Jesus goes further and reveals the attitude His people should show

whoever compels you to go a mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour, and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies. Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who abuse you and persecute you,

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

in the face of injury and injustice. They are not to demand their rights, or think of self, but consider how to do good to those who injure them.

God's people must resist Satan (Jam 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9), and resist sin in the church (1 Cor 5:11-13; 1 Tim 5:20). But here Jesus is speaking of evil persons who wrong them as individuals. This surely does not mean that Christians should not protect their families and help others who are in danger from evil men. But they are not to fight those who would do them some injury or injustice, or seek vengeance on them. Those in God's kingdom are not to meet violence with violence, or force with force (26:52).

Jesus Himself pointed out the sins of the Jews and resisted the evil they did to God's house (see 21:12). But He did not resist those who spit in His face and beat His back and crucified Him (though He could have called angels to His aid (26:52,53). Followers of Christ should follow Him in their attitude to personal injuries. See 1 Pet 2:21-23. This passage of Scripture has nothing to do with passive resistance to achieve political purposes.

**5:42** The principle is the same as that in the above verse – reject self and represent God's spiritual kingdom which is one of grace, mercy, love and kindness. Disciples of Christ must think of others and their needs as He did. But should we give to a person who begs for money to buy intoxicating drink or drugs? Or to a crook who makes his living deceiving others? Surely our giving should not cause harm, or actually promote idleness, begging, or evil. The Lord Jesus wants us to be compassionate but not stupid. When people are in real need (6:2), we should help if we can. See 1 John 3:17,18. We may not be able to give what such people ask or all they ask, but we can give something. Compare Acts 3:6.

**5:43-47** Love is at the heart of God's spiritual kingdom. The King is the embodiment of love (1 John 4:8), and His rule is love (John 13:34) and everyone in God's kingdom must obey this rule. They are to aim at perfection of love (v 48. Compare 1 John 4:16-18). Love is the fulfilling of all God's law (Rom 13:8-10).

The Old Testament nowhere said the Jews should hate their enemy, but that was the traditional teaching of the religious leaders

and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore be perfect, just as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

**6** "Watch out that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

in Israel. It was actually contrary to such verses as Ex 23:4,5 and Prov 25:21. We cannot *become* God's children by practicing the principle of love, but if we *are* God's children, we show that we are such by practicing it (v 45). God loved His enemies (Rom 5:8-10; Col 1:21,22), and He does good to them.

"Pray for those" (v 44) – Luke 6:27,28.

**5:46** Tax collectors were usually Jews who served the Romans (who ruled the Jewish people at that time). Their fellow countrymen considered them traitors. Also they had a reputation for greed.

**5:47** Those in God's spiritual kingdom must act differently, be better, do more than those who are not. If they do not, what evidence is there that they are in it? See v 20.

**5:48** This is the only possible standard a perfect God could set before His people. God is to be their model, and not this fallen world. But only sinless people (if any could ever be found) could perfectly live up to it. However, everyone in the kingdom should aim to do so. Perfection in behavior is the goal set before Christians in other places in the New Testament. See 2 Cor 13:11; Col 1:28; 4:12; 2 Tim 3:17; Heb 13:21; Jam 1:4; 1 John 2:1,6. Aiming at perfection is not the same as achieving it – Rom 7:18,25; Phil 3:12; Jam 3:2.

Verses 39-48 reveal certain plain alternatives – who shall rule us, self or God? What principles shall we follow – the principle that self comes first and must be defended, revenged and promoted, or the principle that self must be denied, and God's kingdom put first? The constant theme of the Sermon on Mount is dying to self and being alive toward God; everything done to please Him, nothing to please self. Great motive power is needed to keep this sermon with its great spiritual demands. What is the only one that will work? See John 14:23,24.

**6:1** Men may see the righteous acts or charitable works of God's people and it is right that they should (5:16). But His people must not do them hoping men will see them and praise them. It is enough that God sees and approves. There must be no hypocrisy in God's kingdom, no using of religious acts to impress men, gain a name, or get praise.

"Reward" – references at 5:12.

2 "Therefore when you do charitable deeds, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, so that they may get glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your charitable deeds will be in secret. And your Father himself, who sees in secret, will reward you openly.

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that

they will be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and shutting your door, pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 But when you pray, do not use empty repetitions, as the pagans *do*. For they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 So do not be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him.

9 "Therefore pray in this way:  
Our Father who is in heaven,

**6:2** Prov 22:9; Acts 20:35; Gal 2:10; Jam 2:15,16; 1 John 3:17,18. Notes and references on giving at 2 Cor 9:15. Christ's disciples must not call attention to their giving. Standing with a rupee in one hand and a trumpet in the other is not the way for them. That is the way of hypocrites – vs 5,16; 23:5. Hypocrites do not do good deeds simply because it is their duty and privilege to do them. If others did not see or know of them, they would never do any good deeds at all. God will not honor such people, because they are not seeking God's honor. Compare John 5:44; 12:26; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 10:18; Gal 1:10; 1 Thess 2:4.

**6:3,4** In other words, tell it to absolutely no one, not even to yourself to take pride in it or to praise self. God's people do not need to keep a record of their good deeds – God will do that. Jesus is emphasizing again that those in His spiritual kingdom must renounce self and live for God alone, ignoring man's approval or blame. Acts of mercy must not become acts for applause.

**6:5,6** Prayer must be for God's ear alone. It is enough that He hears. Hypocrites are not concerned about God – they want to impress men. They may seem to be worshiping God, but are really worshiping themselves. Public prayer is good, but it has its dangers. It may sometimes be difficult to speak to God without trying to impress others who are listening. This may be one reason for Jesus' emphasis on secret prayer. It will be more direct, more real, with no temptation to impress others.

**6:7** Our praying should be neither mechanical or in ignorance. A name repeated over and over (see 1 Kings 18:26; Acts 19:34), or a formula of words constantly repeated, or piling up words to convince God to listen – such things have no power at all with God. God does not require our babbling to know what we need and give it to us. We do not need to wake Him up, or capture His attention (Ps 34:15; 121:2-5; 2 Chron 16:9). And we need not instruct Him about the things that are necessary for us to have. Christ's disciples do not have a God who is more persuaded to answer, the more words they speak.

**6:8** "Father" – note at 5:16. Some may ask, "if God knows what we need before we ask, then why ask?" The answer is simple

– we are to ask because He tells us to do so (v 9; 7:7; Luke 18:1; John 16:24). It is one of the ways in which God's people have fellowship with God, experience His joy, and obtain what is needed. It is a way which God uses to teach them many spiritual lessons. It is also a constant reminder that they are dependent on God for everything and that they should acknowledge it.

**6:9** The following prayer covers those things which should be of greatest concern to Christ's disciples. See what great truth, what important requests can be put in simple language and few words. Not everything God's people will pray for is here – just those things that should daily be in their minds. This prayer is a model, an example, a sample of how they should pray and what they should pray for. We may pray for many things besides those mentioned here, but we should never think we have gotten beyond the requests of this prayer.

The words "this day" and "daily" in v 11 indicate that the requests of this prayer are good and proper ones to make every day, and not just occasionally in church. The plural word "our" indicates that these requests are appropriate for two or more members of a family, or a number of believers, to make together. Perhaps it indicates also that an individual who privately prays alone the lines of this prayer (and this is surely a good thing to do) is to think of others along with himself – his or her family, or friends, or church, or an even wider circle of believers.

"Father" – see the note at 5:16. God's people are to have God-centered prayers not self-centered ones. And we should approach Him as our loving Father who is ready to listen to us and help us (7:9-11). When we pray we are to think clearly about the One we are speaking to. The words "in heaven" indicate majesty and greatness and transcendence. The Father in heaven is the great Creator of the universe, the all-powerful God who can hear every prayer and do all things according to His own will and purpose.

"Hallowed by your name" – name means God's nature and character, who and what He is. The desire that God be honored on earth should be the very first concern of every disciple of Jesus. This must come before personal requests, not merely in

hallowed be your name.  
 10 Your kingdom come.  
 Your will be done on earth,  
 as *it is* in heaven.  
 11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,  
 as we forgive our debtors.  
 13 And lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil.  
 For yours is the kingdom, and the power,

prayer, but in life as a whole. Their prayers, desires, deeds and words should all be for God's glory, just as Christ's were (5:16; John 8:29; 17:4; 1 Cor 10:31). Is it not probable that many of our prayers remain unanswered because in our asking we do not put God's honor first in our thoughts and desires?

"Hallowed" means to be considered holy. God is the absolutely holy one, and those who pray to Him should keep this in mind. We should always want God's name to be honored and glorified in our own lives, in our families, and among the people with whom we associate. Also, perhaps, this is a prayer that God Himself will hallow His name, that He would bring about conditions among men that they would recognize the holy nature of the one true God, that He would cause people to respect and honor Him. Compare Ezek 36:23. Notes on God's holiness at Lev 20:7; Isa 6:3; Rev 15:4.

**6:10** "Your kingdom come" – this concern also has to do with God, not with personal needs. But if God's kingdom (4:17) has already come, and Christ's disciples are in it, why should they pray that it might come? It has come now only in a hidden, spiritual sense in the hearts of His people. This prayer may express a desire for the spread of His kingdom in the world, that more and more people would submit in their hearts to God's rule. Or, more likely, it may be a prayer for God's kingdom to come openly and be manifest in all the earth (see 16:27,28; 25:31; Luke 21:31; 22:18, 29,30; Acts 1:6; Rev 11:15; 20:4-6). In this case it would be like praying for the return of the Lord Jesus (Rev 22:20).

"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" – is it not true that the will of God in heaven is done perfectly, immediately, heartily, joyously, faithfully, constantly? That is how we should want things in the whole earth, including in ourselves as individuals, in our families, and our churches. This prayer will have its complete fulfillment only when the prayer before it is fulfilled. Now everywhere in the earth the will of God is either unknown or resisted, disobeyed and despised. As individuals who pray this prayer we should make it the great concern of our life to know and do the will of God ourselves – Col 1:9; 4:12; Heb 13:20,21; 1 John 2:17; 5:14; Rev 2:26.

**6:11** "Our daily bread" – after first praying for the great matters that have to do with God, disciples may turn to requests for their own needs. Bread here signifies the basic necessities of life. Observe carefully that Jesus did not tell us to pray for riches, or even for many days' needs to be given in advance. Disciples are to recognize that their

day by day life on earth is totally dependent on God, and look to Him in faith to meet their needs (vs 25-33).

This does not mean that disciples are to stop working and beg God for their food. See 2 Thess 3:10; 1 Tim 5:8. They are to work, but at the same time to recognize it is God's grace and not their mere working which keeps them supplied. Should the rich, and those who always have large supplies of everything they need, pray this prayer? Certainly. They too need to recognize that they are dependent on God for everything, and that what they have today can be gone tomorrow. See Prov 23:5.

**6:12** "Forgive us our debts" – compare this with Luke 11:4, where the wording is "forgive us our sins." Why has Jesus given us the same prayer in different words? Perhaps He meant the word "sins" to indicate things we have done, actual trespasses, sins of commission, and the word "debts" to signify what we have failed to do, sins of omission. However that may be, by comparing Matthew with Luke here we can see that debts toward God too are sins. We owe God perfect love and perfect obedience, and come short in our payments. The prayer Jesus taught us is not complete without confession of sin.

Keep in mind that this is a sample of the kind of prayer that all of His disciples should make, not only then, but throughout this whole age of grace. From this we judge that Jesus did not think that any of His disciples would reach a state of sinless perfection on this earth, that any of them would ever be completely beyond the daily need for forgiveness. It is plain that if day by day we need to ask for forgiveness, then day by day, either in what we do or in what we fail to do, or in what we think or desire, we are guilty of sinning and need forgiveness. Jesus would not tell us to ask for something we do not need.

On our proneness to sin and need of forgiveness see 7:11; Rom 7:18,21; Gal 5:16,17; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8; 1 Kings 8:46. On forgiveness see notes at vs 14,15; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-35; etc. Observe that we have a right to pray for forgiveness only if we forgive those who have offended us. If we do not forgive them, how dare we think that God should forgive us?

**6:13** "Lead us not into temptation" – God does not tempt men to sin. Temptation comes from Satan and from one's own heart (4:1-3; 1 Thess 3:5; Jam 1:13,14). And we must understand that we are dependent on God alone to keep us safe in time of temptation (1 Cor 10:13).

See David's prayer in Ps 141:4 – surely a prayer God delights to answer. God does try

and the glory, forever. Amen.

14 "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 "Moreover when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, *putting on* a gloomy appearance. For they disfigure their faces, so that they may appear

men (see notes at Gen 22:1; Ps 66:10-12), but that is a different matter. When we pray this prayer we are asking God to act according to His will, and so we are not asking Him to keep us from all trials. We are asking that He lead us not into temptation, that He would not lead us, who are so sinful and weak, in such a way that we fall into the hands of Satan the tempter.

One more fact we should understand – it is quite possible to pray like this and at the same time have a secret desire to be overcome by temptation and to sin. This, of course, is insincere and hypocritical praying, and in such a case we should not think that God is obliged to answer us and keep us from falling. But when we pray this prayer in the right spirit, we are setting ourselves against all temptation and sin, and against the desire to be tempted. And this we must do to be successful in the spiritual life.

"Evil" – this could also be translated "the evil one," meaning Satan. The author of these notes thinks that here the translation "evil" is better than "the evil one", because it is a more general, more inclusive term. It refers to any kind of evil, from any source. The prayer to "deliver us" is the reverse of the previous request about temptation. This is something God will surely do for the trusting, prayerful disciple of Christ. Jesus would not teach us to pray for something it was not God's will to do. In this prayer Christ wants us to acknowledge that God alone can deliver us from evil within or without or from Satan, that we cannot be delivered by our own strength and wisdom.

In this whole prayer we see the relationship which must exist between God and a disciple of Jesus. God is the mighty one, the loving Father who supplies everything needed; the disciple is weak and needy and must look to God for everything. God is to be honored, not the disciple, His will done, not the disciple's. All the disciple can do is ask – "give", "forgive", "deliver." Jesus is making abundantly clear our utter dependence on a loving God.

"Yours is the kingdom. . . Amen" – a very fitting conclusion to this prayer, or any prayer. See other notes on prayer at 7:7-12; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8; Rom 8:26,27; Eph 14:6,7; Col 1:9; 1 Thess 5:18; Heb 11:6; Jam 1:5-8; 5:16-18; 1 John 5:14,15; Gen 18:32.

**6:14,15** Compare Matt 18:21-35. This does not mean that men can earn God's forgiveness by forgiving others. Forgiveness is a

gift of God's grace (notes at 9:5-7; etc). But who can receive this gift of forgiveness? Only those who repent and turn to Christ (3:2; 4:17; Luke 24:47), those in whom the Holy Spirit is working to produce the kind of people described in 5:3-12. One evidence of the Spirit's working in them is that they forgive others.

If people are not willing to forgive others they show they have not been forgiven themselves and have not received God's grace. And they will never be forgiven until they are brought to repentance and faith in Christ and are changed into the sort of people who forgive others. And for those who are already in God's kingdom, any refusal to forgive others is a very serious matter. Those guilty of it will experience God's frown and God's chastening until they learn to forgive.

**6:16** This means a voluntary fast for the purpose of seeking God, disciplining the body for the sake of one's spiritual life. Compare Ps 35:13; Isa 58:6,7; Joel 1:14; 2:12. That which should be used as a means to help the spiritual life can, if abused, reveal there is no spiritual life to help. To fast in an attempt to get man's praise is monstrous. Notice Jesus says "when you fast" – He regarded fasting as good and right. He fasted 40 days (4:1) and His disciples would fast (9:14,15).

**6:17,18** God rewards not every kind of fasting, but only that done from the right motives. True fasting has to do with a disciple's secret dealings with God. Others should not even be able to guess what is happening.

**6:19** "Treasures" – a word indicating all that men love and count as treasures, whether money or property of some sort, or anything else. The attitude which people should have toward such things appears also in other Scriptures – for example, Luke 12:16-21; 1 Tim 6:6-10,17-19.

"Moth", "rust" and "thieves" speak of the perishing nature of worldly possessions. They may be here today and gone tomorrow. If they are not gone tomorrow we may be; and what are we laying up in heaven which will endure forever? Observe that the Lord strictly forbids His disciples to lay up treasures here. Therefore to do so is disobedience to His instructions (and therefore sin) as well as foolishness.

**6:20** "Treasures in heaven" – the rewards God gives His servants (5:12). We store them up by service to God and acts of kindness and mercy to men (19:21; Ps 112:9; Prov 19:17; 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Cor 9:15; 2 Tim

to men to be fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you openly.

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for

yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in or steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 "The light of the body is the eye. Therefore if your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore if the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or for your body, what you will put on. Is not the life

4:8; Heb 6:10; 1 Pet 5:4). We can do things on earth which will have eternal results. We can live now for the sake of eternity rather than for this brief span of time.

**6:21** The Lord Jesus does not want us to love this world and its treasures, but to set our hearts on heaven. Compare Col 3:1,2; 1 John 2:15-17. There are only two possible kinds of treasures – the perishing ones in this world or the eternal ones in heaven. Which should a sensible person labor for?

**6:22,23** This is true in both the physical and spiritual realm, but the Lord Jesus is speaking of spiritual matters. The subject is the same as before – treasures. To fix the eye on something is to desire it. Good spiritual eyes see things as they are and desire the glory of God, the things of the kingdom of light, and the eternal rewards He gives to those who serve Him. Bad spiritual eyes do not see things as they really are, and desire the things of time, the things related to sin, self, and darkness. They see no glory of Christ and no value in salvation (2 Cor 4:4).

The direction in which the eyes of our mind and heart look determines whether we will be filled with God's light or the darkness of sin. There are only two possible kinds of vision – that which is set on the things of this world, or that which is set on the things of heaven. Compare 2 Cor 4:18; Heb 11:26,27. God will hold us responsible for where we keep our eyes (Luke 11:35).

**6:24** The subject is the same as that in vs 19-23.

"Money" – translated from a word which means riches or treasure. It signifies what men consider valuable in this world. The so-called treasures of earth can become a terrible master, a dictator that makes men serve them. They compel men to lie, cheat, steal and lose their souls. There are only two masters possible – God, or Satan who uses the "treasures" of earth to enslave men. See Satan's attempt to destroy Christ in 4:8,9. Any person, even one who thinks he is a Christian, who is serving money or worldly wealth of any kind, and says he is serving God, is either deceived or a liar. The

more than food, and the body *more* than clothing?

26 See the birds of the air. For they do not sow, they do not reap or gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his height?

28 "And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not work, they do not spin. 29 And yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not adorned like one of these. 30 Therefore, if God clothes the grass of the field like this, which today is *here*, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will he* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or, 'What will we drink?' or, 'What will we wear?' 32 (For the

service of God is utterly, eternally opposed to the service of anything else (4:10).

Various countries have various gods and idols, but money is the universal idol of the world, the thing that people everywhere love, bow down to, and serve. The believer in Christ must renounce this idol as they do every other idol (compare Col 3:5; 1 John 5:21; Luke 14:33).

**6:25-34** These verses too are related to the subject begun in v 19. One reason unbelievers store up treasures on earth is because they want security, and they have no trust in God. Disciples of Jesus are not to be so. Theirs should be a life free of worry (Phil 4:6,7). Of course they should plan, and work, and do what they can to provide for their families (Gen 3:19; 2 Thess 3:10; 1 Tim 5:8). But their trust in God should be such that they are not anxious even about the basic necessities of life – food, water and clothing. If they worry it is because their faith is small (v 30). Believers are not to act like unbelievers, as though they had no heavenly Father to look after them (v 32). If disciples do their part, God will surely do His (v 33).

**6:26** Nature can teach us spiritual lessons. See, for example, Ps 19:1-4; Prov 6:6; 30:24-28. The God who is kind to birds will not forget His own children. But even birds do not sit on a limb and expect God to drop food in their mouths. They build their nests and gather the food God provides.

**6:29** Solomon was the richest of all Israel's kings and lived in the greatest luxury and magnificence (1 Kings 10:23; Eccl 2:7-9).

**6:30** "Little faith" – on four or more occasions Jesus spoke of His disciples little faith. See also 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20; Luke 17:5,6. Little faith does not mean no faith. Some have the faith that enables them to receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, yet not enough to escape their worries and fears, or to give them confidence in times of danger, or to accomplish seemingly impossible things by God's grace, or to help others as they might otherwise do.

**6:32** God wants His people to be different from all others, a unique, trusting, happy



Gentiles go after all these things.) For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Its own trouble *is* enough for the day.

**7** "Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. 2 For with the judgment you judge, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

people, who go after heavenly spiritual things.

**6:33** Disciples of Christ have chosen God as their master, not money, not the needs of the body, not anything of earth. They are to set their eyes on Him and His glory (vs 22-24). Their priorities are to be right. Their chief concern should be for God's kingdom and God's righteousness. They should care more about that than about their own needs.

To seek for God's kingdom cannot mean that disciples should try to enter it, for they are already in it. It means to seek the good of God's kingdom, its glory, its power and the rule of God more and more in themselves and in other people. Compare Rom 2:7. What is it to seek for God's righteousness? It does not mean to seek justification, because believers are already justified (Rom 5:1). It means to make His righteousness one of our chief concerns, to seek to be righteous in our personal lives as God is righteous, to have the right style of living that only He can produce in us (note at 5:6), to see His righteousness fulfilled in others and in our relationships with others. Those who put God first in all things will find that God takes care of them and gives them all they need (Phil 4:19).

**6:34** Compare Phil 4:6; 1 Pet 5:7; Ps 23:1. There are four good reasons seen here in Matt 6:25-34 why believers should not worry.

First, the Lord Jesus three times forbids it (vs 25,31,34).

Second, worry is completely useless (v 27).

Third, worry makes believers act like unbelievers (v 32).

Fourth, believers have a heavenly Father to look after them and give them all they need (vs 30,33).

A fifth reason is implied – worry dishonors God. It is as if a person is saying "my heavenly Father is unable or unwilling to look after me." God does not deny that needs will occur or that troubles and difficulties will come. He only tells us to live one day at a time and have confidence in Him. See also John 14:1; Phil 4:6,7.

**7:1,2** "Do not judge" – compare Rom 14:1-4,10-13. This refers to judging in the sense of condemnation – harsh, severe, unloving criticism. It does not mean that the church should not judge evil and exercise discipline.

3 "And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and, look, a plank *is* in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, so that they do not trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

See Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 5:1-5,12,13. It does not mean that one should not use discernment. How could we obey the Lord's words in vs 6, 15 and 20, if we did not look carefully at others and learn what they are like from what we see? Jesus taught us to be kind, but not to be blind.

But we are not to try to take God's place and condemn others. If we condemn others we will be condemned. In this matter at least, others will treat us as we treat them. More importantly, God Himself will judge us. This does not mean He will condemn His children to hell if they judge others. It means He will judge and chastise us as His children. See 1 Cor 11:31,32; Heb 12:5-11; 1 Pet 4:17.

**7:3-5** As long as we have a harsh critical spirit we are incapable of helping others. Our very attitude is one "plank" we may have in our eye. Our high estimate of ourselves makes us like a blind oculist trying to prescribe glasses for others. Jesus calls such people "hypocrites" because those who judge others are guilty themselves (Rom 2:1), and have not faced themselves or judged themselves as they ought. God has not sent His children into the world as judges but as witnesses (Acts 1:8). Each disciple of Christ should think that others are better than himself – Phil 2:3. If we do that we will not condemn them.

**7:6** Jesus means there are some people in the world who in their behavior are like pigs and dogs – they want to roll in the mire of sin and indulge in moral filth (by "dogs" He meant the street scavengers of villages that we see in many parts of the world, not household pets). They are not interested in repentance or God's kingdom. Compare Ps 22:16; Isa 56:11; Phil 3:2; 2 Pet 2:22; Jude 10; Rev 22:15. Such people are thoughtless and greedy, and oppose truth and righteousness.

His people are to discern such, and refrain from giving them holy truth or wisdom's pearls – until they repent, if such a time ever comes. Does this mean God's people should not preach to the unconverted? Of course not (Matt 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47). But they must be discriminating and careful – wise as serpents and harmless as doves, knowing when to speak and when to be silent, and what to say and what not to say to various kinds of

7 "Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

9 "Or which one of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give

people (10:14,16. Compare Luke 23:8,9; Acts 13:46; 18:6).

**7:7,8** Jesus gives these great promises to God's children. They are in the context of this Sermon on the Mount where we are already told what good things we should ask for and seek (6:9-15,33). So our praying should be in accordance with all that. The Bible does not give us sweeping promises that God will give us anything we ask for even if He knows it is bad for us. We should ask God for those things which will enable us to live according to His teachings. And for this we need a continual supply of God's grace to us, the power of the Holy Spirit, a pure, undivided heart, etc.

The words "seek" and "knock" indicate persistence in prayer. We should keep on seeking until we find, keep on knocking until God opens the door. Of course these verses do not teach us to ask men for what we need. Quite the opposite. We are to ask God. See also Ps 34:10; 69:32; Jer 29:13; Hos 10:12; Luke 11:5-11; 18:1-8; 1 Thess 5:17.

**7:11** "You then, being evil" – this is Jesus' word to His own disciples (Peter, James and John were there, and the other apostles. See 5:1,2). They were certainly no worse than other people – indeed, they were among the best people on earth. But Jesus is describing them as they were in the eyes of a holy God, and so He calls them evil (compare 19:17; Ps 14:1-3). Jesus was emphasizing the sinfulness of all men, including His own people. Wrong thoughts, bad desires, foolish and improper acts, failure to obey all of God's commands – all this is evidence of evil natures. And the disciples were not sinless in thought, word, and deed.

If anyone thinks he is superior to the original disciples, is he not making a huge mistake? Compare 6:12; Rom 3:9; 7:18,25; Gal 5:17; 1 Tim 1:15; Jam 3:2; 1 John 1:8; 1 Kings 8:46. When we approach God in prayer, we must not come with elevated views of our own righteousness (like the Pharisee in Luke 18:10-12), but conscious of the weakness and sinfulness of our natures, and aware that if we receive anything from Him it is because of His grace and mercy.

Observe one more thing here. Jesus did not call His disciples "evildoers" as He did false prophets (v 23 – a different Greek word is used here). To say that His disciples have sinful natures is not the same as saying

good things to those who ask him? 12 Therefore, in everything, whatever you want people to do to you, do the same to them. For this is the Law and the Prophets.

13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in through it. 14 Because narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leads to life, and few there are who find it.

that they are living in sin. Our natures our evil, but we need not be evildoers. Christ's disciples have a new holy nature along with the old (Eph 4:22-24), and by God's grace they can get the victory over their evil natures and live for Him ((Rom 6:12-14).

**7:12** The Lord Jesus revealed how gracious God is. He is a loving Father always giving good things and seeking our highest good. Now Jesus tells us to do likewise. This is not a mere rule to follow; it is a spirit of love to have. We must be what we should be before we can do what we should do. "Law and Prophets" means the whole Old Testament (5:17). The essence of the OT is seen in 22:35-40; Rom 13:8-10.

**7:13,14** Both the gate and way are narrow and restricted. Those who enter cannot take with them all the "baggage" of the world. Sin and selfishness and egoism, other gods and other ways must be left behind. Compare 5:29,30.

Entering the narrow way requires repentance (3:2; 4:17), denial of self (16:24-26), humbling of self to go God's way (5:3-5), and a willingness to accept the rule of the one true God in one's life (v 21; 6:9,10,33).

The narrow gate is the only way into God's kingdom, and the Lord Jesus Himself is both the "gate" and the "way" – John 10:7-10; 14:6. So faith in Him is the absolutely essential thing – John 3:36; 8:24; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Rom 3:21-25; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8,9. True faith in Christ will be joined with repentance, self-denial, and a willingness to submit to God. If these things are absent can faith be genuine? (See the note at Acts 22:10).

God's "narrow" way leads to life – spiritual life, eternal life with God – John 1:12,13; 3:16; 5:24; 6:47. But compared with the multitudes of earth "few" ever find this narrow way. This is because few will desire it or search for it, few are willing to repent, humble themselves and trust the Lord Jesus alone. The few who find God's way are those who want it above everything else, who cannot rest until they find it. And this is a result of God's work in their hearts.

Most people are in the "broad" way. This is the way of the world, the way of sinners, the way of the worship of many gods, or none, the way of living according to one's sinful nature, the way of doing what pleases self without concern for what pleases God, the way of ignorance of the truth, the way of rejecting the Lord Jesus who is the true way (Deut 11:28; Jud 2:17; Ps 1:6; Prov 14:12;

15 "Beware of false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a rotten tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor *can* a rotten tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not produce good fruit is

21:2,8; Eph 4:17-19; Col 3:5-7). The end of that way is destruction. That means spiritual death, separation from God, and the lake of fire (3:10; 5:30; 25:46; Luke 16:22-24; 2 Thess 1:8,9; Rev 20:15; 21:8).

The Lord Jesus tells men to enter the narrow gate – not to admire it, or speculate about it. His disciples had already entered. Here He speaks to those who had not entered and calls them to make a decision, a decision based on all He had been teaching. Compare Ezek 18:30-32. See Luke 13:24.

"Strait" – this word does not mean "straight," but "affording little space" or "confined in area." It is translated from a Greek word that means "restricted" or "pressed together" or "confined." It is a different word than the one translated "narrow" in this verse. The way of Christ is certainly wide enough and large enough for all who truly want to be in it and who will submit to Him in faith, but too narrow, too restricted, too difficult for anyone else.

**7:15-20** The Lord tells us to watch out for false prophets because they may not be obvious. They may have the appearance of genuine servants of God (sheep's clothing), but they are servants of Satan. See 2 Cor 11:13,14. Their teaching and ways are destructive (they are like wolves, the natural enemies of sheep – John 10:12; Acts 20:29,30). Their fruit (their teaching and their activities which are a result of their teaching) will reveal what they are, and the disciples of Christ who have discernment will know what they are. Their nature will be manifest in what they say and do not say, in what they do and do not do. If they continually bear bad fruit they cannot be good trees.

The warning to watch out for false prophets comes just after Jesus's exhortation to enter the narrow way. False prophets will teach things contrary to the teachings of the Lord Jesus. They will present other ways and will try to keep people from entering the narrow way (23:13). Their end will be in accordance with their works (v 19; 3:10; 2 Cor 11:15). On false prophets see Jer 14:14,15; 23:25,26; Ezek 13:1-9; Matt 24:11,24; Rom 16:17,18; 1 Tim 4:1,2; 2 Tim 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 4:1; Jude 4. **7:21-23** "Lord" – see notes at Luke 2:11; Phil 2:10,11. Here the subject is the same as in the previous verses – false prophets. They may use the word "Lord" when

cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore, you will know them by their fruits.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons, and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew

referring to Jesus, but they will not do what he says. Verse 21 does not mean that salvation can be gained by good works. God's will is that men should repent, put their trust in the Lord Jesus, submit to Him and do what He says (17:5; John 6:29; Acts 17:30; Rom 10:9,10. See the long note at Acts 22:10). False prophets do not do this. That which rules their lives is not the will of God but their own wills. They may speak much about the kingdom of God but they are not in it.

Many false prophets are deceived (v 22). They may think they are teaching the truth, but usually they do not know the truth, and are not trying to find the truth. They think the fact that they are prophesying and doing miracles is proof that they are in the kingdom of God. They will learn the true state of things on "that day" – the day of God's judgment.

Let us learn now that the ability to preach sermons is no sign of holiness, being able to do miracles is not evidence of salvation. Is it possible for those who are not true servants of God to prophesy, to give God's message to men, to perform miracles? Yes, it is possible. Judas Iscariot was a thief and like a demon (John 6:70,71; 12:6), and was no child of God. But he received power and authority from Christ like the other apostles (10:1-4). Balaam prophesied and proclaimed beautiful truth, but was an evil man (Num 22:1-7; 2 Pet 2:15. For another illustration of this see John 11:49-52).

Here in Matthew 7 observe in v 23 that Christ will not deny what these false prophets will say. He knows very well that it is possible to be without salvation, and still be able to call Him "Lord" and do miracles in His name. Jesus will not say to them "I once knew you but I don't know you now." His words are "I never knew you." In other words, these false prophets were never His sheep, never belonged to Him, were never God's children (John 10:14,27).

Christ will call them "evildoers." The Greek words here mean those whose deeds are "lawless", those who do not follow righteous principles of behavior, those who transgress the ways of God. Even any good deeds they might do are done with the wrong motive. Selfishness is at the heart of all their actions, and since selfishness is evil, then what they do is evil. Such people have not learned a very basic lesson of the Bible – what they *do* is not as important as what they *are*. Character is more important than

you. Depart from me, you evildoers.'

24 "Therefore, I will compare everyone who hears these words of mine, and does them, to a wise man who built his house on a rock. 25 And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, for it had *its* foundation on a rock. 26 And everyone who hears these sayings of mine, and does not do them, will be compared to a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 And the rain

outward activity. If we are right on the inside, then our outer actions will also be right. But our outer actions may *seem* to be right to men when actually we are not right inside.

Those who do their works only for themselves will find in the end that all they will have is themselves – not Christ, not God, not salvation. A terrible end for such people is indicated by the words "Depart from me" – 25:46; 2 Thess 1:8,9.

**7:24-27** In verses 15-23 we see Christ's condemnation of false prophets. In these verses we have a warning against false hearers – those who hear the truth but do not obey it. Here a distinction is made between the wise and the foolish (see also notes on Proverbs 9:1-18). In this illustration both types of people have some of the same desires and aims – both types build a "house." Perhaps the word "house" signifies a person's whole life, especially his or her life as it relates to Christianity. The foolish man may be very wise when it comes to matters of the world or finance or politics or such things. But in matters of religion he is a fool.

The big difference between the houses the two men built is in the foundation. The foundation is a part of a house which may not be seen outwardly. Often it is hidden in the ground, and from there it supports the whole house. In the deep places of the heart of the wise man is the desire to obey the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit has enabled him to recognize his spiritual poverty and has humbled him. He has given him a thirst for righteousness. He prays sincerely that God's will be fulfilled in his life. The wise man has trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ and shows by his obedience that he has trusted Him.

But in the hidden places of the heart of the foolish man there is not this desire to obey Christ. So naturally he does not put into practice what Christ teaches. He has no inward drive to do so. His religion is entirely a surface thing without depth. The foundation of such a person's life is shifting sand. The only foundation for a genuine Christian life is Christ (1 Cor 3:11). The foolish man does not even consider building his "house" on this one foundation. The foundation he chooses is his own thoughts, or impressions, or feelings, or his own religious ideas or doctrines.

Jesus indicated here that every person's "house" is going to be tested. "Rain",

came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it fell, and great was its fall."

28 And when Jesus had finished *speaking* these words, it happened that the people were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he taught them as *one who* had authority, and not as the scribes.

**8** When he had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him.

"floods" and "winds" will test every part of it, and when it is tested the foundation on which it is built will be revealed. Oh, what a storm struck Job (Job chapters 1 and 2). How Jeremiah was battered (Lam 3:1-24). See what a wave struck Peter (Luke 22:54-62). What rough weather Paul faced (2 Cor 6:4-10; 11:23-29). See too the storms of Ps 66:10-12 and Heb 11:36-38. But if a man has built solidly on Christ his house will stand, nothing can destroy it. If it is not built on Christ nothing can save it.

Rain, wind, and flood may also speak of future judgment when every house will be tested and every foundation exposed. Many religious houses that people take pride in will fall in that day with a great crash. The reason is they were not built on Christ's teachings here in the Sermon on the Mount (v 26). Christ did not give His teaching in this Sermon or any other teaching, that we might merely admire it or listen to it, or speak or write about it, but that we might act according to it. If we do not do so, disaster is the only possible result. Let us make sure "our house" is built solidly on Him, that we trust Him only, love Him truly, and obey Him heartily.

**7:28,29** The reason for the amazement of the crowd was not simply in what Jesus said, but the way He said it. He did not quote this or that teacher as the authority for His teaching. He spoke with the authority God the Father have Him. See in 5:22,28,32, 34,39,44 the phrase "I tell you." Compare John 7:16,17; 12:49,50. In God's kingdom He presents Himself as Christ the Messiah of Israel (5:17), as Lord, Son of God, and Judge (7:21-23). Now in all matters concerning God's kingdom, in the whole field of religion, in all that relates to the destiny of men, in heaven and on earth, He is the absolute authority (28:18; John 17:2; Phil 2:9-11).

**8:1** This is a chapter of miracles. In it the Lord Jesus shows His authority and power over human diseases (vs 1-17), in the matter of spiritual life (vs 18-22), over the forces of nature (vs 23-27), and in the unseen world of spirits (vs 28-34).

All this is abundant evidence that He was just who He said He was—the Lord from heaven (John 3:13; 8:23). Christ's miracles showed forth His glory – John 2:11. They were evidence that God the Father had sent Him and that He was one with God (John

2 And, suddenly, a leper came and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

3 And Jesus put out *his* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed away. 4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you do not tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

5 And when Jesus went into Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, 6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

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

5:36; 10:37,38; 14:11; Acts 2:22). They were Christ's credentials, God's commendation – not in writing, but in action. They were proof that the kingdom of God had come (12:18).

The miracles of the Lord Jesus were not tricks which can be performed by a magician's art. He healed "incurable" diseases like leprosy, opened blind eyes (9:27-30; 11:4; 20:34), walked on water (14:25), and raised the dead (Luke 7:11-15; 8:49-56; John 11:43,44). Jesus did more than teach; He demonstrated the power of God and the character of God in ways which were unmistakable.

This does not mean that all who do miracles have come from God (7:22; 24:24). The miracles of false prophets are evidence of the power of Satan; and the character of false prophets is clear to Christ's disciples. What they teach and how they live shows what kind of people they are.

**8:2** "Leper" – see note at Leviticus chapter 13. In the Old Testament certain diseases were pictures or symbols of sin, and their healing was a picture of spiritual healing. See note at Lev 13:1-44. Under the law some infections made a person "unclean" and he remained unclean until healed. See Lev 13:45,46. A request to be made clean was a request for healing.

**8:3** Jesus touching him was a demonstration of compassion and love. The holy King from heaven stretches out His hand to an unclean man to make him clean and whole. This is a picture of Christ's work in the spiritual realm also (John 15:3; Eph 5:25-27; Heb 9:13,14; 1 John 1:7). Observe His words, "I am willing." We never read in the Bible that the Lord Jesus ever turned away anyone who came to Him for help. He was always both willing and able to do what people asked of Him.

**8:4** Jesus never sought publicity or popularity – in fact, just the opposite (v 18; 9:30; 12:16; John 6:15). The man was sent to the priests so they could certify that his healing was real. Only then would they pronounce him "clean" and let him return to his home.

"That Moses commanded" – God gave

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof, but just speak the word and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *man*, 'Go', and he goes; and to another, 'Come', and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this', and he does *it*."

10 When Jesus heard *this*, he marvelled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel. 11 And I tell you that many will come from the east and west, and will sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness. There will be weeping

the command through Moses. See Lev 14:1-32.

**8:5** A centurion was an officer over one hundred soldiers in the Roman army.

**8:7** Again we see Christ's willingness to go anywhere and help anyone.

**8:8** Those who think they are most worthy of receiving something from the Lord are the least worthy; those who think they are least worthy are actually the most worthy. In God's sight humility and worthiness go hand in hand. Compare 5:3.

**8:9** The centurion had a wonderful faith in the power of the Lord Jesus, because he understood the nature of authority and was sure that God had given Jesus authority over diseases.

**8:10** Jesus was not surprised at the man's faith. But he counted that faith very remarkable, He admired it. In the account of Jesus' life on earth only two things made Jesus marvel – strong faith where naturally it would not be expected and unbelief where there should have been faith (Mark 6:6). People in Israel were the ones who should have had the great faith, not this foreigner. The Old Testament with its examples of God's love and power, and its promises concerning the Messiah, had been given to Israel (Rom 9:4,5).

**8:11** By "east and west" He meant peoples of all the earth. For the first time in the Gospel of Matthew Jesus indicates that His gospel and God's kingdom are for all the world, and not for one nation. Compare 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46,47; Acts 1:8. The centurion was the first fruit of a great multitude who would later enter the kingdom of Christ. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the first ancestors and the patriarchs of the nation of Israel. Their stories are found in Genesis chapters 12-50.

**8:12** "Sons of the kingdom" – a way of saying the subjects of the kingdom. These "sons of the kingdom" were those to whom the kingdom at first belonged, the nation Israel. The King (2:2) came to them, preached God's kingdom, described something of its character and demanded repentance and faith in Him. But they refused to submit to the King. The results

and gnashing of teeth.”

13 And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way, and it will be done for you *just* as you have believed.” And his servant was healed at that very hour.

14 And when Jesus had come into Peter’s house, he saw *Peter’s* mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and served them.

16 When evening came, they brought many who were possessed by demons to him. And he drove the spirits out with *his* word, and healed all who were sick, 17 That what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, who said, “He took our infirmities, and bore *our* sicknesses.”

18 Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave an order to go away to the other side *of the lake*. 19 And a certain scribe came and said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”

20 And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of

man has nowhere to lay *his* head.”

21 And another of his disciples said to him, “Lord, first permit me to go and bury my father.”

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

23 And when he got into a boat, his disciples followed him, 24 and, suddenly, a great tempest arose on the lake, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But he was asleep. 25 And his disciples came to *him* and woke him up, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”

26 And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the lake. And there was a great calm.

27 But the men were amazed, saying, “What kind of a man is this that even the winds and the lake obey him!”

28 And when he arrived at the other side in the country of the Gergesenes, two demon-possessed *men*, coming out of the tombs, met him. *They* were so very fierce, that no one could pass by that way.

could only be disastrous for them. Compare 21:42-44. This is a warning Jesus often repeated – 13:42-50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.

“Darkness”, “weeping” and “gnashing of teeth” indicate something of the misery of hell. See also 5:29,30; 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Mark 9:47-49; Luke 13:28; 16:19-31; 2 Pet 2:14,17; Jude 13. Eternal darkness will be the punishment of those who hate the light Christ brings (John 3:19,20). Gnashing of teeth may speak of both pain and rage against God’s justice. Compare Ps 112:10.

**8:13** Men always receive what they trust God for. If we come to Christ with a large measure of faith we will receive a large blessing. Compare 9:2,22,29; 15:28; 17:20; 21:21; Mark 5:34; 10:52; 11:22-24. In this case the healing performed by Jesus was instantaneous, complete, and permanent.

**8:14** Peter was a married man, as, it seems, were all the original apostles of Christ. See 1 Cor 9:5.

**8:15** Christ’s kindness towards us should produce a desire in us to serve Him.

**8:16** Christ’s word had almighty power and authority behind it. Note on demon possession at 4:24.

**8:17** See Isaiah 53:4. That prophecy was fulfilled in Christ’s healing ministry, not in His death on the cross. It speaks of His compassion, His identifying Himself with suffering people, and His power displayed in banishing their diseases.

**8:18** The lake is Galilee. The “other” side is the east side, away from His headquarters in Capernaum.

**8:19-22** “Scribe” – note at 2:4. The Lord Jesus never made His way appear to be easy, and He never tried to attract followers by lowering God’s standards. Compare Luke 14:25-35. The man in v 9 was too hasty in

his decision. He had not counted the cost of being a disciple of Jesus. The man in v 21 was too slow in his decision. Both types of persons are still with us.

**8:20** The Lord Jesus used the name “Son of man” to refer to Himself about 80 times in the Gospels. It was a title taken from Daniel 7:13,14 and signified the Messiah. It also signified the real human nature of Christ the Son of God.

**8:22** In other words let those who have no spiritual life bury those who have died physically. The man meant he wished to stay at home until his father died. If his father had already died he would have been at home preparing to bury him. When Christ calls men to a special ministry they must be willing to obey Him without letting earthly ties and responsibilities interfere. Compare 10:37-39. See also Luke 9:61,62.

**8:26** Jesus’ first task was to deal with the disciples – a harder task than stilling the storm. In dangerous or crisis situations little faith means much fear. Perfect faith means no fear. See also 6:30,34. Christ’s disciples should not fear – all the forces of nature are in His control. Compare this verse with Ps 89:8,9 – there it is the LORD (Jehovah), the one true God, who stills the waves of the sea. Here it is the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah (Ex 3:14,15; John 1:1,14; 8:24,58; 10:11; Phil 2:6,10,11; Heb 1:10-12; and notes at Luke 2:11).

**8:27** Here is a question all should ask. The answer is given in the Bible. We can learn spiritual lessons from this literal miracle (as we may from all Christ’s miracles). Life too has its storms which bring us into great danger. But if our trust is in Christ we need not fear – Ps 46:1-3; 93:3,4.

**8:28-34** For a fuller account of this see Mark 5:1-20. There attention is focused on one

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

30 And some distance away a large herd of pigs was feeding. 31 So the demons begged him, saying, "If you drive us out, let us go into the herd of pigs."

32 And he said to them, "Go." And when they came out, they went into the herd of pigs, and now the whole herd of pigs rushed down a steep place into the lake and died in the water. 33 And those who had been feeding them ran away and went into the city and told everything, and what had happened to those who had been demon-possessed. 34 And now the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they begged *him* to go away from their region.

**9** And he got into a boat, and crossed over and came to his own town. 2 And just then they

man of these two who were demon possessed. The region of the Gadarenes was an area southeast of the sea of Galilee. Note on demons at 4:24.

**8:29** Though men did not know who Jesus was, demons did know (Mark 1:24; 5:7), and were afraid. The "time" is the time God has appointed for their punishment. Compare 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6. God permits demons to act on earth for a time. He has not revealed to us the reason for this, but we can be sure that the all-wise God has a good purpose in it all. See 1 Chron 21:1.

**8:31** Apparently demons are anxious to inhabit bodies – any kind of bodies. Compare 12:43. Why did Jesus permit these demons to destroy a herd of someone's pigs? Under the law of Moses the pig was an "unclean" animal, and Jews were to have nothing to do with it (see Lev 11:7 and note on that chapter). If the owner of these pigs was a Jew, or if Jews were buying them for meat this would account for Jesus' behavior here.

**8:34** Evidently the fact that a great miracle had been performed and that two human beings had been wonderfully delivered meant little to them. The whole town wanted to get rid of Jesus. They thought of Him as a source of trouble and loss. So in every generation since then mankind has been divided into two camps. Those who welcome Jesus and those who want to get rid of Him.

**9:1** Here Capernaum is called His "own town" because it was the headquarters for His ministry in Galilee.

**9:2** Notice it says "their" faith, not "his" faith only. Here is an example of how faith can work in bringing others to Christ. The man wanted physical healing. He received far more than that.

**9:3** They knew that God alone can forgive sins (Isa 43:25; 44:22). No prophet ever had this power. They did not know that Jesus was God incarnate, so they considered His

brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a cot. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, "Son, take courage! Your sins are forgiven you."

3 And now some of the scribes said to themselves, "This *man* is blaspheming."

4 And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? 5 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you', or to say, 'Get up and walk?' 6 But so that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins," he then said to the paralytic, "Get up. Pick up your cot and go to your house."

7 And he got up and left for his house. 8 But when the crowds saw *this*, they were amazed and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

9 And as Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

10 And now it happened, as Jesus was sitting

words blasphemy. Blasphemy is speaking against God, using His name in vain, attributing evil to Him, or trying to claim for self what belongs to God alone (such as His nature, authority, rights, and power). See Lev 24:14-16.

**9:4** Jesus being God in the flesh knew the thoughts of men. Compare 12:25; Luke 6:8; 9:47; John 2:25; Ps 94:11; Heb 4:12,13; Rev 2:23; 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron 28:9; 2 Chron 6:30; Jer 17:10; Ezek 11:5; Prov 15:11; Acts 1:24.

**9:5-7** Jesus proved He had God's authority to forgive sin by a display of God's power to heal. This miracle of healing is a picture of spiritual healing. Here we see that forgiveness was immediate, and all of grace – a gift of God to a helpless man (compare Acts 13:38,39; Rom 4:7,8; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 2:13; Heb 8:12; 1 John 1:9). Men may forgive offenses done against them (6:14, 15), but only God can forgive sins done against Himself, and in a very real sense all sin is against God (Ps 51:4).

Complete forgiveness of sin comes only when there is repentance and faith in the heart, and only God can see whether they are there. Jesus could see men's inner condition and could therefore pronounce forgiveness. The very purpose for which He came was to make God's forgiveness possible (Luke 24:46,47; Acts 13:38,39). Anytime, anywhere a person turns to Him in faith, he will find forgiveness of all his sins (12:31). If people sought for forgiveness with the same earnestness as they do for healing and for other things, the world would be far different than it is now.

**9:8** "Men" – the crowd did not understand that Jesus was more than a mere man.

**9:9** Compare 4:18-22. See also Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27,28 where Matthew is called Levi. He had a job the Jews despised, serving the ruling Roman government (5:46). But he became a great apostle and author of

at the table in the house, that many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said to them, "*The ones who* need a physician are not those who are well, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what *this* means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees often fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the sons of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast. 16 No man puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, and the tear will become worse. 17 And men do not put new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wineskins will burst, the wine will

run out and the wineskins will be ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

18 While he was speaking these things to them, suddenly a certain ruler came and worshipped him, saying, "Just now my daughter has died, but come and put your hand on her, and she will live." 19 And Jesus got up and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

20 And, suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, came up behind *him* and touched the edge of his cloak. 21 For she said to herself, "If I can just touch his cloak, I will get well."

22 But Jesus turned around, and when he saw her, he said, "Daughter, take courage. Your faith has made you well." And the woman became well from that time.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the people making a commotion, 24 he said to them, "Go away, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they laughed at him. 25 But when the people had been put out, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got

this Gospel which bears his name. Such is the grace of God.

**9:11** "Pharisees" - 3:7. Here once again they showed that they thought themselves better than other men. They could not begin to understand why a holy person would want to associate with "sinners". Nor did they realize that in their unbelief and self-righteousness they were far more objectionable to Jesus than those they called sinners.

**9:12** What a beautiful answer! He means that all sinners are spiritually sick and that He has come to heal such. And as a doctor needs to be with his patients to help them, so He needed to be with sinners to heal them. It was not that He took pleasure in their company while they remained sinners or that He wanted to behave as they did.

**9:13** Jesus refers to Hos 6:6. God wants people to be merciful to others, as He is merciful. This is far more important than any ritual of religion could ever be. See also Matt 5:7. The righteous here means those who think they are righteous and holier than other people. Actually all are sinners (Rom 3:23), but not everyone understands this as they should. And Jesus has come to call sinners to forgiveness and salvation (Luke 19:10; John 3:17; 1 Tim 1:15).

**9:14** "Disciples of John" - 3:1; John 3:23-25.

**9:15** "Sons of the bridechamber" - the friends or attendants of the bridegroom. See what name the Lord Jesus gives Himself here - "bridegroom." Compare John 3:28-30; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-33. He is the spiritual bridegroom of the true Church and of the individual believer. See notes on Song of Songs. Compare psalm 45. Jesus does not deny the usefulness of

fasting (6:16). His disciples would fast after His departure (Luke 24:51).

**9:16,17** The Lord Jesus had come to do a new thing on earth, to provide a new garment of righteousness, a new wine of joy. The old Jewish religious forms and ways were not suitable for His new work. They could not contain the new truth and life Jesus brought. Truth is of more importance than antiquity.

**9:18** This ruler was a leader of a synagogue and his name was Jairus (Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:41-56).

**9:20,21** This disease made its sufferer "unclean." See note at Lev 15:25-27. In Old Testament days it was one of the pictures or symbols of sin.

**9:22** See the power of faith. Faith is the belief that God will act according to His Word and His nature as revealed in the Bible. It is confidence in Him as a person. See Heb 11:1,6. Faith saves by bringing us into the presence of the One who saves and opens the way for Him to work.

"Courage" - a more accurate translation of the Greek word than "comfort."

**9:23** These players were musicians hired to play at funerals.

**9:24** "Sleeping" - if the ruler was right when he said the girl had just died, then Jesus meant that she was not permanently dead. Sleep is a word often used for the physical death of God's people in both Old and New Testaments (notes at John 11:11-14). It suggests that they will awake and rise again from the temporary state of death - 1 Thess 4:13-18.

**9:25** The laughing crowd will not see the glory of His working. Scoffers will not experience his power. This is one of the three recorded occasions of Jesus' raising the dead. The



up. 26 And the news of this spread throughout that whole region.

27 And when Jesus left there, two blind men followed him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us."

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

29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it *done* to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus gave them a strict order, saying, "See *that* no one finds out." 31 But when they left they spread the news about him throughout that whole country.

32 As they went out, suddenly, they brought to him a man unable to speak and demon-possessed. 33 And when the demon had been driven out, the

dumb *man* spoke. And the crowds were amazed and said, "Nothing like this was ever seen in Israel."

34 But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons through the prince of the demons."

35 And Jesus went around all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when he saw the crowds, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were feeble and dejected, like sheep which have no shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the labourers *are* few. 38 Therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

**10** And when he had called his twelve disciples to *him*, he gave them authority *over*

others are in Luke 7:15; John 11:43,44. But it is probable there were other cases (11:4,5).

**9:27** "Son of David" – see 1:1. This was a name for the Messiah of Israel. These blind men were expressing their faith that Jesus was the Anointed One.

**9:28** See again the importance of faith. Contrast Mark 6:5,6.

**9:29** Here is a principle the Lord follows in His work among men (v 22; Mark 11:22-24; Heb 11:6; 1 John 5:14,15).

**9:30** Again we see that Jesus did not seek fame (8:4), or indeed any benefit of any kind from His miracles. See also what He taught others in 6:1-4.

**9:31** It is true of so many that they will do what they want rather than what the Lord Jesus wants.

**9:32** Demon possession affects different people in different ways. Compare 8:28-32; 12:22. This does not mean that every mute or blind person, or epileptic is possessed by a demon. There are also other causes of such things.

**9:33** "Nothing like this was ever seen" – this was true of Israel and of all countries and all times. The miraculous healing ministry of the Lord Jesus and His apostles was unique in the history of the world.

**9:34** These Pharisees thus showed incredible hardness of heart and unbelief, and were taking themselves beyond forgiveness. See 12:24-32. The prince of demons is Satan.

**9:35** Here in a nutshell is the whole of Jesus' ministry (4:23,24).

**9:36** The reason why Jesus did what He did is here – compassion, love, pity for helpless men in their need (14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41;6:34; Luke 7:13; Heb 4:15). There were religious leaders in Israel who should have been shepherds to God's people, but they were like thieves and robbers (John 10:1,7,11-13). This is often true today also among people other than Jews.

**9:37** Compare John 4:35-38. There are great

and eternal rewards for those who serve God, but comparatively few people volunteer for the work.

**9:38** Here we can see something of the mysterious power of prayer. Why did Jesus tell them (and us) to pray like this? Will not God (the Lord of the harvest) send laborers into His harvest field whether His people pray or not? This is a question that may naturally come to mind, but it is not one we should ask. It is our business to do what the Lord says and leave the mystery of it to Him. God has appointed prayer as one of the ways His people can share with Him in His work. Let us make use of this means. It is enough to know that in answer to our prayers the Lord of the harvest will send laborers into His harvest fields.

**10:1** "Disciples" – this is a translation of the Greek word meaning learners, those under training. Learners were expected to put into practice the instructions of their teachers. Compare John 8:31. The original twelve disciples of Christ were those whom Christ chose to receive instruction and training as He went about in His ministry.

"Disciples" is the usual word in the Book of Acts for believers in Christ (Acts 6:11; 9:1; 11:26; etc). There it is used 26 times (the word "Christians" appears in Acts just twice, and "believers" 11 times). There is no way anyone can be a believer in Christ, a real Christian, without learning from Christ and being taught by God (see Isa 54:13; John 6:45; Eph 4:20-24; 1 Thess 4:9; Titus 2:11,12; 1 John 2:27. Compare the invitation of Jesus in Matt 11:28-30).

So in some measure all believers are disciples. They have turned to Christ to learn from Him and to obey His teachings, and the seed, at least, of discipleship is in their hearts. Of course, none of us is a perfect disciple, and the seed of discipleship planted in us when we first trust in the Lord Jesus needs to grow and develop. But this does not change the fact that all believers are disciples, and are called disciples in the Bible.

unclean spirits to drive them out, and to heal every kind of sickness and disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, his brother Andrew, James *the son* of Zebedee, his brother John, 3 Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew the tax collector, James *the son* of Alphaeus, Lebbaeus, who was named Thaddaeus, 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out, and commanded them, saying, "Do not go on *any* road of the Gentiles, and do not enter *any* Samaritan city.

It is important to keep this in mind when we study the teachings of Lord Jesus about discipleship.

What the Lord Jesus wants above all is to have followers who have chosen Him above everyone else, love Him above all, are constantly learning from Him and putting into practice what He teaches them. Nothing less than this can satisfy Him. See Luke 14:25-35.

**10:2-4** "Apostles" – the Greek word translated "apostle" means "a delegate," "messenger," "one sent forth with orders." Here for the first time the twelve original apostles of Jesus are listed. Observe that they were first disciples (learners) before they were apostles. What is the use of going to teach others if one has not been taught by Christ? Observe too that they received their authority directly from Christ and in His presence. He gave them authority to do just what He had been doing. He was preparing them to be the future leaders of the Church of the New Testament.

Christ chose His apostles to be His special representatives on earth, and to be able (along with all the writers of the New Testament) to give infallible teaching. In that sense of the word, there have not been any other true apostles after they passed away, and there are none now. They had a unique work to do and they completely finished it. See notes also at 16:19; Acts 8:15-17; 2 Cor 12:12.

**10:3** "Bartholomew" – probably the same as Nathaniel (John 1:45-51).

"Matthew" – he does not present himself as someone special but modestly refers to his old despised job of tax collector. The apostles were not concerned with man's honors. They were not like some Christian leaders today who love to be called "doctor" and parade their degrees and attainments. Compare 23:6,7.

"Thaddaeus" – also called Judas (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13)

**10:4** "Simon the Canaanite" – the same as Simon the Zealot (Luke 6:16). The name "Zealot" probably means that Simon had formerly been a member of a party in Israel called the Zealots. They fought against Roman rule over the Jews. But it is possible, though not likely, that it means he was zealous in religion or in something else.

6 Instead, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

9 Provide no gold or silver or copper for your money belts, 10 or a bag for *your* journey, or two coats or sandals or staffs. For the workman is worthy of his food.

11 "And whatever city or town you enter, enquire who is worthy in it, and stay there *with* them until you go away. 12 And when you go into a household, greet it. 13 And if the household is

"Judas Iscariot" – elsewhere is called a thief and a "demon" (John 6:70,71; 12:6. See notes there). His heart was never with Christ. He was concerned with himself and what material advantages he could obtain. Still the Lord Jesus called him to be with the other apostles and gave him authority to cast out devils and heal the sick. Compare 7:22,23.

**10:5** The Gentiles were non-Jewish peoples. The Samaritans were people of mixed blood whose origins are seen in 2 Kings chapter 17. They lived in Samaria, an area between Galilee on the north and Judea on the south. The Jews for the most part hated the Samaritans and would have nothing to do with them (John 4:9). But this is not the reason why Jesus forbade His disciples to preach to them. The time for preaching the gospel to them had not yet come (it did come later – John 4:1-42; Acts 8:5-25). The Jews were the people of God from the days of Abraham (Genesis chapter 12), and God made special covenants with them (compare Rom 9:4,5). So it was fitting at that time that the good news of God's kingdom should first be preached to them.

**10:6** See 9:36; 15:24.

**10:7** See 3:2; 4:17.

**10:8** These miracles were to be evidence that the kingdom of God was near. They were not to try to make money from the authority and power freely given them, but to freely use them for the good of others. Compare Acts 20:33-35; 1 Cor 10:33; 2 Cor 12:14,15. A simple life-style and self-denial were to be the marks of Christ's disciples. Notes at 3:4; Luke 9:23; etc.

**10:9,10** They were to give freely and accept what was freely given to them. Kindness would receive the reward of kindness. God's workers are worthy of the support of people who receive God's blessings through them (1 Cor 9:7-14; 1 Tim 5:17,18). If their shirt or sandals wore out they were to trust God to provide them with others.

**10:11** They were to be careful where they lodged and not accept every offer of hospitality which came to them. They were to seek out the worthy, not the wealthy. They were to have no money for inns and hotels. See also Luke 22:36.

**10:12,13** The customary greeting among Jews was "peace be to you." Peace would

worthy, let your peace come on it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoever does not receive you or listen to your words, when you leave that house or city, shake the dust off your feet. 15 Truly I say to you, in the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city.

16 "Look, I send you forth like sheep among wolves. So be as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men! For they will hand you over to the Councils, and they will beat you with whips in their synagogues, 18 and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, to *give* testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they hand you over, do not worry *about* how you will speak, or what. For at that very hour what you should say will be given to you. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

be the result in any home that received them and their message. Peace could not be with those who rejected their message, and the apostles were not to create the impression that it could.

**10:14** This was to indicate that there was no fellowship, no common ground between them and those who rejected Christ's message. It was a warning that the rejecters would be utterly left to themselves. Compare 23:38.

**10:15** "Day of judgment" - 11:22,24; 12:36; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:2,16; 14:10; 2 Pet 2:9; Rev 14:7; 20:11-15.

"Sodom and Gomorrah" - Gen 19:23-29; 2 Pet 2:6; Jude 7. The punishment of those places which reject Christ will be greater than Sodom's because their opportunities are greater, the truth preached to them greater, and the evidence for the truth greater. Greater privileges and opportunities mean greater punishment if rejected. Compare 11:20-24; Heb 2:1-4.

**10:16** "Wolves" - 7:15; Luke 10:3; John 10:12; Acts 20:29. The disciples needed to exercise discernment. Compare 7:6,20. And they must never behave in a way that their enemies might justly accuse or attack them. Compare 1 Pet 3:13-17; 4:12-16. From v 17 to the end of the chapter it seems Jesus looks beyond the comparatively brief Galilean ministry to their continuing ministry in later days. At that time there is no record of their arrest or of being brought before kings (vs 18,19). And the language of vs 21-23 hardly fits the brief ministry in Galilee. But these things all happened in the later ministry of Christ's apostles, as the book of Acts makes clear. Verse 23 may point to the very end of this age. The language suggests Christ's second coming.

**10:17** Christ's disciples must realize that there will always be opposition to His message, and that haters of the true God will hate them too - vs 21,23.

**10:19** This refers only to these special

21 "And brother will hand over brother to death, and a father *his* child, and children will rebel against parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all *men* for my name's sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For truly I say to you, you will not have gone over the cities of Israel before the Son of man comes.

24 "The disciple is not above *his* teacher, or the servant above his master.

25 "It is enough for the disciple that he is like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the owner of the house Beelzebub, how much more those in his household.

26 "Therefore, do not be afraid of them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 What I tell you in darkness speak in the light, and what you hear in

occasions and does not mean that in the ordinary course of their ministry they were not to think and prepare what they should say. In these days preachers who have time to properly prepare their sermons and do not do so, are usually not worth listening to.

**10:20** See Acts 4:8,13. If God's Spirit speaks through them, the poor and uneducated can confound the great and the wise.

**10:21,22** Such is the nature of man. The preaching of the truth will arouse bitter hatred and persecution, even of blood relatives. The most natural ties of love will be snapped by religious intolerance and bigotry - v 36; John 15:18-21. God's servants must endure much opposition. They will not be saved because they endure, but enduring to the end will be a proof that their faith is real, and so they are saved (Matt 24:13; Heb 10:39; 1 Pet 1:5).

**10:23** Disciples must not try to force their message on others. If they are rejected let them go to other places where they might be received.

**10:24,25** "Beelzebub" - 2 Kings 1:2 - this name comes from the name Baal-Zebul, a god of the Philistines, which means "Baal the prince" or "Baal, the exalted one." Apparently the Jews mockingly changed the name to Baal-Zebub (which has come into English as Beelzebub), which means "Lord of the flies." The Pharisees gave this name to Satan. They said that Jesus got His power from him - 12:24; Luke 11:15; John 8:48. What can the followers of Jesus expect from the world that called Him demon possessed and killed Him? Let us be prepared (and be content) to endure dishonor, slander, and persecution for His sake. Notice that Jesus calls Himself here the head of a house and His disciples members of it. Compare Eph 2:19; Heb 3:1-6.

**10:26** The reason disciples should not fear is that their guru is the Lord of heaven and earth who will eventually bring the truth of

the ear preach on the housetops. 28 And do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Instead be afraid of him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So do not be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows.

32 "Therefore whoever confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven.

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

everything to light. Compare Psalm 37:6. See Luke 12:2,3.

**10:28** Heb 13:6. For believers in Christ the only proper object of fear is God Himself. They have eternal life with God, and nothing that men can do to them can have an eternal result. See notes on the fear of God at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

**10:29,30** Since God observes the smallest details of His Creation, disciples should trust Him to look after everything that concerns them. Believers in Christ are to live a life free of worry, anxiety and fear – 6:25-34; 8:26; John 14:1; Phil 4:6,7; 1 Pet 5:7.

**10:32,33** Believers in Christ must openly stand for Him and confess Him as their Lord and Saviour (compare Rom 10:9,10). Not doing so is like disowning and denying Him. Silence indicates that faith is not real. Those who wish to be secret believers, and never speak of their faith in Jesus, are running a terrible risk. How can they be sure their faith is genuine? Far better to confess Him openly, even if it means suffering and death, than to go on in silence and at last stand before God disowned by Jesus.

**10:34** Jesus came to bring peace to those who receive and believe Him, and to make peace between them and God. But He did not come to bring peace to all on earth. For there can be no peace to those who reject Him (Isa 48:22), and there will be conflict between them and those who receive Him.

**10:35,36** See v 21. Truth divides those who believe it from those who do not. The fact they may be members of the same family has nothing to do with it.

**10:37** Compare Luke 14:26 where this is put even more strongly. If Jesus were not God He would have no right to speak so. Christ demands first place in our hearts, and we must be willing to choose Him instead of relatives (8:21,22). Truth is more important than family ties. Those who put family first, or self, or sin, or money, or anything else,

36 And a man's foes *will be* those of his own household.

37 "Anyone who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and anyone who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Anyone who finds his life will lose it, and anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.

40 "Anyone who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold *water* to drink in the name of a disciple, truly I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

cannot be His true follower (Luke 14:33). On Christ's deity see Phil 2:6.

**10:38** See notes at 16:24; Luke 9:23. The cross is a symbol of death. It was the Roman means of execution. Figuratively, to take up one's cross means to willingly go forward to the place of death to self and its desires, aims, and plans (compare 2 Cor 4:10-12; Gal 5:24). It means a mind to undergo whatever is painful or humiliating or mortifying to follow Christ. It is an attitude toward Christ and one's self which is at the basis of the true Christian life.

The believer is told to maintain this attitude daily (Luke 9:23). To try to carry one's cross without following Jesus is a hard and bitter thing. And renunciation of desire and the world, austerities, penance, etc, come to nothing good if we do not follow Him. But to carry our cross and follow Jesus because we trust and love Him is freedom and joy, for those who do so will find that Jesus is with them all the way.

**10:39** This means that those who live for self and their place in this world will lose eternal life, and those who choose Christ instead and die to self will find eternal life with God. We see what a powerful thing faith is – it can enable us to choose Christ over ourselves and others and everything in the world. See also Mark 11:24; Heb 10:39; 11:1,4,6; etc.

**10:40-42** They who receive Christ receive God the Father who sent Him, because He was one with the Father (John 10:30). They who receive Christ's disciples receive Christ because they are representatives of Christ, and He is one with them (Acts 9:1-5). His disciples are "little ones" – v 42; 18:2,3; John 13:33; 1 John 2:1. The world looks down on them. They are often lacking in wealth or learning or position or worldly qualification (1 Cor 1:26-29). To show kindness to them is to show kindness to Christ, and there will be a reward for even the smallest act of kindness. See also 5:12. If we really

**11** And it came about when Jesus had finished commanding his twelve disciples, that he left there to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 Now when John in prison heard about the deeds of Christ, he sent two of his disciples. 3 And they said to him, "Are you the one who was to come, or do we look for another?"

4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who does not stumble because of me."

7 And as they were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? Look, those who wear fine

*clothes* are in kings' houses. 9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is *the one* about whom it is written,

Look, I send my messenger before  
your face.

He will prepare your way before you.

11 "Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist. But he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has been subject to violence, and the violent are taking it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. 14 And if you will receive *it*, this is Elijah, who was to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

16 "But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces

believe this we will not be reluctant to help others who are Christ's disciples.

**11:2** John the Baptist had been put in prison by Herod, the ruler of Galilee and Perea (4:12; 14:3-5).

**11:3** "The one who was to come" was the Messiah (1:1) expected by the Jews. John's faith was sure and strong (John 1:26-34; 3:27-36). But he had been in prison for months, and Jesus had not behaved as most of the people thought the Messiah would behave. Jesus had not taken the throne of Israel, put the Romans to flight, and brought freedom, peace and prosperity to the nation. It was the common expectation among the Jews that the Messiah would accomplish such things. Compare Isa 9:6,7; 11:1-16, etc. And see John's own words in 3:11-15. It seems that John needed reassurance and encouragement, and the Lord Jesus gave them in the words which follow. **11:4-6** Jesus is saying that He was performing the works of the promised Messiah (compare Isa 29:18; 35:5,6; 61:1), and that John should not doubt Him because things were not going forward as John had expected. John would have known and understood these words.

**11:6** Here is another "blessed" to add to the ones in 5:3-11. See also 13:16; 16:17; 24:46; 25:34; Luke 1:45; 11:28; John 20:29; Rev 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14. For Old Testament notes on "blessed" and "blessing" see Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1.

**11:9** Note on "prophet" at Gen 20:11; etc.

**11:10** Mal 3:1. See also Isa 40:3.

**11:11** John, great as He was, belonged to the old order of things under the law. The Lord Jesus brought in a new order of things, the spiritual kingdom of God. The least person who is in this kingdom is greater in position and privileges than John, but not greater in character or deeds. Compare John 3:28-30. There John speaks of the Bridegroom (Christ), the bride (those in the

kingdom of God), and the friend of the bridegroom (himself). In the life of the bridegroom the bride obviously has a higher position and greater privileges than the friend.

**11:12** John the Baptist, by his life and preaching, was a great force in God's hands to stir up the people to repentance and earnest striving to enter God's kingdom. Only those who were determined to enter it at any cost were able to do so. Is it any different now? The careless, those content with mere forms of religion, those lacking in the kind of forceful determination that God gives, will not enter God's kingdom. When God brings people into His kingdom He makes them want it very much.

**11:13** The "Prophets and the Law" mean the whole Old Testament. John was the last in a long line of such prophets, and God's messenger of a new age.

**11:14** John was not Elijah (John 1:19-21), but he came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Notice carefully the wording of this verse. Only if they would "receive it" could it be said that John was the Elijah who was to come (Mal 4:5). But the people as a whole were not willing to accept it, as Jesus clearly states in vs 16-19. So John was not the Elijah who was to come. If he had actually been Elijah, he would have been Elijah whether the people received it or not. In 16:11 Jesus indicates that Elijah is still to come and "restore all things." John was unable to "restore all things" because of the unwillingness of the people and their leaders.

**11:15** See 13:9.

**11:16-19** People of that day (Jesus probably was referring to the Pharisees and Sadducees) were like willful children playing the games of "wedding" and "funeral." They complained that John wouldn't dance to their tune, and that Jesus wouldn't weep on demand. They would not receive God's messengers and God's message through them.

and calling to their companions, 17 And saying, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We wailed for you, and you did not mourn.' 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a heavy drinker, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is justified by her children."

20 Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his miracles had been done, because they did not repent: 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say to you, In the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for

you. 23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to hell. For if the miracles which have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that in the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you."

25 At that time Jesus responded and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to babes. 26 Even so, Father, for it was good in your sight.

27 "All things have been handed over to me by my Father. And no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and *those* to whom the Son chooses to reveal *him*."

They rejected everything. There was no pleasing them. Such people "play" at religion. They are fundamentally insincere. If God's man eats, that doesn't please them. If he does not eat, that doesn't please them either. And see the things they said about the one Jesus called the greatest of men and about the Lord Himself.

**11:18** Later they said the same thing about the Lord Jesus (John 8:48).

**11:19** See 9:11-13; Rom 5:8. If the Lord Jesus had not loved men who were lost in sin, there would be no hope for anyone. Their accusation rightly understood is actually a high recommendation of Jesus as the Saviour of sinners. The wisdom of God in sending John and the Lord Jesus, and their wisdom in their ministry, was demonstrated by the results they achieved. No complaints from a foolish people could change that.

**11:20** Repentance was a main emphasis of Jesus' preaching, the result He wanted to see - 4:17. See notes at 3:2; Luke 13:1-5. Without it His miracles and teaching would have no lasting effect on the people. It is good to be healed of some dread disease, but it is far better to repent at Christ's feet. It is good to see displays of God's glorious power, but it is far better to turn from sin and obtain His salvation.

**11:21** Korazin and Bethsaida were two towns in Galilee near Capernaum. Tyre and Sidon were two ancient and famous cities on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel. They were cities of the Gentiles, given to idolatry and greed, and God sent judgment on them. See Isa 23:1-5; Ezek 26:1-21; Amos 1:9,10.

"Sackcloth and ashes" indicate that they would have repented with deep sorrow. The cities of idolatrous Gentiles would have received Him better than cities of His own people Israel. Compare John 1:11.

**11:22** Note at 10:15.

**11:23** "Capernaum" - 4:13. They had great privileges - the Son of God Himself lived there.

"Hell" - in Greek "Hades" - the unseen realm of the dead, similar to the Hebrew "Sheol" (note at Gen 37:35).

"Sodom" - 10:15. For the most part the people of the cities where Jesus ministered were harder of heart than those of the worst cities of ancient times, cities notorious for wickedness.

**11:25** Though despised and rejected of men, the Lord Jesus found much to praise God for. Here He praises Him for His wise dealing with men. God passes over those who are regarded (and who regard themselves) as the people of wisdom and learning (such as the Pharisees and the teachers of the law). He chooses the humble, simple, childlike nobodies of earth and reveals His truth to them. Compare 18:3; 1 Cor 1:19-29; Jam 2:5. A humble and teachable child can learn more of the truth of Christ than the greatest intellectuals proud of their intellect. If we are to understand God's truth, God must enlighten our minds and shine into our hearts. Compare Luke 24:45; John 16:13; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17,18.

**11:26** Here is the best possible reason for anything. Compare Rom 11:36; 12:2; Eph 1:9,11.

**11:27** No mere man, no mere prophet could ever truthfully say these things. Here is the clearest evidence that Jesus thought Himself to be God in human form. See other references concerning this at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

"All things have been handed over to me" - 28:18; John 3:35; 5:19-27.

"The Son" - 3:16,17; John 3:16; 5:18-23.

"Knows"- observe carefully what Jesus says about the knowledge of God here. Only God the Father completely knows the Lord Jesus, is fully acquainted with all His ways, His nature and attributes. No man can fully understand Him. Only the Lord Jesus knows the Father, knows the infinite and eternal God absolutely and fully. This is because they have shared from eternity the same nature (1 John 1:1,14; 10:30; 14:9; 17:5; Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3).

And the Lord Jesus is the only one who can reveal God to men, and men can come to a measure of that knowledge only through Him (John 14:6; 17:2,3; 1 John 5:20). Jesus is speaking of true enlightenment of the

28 "Come to me, all *you* who labour and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke on you, and learn from me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."

**12** At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields, and his disciples were hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and to eat. 2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

3 But he said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he and those with him were hungry? 4 How he went into the house of God, and ate the Showbread, which was not lawful for him,

or for those with him, to eat, but only for the priests? 5 Or have you not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? 6 But I tell you that *one* greater than the temple is here. 7 But if you had known what *these words* mean, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

9 And when he left there, he went into their synagogue. 10 And now a man was there who had a withered hand. And they asked him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbaths?" so that they might accuse him.

11 And he said to them, "Among you what *if a* man has one sheep, and it falls into a pit on the

mind and heart (v 25), the direct knowledge of God. This knowledge of God is dependent on the Lord Jesus. All the above statements are either true, or else arrogant absurdity or terrible self-delusion. All the evidence says that Jesus spoke the truth. There is hardly a verse in the Bible that indicates the full deity of the Lord Jesus more plainly than this one.

Is it necessary to say that the knowledge of God He speaks of has nothing to do with Advaita Vedanta? In fact, it is completely opposed to it (see notes at John 10:30; 14:16,17; 15:21; Rom 8:16; 1 Cor 1:20,21). **11:28,29** Now Jesus speaks of how He reveals the Father and to whom. He reveals the Father to those who feel their burden (especially the weight of their sins) and come to Him, to those who are willing to be united to Him, to those who will humbly, meekly learn what He has to teach. Such people, and only such, will come to the knowledge of the one true God. And see what He promises – rest, a rest from self-effort, vain seeking, and the burdens of an empty sinful life without hope. This is not rest *from* troubles, but rest *in* troubles. Compare John 16:33.

"Labour and are heavy laden" – or "weary and burdened" – a translation perhaps closer to the Greek.

**11:30** Compare 1 John 5:3. Trust, obedience and love, and His presence with us are what make His yoke easy and His burden light. Compare Acts 15:10 which speaks of the rules and regulations of the law. Yoked to Christ we find freedom and liberation and peace. His yoke is grace, not law. It is His strength and power, not self-effort on our part. Meekly learning from Him we come to more and more knowledge of God. Christ is both teacher and lesson. To be yoked to Christ is to be joined to one of perfect understanding and kindness and grace and love. How can it be burdensome?

**12:1** This was not stealing grain. The people of Israel, when passing through the fields of others, were permitted to eat what they needed. This was according to the law God

gave them (see Deut 23:24,25).

"Grain fields" – "corn" (KJV) was not grown in that part of the world at that time.

**12:2** Note on Sabbath at Ex 20:8-11. The Pharisees interpreted the law very strictly, and had a great many rules as to what could and could not be done on the Sabbath. To them gathering of food was work, and work was forbidden on the Sabbath. Healing also was work and forbidden (v 10).

**12:3,4** See 1 Sam 21:1-6. The meaning is that people and their needs are more important than rules, and that the hungry have a right to eat, even if the exact letter of the rules is ignored.

"Showbread" – the bread kept in the tabernacle or temple in the holy place – Ex 25:30.

**12:5** The priests worked when preparing and offering the Sabbath sacrifices. See Num 28:9,10. The Pharisees were readers of the Old Testament, but had little spiritual understanding of it. We see this again and again in their encounters with the Lord Jesus.

**12:6** Christ here calls Himself greater than God's temple. And His meaning here is that if the priests could break the rules of the Sabbath for the sake of the work of the temple, the disciples could ignore the rules for the sake of Christ's work, and at His direction. The disciples were on a mission with Christ when this event occurred.

**12:7** Note at 9:13.

**12:8** Jesus means Himself. See note on the Son of Man at 8:20. Again we see that Jesus was conscious of His divinity. Could a mere man or prophet, no matter how great, truthfully say that He was Lord of the Sabbath? The Sabbath and the laws relating to it were appointed by God Himself (Ex 20:1,8), and only God had the right to change the laws, or permit men to ignore them, or regulate the observance of the Sabbath in any way. Notes on Lord at Luke 2:11; Rom 10:9,10; Phil 2:10,11.

**12:10** The Pharisees thought it was not lawful to heal anyone on the Sabbath, unless his life was in danger.

**12:11,12** These words were an unanswerable

Sabbath. Will he not take hold of it and lift *it* out?  
12 How much more important is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbaths."

13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored to normal, as sound as the other. 14 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a meeting against him, *discussing* how they could destroy him.

15 But Jesus, knowing *this*, withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all, 16 and told them that they should not make him known, 17 so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,

18 See my servant, whom I have chosen,  
my beloved, in whom my soul delights.  
I will put my Spirit upon him,  
and he will proclaim judgment to the  
Gentiles.

19 He will not quarrel or cry out;  
neither will any man hear his voice in  
the streets.

20 He will not break a bruised reed,  
and he will not quench smoking flax,  
until he sends out judgment to victory.

21 And in his name the Gentiles will trust.

22 Then one *who was* demon-possessed, blind, and unable to speak, was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the blind and mute both spoke and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Is not this the son of David?"

24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This *fellow* does not drive out demons except by Beelzebub the prince of demons."

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons drive *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

29 "Or else how can someone enter a strong man's house, and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. 31 Therefore I say to you, Every kind of sin and blasphemy

argument which the Pharisees made no attempt to answer.

**12:13** Jesus' authority and power were also unanswerable.

**12:14** See 26:4; 27:1; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:1; John 5:18; 7:10; 11:53. They preferred to try to destroy the truth rather than accept it. Their only answer to perfect reason and perfect goodness was murder. Such is the heart of man, even religious man. See Jer 15:19; 17:9.

**12:16** See 8:4; 9:30.

**12:17-21** See Isa 42:1-4. The Lord Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets (5:17). The ministry of Jesus was not loud and noisy. He preferred to work quietly, peaceably and without public clamor, contention, and show. Instead of calling for battle, He withdrew from His enemies. He knew that the important battles were spiritual ones, and that He would win the greatest battle of all on the cross, seemingly weak and defeated. And all this was in accordance with the words of God's prophet spoken several hundreds of years before.

**12:18** The Lord Jesus was the servant of God as well as the incarnation of God. See 20:28; Rom 15:8; Acts 3:25,26; Phil 2:6,7.

**12:20** He would continue in His meek and gentle ways until righteousness triumphed. Jesus did not behave as the Jews expected their Messiah to behave (as a mighty conqueror of their enemies). Yet the final victory would be His.

**12:21** This looks far beyond His ministry to the Jews. Other peoples would believe and

receive Him.

**12:22** Note at 9:32.

**12:23** Note on Son of David at 1:1.

**12:24** Note on Beelzebub at 10:25.

**12:25** See 9:4.

**12:27** Some followers of the Pharisees also drove out demons, or at least professed to do so. See Acts 19:13-16. They well knew that the prince of demons did not give power to drive out demons, and they could well judge the slander of the Pharisees.

**12:28** Note on kingdom of God at 4:17. The kingdom of God had come because the King had come, and one proof of this was His authority over demons.

**12:29** In this brief parable the strong man represents Satan; the one who carries off his possessions is the Lord Jesus; the possessions are people under Satan's control. The fact that Jesus was rescuing men from Satan's dominion was evidence, not that He was in league with Satan as the Pharisees said, but that He had bound Satan. Is Jesus then a robber? No, He takes back only what Satan first stole from God. He carries away lost and fallen men from Satan's kingdom and places them in His own glorious kingdom (Acts 26:18).

**12:30** Mark 9:40; Luke 11:23. This applies equally well to Satan and his demons or to men. In regard to Christ there is no neutral ground. He says the very attitude of not being for Him is proof of opposition.

**12:31** The first part of this verse is one of the great promises of the Bible, the second part is one of the most terrible warnings.



will be forgiven to men, but the blasphemy *against* the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven to men. 32 And whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this *world* or in the world to come.

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad. For a tree is known by *its* fruit. 34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For the mouth speaks out of the overflow of the heart. 35 A good man brings out good things from the good treasure of the heart, and an evil man brings out evil things from the evil treasure. 36 But I tell you that in the day of judgment men will give an account for every idle word that they speak. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees

"Will be forgiven to men" means, of course, forgiveness will come to those who repent and trust in Christ. Then God will forgive the worst crimes, the most vile acts of which men are capable (Luke 24:47; Acts 13:38,39; Eph 1:7; 1 John 1:9). Notes on forgiveness at 6:12,14,15; 9:5-7.

"Blasphemy" – note at 9:3. From the context it appears that this one unforgivable sin, the blaspheming against God's Holy Spirit, is this: saying that the works of the Holy Spirit done by Christ are works of Satan. This involves a conscious, determined, willful rejection of Christ. It reveals a heart so hardened as to have no desire for repentance and to be incapable of repentance. And without repentance there can be no forgiveness – 3:2. Compare Heb 6:4-6; 1 Tim 4:2; 1 John 5:16. See the warning against hardness of heart in Heb 3:7-13.

**12:32** It is God who enables men to repent (Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim 2:25). It is the Holy Spirit of God working in men's hearts who leads them to repentance. When men harden themselves against Him and refuse to repent even when faced with the truth, and blaspheme Him, He will not do this work in them. And so such men will never repent, and so can never be forgiven.

**12:33** See 7:16. If the works of Christ were good, the Pharisees should understand that His character and nature are good. They should believe Him for His work's sake (John 5:36; 10:37,38).

**12:34,35** See 3:7; 23:33. They were the kind of people who commit the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit. Their hatred of truth and of light and of Christ hardened them against the work of God's Spirit and made them what they were. What is in a man's heart will eventually come out and show what sort of man he is. Compare Prov 4:23. Even the most silent of men will sometimes betray by words what he thinks and what he is.

**12:36** Careless words can reveal what is in a person better than careful, deliberate

answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a *miraculous* sign from you."

39 But he answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a *miraculous* sign. And no *such* sign will be given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And, look, a greater than Jonah *is* here. 42 The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it. For she came from the farthest parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And, look, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it walks through dry places, looking for rest

words. The tongue is a very powerful instrument and words have eternal results. Compare Prov 18:21; Jam 3:5,6.

**12:37** Our words are being recorded, and on the day of judgment they will be "played back." Our words (and notice v 36 – "every careless word") will be the basis of our judgment because they will reveal exactly what we are.

**12:38** Compare Mark 8:11; Luke 11:29-32. To humble and believing hearts Christ's miracles were evidence that He was the Messiah (8:1). Willful and determined unbelievers could not be convinced by the most spectacular of signs. Compare Luke 16:31.

**12:39** An adulterous generation is one spiritually unfaithful to God. See notes at Jer 2:2; Ezek 23:2,3; Hos 1:2. Such a generation was not prepared to trust God, His Word, and His Son.

**12:40** The Jews counted parts of days as full days. The Bible says that Jesus rose on the third day after His crucifixion (16:21; 27:64; Luke 24:7,21; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor 15:4). His resurrection is the greatest possible sign that He is the Messiah and Son of God. See notes at 28:6. The history of a brief part of Jonah's life is found in the Old Testament book of Jonah.

"Great fish" – there is no need to translate the Greek word as "whale." It means any kind of sea monster or huge fish.

**12:41** Here the Lord Jesus calls Himself greater than Jonah. Jonah showed no miraculous signs, yet Nineveh repented. That Gentile city responded to God, but God's own people Israel hardened themselves against Him in spite of many mighty works. On Nineveh see Jonah 1:2.

**12:42** 1 Kings 10:1. Sheba is a long way south of Israel. Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 3:10-12; 4:29-34), but his wisdom is as nothing compared to the wisdom of the Lord Jesus, God's Son.

**12:43** "Unclean spirit" – note at 4:24. Demons want to "rest" in some body or

and finding none. 44 Then it says, 'I will return to my house that I came out of.' And when it has come, it finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. This is how it will be with this wicked generation."

46 While he was still talking to the people, suddenly *his* mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak with him. 47 Then someone said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, asking to speak with you."

48 But he answered and said to the one who told him, "Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?" 49 And he stretched out his hand toward his disciples and said, "See my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, that one is my brother, and sister, and mother."

**13** The same day Jesus went out of the house, and sat by the lake. 2 And great crowds

other. See 8:31.

**12:44** "My house" refers to the man he left. "Swept and put in order" speaks of reformation of life without God. The house is "empty." The Lord Jesus is not within, God's Spirit does not live there.

**12:45** Reformation, and religion, and a clean moral life do not make men safe. If God's Spirit does not dwell within them, Satan can make them worse than they were before they reformed themselves. Christ in us is the only hope of salvation and safety (Col 1:27; Rom 8:9; Rev 3:20). Jesus applies this truth to that generation of Israel (23:35,36). As a whole it was the worst of all their generations. The people were very religious, and they no longer practiced idolatry as their fathers had done. But they had a devilish hatred of the Son of God and rejected and crucified Him. This was because God was not in them, and Satan had opportunity to occupy their "house", which he did and brought many demons with him.

**12:46** It seems that their object was to turn Him from His work and take Him to their home. See Mark 3:21,31,32 and 6:3. At that time His brothers had not yet come to believe He was the Messiah (John 7:5). Here it appears that even His mother Mary may have doubted Him temporarily.

**12:49,50** His meaning is that spiritual relationships are more dear, more important than family relationships. He said this had to be true of His followers (see 10:37), and it was fully true in His own life. If we are those who do His will, Christ counts us also as His mother, or sister, or brother. His disciples are His family. See Heb 2:11,12.

**13:3** The Greek word translated "parable" means a comparison of one thing with another. Jesus used parables to compare

gathered together to him, so he went into a boat, and sat down, and the whole crowd stood on the shore. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying, "Now a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they had not much soil. And immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched, and withered away, because they had no root. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up, and choked them. 8 But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9 Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

10 And the disciples came, and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

11 He answered and said to them, "Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, from him will be taken away even what he has.

the spiritual things of God's kingdom with natural, physical things. Parables are "earthly illustrations of heavenly truth." The Lord here compares Himself to someone who sows seed (see v 37). The seed He sows is the truth God has revealed (Luke 8:11. Compare 1 Cor 3:6; 9:11; 1 Pet 1:23). See His own explanation of this parable in vs 18-23.

**13:5** Here "stony places" is not good soil with some rocks scattered on top. It is rock beneath with a little soil on top. The seed did not get down into the good earth. The warmth of the sun germinated this seed quickly.

**13:7** Farmers generally will not sow seed among thorns or on a footpath or on rocky places. But those who sow the seed of God's Word will sow it in all the earth (Mark 16:15), and some will surely fall in minds and hearts not well prepared to receive it.

**13:8** Some soil is better and more productive than others.

**13:9** See 11:15; 13:43; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8; 14:35; Rev 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 13:9. This emphasizes the importance of what has been spoken.

**13:11,12** Jesus gives two reasons for His use of parables - one reason was to reveal the truth, the other was to conceal the truth. There are secret truths, mysteries about the kingdom of God which could be received only by those who had repented and believed in the Lord Jesus and entered the kingdom. Those, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, who had hardened their hearts against the truth and willfully rejected Christ, could not understand what He meant. Christ's way of speaking was in judgment on a rebellious and unbelieving nation (vs 12-15).

"Mysteries" - in the New Testament a

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

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which says,

Hearing you will hear and will not understand,  
and seeing you will see and will not perceive.

15 For this people's heart has become fat,  
and *their* ears are hard of hearing,  
and they have closed their eyes,  
so that they would not at any time see  
with *their* eyes,  
and hear with *their* ears,  
and understand with *their* heart,  
and be converted, and be healed by me.

16 "But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see;

and your ears, for they hear. 17 For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

18 "Therefore listen to the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked *one* come and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the one who received seed by the path. 20 But the one who received seed in stony places, is he who hears the Word, and immediately receives it with joy, 21 but he has no root in him, so lasts only for a while. For when pressure or persecution comes because of the Word, he immediately stumbles. 22 And the one who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the Word, and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. 23 But the one who received seed in the good ground is he

"mystery" is a truth which God reveals and which we could not know if He did not reveal it.

"Kingdom of heaven" - 4:17. Verse 12 does not speak of material things but the ability to understand spiritual truth. They who refuse the light that Christ brings will lose whatever light they may have had before. They who receive the light will become more and more enlightened. Jews who "did not have" did not have because they did not want to have, and refused to have (compare John 3:19,20; 9:39).

**13:13** Jer 5:20,21; Ezek 12:2.

**13:14,15** Isa 6:9,10. The people deliberately and willfully prevented themselves from turning to God. Refusing spiritual light inevitably leads to judgment.

**13:16** Compare 16:17; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17,18. The ability to hear and understand spiritual truth is one of God's great gifts. Let us ask Him for it.

**13:17** Those men of God who lived before Christ came longed to see the Messiah and hear His words (compare 1 Pet 1:10-12).

**13:18-23** This is the first of His parables that Jesus Himself explained. It gives us hints as to how to understand all His parables. Parables have one or more principal points or purposes, often only one. In every parable we should try to lay hold of the principal point or points. The details of Christ's parables also may have meanings. We see that here in His explanation of the parable of the sower. It is even more plain in vs 37-43 where Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and weeds.

But we should not put such emphasis on the details that we lose sight of the main point or points. And we should never try to show our cleverness in trying to interpret the details. Compare note at Ex 25:9. Our interpretation should be simple and natural.

We should not try to get our doctrines from the parables. The plain teachings of Christ and the apostles give us doctrine. But we should understand that the parables

cannot be contrary to sound doctrine. We should look for Christ in the parables (as in all the Bible. Compare Luke 24:27,44). We should pay attention to the way Jesus introduced each parable, and the application at the end (if there is an application given).

We should apply the parables, as far as possible, to ourselves and our situation now. In them are spiritual lessons and moral principles for us all. We will not profit from the parables if we do not follow the truth we find in them.

In the parable of the sower the principal lesson concerns the different condition of men's hearts. In no case is there a change in the sower or the seed.

**13:19** Notice the words "does not understand." Compare v 23. Because of spiritual blindness and ignorance this kind of person is careless and unconcerned about God's truth. The evil one is Satan. He is eager to destroy God's Word from men's hearts. Satan's purpose appears in Luke 8:12.

**13:20,21** The picture here is shallowness and superficiality in regard to God's Word. This kind of man is religious only as long as it makes him happy. Trouble destroys his happiness and therefore his religion. There is no deep determination to go on to the end regardless of what might happen. There is no depth of discipleship, no persistent effort to learn the things of Christ and apply them.

**13:22** Worldly worries and concerns for wealth are like choking, destroying thorns (Mark 4:19 adds the words "desires for other things" and Luke 8:14 adds the word "pleasures"). This is one reason why Christ and His apostles taught that disciples should trust God for their needs and not worry, that they should set their hearts on spiritual, heavenly things, not on things of this world. See 6:19-34; Col 3:1-3; 1 Tim 6:9,10.

**13:23** The key word here is "understands." Compare v 19. It is not said that any of the others understood what they heard. But this

who hears the Word, and understands *it*. He indeed bears fruit. Some produce a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

24 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. 26 But when the blade sprang up, and began to produce a crop, the tares also appeared.

27 "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Then where have these tares come from?'

28 "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go

kind of person has been taught by God and has his spiritual eyes opened – Luke 24:45; etc. This makes all the difference. We can produce spiritual fruit only as we understand the teachings of the Bible, God's Word. What we do not understand we will not apply to our lives, and may quickly forget. God wants us to study and understand His truth. See Deut 6:6,7; Josh 1:8; Ps 1:1,2; 119:1; Prov 2:1-8; Acts 8:30-35; 1 Cor 2:12-16; Eph 1:17,18; 4:13,14; Col 1:9; 2:2.

"Fruit" – spiritual fruit is the only evidence of God's working in men's hearts. If there is no fruit there must be doubt whether anything real, valuable, and permanent is taking place. See John 15:1-6; Heb 6:7-12. But we should despair of no one. The poor conditions of heart described in this parable do not need to be permanent. Hard hearts can be broken, thorns can be uprooted. In this parable there is great encouragement for all who sow the Word of God in obedience to the Lord Jesus. There is good ground out there prepared by God, and eventually there will be a harvest. Compare 9:37; Ps 126:5,6; John 4:35.

The parable also contains a warning. We should be careful about the conditions of our hearts. We are responsible for their condition – whether they are unprepared or shallow and hard, or thorny. Compare Hos 10:12; Jer 4:3; Ezek 18:31; Joel 2:13; Prov 4:23.

**13:24-30** The Lord Himself explained this parable in vs 37-43. The "field" represents conditions on earth. The world belongs to God, and His purpose is to have His kingdom rule over all and every part of it. The good "seed" is not the Word of God as in the parable of the sower, but God's children, born of His Spirit into His kingdom (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8).

At present in the world and in the church there is a mixture of good and bad. The Greek word here translated "tares" means a kind of weed almost identical to wheat in appearance in its early stages (compare 2 Cor 11:13-15). They represent the children of Satan (v 38; see John 8:44; 1 John 3:8). God's enemy is Satan who "sows" evil men in the world. Generally

and gather them up?'

29 "But he said, 'No. While you are gathering up the tares you may also root up the wheat along with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will say to the reapers, 'First gather the tares together and tie them in bundles to burn them. But gather the wheat into my barn.'"

31 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown, it is the largest of the garden plants, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

speaking there are only two kinds of people on earth – those who are God's children and in His kingdom and those who are not.

**13:29** There can be no way for God's servants to rid the world of evil men, without at the same time destroying some good men. One reason is that it may not always be easy to distinguish between "weeds" and "wheat" in their early stages. In any case, who will do the separating and destroying? Apart from God Himself who has the wisdom or power? And we should always remember that "children" of Satan may in time become children of God (Rom 3:9; Eph 2:1-4; Titus 3:3-7).

**13:30** At the great harvest at the end of this age God will separate all His children from all Satan's children. Compare 25:31-46. Observe that Satan's children are gathered first. The final issue of the harvest will be the same as described in Matt 3:12.

**13:31,32** The main point of this parable is plain – though the kingdom of God had a very small beginning, it was to grow very large. It began its work in this age with Christ and a few disciples. Now it has spread throughout the earth. Christ is the one who planted the seed, His "field" is the whole earth, as in the parable of the weeds and wheat. The mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds planted by farmers (this is Jesus' meaning here – see Mark 4:31). The kind of mustard plant referred to here can grow as high as three meters.

In the Old Testament a tree was sometimes used as a symbol of a great kingdom (Ezek 31:6; Dan 4:20-22). Eventually, in the age to come, Christ's kingdom will fill the earth and replace all others (see notes on Dan 2:44,45).

In the OT birds sometimes symbolize nations and peoples (Isa 46:11; Jer 12:9; Ezek 17:22-24; see Ezek 31:3-6; etc). It seems likely that here they represent nations and peoples who become "Christianized" – greatly influenced by Christianity without becoming truly Christian – the birds are not branches of the tree. However it should be noted that in the parable of the sower birds stand for Satan and evil spirits (vs 4,19), and some think that here also

33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until the whole was leavened."

34 Jesus said all these things to the crowd in parables, and without a parable he did not say anything to them, 35 so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

I will open my mouth in parables.  
I will utter things which have been  
kept secret from the foundation of  
the world.

36 Then Jesus sent the crowd away and went in the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain the parable of the tares of the field to us."

37 He answered and said to them, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of man. 38 The field is the world. The good seed are the children of the they mean Satan's attempts to injure and destroy God's kingdom.

**13:33** There is large disagreement among scholars about the meaning of this brief parable. Some say it is a picture of the spread of God's kingdom in the world. Some say it symbolizes the inner working of God's Word in the individual and in the church as a whole. Others say it signifies the secret working of evil in the church, and link it with verses like 2 Thess 2:7. They point out that yeast (leaven) is often used in the Bible as a symbol of evil (see 16:12; Ex 12:8; 1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9), and that "woman" in theological matters may also symbolize evil teaching or apostasy (see Rev 2:20; 17:3; Jer 51:2,3,7).

Of course the kingdom of heaven is not evil in itself, but this may describe a certain aspect of the kingdom in this present age, and the apostasy that will permeate the visible church on earth. Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the "yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (see notes at 16:6,12). Perhaps this parable is a prophecy that the church would grow careless and that ritualism, traditionalism, hypocrisy, denial of Bible truth, carnal reasoning and unbelief (the Pharisees and Sadducees were guilty of all of these) would spread throughout all branches of Christianity.

**13:34** But at this particular time and occasion He used only parables. At other times, of course, He used the ordinary forms of speech.

**13:35** Ps 78:2. These hidden things were the secret truths of God's kingdom.

**13:37-43** Notice again that when the Lord Jesus explained a parable He gave significance to the details.

**13:38** Here "children of the kingdom" signify believers in Christ, those born again by God's Spirit (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8).

**13:41** God means for His kingdom to completely fill the earth (Isa 11:1-9; Dan

kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of man will send forth his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom everything that causes stumbling, and those who do evil, 42 and will throw them into a furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine out like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.

44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field that a man finds and hides *again*, and for joy over it goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that

2:35,44,45; 7:27; Rev 11:15; 19:15,16).

**13:42** Notes at 3:10; 5:22.

**13:43** Prov 4:18; Dan 12:3; 1 Cor 15:40-44. We cannot yet imagine what glory this indicates - 1 John 3:1-3.

**13:44-46** Some think that in these two parables the "treasure" and the "pearl" signify the Church and the one who "found" them signifies Christ. This is most unlikely. It is much more probable that these parables signify two different kinds of men who find the kingdom of God. It seems that one of the points of the first parable is that the treasure was found unexpectedly. The man "found" it, evidently not knowing previously that it was there. And notice the words "hides again." Evidently the finder was afraid that someone else would get the treasure before he could secure it. How can all this refer to Christ?

The interpretation of this first parable also rests on the meaning of the word "field." If the field is the world as in v 38, then obviously a person does not buy the world to get the kingdom of God. But look carefully at the wording of vs 24 and 44 - v 24 has "his" (Christ's) field, but v 44 has "a" field. In v 38 "his field" is said to be the world. But is there any reason to think that "a" field is also the world? A field here seems to indicate any field, and possibly has no special meaning at all. At least we can say that it did not belong to the person who found the treasure, because he went and bought it. So the person can hardly refer to Christ who owns the world and does not need to buy it - in v 24 it is said to be His world already.

The seeker in the second parable was seeking after many pearls. He was in the business of buying and selling. Not so with Christ. He knew exactly what He wanted when He came to earth, and He was after one great thing all the time - the Church.

The wording of these parables suits

he had and bought it.

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the lake and caught every kind of fish. 48 When it was full, they pulled it to shore, sat down, and gathered the good into containers, but threw the bad away. 49 It will be just like this at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

51 Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."

52 Then he said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old."

53 And it happened *that* when Jesus had better the interpretation that we have here two brief pictures of individuals finding the kingdom of God. The first one finds it without deliberately seeking for it. Compare Rom 10:20 (Isa 65:1); 9:30,31. The kingdom of God is in this world but not obviously so. It is hidden from the great mass of men. But God directs the steps of individuals in ways they do not know, and suddenly they come upon this great treasure. The seeker after pearls represents a different kind of person. He is a thinker and has some knowledge of quality things. God has made him a searcher for truth, justice, beauty, wisdom, salvation. When he learns of the kingdom of God, when he sees it with enlightened spiritual eyes, he knows there is nothing to be compared with it.

Observe that the men in both parables sold everything to buy what they had discovered. But can the kingdom of God be bought? No (Acts 8:20; Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8,9). But it is still described as something to buy (Isa 55:1,2; Rev 3:18). In other words, there is a cost to the one who wants it, and that cost is everything one has (compare 10:37-39; Luke 14:26,27,33; Mark 10:28). To anyone who has seen its value and its beauty, the cost does not seem too high (Phil 3:7,8).

**13:47-50** This parable is similar to that of the tares and the wheat, but there are differences also. That one speaks of the gradual development of how things will be in this age. This one speaks of those caught in the gospel net, those who are somehow drawn into Christianity hardly knowing how.

Again we see that during this age, separation of the good and bad is not fully possible for men. Leaders in the church and believers may (and should) try to keep their local churches pure and unmixed with ungodly men (1 Cor 5:1,2,11-13; 2 Tim 3:1-5). But this will prove on the whole to be impossible to perfectly accomplish. There was a Judas among the twelve apostles, unsuspected by them, and the apostles later warned that evil men would get into the church (Acts 20:23-30; 2 Tim 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1,2). The final and

finished these parables, he left there. 54 And when he came to his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where does this *man* get this wisdom, and *these* miracles? 55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, aren't they all with us? Then where does this *man* get all these things?"

57 And they were offended at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his own country and in his own house."

58 And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

**14** At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, 2 and said to his

complete separation of the good from the bad (true from false Christians) will be at the end of this age. Compare vs 40-43.

**13:47** The Greek word for "net" signifies not a small hand net, but a great dragnet which could draw in a very large number of fish.

**13:51** They understood because He both opened the eyes of their understanding and explained His parables to them. So they could say "yes." See Mark 4:34. If they had not understood, would they not have asked for further explanations, as they did concerning the parable of the weeds and the wheat (v 36)?

**13:52** The Lord Jesus here indicates that His disciples must be teachers. Out of the vast storehouse of the Word of God they would present to people the old treasures of the Old Testament and the new treasures of the New Testament, as Jesus Himself was then doing.

**13:54** "His own country" – Nazareth and its environs. The parables had been spoken at the Sea of Galilee near Capernaum. In Nazareth Jesus was greeted with skepticism and scorn.

**13:55,56** These verses indicate that after Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary had other children.

**13:57** Compare Luke 4:24-30. They could not believe that a person of (seemingly) so ordinary a background, and low in the social order, could amount to much. People still frequently make such a mistake.

**13:58** See Mark 6:4,5. Their lack of faith in Him made it impossible for Him to do them the good He otherwise would have done. This is always the case. See the note at Ps 78:41.

**14:1** This Herod was a son of the Herod of 2:1. He ruled over Galilee and Perea and is called "king" in Mark 6:14. Here he is called "tetrarch" (which means a ruler of a fourth part). After the death of the first king Herod the area he had ruled was divided among his sons.

**14:2** Herod was an evil man. Here is evidence that his conscience was bothering him for what he did to John. He was afraid but, like so many others, he did not let his

servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has risen from the dead, and so miraculous powers are at work in him."

3 For Herod had seized John, bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4 For John said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 And though he wanted to put him to death, he was afraid of the people, because they counted him a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. 7 So he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. 8 And she, having been previously instructed by her mother, said, "Give me here John the Baptist's head in a dish." 9 And the king was sorry. Nevertheless because of *his* oath and those who were sitting at the table with him, he commanded that it be given *to her*. 10 And he sent *men* and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 And his head was brought in a dish and given to the girl, and she took it to her mother. 12 And his disciples came, took away the body, buried it, and went and told Jesus.

13 When Jesus heard *this*, he left there by boat to a deserted place alone. And when the people

heard *about it*, they followed him on foot from the cities. 14 And Jesus went out and saw a great crowd, and was moved with compassion for them, and he healed their sick.

15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the time is late. Send the crowd away, so that they can go to the villages and buy themselves food."

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

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

18 He said, "Bring them here to me." 19 And he commanded the crowd to sit down on the grass, and he took the five loaves and the two fish, and, looking up to heaven, he *blessed them*, *broke them*, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the crowd. 20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up twelve basketfuls of the pieces that were left over. 21 And *the number of* those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

22 And immediately Jesus had his disciples get into a boat and go before him to the other side, while he sent the crowds away. 23 And after

fear turn him to God. Observe his belief in the resurrection of the dead. See notes on the resurrection at John 5:28,29.

**14:3** Herod had persuaded Herodias to leave Philip and live with himself. This was contrary to God's law (Lev 18:16).

**14:4** John was a courageous man who did not withhold God's message even from depraved rulers. See also 10:18; Acts 26:1,2.

**14:5** He wanted to kill John only because Herodias wanted him dead, but for some time protected him from her vengeful demands. He knew John was a righteous man, and he was afraid of both John and the people (see Mark 6:19,20).

**14:9** Note at v 5. One may be distressed at the actual act of killing a person, even though the wish had been in the heart.

**14:10,11** Here is the end of the man whom Jesus called one of the greatest of all men. Yet neither God in heaven nor the Lord Jesus on earth lifted a finger to prevent it. God does all things well and rules over all, but often His ways are mysterious (Isa 55:8,9; Acts 12:1-4; Rom 11:33). As for John, he had done his part in preparing the way for Christ (3:1-3; John 3:27-30), and his ministry was completed. So God gave him the great privilege of suffering and dying for Christ.

**14:13** Verse 23.

**14:14** See 9:35,36.

**14:15-21** This is the only miracle Jesus performed which is recorded in all four Gospels (except His resurrection from the dead). See Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-13. As with His other miracles this one too was for the good of others, and showed not only

His supernatural power but His compassion. This miracle was important also because of the truth it signified. See the teaching Jesus based on it in John 6:26-59.

**14:17** It is always true that what His disciples have will not be enough for the multitude, but He will accept it and use it in marvelous ways.

**14:18** This is what He says to us now about all we have.

**14:19** He first acknowledged publicly where His power came from. See 3:16; John 5:19-23. In expressing thanks to God the Father He is an example to us all - Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; Lev 12:13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12. See the work of the disciples here - they could not provide all that was needed, but they could give it out when the Lord provided it. This is true also in the work of His disciples in spiritual matters. There is enough food in Christ's gospel to feed the whole world! God wants distributors.

**14:20** It was the job of the disciples to serve the people. Then the Lord provided for the disciples. This will always be true. Compare 6:33; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor 9:8-10; Phil 4:19. Observe also that as they distributed to others the supply increased.

**14:21** Matthew alone records that there were women and children present. There may not have been very many, since the place was "remote" (v 15), but we cannot be sure about this.

**14:22** Mark 6:45.

**14:23** "To pray" - 19:13; 26:36; Luke 5:16; Heb 5:7; 7:25.

**14:24** Sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee could be very dangerous to those out in

sending the crowds away, he went up into a mountain by himself to pray. And when evening came, he was there alone. 24 But the boat was now in the middle of the lake, tossed by waves, for the wind was against *it*.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the lake. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were alarmed, saying, "It is a spirit." And they cried out in fear.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered him and said, "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water."

29 And he said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strong wind, he was afraid. And beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me."

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

32 And when they got into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshipped him, saying, "You truly are

the Son of God."

34 And when they crossed over, they arrived at the land of Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized him, they sent *word* out into all the surrounding countryside, and *people* brought to him all who were sick, 36 and begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak. And all who touched *it* became perfectly well.

**15** Then scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3 But he answered and said to them, "And why do you break the commandment of God by *following* your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, 'Honour your father and mother,' and, 'He who curses father or mother must be put to death.' 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to *his* father or *his* mother, 'Whatever of mine might have been useful to you is an offering *to God*,' 6 and does not honour his father or his mother, *it is all right*.' In this way, by your tradition, you have made the commandment of God *to be of* no longer in effect. 7 *You* hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about

boats. In this case, it was just another opportunity for Jesus to show His loving care for them, and His divine power.

**14:25** Here is another marvelous example of the miracles of Jesus – one that cannot be imitated by magicians and so-called godmen. One can either walk on water or one cannot. And doing so reveals supernatural power. See notes at 8:1; John 2:11. The fourth "watch" was 3 to 6 AM.

**14:26** They could not believe that flesh and blood could walk on water, and so thought Jesus must be some spirit or ghost. Compare Luke 24:36-39.

**14:28** We see something of Peter's character here – impulsive and daring. Evidently he thought that if Jesus could walk on water He could make him also walk on it.

**14:29** This walking on water was not by Peter's power. Jesus can enable men to do many things they cannot do themselves. Compare 2 Cor 3:5.

**14:30** There is a lesson here in spiritual matters – as long as we keep our eyes on the Lord Jesus and trust Him only, we will be able to do the things He says, even things impossible to us otherwise. If doubts overwhelm us – if we take our eyes away from Him and become occupied with difficulties and dangers – we will fail and sink.

**14:31** Peter's faith was small and yet he walked on water! Learn that even a person of small faith can do impossible things as long as he trusts in the Lord Jesus to enable him. See 17:20. But doubt is ruinous. When his faith failed his feet failed.

**14:33** See 2:11; 3:17; 11:27; Luke 1:32,35; John 1:18; 3:16; 5:17,18; 10:36; 20:28.

Observe that the Lord Jesus accepted their worship – a thing He would do only if He knew Himself to be the one proper object of worship (God). See 4:10. See also Luke 2:11; Phil 2:6.

**14:34** This was on the west side of the Sea of Galilee.

**14:36** It was not a cloak which healed them, but Christ's power released in response to their faith – 9:20-22.

**15:2** The traditions of the elders were interpretations of the law of Moses and rules governing daily life drawn up by Jewish teachers. They had been passed on generation after generation. These religious leaders considered that people became ceremonially defiled by the common activities of daily life and needed to wash to remove this defilement. They were not concerned with any physical dirtiness of the disciples. They made washing a religious ceremony (Mark 7:2-4).

**15:3** Jesus was not concerned with the traditions of the elders. The commands of God were the important thing to Him. These religious leaders devised ways to get around God's plain commands, while insisting on their own traditions. Observe that Jesus is teaching the divine inspiration of the law. The commands which came through Moses were God's commands.

**15:4** Ex 20:16; 21:17.

**15:5,6** In other words, in the name of God, and pretending it was for God's sake, they broke God's commands. This is another example of man's fallen deceitful nature perverting God's ways.

**15:7** "Hypocrites" – 6:2; 7:5; 23:13.



you, saying,

- 8 This people draw near me with their mouth,  
and honour me with *their* lips,  
but their heart is far from me.  
9 But they worship me in vain,  
teaching *as* doctrines the  
commandments of men."

10 And he called the crowd and said to them,  
"Listen and understand. 11 What defiles a man is  
not what goes into the mouth. But what comes out  
of the mouth, this *is what* defiles a man."

12 Then his disciples came and said to him, "Do  
you know that the Pharisees were offended when  
they heard this statement?"

13 But he answered and said, "Every plant that  
my heavenly Father has not planted, will be rooted  
up. 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of  
the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both will  
fall into the ditch."

15 Then answered Peter and said to him,  
"Explain this parable to us."

16 And Jesus said, "Are you also still without  
understanding? 17 Do you still not understand that  
whatever goes in the mouth goes into the stomach

and is eliminated? 18 But the things which come  
out of the mouth come from the heart. And they  
defile the man. 19 For out of the heart come evil  
thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immorality,  
thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are  
*the things* which defile a man. But eating with  
unwashed hands does not defile a man."

21 Then Jesus left there and went into the  
region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And, suddenly, out  
came a Canaanite woman from that region and  
cried out to him, saying, "O Lord, Son of David,  
have mercy on me. My daughter is terribly demon-  
possessed."

23 But he did not answer her a word. And his  
disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her  
away, for she is crying out after us."

24 But he answered and said, "I was not sent *to*  
*anyone* except the lost sheep of the house of  
Israel."

25 Then she came and worshipped him, saying,  
"Lord, help me."

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

27 And she said, "True, Lord! Yet the dogs eat  
the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

**15:8,9** Isa 29:13. Most men prefer to follow  
men's rules rather than obey God's Word,  
but many of them would like to be consid-  
ered on God's side. There is a great deal of  
such "vain" worship on earth.

**15:11** His meaning is that real "unclean-  
ness" is not physical but moral; is not  
related to foods and washings, but to the  
heart and mind and spirit (vs 17-20). What  
use is it if we try to be "ceremonially" clean  
by washing the outside, and leave the inner  
person, the heart, full of wickedness? See  
23:25-28. We need to be clean on the  
inside. See 5:8; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:22;  
1 John 1:9.

**15:13** God both plants and uproots plants.  
See 13:24-30; Isa 60:21; 61:3; Jer 1:9,10.  
Who besides God does any planting? - see  
13:39.

**15:14** "Blind leaders" - 23:16,24; Rom 2:19.  
Many there are who are totally lacking in  
spiritual understanding who still think they  
are enlightened, and who try to guide  
others. And many people all over the world  
have fallen into religious "ditches" by  
following them.

**15:16** See 16:9; Luke 24:25.

**15:19** Jesus here reveals what man's heart  
is by nature. Every human being is born with  
a sinful nature which eventually reveals  
itself in one or more of the sins listed here.  
Since the streams are so bad what must  
the fountain be like! See Gen 8:21; Ps 51:5;  
Isa 64:6; Jer 17:9.

**15:21** See 11:21.

**15:22** She was descended from the original  
inhabitants of Canaan. See Gen 10:18;  
15:20. Note on Son of David at 1:1. Note

on demon possession at 4:24.

**15:23** Jesus was not lacking in love and com-  
passion for people other than Jews. That is  
not why He remained silent here. Compare  
His own words at 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke  
24:46,47; John 3:16. But before He was  
ready to send His gospel throughout the  
world He had a work to do in Israel, and  
God sent Him specifically to do that work  
(v 24). Compare 10:5,6. As for this woman,  
it appears that He was testing her faith to  
bring out its strength and beauty, and from  
the beginning He planned to help her (it is  
likely that He went there with that very  
purpose in mind). The disciples were more  
concerned with themselves than with the  
need of this woman.

**15:26** "Children" here means the children  
of Israel, God's chosen people. The Greek  
word for dogs used here does not mean the  
scavengers of the streets, belonging to no  
one and sometimes used in the Bible as a  
symbol of wicked men (Ps 22:16; Phil 3:2;  
2 Pet 2:22; Rev 22:15). The word here  
means little dogs - pet dogs kept at the  
house. Jesus was not showing scorn or in-  
sulting this woman. He was testing her and  
showing, perhaps, that the basis of prayer  
is not our merit. The tone of voice and the  
look on the face can be as important as  
words spoken, and there was something in  
Jesus' manner which encouraged her rather  
than discouraged her.

**15:27** The woman understood in some  
measure that the Jews were God's chosen  
nation, and that she was an outsider  
without any covenant relationship with God  
or claim on His mercy (compare Eph 2:12).

28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "Woman, your faith is great! It will be to you just as you wish." And from that hour her daughter was healed.

29 And Jesus left there, came near the lake of Galilee, and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. 30 And great crowds came to him. With them were *the* lame, blind, mute, crippled, and many others. And they put them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them, 31 so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

32 Then Jesus called his disciples and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have stayed with me now for three days, and have nothing to eat. I am not willing to send them away without eating, for they may faint on the way."

33 And his disciples said to him, "Where would we get enough bread in this wilderness to satisfy such a large crowd?"

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

35 And he commanded the crowd to sit on the ground. 36 And he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke them, and gave *them* to

And wisely and humbly she used this for her advantage. And she knew that a crumb from the Lord Jesus would be greater than a whole loaf from anyone else.

**15:28** She showed the greatness of her faith by her persistence. She would not be stopped by silence (v 23), rejection by the disciples (v 23), teaching that seemed to exclude her (v 24), or any temptation to pride (v 26). She fully believed that Jesus could and would help her, and she determined to go on asking until He did. Compare Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8. Let us observe how important faith is to Jesus, how He commends it and rewards it (8:10; 9:22,29; 17:20; 21:21,22. See Heb 11:6).

**15:30** See 4:23,24; 9:35,36.

**15:31** See 9:8. The God of Israel is the only God there is (Deut 6:4; Isa 43:10,11; 44:6,8; 45:5,18). And one great purpose for Christ's activity was to bring praise to Him (compare Rom 15:8,9).

**15:32** See 9:36; 14:14. Observe that Jesus thought of their needs before they said anything about them. Compare 6:8.

**15:33** They speak as though the event of 14:15-21 had never happened. Did they think that was an event never to be repeated? Sometimes the dullness and smallness of faith in the disciples seems amazing – until we become aware of our own.

**15:36** See 14:19.

**15:37** When we give what we have to the Lord Jesus, our seven "loaves" may feed a

his disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the crowd. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up seven basketfuls of broken *pieces* that were left over. 38 And those eating were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 And he sent the crowd away, and got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.

**16** The Pharisees and the Sadducees came, and testing him asked *him* to show them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said to them, "When evening comes, you say, '*We'll have* fine weather, for the sky is red.' 3 And in the morning, '*Today we'll have* a storm, for the sky is red and overcast.' *You* hypocrites! You can discern the appearance of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times! 4 A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And he left them and went away.

5 And when his disciples went to the other side, they forgot to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said to them, "Watch out and be on your guard about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we did not bring any bread."

8 Knowing *this*, Jesus said to them, "O you of

multitude and mean seven times more coming back to us than we gave. See Luke 6:38. **15:38** Magadan was a town on the west shore of the lake of Galilee.

**16:1** Pharisees and Sadducees were divided in many things, but they joined together in one thing – opposition to Jesus. An evil cause can unite people as much as a good cause. See Luke 23:12. Note on Sadducees at 3:7.

**16:2,3** There were already many signs, but they had no heart to accept them. The prophecies of the Old Testament, the ministries of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus revealed that the days of the Messiah were with them. And the many miracles Jesus had performed revealed His supernatural power – 8:1. Those unbelievers deserved no special signs, and He would not give them any. They had not responded to the truth God had already given them.

**16:4** See 12:39.

**16:6-12** Here we have yeast (leaven) used as a symbol of something evil. See 13:33; Ex 12:8; 1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9. This occasion once again revealed dullness in the disciples. The Lord Jesus used a figure of speech which they should have understood. It seems that their minds were too much on literal bread. Occupation with physical needs and desires may make all of us dull hearers of God's Word.

**16:8** See 6:30; 8:26; 14:31. In the next two verses Jesus points out that they had no cause to be anxious or unbelieving about

little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you did not bring any bread? 9 Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves for the five thousand and how many basketfuls you picked up? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you picked up? 11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you about bread, but that you should be on your guard about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees?"

12 Then they understood that he told them to be on their guard, not about the yeast in bread, but about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

food, even though they had forgotten to bring any. He had twice miraculously provided food for great multitudes. Do we fall into the same anxiety and unbelief as theirs? Even after years of Christian experience, do we not sometimes need to be rebuked for lack of faith and understanding?

**16:12** By "yeast" Jesus meant false religious teaching. Just as yeast permeates all the dough where it has been put, false teaching can spread through a whole group of people, can corrupt an entire religious organization, can influence even a nation. Both Pharisees and Sadducees claimed to be followers of the true religion revealed by God, but they did not partake of its reality and spiritual life. Every church still needs to beware of such "yeast" wherever it may be found (see Rom 16:17,18; 1 Tim 4:1,2; 2 Tim 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1-3). Compare 13:33. We see something of the false teaching of the Pharisees and the results of it at 3:7-9; 5:20; 9:11; 12:2,24,28; 15:1,2; 23:2-36. They said they believed the Bible was the Word of God and that there was one true God, but they emphasized ceremonies, traditions, mere outward observance of God's law and man-made rules. It all tended to self-righteousness and hypocrisy - Luke 12:1; 18:10-12. The Sadducees denied truth plainly revealed in the Word of God (Acts 23:8). Their ways resulted in worldly, carnal reasoning. Both of these groups were sunk in unbelief and hypocrisy. The same kinds of people, under different names, are still with us today.

**16:13** Caesarea Philippi was a town about 40 kilometers north of the lake of Galilee, near the highest mountain in the region - Mt Hermon. Note on Son of man at 8:20.

**16:14** When the Jews of Christ's day suggested He might be John or one of the prophets who had died, they were not expressing a belief in reincarnation but in resurrection - 14:1,2. On reincarnation see notes at Job 11:12; John 9:2,3.

**16:15** This is a question that still comes to us all. The answer we give to it is of the utmost importance.

**16:16** Note on Christ at 1:1; on Son of God at 3:16,17; John 3:16; 5:18-23. God is called "the living God" in contrast to dead idols, and

13 When Jesus arrived in the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?"

14 And they said, "Some say that you are John the Baptist. Some say, 'Elijah.' And others say, 'Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'"

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

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

17 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. 18 And also I tell you that you are Peter,

to the "gods" who exist only in peoples' imaginations. Notes at Ps 115:3-8; etc.

**16:17** "Blessed" - references are at 11:6. Here Jesus pronounces Peter blessed because God had enlightened him to understand the great truth concerning Jesus - that He was the Messiah and the (not "a") Son of God. He did not arrive at the truth by logical reasoning or by human teachers. It was no head theory. He had a direct revelation of truth from God. Compare 11:27; etc. Blessedness comes to all who are similarly enlightened to know the truth about the Lord Jesus. Compare 1 John 2:23; 5:1,5.

**16:18** The name Peter in Greek (Petros) means a small rock, a stone. The word for the "rock" on which Christ builds His Church (petra) means a large rock. So Christ is not saying He would build the Church on Peter. Such a magnificent structure requires more than such a weak and puny foundation. A comparison with other references to this subject makes this even more clear. See 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:19-21. Peter, together with all the apostles and prophets, was a part of the Church's foundation, but Christ Himself is by far the most important "rock" in it.

"Rock" as used here in Matthew may mean the confession of Peter that Jesus was the Christ, the only Son of God. That is a foundation truth for anyone entering the fellowship of God's people.

In this verse the word "church" appears for the first time in the New Testament. The Greek word is "ecclesia" and comes from a verb which means "called out from." In the NT it is the word commonly used for an assembly of God's people. They are called out from the world to be a separate holy people - 1 Pet 2:9; 2 Cor 6:17,18; Rom 8:30; John 17:6.

"Hell" - in Greek "Hades." See note at Luke 16:23. In the Old Testament "gate" often signified the place where the leaders and rulers and judges met to decide matters relating to their town (Gen 34:20). Gates of Hades probably means here the counsels and plots and plans of all the leading powers and beings related to the realm of death, especially Satan who has the power of death (Heb 2:14). They will not be able to win their fight against Christ

and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. 19 And I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

20 Then he ordered his disciples to tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ. 21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took him aside and began to and His Church.

**16:19** Jesus gave the keys to Peter as the leader of the twelve apostles. He was chosen for the special task of opening the kingdom of God to others. We see his use of these keys in his ministry to Jews (Acts 2:14-41), Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17), and Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48) – these were the only three groups of people that existed.

Let us learn the following: the doors to God's kingdom are now wide open, and anyone who will may enter. Once a door is opened keys are no longer needed to open it. The keys were given to Peter, not to his successors. Peter alone could do what he did. God used Peter as His instrument to open the door of His kingdom to all. And he did it once for all time. Now if there is any closing or opening of doors to do, the Lord Jesus Himself will do it. See Rev 1:8; 3:7.

Peter had more to do than opening the gate of God's kingdom. There were things to "bind" and "loose." That is, the affairs of the kingdom had to be administered and decisions must be made concerning things to be allowed or forbidden. It is important to see that in this work the other disciples had the same authority as Peter. See 18:18; John 20:23. Verse 19 could (and perhaps should) be translated "whatever you bind on earth will [already] have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven." This would mean that Peter and the other disciples would be agents to carry out decisions already made in heaven.

**16:20** The time had not yet come to announce what Peter had learned. It would have caused more obstacles to Christ's ministry, more opposition from His enemies, and bring about a crisis before the proper time (see John 7:30).

**16:21** For the first time Jesus taught His disciples what His principal work was to be. His chief reason for coming into the world was not to gather huge crowds, declare His divinity, become popular, and ascend a human throne. He came to die for sinners and rise again (20:28; Luke 24:46,47; John 1:29; 3:14; 10:11; 1 Cor 15:1-4). Note on resurrection of the dead at John 5:28,29.

**16:22** This shows how little the disciples at that time understood Christ's mission to the world. They thought He would be a mighty

rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from you, Lord! This shall not happen to you."

23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! To me you are a stumbling block, because you are not thinking of the things of God, but of the things of men."

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man, if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for

conqueror of their enemies, not a suffering saviour. Poor Peter! He thought he would be Christ's advisor! He rebuked Jesus, the one he had called the Messiah, the Son of God! Such was Peter, ascending one moment to the heights, falling to the depths the next moment. Did he imagine he knew better than Christ Himself what Christ should do? He was not the last person to fall into this error. There are still many who complain against God's ways as if they knew better than God how things should be done (see note at Ps 47:2).

**16:23** See 4:10. "Satan" – note at 1 Chron 21:1. The name means "opponent" or "adversary." Here Peter was opposing Christ in trying to keep Him from the cross. So Jesus justly rebuked him. He never used harsher language in speaking to any disciple. Peter was thinking in merely human ways. Men want ease, comfort, safety, prosperity for themselves and for those they love. They do not understand God's ways and plans. To mind the things of men may put us in opposition to the things of God. See Isa 55:8,9; Rom 8:5-8; 11:33,34; Phil 3:19; Col 3:1-3; Jam 4:4; 1 John 2:16,17. Let us learn from God rather than try to teach Him what He should do. If Christ had listened to Peter there would have been no sacrifice for sin, no resurrection, no gospel, no hope for anyone.

**16:24** Note at 10:38; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23. The denial of self is an essential part of true Christianity. This is contrary to all philosophies which teach the exaltation of self or assertion of self. According to the Bible self is fallen and sinful and worthy only of death (15:19; Ps 51:5; Jer 17:9; Rom 8:7,8,12,13; Gal 5:17,24; Eph 4:22; Col 3:5).

"Himself" does not mean just the body, but the whole person as he is by nature – all that he thinks, desires, and does. The person who lives for self cannot live for God, and living for God is the chief duty and privilege of men (1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:15).

**16:25** Note at 10:39. We must give up self for Christ. People may lose themselves in other things and for other reasons. Only when we give our life to Christ will we find true and abundant life.

**16:26** The world is a passing show (1 John 2:16,17), and we are here only for a little while (Ps 90:10; Heb 9:27). Even if we could gain it

his soul? 27 For the Son of man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his deeds. 28 Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste of death until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

**17** And after six days Jesus took Peter James, and John his brother, and led them up into a high mountain by themselves, 2 and was transfigured in their presence. And his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him.

4 Then Peter, responding, said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you are willing, let us make here three tabernacles, one for you, one for all, it would be the height of foolishness to chose that when we can have something far better and enjoy it forever – inheritance with Christ (Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21-23; 1 Pet 1:4; Rev 21:7). Yet many there are who throw away eternal life for a plot of land or a few pleasures. Even one of the original apostles chose a bag of money rather than eternal life (26:14-16; John 12:6. See also Gen 25:29-34; Heb 12:16,17).

**16:27** Here are two events in the future which are absolutely certain to occur – the return of Christ (19:28; 24:27,30; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16; Heb 9:28), and His judgment of men (25:31,32; Acts 17:31; Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12). All of our choices and activities should be in the light of these two facts.

**16:28** Note on Son of man at 8:20. "Coming in his kingdom" here does not mean His second coming to rule over the earth. The best explanation seems to be that Christ is speaking of the establishment of His kingdom through His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, His sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the spread of His kingdom as recorded in Acts. This verse also seems to be related to His transfiguration which is recorded in the next chapter. Compare 2 Pet 1:16-18.

**17:1** This high mountain was probably Mt Hermon.

**17:2** The disciples were given a brief sight of Christ's glory (Mark 9:23; Luke 9:28,29; John 1:14; 1 Pet 1:16-18. Compare Rev 1:14-16). This was evidence that Christ would fulfill the promise of 16:27. The word "transfigured" means a change in the outer form or appearance that comes from within. Compare Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18 where the same word is used.

**17:3** Moses represented the law, the old covenant with its types and pictures of salvation. Elijah represented the prophets with their visions and promises of the kingdom of God. Moses died about 1400 years before this event. Elijah ascended to heaven nearly 900 years before it. Their appearance here demonstrates the Bible's teaching that people survive after

Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud covered them in shadow, and then a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him."

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were very frightened. 7 And Jesus came and touched them and said, "Get up and do not be frightened."

8 And when they had raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus alone. 9 And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus gave them an order, saying, "Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of man has risen from the dead."

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must first come?"

11 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Elijah

death. We know from Luke 9:31 what Moses and Elijah talked about with Jesus – His death. **17:4** Probably Peter's idea was to prolong the blessed experience on the mountain, to spend as much time as possible there in glory, away from the work, the strains, the problems of life on the plain. But see Mark 9:6. Once again he was minding the things of men (16:23). If Jesus had stayed on the mountain there would have been no salvation for men.

**17:5** See references to "cloud" at Acts 1:9. Here God the Father magnifies the Lord Jesus above Moses and Elijah, and so above all the great men of the Old Testament or any who ever lived. Jesus was the unique Son of God. See 3:17; etc. The eternal living God, the Creator of the universe, tells us to pay the utmost attention to the words spoken by Jesus and recorded in the Bible. Of all who ever spoke Jesus is most worthy of these words – "Listen to Him." Compare John 7:16,17; 12:49,50; Heb 1:1,2. The quality of our life on earth and our whole eternity is dependent on whether we listen to Him – John 10:3,16,27; Acts 3:23. Sad it is that many men listen to other men but refuse to hear the voice of God's only Son. **17:6** Compare Ex 3:6; Isa 6:5; Ezek 1:28; Dan 10:7-9; Rev 1:17.

**17:7** See 8:3,15; 9:29; 20:34; Dan 10:10; Rev 1:17. One touch by the Lord Jesus brings more blessedness than the whole world can give.

**17:8** What here happened to them literally should happen to us spiritually. When the sun rises the stars fade from view. One glimpse of Him and anyone else who ever lived must take a lesser place.

**17:9** The time to declare all the truth about the Lord Jesus had not yet come, but it would come later.

**17:10** "Elijah must first come" – this means appear before the Messiah, the Saviour. This teaching was based on Mal 4:5,6. The disciples believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but they did not understand why Elijah had not come to prepare His way.

**17:11** This seems to be an assertion that Mal 4:5,6 will be fulfilled in the future, that

indeed comes first and restores all things. 12 But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. In the same way the Son of man also will suffer at their hands."

13 Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

14 And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him, knelt down to him and said, 15 "Lord, have mercy on my son. For he is a lunatic, and suffers miserably. For he often falls in the fire, and often in the water. 16 And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him."

17 Then Jesus answered and said, "Faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to me."

18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it went out of him. And the child was cured from that very time.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately, and said, "Why could we not drive it out?"

20 And Jesus said to them, "Because of your

Elijah will come before the day of the Lord – a day which has not come even yet. Note at 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10.

**17:12** Note at 11:14.

**17:13** "John" – at 3:1-12; 11:2-15; 14:1-12.

**17:15** "Lunatic" – or "moon-struck." It was a common idea in those days that the moon could cause some people to act in a crazy manner. Actually this boy's seizures were caused by a demon (v 18), but similar things, such as epileptic seizures, may occur also apart from demonic activity.

**17:17** That "faithless and perverse" generation was one of the worst in Israel's long history – 12:39; 23:33-36; Acts 2:40. This verse gives an indication that all the time Jesus spent on earth He suffered from the unbelief and disobedience of people. It was pain that brought to His lips the words "how long." Do we continue to give Him pain for the same reason?

**17:18** See 4:24; 8:29-34; 9:32,33.

**17:19-21** Verse 17; 6:30; 8:26; 14:31. Jesus had given them authority to drive out demons (10:1). Now, perhaps, for the first time they had tried and failed. It seems the reason was this: they did not have the same faith in Christ and His words as they had on former occasions. Perhaps this time they depended on a mere formula, or even on themselves (after God has enabled us to do something it is possible for us to begin thinking that we can do it without Him). Not all demons are alike. It seems some are stronger and more determined than others, and casting such out requires a stronger faith than is usually the case. Prayer and fasting can be aids to faith.

This illustration of the mountain shows the great power of faith. Actually it is not literal mountains that need to be moved,

unbelief. For truly I say to you, if you have faith *as much* as a mustard seed, you will *to* say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there', and it will move, and nothing will be impossible to you. 21 However this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

22 And while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man will be betrayed into the hands of men, 23 And they will kill him, and the third day he will be raised." And they were plunged into deep sadness.

24 And when they came to Capernaum, those who collected the *temple* tax came to Peter and said, "Doesn't your teacher pay the *temple* tax?"

25 He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus was the first to speak, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes? From their own children, or from foreigners?"

26 Peter said to him, "From foreigners." Jesus said to him, "Then the children are exempt. 27 But so we will not be a stumbling block to them, go to the lake, put in a hook, and take the first fish that

but obstacles and difficulties which are like mountains. And these will all yield when faith is strong enough. See also Mark 11:24; Rom 4:19-21; Hebrews chapter 11.

"Unbelief" (v 20) – some ancient manuscripts have here "little faith". Their unbelief on this occasion did not indicate a complete lack of faith in the Lord Jesus in everything, but a small faith mixed with unbelief, with the unbelief predominating at this time and in this matter.

**17:22,23** See 16:21. They did not understand His words, but realized that something terrible was going to happen. They did not know what His resurrection from the dead would mean (Mark 9:10,32; Luke 18:34). God's people sometimes grieve about something they could rejoice in if their understanding was better. See at Gen 50:20 an illustration of rejoicing instead of grieving.

**17:24** Ex 30:13; 2 Chron 24:9. This tax was for the upkeep and ministry of the temple.

**17:25** Collecting taxes from conquered peoples was the practice in the Roman Empire. Roman citizens did not have to pay.

**17:26** Christ was the Son of God and greater than the temple (12:6). There was no obligation for Him (or for His followers) to pay the temple tax. The children of God are free, and their giving to religious institutions should be voluntary. See 2 Cor 9:7. They are not to be in bondage to the law of Moses or to man-made rules (Gal 5:1,13). Of course these verses have nothing to do with the obligation of Christians to pay taxes to their government. See Rom 13:5-7.

**17:27** Here is another important principle for the children of God. They must not use their freedom in such a careless way that others are unnecessarily offended

comes up. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money. Take that and give *it* to them for me and you."

**18** At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 And Jesus called a little child to him, and set him among them, 3 And said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted, and become as little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself like this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever receives one such little child in my name receives me. 6 But whoever is a cause of stumbling to one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck and *that*

(Rom 14:13,15,19-21). It would seem from this verse that neither Jesus nor Peter had the money on hand for this tax. The total for both was the equivalent of about four days wages for a laborer. The Lord Jesus voluntarily lived His life in poverty (8:20).

In this event see how God can control everything to meet His peoples' needs. Someone had once dropped a coin into the lake (or, for all we know, God created one at this moment). God caused the fish to get the coin in its mouth and come to the very place where Peter would throw out his line (compare Jonah 1:17; 2:10).

To meet the needs of His people God can use many ways, including miraculous ones. See also 1 Kings 17:4,9. The whole world is at His disposal (Ps 24:1; 50:10,11). Let us trust Him and be free from anxiety (6:25-34).

**18:1** This question revealed a big error in the thinking of the disciples – one still very common today. See 20:20,21; Mark 10:35-37. Compare Jer 45:5. It is exceedingly important that those who are tempted to desire great things for themselves learn the lesson Jesus taught here.

**18:2** Here was a living object lesson – a child simple, trusting, humble. Little children do not seek to be great.

**18:3** Mark it down as absolutely certain – those who are ruled by pride and those who seek for their own greatness will never enter God's kingdom, let alone be great in it (unless they repent and humble themselves). Compare 5:3,4; 20:25-28; Isa 57:15; 66:2; Prov 3:34; Luke 9:23; 18:13,14. The first condition for entering God's kingdom is the denial of self – see 16:24-26. All this is the exact opposite of the way men generally think by nature.

**18:4** See also 20:25-27. We can rise in God's eyes only by abasing ourselves and being willing to accept a low place, not by grand aims to promote ourselves and struggles for high positions. If we promote ourselves we may be able to achieve success in men's

he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 "Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! For of necessity there will be stumbling blocks, but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! 8 Therefore if your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw *it* away from you. It is better for you to go into life lame or crippled, than having two hands or two feet to be thrown into everlasting fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pull it out and throw *it* away from you. It is better for you to go into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

10 "Watch out that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven. 11 For the Son of man has come to save that which was lost.

12 "What do you think? If a man has a hundred eyes, but not in God's eyes. This does not mean we should humble ourselves with the purpose of attaining greatness. This would be no humbling of self at all.

**18:5** Compare 10:40-42; 25:31-46.

**18:6** "A cause of stumbling" – the Greek here means to put an obstacle in the way of someone to cause him to fall. The translation of the NIV here "causes. . .to sin" seems misleading. To teach another to sin is a terrible thing (the Jews regarded it as the worst of all sins), but to deal with a child in such a way that he (or she) is stumbled about the way of Christ is a very terrible sin indeed (compare 23:13; Acts 13:8). And the punishment for those who do so will also be terrible – unless they repent and find forgiveness through Christ (12:31). The Greek word translated "millstone" means a very large millstone, the kind pulled round and round by a donkey. Greeks and Romans actually inflicted this kind of punishment on the worst criminals.

**18:7** In this fallen world it is certain that temptations to sin will come to everyone. But this does not mean that men are not responsible when they tempt others. Observe in this verse what is the real source of woe to the world.

**18:8,9** See notes at 5:29,30. Jesus repeated important truths to impress them on His hearers. There are two words here about the punishment of hell not found in 5:29,30 – "everlasting" and "fire" (see also 3:10,12; 5:22; 7:19; 13:40,42,50; 25:41). The purpose of dealing with oneself drastically is to "enter life" – this means to receive eternal life now and to live in God's presence forever.

**18:10** It is all too easy to scorn and look down on the humble and weak. But God appoints His angels for special work in relation to people on earth, and one of them is to watch over God's little ones. See also Ps 34:7; 91:11; Heb 1:14.

**18:11** See Luke 19:10.

**18:12-14** A parable repeated in Luke 15:4-7 with certain changes in wording. See notes

sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go into the mountains, and look for the one that has gone astray? 13 And if it so happens that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine which did not go astray. 14 Just so, it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

15 "Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, alone, between you and him. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not listen, take with you one or two more, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses to listen to the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

18 "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and

whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.

19 "Again, I tell you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I among them."

21 Then Peter came to him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "I do not tell you, 'up to seven times,' but up to seventy times seven.

23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he began to settle *them*, someone was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But since he had no *means* to pay off *the debt*, his master commanded that he, his wife and children, and all

there. We are not to vainly imagine we are better than those who leave the way and fall into sin and look down on them (v 10). There are two possible views about these sheep – they could represent unsaved men (compare Isa 53:6), or else believers in Christ who wander away (Ps 119:176).

Notice the following facts: the sheep here are all owned – they signify God's special property. That is, they are either saved people already, or those whom God has chosen to be saved (John 6:37; 10:16; 17:6; Eph 1:4). The wandering sheep will not be left to wander forever. Christ goes after them. Wandering "sheep" cause great activity in heaven. God's great heart cannot rest as long as there is a single one of His still wandering away. Those brought back are a cause of great joy to God. For other references to sheep and their shepherd see Ps 23; Isa 40:11; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:11-16; John 10:1-29.

**18:15** "Between you and him" means not to tell others until it is clear that reconciliation is impossible. Gossip is not the way to bring peace. The object is to win the brother back to fellowship, not to show everyone how bad he is.

**18:16** Deut 19:15. This means keep trying to get him to accept the truth.

**18:17** "Church" here means the local group of believers. "Heathen" means one who does not worship the one true God, and "tax collector" here signifies one working for the enemies of his people (5:46). This verse means that if a member of a local church will not repent of wrong doing, he should be put out of the fellowship. The idea is to bring him to repentance by losing that which should be of great value to him – the fellowship of God's people. Compare 1 Cor 5:1-5; 6:1-7; 2 Cor 2:6,7.

**18:18** Here we see that all the disciples possessed the same authority to bind and loose as Peter was given in 16:19.

**18:19** This promise is in the context of church

discipline, and gives a word about the kind of prayer made by an assembly that God will answer. There must be oneness of mind, purpose, motive, and trust – a thing often difficult to achieve.

**18:20** The subject is still the local church. A church does not need to be large to have Christ there. Observe that Jesus promises He will be in many places at one time. Throughout the world a great many local churches meet in His name at the same time, and Jesus is with them all. Compare 28:20. This can be true only of God who alone can be in all places at once. Jesus was conscious that He shares God's nature. See Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

**18:21** Verse 15. Peter thought that seven times to forgive a brother was surely all that God could require.

**18:22** This is the same as saying there is really no limit to the number of times God requires us to forgive others. The following parable gives a good reason for this: no matter how often God's children forgive others it is nothing compared to the number of times God has forgiven them.

**18:23-35** Here is one of the great passages on forgiveness in the Bible. We can learn some very important lessons from it.

**18:23** Note on kingdom of heaven at 4:17. God too keeps accounts concerning people and will settle those accounts. He does so because it is just and right to do so.

**18:24** "Talent" – originally meant a balance, then a measure of weight, and finally a sum of money in gold or silver equal to that weight. Our sin against God is compared to an enormous debt (see 6:12). The debt for this one man was the equivalent of some millions of dollars or a few crores of rupees.

**18:25** The amount the servant owed his master would be utterly impossible for him to pay, either in money or in services. In the same way, it is completely impossible for any of us to pay our debt to God. Shall we try to pay with good works? They are like



that he had, be sold and payment made.

26 "Therefore the servant fell down and worshipped him, saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, and let him go, and forgave him the debt.

28 "But that same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. And he seized him and grabbed *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe.' 29 And his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 30 And he was not willing, but went and threw him into prison until he paid the debt.

31 "So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sad, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after calling him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you asked. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 And his master was angry and handed him over to the torturers until he paid all that was owed to him.

filthy rags (Isa 64:6). What men regard as works of merit are worse than worthless in the eyes of the true God. A lifetime of good deeds would not blot out a single sin. Shall we give Him our money? One soul is worth more than the whole world (16:26). Silver and gold cannot purchase our forgiveness (Ps 49:7,8; 1 Pet 1:18).

We have absolutely nothing with which to pay our debt to God - nothing. The selling of people to pay debts was a way of the ancient world. See Lev 25:39; 2 Kings 4:1. But no selling of ourselves, or all who belong to us, could ever purchase forgiveness from God.

**18:26** In his desperation he was promising an impossible thing. And men will give God many such promises when they want something from Him - promises which they can never keep.

**18:27** There was only one way for such a debt to be erased. That was the way of free grace. In His compassion God completely forgives and cancels the repentant and believing sinner's debt toward Him. See Luke 24:46,47; Acts 13:38,39; Rom 3:23-26; Col 2:13; Titus 3:3-7.

**18:28-30** A hundred silver coins (denarii) was the equivalent of a hundred days' wages for a laborer, a very small amount compared to the other debt in this parable. This contrast between the two debts is meant to teach us that our sin against God, our "debt", is far worse than anyone's sin against us. This servant showed himself to be hard and ruthless. Grace shown him had not changed his heart.

**18:31** A Christian treating fellow Christians in such an unmerciful manner shocks and

35 "My heavenly Father will also deal with you in the same way, if each one of you, from your hearts, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

**19** And it happened *that* when Jesus had finished *saying* these words he left Galilee, and came into the region of Judea beyond Jordan. 2 And great crowds followed him, and he healed them there. 3 The Pharisees also came to him, testing him, and saying to him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every cause?"

4 And he answered and said to them, "Have you not read that he who made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, For this cause a man will leave father and mother, and be united to his wife, and the two will be one flesh? 6 So they are no more two, but one flesh. Therefore let not man separate what God has joined together."

7 They said to him, "Then why did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce and send her away?"

8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives. But from the beginning it was not so.

pains God's people.

**18:32** "Wicked" - 25:26; Jam 2:14; etc.

**18:33-35** God requires His children to be forgiving as He is forgiving - 5:7; 6:14,15; Eph 4:32; etc. This is a rule of the kingdom of God. If it is not obeyed there will be severe penalties to suffer somewhere, sometime. Perhaps this is the principal lesson the Lord taught here (v 35). Observe that forgiveness must be "from your heart", and not merely saying words.

God will punish an unforgiving person. The "tormentors" may refer to the sufferings and troubles of this life that will come to God's children if, perchance, they do not forgive others. Or, if the wicked servant is regarded as an unsaved man, they may refer to the pains of hell in the hereafter. The parable cannot mean that a saved person may lose his salvation if he does not forgive others. Saved people learn to forgive others (6:14,15), and they will not be lost (John 6:39,40; 10:28; Rom 5:9; Phil 1:6).

**19:2** See 4:23; 9:3.

**19:3** "Pharisees" - note at 3:7. They often tried to trap Jesus - 22:15,18.

**19:4** Gen 1:27.

**19:5** Gen 2:24.

**19:6** Eph 5:28-33.

**19:7** Deut 24:1-4. The Pharisees were trying to show that Jesus disagreed with the law of Moses and so condemn Him. But they misinterpreted Moses. Moses did not "command" divorce.

**19:8** Because their hearts were hard they did not want God's best, and they were permitted to behave in ways less than the best. Sometimes God gives men their desire when they insist on it, even though it

9 And I tell you, Whoever divorces his wife, except for *the cause of* sexual immorality, and marries another, is committing adultery. And whoever marries her who is divorced is committing adultery."

10 His disciples said to him, "If this is the case between a man and a wife, it is not good to marry."

11 But he said to them, "All *men* cannot receive this statement, only *those* to whom it has been given. 12 For there are some eunuchs who were born that way from *their* mother's womb, and there are some eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive *this*, let him receive *it*."

13 Then little children were brought to him, so that he would put *his* hands on them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, "Permit little children to come

is not good for them (Ps 106:14,15).

**19:9** See notes on divorce at 5:31,32.

**19:10** Apparently they thought that the provision for easy divorce was the only thing that made marriage tolerable! Their low view of marriage needed correcting.

**19:11** Those who are not Christ's disciples cannot be expected to behave in this matter as if they were. Christ's principles are the best and they are only for His people. Others will suffer the consequences of not being His disciples.

**19:12** "Made themselves eunuchs" – surely very few have literally done this, but if it is taken in the sense of abstaining from marriage, then no small number have done so.

"For the kingdom of heaven" does not mean abstaining from marriage in order to gain the kingdom, but to serve without hindrance in the kingdom (1 Cor 7:7,8,26,32-35). But this abstinence from marriage must be voluntary – not forced on anyone by any authority. Compare 1 Tim 4:1-3.

**19:13** In spite of 18:2-6 the disciples may not yet have realized how much He loved children and wanted to bless them.

**19:14,15** See 18:2-4. Jesus always had time for the weak and lowly. Children are welcome to come into His presence at any time and He delights to have them there. He laid hands on them and blessed them, but He did not baptize them. This passage does not teach infant baptism. Indeed, it has nothing whatever to do with baptism.

**19:16-29** Compare Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30. Matthew says this man was young (v 22); Luke says he was a ruler (Luke 18:18); all three Gospels say he was very rich. He had everything that many people desire – youth, position, authority, and wealth. But he was dissatisfied. Compare Eccl 2:1-11,17.

**19:16** This man had mistaken views about the way of salvation. He thought one could earn it by doing good deeds, or perhaps by

to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and went away from there.

16 And, suddenly, someone came and said to him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do, so that I may get eternal life?"

17 And he said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one *is* good but one, *that is* God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

18 He said to him, "Which?" Jesus said, "You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not give false witness, 19 Honour your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

20 The young man said to him, "All these I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be

one exceptionally good deed. Note on eternal life at John 3:16.

**19:17** Jesus was not denying His own goodness. He was saying that if the man regarded Him as a mere human teacher he should not call Him good. All men are sinners (Rom 3:23), and Jesus called even His own disciples "evil" (7:11). This youth's understanding needed to be enlightened to realize that God alone is good, and that Jesus is good only because He is God incarnate and not a mere man (John 1:1,14,18). In other words, if Jesus is truly good He is God, and the youth needed to see this.

Then Jesus pointed him to God's commandments as a way to life. See Lev 18:5. Notes at Lev 18:5; Gal 3:12. Jesus is not teaching salvation by works. This would contradict His own and the Bible's plain teaching in other places (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:47; 14:6; Gal 3:10-12; Eph 2:8,9; Titus 3:3-7). He knew that neither this youth nor any man ever fully kept God's commandments. He has already said that none is good, and if men are not good they will be unable to keep God's good commandments. The young man much needed to understand this. One purpose of the law was to teach men their sinfulness (notes at Ex 19:21-25; Rom 3:20; 7:7; Gal 3:24). Jesus now shows this man that he had not really kept God's commandments, even though he said he had (v 20).

**19:18,19** Ex 20:13-16; Lev 19:18. This last commandment should have opened the man's eyes to his sin, but it did not.

**19:20** He had no doubt lived a moral life and kept the outward forms of the ten commandments. He is an example of an ethical man not corrupted by the more gross sins. But he had not loved his neighbor as himself.

**19:21** The man said he had always loved his neighbor as himself. Yet he had kept his great wealth for his own use. Jesus is saying, "If you have love for your neighbor

perfect, go, sell what you have and give *the money* to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me."

22 But when the young man heard this word, he went away sad, for he had great possessions.

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And I tell you again, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

26 But Jesus looked *at them* and said to them,

you must prove it by your actions. Words are not enough." Does Jesus here demand that we all sell all we have and give it away? The answer is "yes", if a love of money and possessions is the sin that keeps us from following Him. And He demands that all disciples renounce all things in their hearts and give their hearts to Him (Luke 14:33).

There is another commandment which men should fulfill (22:37; Deut 6:5). This man failed to keep that one too. If he had loved God as he should have, he would gladly have given away everything for His sake. But the truth is, he did not truly love either God or his neighbor. He loved himself and his possessions.

"Poor" – see the concern of Jesus for the poor. Compare 11:5; Luke 4:18; 6:20; 11:41; 14:13. Note on "treasure in heaven" at 6:20,21.

**19:22** He was sad because he had failed the test and knew that he had failed. He wanted both eternal life and all he could selfishly enjoy in this life too, and found that Jesus would not accept this principle. Jesus will not permit selfishness to be the reigning principle in the lives of His disciples. They cannot serve both God and money (6:24). And we will all be tested on this point. In fact, we are continually being tested about what we will do with the money and possessions God has given us, whether they be much or little.

We should understand the answer of Jesus to this man who came to him asking for eternal life. Why did he not say to him "Believe in me and you will have eternal life"? (John 3:16; etc). In a way He was saying just that. He was showing that true faith in Him is a powerful force that breaks people free from the things of this world and causes them to value Jesus far above everything else and to receive Him as the Lord of their lives. See note at Acts 22:10. And He was showing that men need to repent of their lack of love for God and man and their clinging to other things. See notes at Matt 3:2; 4:17. If we are not willing to give all we have for Christ and eternal life, we show that we value what we have more than Him and that. And why should God give us something we value less than the pathetic and passing

"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

27 Then answered Peter and said to him, "Look, we have given up everything and followed you. Therefore what will we have?"

28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, you who have followed me, in the renewal when the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has given up houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit everlasting life. 30 But many *who are* first will be

riches of this world?

**19:23,24** The difficulty lies in man's sinful nature which selfishly clings to wealth and possessions and puts them above God.

**19:25** They knew that the desire for riches and possessions was almost universal. And they doubtless knew that in the Old Testament wealth was often a sign of God's blessing (compare Gen 24:35; Job 42:10).

**19:26** Here is a general principle which covers not just the case of the rich, but all men. Salvation is not merely difficult to men, it is utterly impossible to achieve by anything they can do (John 3:3-8; 6:44; Acts 13:38,39; Rom 5:6; 8:3; Jer 13:23). But God can do what men cannot do. And He saves men by grace alone (Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8,9).

**19:27** See 4:18-22. The question seems to mean "If worldly wealth is ruled out what remains as a reward?" Could he not imagine anything better than riches? The question does not show a spiritual mind, and Jesus in the parable of 20:1-16 rebukes it.

**19:28** "Renewal" – see Acts 3:21; Rom 8:19-22; Isaiah chapter 11.

"Throne" – 25:31; Luke 1:32,33; Dan 7:14; Isa 9:6,7; Ps 2:6-9. Twelve thrones speak of their authority with Him – Luke 22:28-30; Rev 3:21; 20:4. Does not the word "Israel" in this verse mean the literal nation of Israel? Compare Acts 1:6,7; Rom 11:25-29; Rev 7:4.

**19:29** Heartily following Christ is to move in a new spiritual realm. To disciples many people become like mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers and children. Many homes and fields are opened to them. Disciples enter into privileges and spiritual relationships a hundred times more blessed, more meaningful than they could ever have apart from Christ (compare 12:48,49; John 17:20-23; 1 Cor 3:21-23; 12:12-27). And their inheritance will be an even higher kind of life – eternal life (v 16).

**19:30** 20:16; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30. Many who hold high positions and are highly regarded in this world (and even in Christian circles) will find in the next world that they are at the very bottom, and those scorned and put down will be exalted to the highest place. This is a word of comfort to

last, and the last *will be* first.

**20** "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. 2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a silver coin for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about nine in the morning, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will receive you whatever is right.' And they went.

5 "He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon, and did the same. 6 And about five in the afternoon he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day long?' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and you will get what is right.'

8 "So when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the labourers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last

the lowly and those who lightly regard themselves, and a warning to lovers of power and position.

**20:1,2** Note on the kingdom of heaven at 4:17. This teaching is connected with the thoughts in the preceding chapter. See 19:27 – where Peter appears almost as a laborer trying to bargain for wages. In 19:30 Jesus teaches that a wrong attitude can cause the first to be last. In this parable He shows what should be the attitude of disciples ward God in the matter of service and rewards. The landowner signifies God. The vineyard signifies His work in the world. God is always looking for workers for His vineyard. Compare 9:36-38; 21:28. The word "agreed" suggests bargaining on their part.

"Silver coin" – in Greek "denarius" – this was the usual daily wage paid to laborers in those days.

**20:3** The third hour was 9 AM. It is a sad fact that even though there is much work in God's kingdom to do, many are doing nothing.

**20:4** There was no bargaining; they made no demands. They trusted the landowner and went to work. This is the attitude all Christ's disciples should have.

**20:6** The eleventh hour was 5 PM. There was only an hour before the day's work would be over.

**20:7** They were willing to work but had lacked opportunity. There are some laborers for God whom He calls late in their lives and who are able to work only a brief time.

**20:8** God will reward those who labor for Him – 5:12; 10:41,42; 16:27; 1 Cor 3:8,14; 2 John 8; Rev 11:18; 22:12.

**20:9** They worked only an hour but received a full day's wage. This revealed the kindness of the landowner. They had not earned a full day's wage but just as those who worked all day, they needed one. Such is

*group* up to the first.'

9 "And when those who *were hired* about five o'clock came, each of them received a silver coin. 10 But when the first *group* came, they supposed that they would receive more, but each of them too received a silver coin. 11 And when they received *it*, they complained against the landowner, 12 saying, 'This last *group* worked *only* one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and heat of the day.'

13 "But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am not doing you any wrong. Didn't you agree with me for a silver coin? 14 Take yours and go your way. I choose to give to this last *group* the same as *I gave* you. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I choose with what I have? Is your eye evil, because I am good?'

16 "So the last will be first, and the first last, for many are called, but few chosen."

17 And going up to Jerusalem Jesus took the twelve disciples aside on the way and said to them, 18 "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the

God's grace. He will give a full reward for faithful work done for even a little while.

**20:10** On the basis of justice they had no right to expect more. They had agreed to one denarius (v 2). This parable does not teach that God always gives the same reward to all of His servants. That would be contrary to His teaching in places like 1 Cor 3:10-15. But when it pleases Him He may give equal rewards for service well done, whether it be for a long time or a brief time. But for a full reward work must be done in the right way and from a right motive.

**20:11,12** They showed the bad spirit that Jesus is teaching His disciples not to have. They grumbled against an act of kindness and goodness. The landlord was guilty of no injustice.

**20:13,14** The Lord will not be happy with complaining disciples who are envious of His goodness to others.

**20:15** This is a principal point of the parable. What God has is God's, and He may do with it as He pleases. He is perfectly free to show grace and kindness to whom He will. Those who trust Him, and are willing to labor for Him according to the word "I will give you whatever is right" (v 4), will find that God's heart is full of grace and goodness. They who have a bargaining spirit with God, or a grasping spirit, or a selfish, envious spirit, will find that they cannot change God's mind.

"Is your eye evil" – probably means "are you envious?"

**20:16** Those who entered the vineyard last became, it seems, first in the landowner's favor and esteem, and vice versa. Let us never forget that no matter how we work for God we are still "unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10), and really deserve nothing.

**20:17-19** Verse 28; 16:21; 17:23; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-33. Once again Jesus speaks of the chief reason He came to earth.

Son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes. And they will condemn him to death, 19 and hand him over to the Gentiles to mock and to beat with a whip and to crucify. And the third day he will rise again."

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's children came with her sons to him, worshipping *him*, and asking him for something. 21 And he said to her, "What do you want?"

She said to him, "Grant that these, my two sons, may sit in your kingdom, the one at your right hand, and the other at the left."

22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am going to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized?" They said to him, "We are able."

23 And he said to them, "Indeed you will drink my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. But to sit at my right hand and at my left, is not mine to give, but *it will be given to those* for whom it is prepared by my Father."

24 And when the ten heard *about this*, they were indignant with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 But it shall

**20:19** For the first time He foretells that it would be the Gentiles who would actually put Him to death and that the method would be crucifixion. On crucifixion see 27:22.

**20:20,21** Zebedee's sons – James and John – joined their mother in this request. See Mark 10:35-37. None of them had yet learned the lesson Jesus taught in 18:4; 20:16; etc. Nor, it seems, had they realized that Jesus was not then going to establish a visible kingdom on earth.

**20:22** See 26:39,42. Drinking His cup means to share in His rejection and sufferings. They said they could drink His cup, but little did they then realize what they were saying.

**20:23** Later they drank from His cup. James was imprisoned and put to death by Herod (Acts 12:1,2). Still later John was punished by banishment to Patmos (Rev 1:9). Indeed all the apostles suffered for their witness for Christ (Acts 5:18,40,41; etc). God's way is suffering then glory (Rom 8:17; etc).

**20:24** Did not they themselves want the chief places in the kingdom? Compare Rom 2:1.

**20:25-27** Verse 16; 18:4. Some lessons need to be taught again and again, even to the best of men. It is not those who selfishly strive for greatness whom God counts great, but the humble, the lowly servant of all. See Jer 45:5. There are two kinds of mentality. The "master" outlook and the "service" outlook. We must reject the one and cultivate the other, and write on our hearts this lesson Jesus taught. The disciples at that time were all for self-promotion. Jesus was for self-sacrifice. We know who was greatest.

not be so among you. But whoever wants to be great among you, must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave, 28 just as the Son of man came to serve, not to be served, and to give his life a ransom for many."

29 And as they were leaving Jericho, a great crowd followed him. 30 And, suddenly, two blind men sitting by the way side, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, son of David."

31 And the crowd rebuked them so that they would keep quiet, but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, son of David."

32 And Jesus stood still and called them and said, "What do you want me to do for you?"

33 They said to him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."

34 So Jesus had compassion *on them* and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

**21** And when they drew near Jerusalem, and arrived at Bethphage, at the mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied up and a colt with it.

**20:28** "Came to serve" – for other reasons why Jesus came to earth see note at 5:17. The Son of man (Jesus) was a willing, glad servant to God and to men – Isa 42:1; Luke 12:37; 22:27; John 13:13-16; Rom 15:8; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:7.

"Ransom" – the noun means that which is given to buy back from bondage. The verb means to pay a price to deliver something or someone. It is similar in meaning to the word "redeem." Compare Ex 21:30; Lev 25:50; Prov 13:8; Job 33:24; Hos 13:14. Men are in bondage to sin and Satan (John 8:34,44; Acts 26:18; Rom 6:16-18; Eph 2:1-3). The price to buy them back was the life of the Son of God. This is the great work He came to do (Rom 3:23-25; 1 Cor 6:20; Gal 3:13; Eph 1:7; 1 Pet 1:19). What do the words a ransom "for many" mean? He died for all (1 Tim 2:6), but only those who believe and receive Him are actually delivered from bondage.

**20:29** "Jericho" – a town in the Jordan valley just north of the Dead Sea.

**20:30** Note on Son of David at 1:1.

**20:32** Cries for mercy from the poor and helpless always reach the ears of the Lord Jesus (8:3; Ps 34:6; Rom 10:12,13). This verse indicates His desire to serve and to help those who call to Him.

**20:34** See 9:36; 14:14.

**21:1** The mount of Olives is to the east of Jerusalem. From its top one can look down on the city.

**21:2,3** Here is an example of Christ's knowledge of what was going on in another place

Untie *them*, and bring *them* to me. 3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them', and he will send them at once."

4 All this was done so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look! Your King is coming to you,  
meek, and sitting on a donkey  
and a colt the foal of a donkey.

6 And the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and had *him* sit on them. 8 And a very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road. Others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 And the crowds that went ahead and that followed, cried out, saying, "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

10 And when he came into Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred *and* saying, "Who is this?"

11 And the crowd said, "This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

(see also John 1:47-50).

**21:4,5** Zech 9:9. The King rides into His royal city. This was an entrance suitable to the meek and lowly one (11:29), but not what men in general would count suitable. "Daughter of Zion" means Jerusalem. Note on "daughter" at Isa 1:8; 23:12.

**21:6,7** Christians have the privilege of serving a king who knows all that is going on and who gives them the clearest instructions. All they need to do is obey.

**21:8** Compare 2 Kings 9:13.

**21:9** Hosanna comes from Hebrew and was a prayer meaning "save." But it became a way of expressing praise, indicating that the one who could save was present. Note on Son of David at 1:1. Some were willing to accept Jesus as Messiah, God's appointed king (Ps 118:25,26).

**21:10,11** Jesus had spent very little time in Jerusalem and had little public ministry there. The leaders knew Him but many of the people did not.

**21:12** Mark 11:11,15-18; Luke 19:45-47; John 2:12-16. Jesus was gentle and humble in heart (11:29), but bold as a lion when God's honor was involved and mighty in strength to fight evil (Rev 5:5). Mark's Gospel makes it clear that this event occurred the day after Jesus entered Jerusalem.

**21:13** "Thieves" - Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11. Evidently in the very compound devoted to the worship of the one true and holy God, they were cheating the people who came to worship. Their greed and crookedness aroused the anger of God's holy Son. What makes a person angry is an indication of his character. Compare v 15. They were not the last of those who try to enrich themselves

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and drove out all those who sold and bought in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers, and the seats of those who sold doves, 13 and said to them, "It is written, My house will be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, and saying, "Hosanna to the son of David!" they were very displeased, 16 and said to him, "Do you hear what they are saying?"

And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, Out of the mouth of little children and nursing infants you have provided praise?"

17 And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there. 18 Now in the morning as he returned to the city, he was hungry. 19 And when he saw a fig tree along the way, he went to it, and found nothing on it except leaves, and said to it, "May no more fruit grow on you forever." And immediately the fig tree withered away.

under the cloak of religion (compare John 12:4-6; 1 Tim 6:5; Jude 11). And Christ is as angry about this now as He was then.

**21:15** Note on priests at Ex 28:1. They were not indignant because of the evil going on in the temple compound, but when great good was done there, and great glory to God resulted from it, they were angry. Such is man's fallen nature. Of course the thing that provoked them was others calling Jesus the Son of David—the Messiah of Israel. They did not want to accept this or hear it.

**21:16** "Have you never read?" - 12:3,5; 19:4; 21:42; 22:31. They claimed to be experts in interpreting the Old Testament, but were ignorant of many important matters. Such people are still with us. Jesus here quoted Ps 8:2.

**21:17** Bethany was a small town over the crest of the Mount of Olives to the east, about 3 kilometers from Jerusalem.

**21:18** See 4:2. Jesus had both a human nature and divine nature.

**21:19** It was the nature of fig trees that fruit appeared with full leaf, and sometimes before full leaf. If it had leaves it should have had fruit, even though it was early in the year for fig trees to have either leaves or fruit (Mark 11:13). The time was April, the full leaf and fruit bearing season was June. This tree was deceiving. It promised what it did not have. In some ways it was a picture of the nation of Israel or of the city of Jerusalem. Compare Luke 13:6-9. It is also a picture of any person, any church which professes much but produces little or nothing. What is the use of great foliage if there is no fruit?

Sometimes in the Bible trees symbolize

20 And when the disciples saw *this*, they were amazed and said, "How quickly the fig tree withered away!"

21 Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you will do not only *what was done* to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be moved, and thrown into the sea', it will be done. 22 And everything that you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

23 And when he came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him while he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?"

24 And Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you one thing. If you tell me this, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven', he will say to us, 'Then why did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'From men', we are afraid of the people, for everyone holds John to be a prophet." 27 And they answered Jesus and said, "We cannot tell."

And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. 28 But what do you think? A *certain* man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go work today in my vineyard.' 29 He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterwards he repented and went. 30 And he came to the second *son* and said the same thing.

nations or individuals (3:10; 7:16-20; Ps 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12; Jer 11:16,17; Ezek 17:22-24). It is not stated here in Matthew that this fig tree represents Israel, but it may be so. Israel certainly had plenty of "leaves" but little or no "fruit." Compare v 43; Isa 5:1-4.

**21:21,22** Observe that the lesson Jesus taught His disciples from this incident of the fig tree was not a lesson about judgment on Israel, but of the power of faith. Prayer without faith may lack power, but believing prayer will accomplish wonders – 17:20; Mark 11:23,24; Luke 17:6; Jam 1:6; 5:16.

**21:23** Their meaning was that Jesus' activities were not authorized by the religious leaders of the nation and that therefore He had no right to do as He was doing.

**21:24-27** Jesus knew these men were cowardly and dishonest. They did not want the truth, but were determined to oppose and defeat Him. So He put them on the horns of a dilemma. And He had nothing more to say to them when they revealed their character by their answer.

**21:28-32** This little parable was spoken to the Jewish religious leaders and its meaning is clear. It also is a help in understanding the incident of the fig tree in vs 18,19.

And he answered and said, 'I *will go*, sir,' but he did not go. 31 Which of these two did the will of *his* father?"

They said to him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you with the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. And when you saw *this*, you did not repent afterwards, so that you might believe him.

33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it, dug a place for a winepress in it, built a tower, rented it out to vine growers, and went to a far country. 34 And when fruit season drew near, he sent his servants to the vine growers to get his share of the fruit. 35 And the vine growers took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another.

36 "Again, he sent other servants, more than the first *time*. And they did the same thing to them.

37 "But last of all he sent to them his son, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

38 "But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and take over his inheritance.' 39 And they caught him, threw *him* out of the vineyard, and killed *him*.

40 "Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine growers?"

The first son signifies the "tax collectors and prostitutes" of v 32. They made no pretense of being God's servants, but openly disobeyed Him and did as they pleased, but later they repented and did God's will. The second son signifies the religious leaders. They made great claims of obedience to God, but actually were not obedient, and did not repent of their inner disobedience and hypocrisy.

**21:33-40** This parable was also addressed to the Jewish religious leaders, and is very clear in meaning. Jesus was speaking of God's kingdom (v 43). The landowner (v 33) signifies God. The vineyard is the nation of Israel. See Ps 80:8-11; Isa 5:1-4; Jer 12:10. "Hedge" suggests separation from other nations (see Ex 19:4-6; Lev 20:24; 1 Kings 8:53). "Tower" (or "watchtower") suggests the earnest desire to protect the nation against enemies. "Winepress" signifies the intention to have a crop. "Vine growers" means the leaders of the nation.

"Went to a far country" – after planting Israel in Canaan by miraculous activity God seemed to withdraw to some extent behind the scenes. Those sent to enquire about fruit (v 34) were the prophets (Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5). In vs 35,36 we have a brief

41 They said to him, "He will bring those evil men to a bad end, and will rent out *his* vineyard to other vine growers who will give him the fruit in its season."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"

43 Therefore I tell you, The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing its fruit. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken, but the one on whom it falls, it will grind him to powder."

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they saw that he spoke about them. 46 But when they looked *for a* way to seize him, they were afraid of the crowd, because they took him for a prophet.

**22** And answering Jesus again spoke to them in parables, and said, 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a

history of the way Israel treated the prophets God sent to them. See also 5:12; 23:30-37; Acts 7:52; Heb 11:36-38. The "son" of v 37 signifies the Lord Jesus. Verses 38,39 give a prediction of what the Jewish leaders would do to the Lord Jesus. Jesus wanted these leaders to apply the parable (v 40), to condemn themselves by their own words.

**21:41** Little did they know they were foretelling their own punishment.

**21:42-44** The Lord Jesus here brings out the spiritual application of the parable. He is the rejected "stone" of Ps 118:22,23. God would remove His vineyard (the kingdom of God) from the control of the Jewish nation which rejected His son (John 1:11), and give it to others. These were peoples of other nations who would receive Christ. They soon became the vast majority of all those in the churches (which is, of course, true to this day). Verse 44 reveals the doom of those who will not receive the Lord Jesus as Messiah and Lord and Saviour. Compare Acts 4:11; Rom 9:32,33; 1 Pet 2:6-8.

"Scriptures" (v 42) – the Old Testament (John 2:22; 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16).

**21:46** They did not look for a way to repent and be saved from the threatened punishment revealed in this parable. They looked only for a way to silence the one who revealed their sin and unbelief. Learn from this what the fallen heart of man is like, and beware of falling into the same error.

**22:1** "Them" – 21:23,45.

**22:2** Note on kingdom of heaven at 4:17. Compare the following parable with Luke 14:15-24. This parable also is very clear in its teachings. The "king" is God the Father. The "son" is the Lord Jesus. The "wedding" suggests the great truth that the true Church is the bride of Christ (9:15; John 3:27-29; Rom 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:25-32).

marriage for his son. 3 And he sent out his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding, but they would not come.

4 "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited: Now I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and fattened animals *have been* killed, and everything *is* ready. Come to the marriage.'

5 "But they made light *of it* and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest took his servants, mistreated *them* and killed *them*."

7 "But when the king heard *of it*, he was angry, and he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding *feast* is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and invite everyone you find to the marriage.'

10 "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together everyone they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled

**22:3** The "invited" signify the Jewish nation. They were God's chosen people and received the first invitation (10:5,6; 15:24). They refused to accept God's message (23:37-39; John 1:11; 5:40). In Old Testament times God continually sent His servants (Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5). In New Testament times He did likewise – 23:34; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8.

See the message God's servants have to deliver – everything was "prepared" and "ready." God's kingdom, the salvation He wants men to receive and enjoy, is altogether the work of God. It is prepared and ready in Christ. Men need not prepare anything but should come just as they are – 11:28; Isa 55:1-3; John 6:37; Rev 22:17.

**22:5** This was the reaction of many in Israel in those days (it is the same all over the world today). God invited them to an eternal feast of good things in Christ. They ignored God's invitation and occupied themselves with the things of this world.

**22:6** Others in Israel (as in many places in the world today) were more violent in their reaction – see 21:35,36; Acts 4:3; 5:18,40; 7:58; 8:3; 12:1-3; 14:5,19; 17:5; 21:30; 23:2. This showed a hatred for the King, His Son, and His servants (John 15:18-24).

**22:7** God's anger will surely come on all those who mistreat and persecute His servants and reject His invitations (compare 2 Thess 1:6-8). It came on Israel, and these words were fulfilled in 70 AD. Compare Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24. The army was the Roman army, but it was God's army too because He used it for His purposes. Compare Isa 10:5,6; etc.

**22:8,9** God will not have an empty house. If some refuse His invitation He will find others who will come. Here the Gentile nations are meant (8:10-12; etc).

**22:10** "Both bad and good" means people of good reputation and bad, those morally



with guests. 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who was not wearing a wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, 'Tie him up hand and foot, take him away, and throw *him* into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 "For many are called, but few *are* chosen."

15 Then the Pharisees went away and plotted how they could trap him in *his* talk. 16 And they sent to him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God in truth. And you do not show favoritism to anyone, for you do not regard a man's appearance. 17 So tell us what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test me, *you* hypocrites?"

good and bad, keepers of the law and breakers of the law. Of course, in God's eyes none are good (19:17). All are sinners (7:11; Rom 3:23), but some are worse sinners than others. However, all are invited to come to Christ and receive salvation.

**22:11** The people who were there had come in directly from the streets. In the banquet hall they could not have had special wedding clothes on unless they had been provided by the king himself (compare 2 Kings 10:22). Therefore it seems clear that the man without wedding clothes had refused to accept the ones that the king had there for this purpose. These wedding clothes speak of the righteousness of Christ which God freely gives to all who receive Him as Lord and Saviour (compare Isa 61:10; Zech 3:1-5; Rom 1:17; 3:21-24; 10:10; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:7-9).

**22:12** This man is a picture of those who seem to accept God's invitation, but refuse His provision for righteousness. They ignorantly suppose their own righteousness is sufficient. There are many like this in the churches. When the king examined him he could not say a single word in his defense. He should have had on the proper garment and knew it. When such people stand before God they will be condemned, guilty and speechless.

**22:13** To refuse or neglect God's provision is a serious matter indeed, and will have terrible penalties. Compare Heb 2:3. On "gnashing of teeth" see 8:12; 13:42,50; 24:51; 25:30. What contrast here between this and the delights and rejoicing of the wedding feast.

**22:14** The Gospel invitation goes out to a great many, but only a comparatively few show themselves to be actually the chosen of God, the elect (Mark 13:20; John 6:37; 15:19; 17:6; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13).

**22:15-46** These verses record a series of questions. The first three were asked by

19 Show me the tax money." And they brought a silver coin to him. 20 And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription *is* this?"

21 They said to him, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

22 When they heard *these words*, they were amazed and left him and went away.

23 The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him, 24 saying, "Teacher, Moses said, If a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and have offspring for his brother. 25 Now there were seven brothers with us. And the first, after marrying a wife, died, and having no children, he left his wife to his brother. 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, up to the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman also died. 28 Therefore in the resurrection, of these seven whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

Jesus' enemies to try to trap Him. The last question was asked by Jesus and silenced His enemies. The questions asked by His enemies reveal the character and interests of the three kinds of people who asked them.

**22:15** See Luke 20:20.

**22:16** Herodians were a worldly, politically-minded group who supported the rights of the family of Herod to rule Israel. The Pharisees were usually opposed to them, but now sought their help to trap Jesus if possible (compare Luke 23:12). The words of the Herodians here reek with hypocrisy and flattery.

**22:17** The Romans with Caesar as their emperor ruled Israel and demanded taxes from them. If Jesus said they should not pay taxes He could be charged with treason. If He said they should pay taxes He would be charged with being on the side of Rome against the people of Israel.

**22:18** Jesus knew what was in men - 9:4; 12:25; Luke 6:8; 9:47; 11:17; John 2:24,25; 6:61,64; 13:11.

**22:19** "Silver coin" - in Greek "denarius", a Roman coin. On one side was the emperor's portrait, on the other was his name.

**22:21** If Caesar was ruling and minting the money in use, it was right to pay taxes to him for government administration. Compare Rom 13:1,6,7. People have duties to the state. But they should give to God their hearts, their worship, their offerings, their lives. The state has some claims on its citizens, God has far more. Both must be acknowledged.

**22:22** The very wise answer of Jesus amazed His enemies. But since they did not want the truth they went away to plot further things against Him.

**22:23** Note on Sadducees at 3:7. With their question they naively hoped to show that the doctrine of the resurrection was absurd, and that Jesus was foolish to believe it. Notes on resurrection at John 5:28,29.

**22:24** See Deut 25:5,6.

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "You blunder, not knowing the Scriptures, or the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they do not marry, and are not given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven. 31 But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

33 And when the crowd heard *this*, they were astonished at his teaching.

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *him a question* to test him, saying, 36 "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38 This is the first and great

commandment. 39 And the second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, "What do you think of Christ? Whose son is he?"

They said to him, "*The son of David.*"

43 He said to them, "How then does David by *the Spirit* call him Lord, saying, 44 The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool? 45 If David called him Lord, how then is he his son?"

46 And no one was able to answer him a word. And from that day on no one dared to ask him any more *questions*.

**23** Then Jesus spoke to the crowd and to his disciples, 2 saying, "The scribes and the

**22:29** The two errors of the Sadducees are still very common, even among Christian leaders and ministers – ignorance of the teachings of the Bible and of the power of God. Anyone ignorant of these two things will certainly fall into serious error in their thinking, even though they may be highly intelligent and well educated in other matters.

**22:30** Here Jesus affirms the truth of the resurrection. See also Luke 14:14; John 5:29; 11:25. But He says there will be a new order of things, a new kind of life for those who are raised from the dead. For them marriage will have no part. In this one matter they will be like the angels in heaven. This does not at all mean that in all other respects they become angels or like angels.

**22:31,32** "God of Jacob" – Ex 3:6. Jesus could have used other Old Testament references which speak of the resurrection (Job 19:25,26; Ps 16:10,11; Dan 12:2; etc). But He quotes from the books of Moses because the Sadducees regarded them as having the greatest authority of any in the Bible. And He shows they had not even understood that portion of Scripture. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had all passed away. A person who is dead – body, soul, and spirit – can have no God, and God cannot be their God.

Jesus means that their spirits still live and await the resurrection, and that resurrection is needed if men are to be called fully living. And a person whose spirit has been separated from his body in death is not the full person God created and intended. This implies that God will unite an individual's spirit and body in the resurrection, and continue to be the God of the full person. God is not the God of decayed corpses.

**22:33** Verse 22; 7:28; etc.

**22:35** "Lawyer" – an expert in the law of Moses.

**22:36** This was a question sometimes debated by Jewish scholars of that day, and they were divided into various camps. This

lawyer (expert in the law of Moses) wanted to test Jesus' grasp of the law to see if He would commit Himself to one of these camps. **22:37-40** Jesus passed the test. He went right to the very heart of the law and showed that the basis of all the commands God gave was love. Verse 37 is from Deut 6:5 and verse 39 is Lev 19:18. See also Rom 13:8-10.

**22:41-45** His opponents had asked Him questions. Now He would ask them some. The prevailing idea about the Messiah was that he would be a mere man who would ascend the throne of David and reign powerfully and gloriously over Israel. These questions of Jesus show that this idea was wrong. The Messiah was not to be a mere human descendant of David, but the Lord of David (the Hebrew word for Lord "Adonai" was often used in the Old Testament for God Himself). Here it means Jesus. See also Luke 1:43; 2:11; Acts 2:36; Phil 2:10,11; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:5.

**22:42** "Christ" means the Messiah promised in the OT. See notes on Son of David at Matt 1:1.

**22:43** Notice the words "by the Spirit." Jesus here confirms the divine inspiration of psalm 110, as He did the whole Old Testament at other times (4:4; 5:18; 15:3,4; John 10:35).

**22:44** See note at Ps 110:1. The Jews recognized that this psalm was about the Messiah.

**22:45** They well knew that fathers do not call their sons "Lord." But they could not explain why David did so.

**22:46** It was becoming obvious to everyone that He could answer all their questions, but they could answer none of His. They had tried to trap Him but were trapped themselves (compare Ps 57:6).

**23:1** The following denunciation of the religious leaders of that day was spoken somewhere openly in the temple compound. See 24:1.

**23:2** "Pharisees" – 3:7. "Sit in Moses seat" means they were regarded as the successors

Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, observe *it* and do *it*, but do not do according to their works, for they say, but do not do. 4 For they tie up heavy burdens, hard to carry, and lay *them* on men's shoulders, but they are not willing *to lift* one of their fingers to move them.

5 "But they do all their deeds to be seen by men. they make their phylacteries broad, and enlarge the borders of their cloaks, and love the places of honour at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, 7 and greetings in the market-places, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

8 "But you must not be called Rabbi, for one is your Master, the Christ, and you are all brothers. 9 And do not call any *man* on the earth your 'father,' for one is your Father, who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called masters, for one is your Master, the Christ.

11 "But he that is greatest among you shall be of Moses as teachers of God's law.

**23:3** Insofar as they truly taught the law of God given through Moses the people of Israel were obligated to obey them, even though they did not themselves obey the law. Compare 2:17-24. Practicing what one preaches must be the constant aim of every Christian leader (1 Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:3).

**23:4** For sinful men (and all men are sinful) the law of Moses was a burden hard to be carried. See Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1. Israel's religious leaders made it even harder to bear by interpreting it very strictly and adding a great number of rules and regulations. How different is the way of the Lord Jesus - 11:28-30!

**23:5** See 6:1-5,16. "Phylacteries" - these were tiny boxes in which they kept verses of Scripture. They wore them on their forehead or arm (compare Ex 13:9; Deut 6:8).

"Enlarge the borders" - or "tassels" or "fringes" (Num 15:38,39; Deut 22:12). These hypocrites thought that if they made these more conspicuous men would regard them as more pious. They missed the real purpose of phylacteries and tassels. God ordered their use as an aid to remembering to obey God's Word, not so that men could impress others.

**23:6,7** Here is another common error among religious leaders in general (including Christian leaders). Many love to be regarded highly, to have the places of honor, and to be called "reverend" or "doctor" or "bishop" or "father" or "master." Let us all beware of this. Let us remember the teaching of the Lord Jesus in vs 11,12; 18:4; 20:25-28; etc. Denying self, not exalting self, must be our practice (16:24; Luke 9:23).

**23:8** Rabbi means a respected religious teacher. The one teacher all Christians have is Christ (v 10). He appoints human teachers to teach His people (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 2:7; Heb 5:12), but they should recognize that their authority and teaching

your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For you neither go in *yourselves*, nor allow those who are entering to go in.

14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers. Therefore you will receive the greater condemnation.

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel around sea and land to make one convert, and when he has become one, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound *by his oath*.' 17 *You* fools and blind! For

come from Christ alone, and not exalt themselves.

**23:9** Jesus is not speaking of ordinary family relationships. We all have fathers and may call them such. But He is speaking of religious matters and is warning against the error of allowing a human being to usurp the place only God should have. There is always a tendency among people, even religious people, to make too much of men, too little of God.

**23:11** See 20:25-28.

**23:12** 1 Sam 2:8; Ps 18:27; Prov 3:34; Isa 57:15; Ezek 21:26; Luke 1:52; 14:11; Jam 4:6.

**23:13** "Woe" indicates terrible punishment when God brings them to account before His throne. The Lord pronounced this first woe against them because they tried to keep people from believing in Him, and He knew He was the only way into God's kingdom (Luke 11:52; John 9:22; 12:42. Compare Acts 13:8-11). This terrible sin is still common today. It will cause those guilty of it to sink to the lowest depths of hell.

See a very similar saying of Jesus at Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47. Their sin was cheating the helpless and then trying to cover up their crimes with religious activities. Compare Isa 1:10-17.

**23:14** "For a show" - this is the whole purpose of some people's religion, and all it amounts to.

**23:15** They did not try to turn men to God, but to themselves, and to make converts to their own group. This is an empty and foolish thing which men do for their own glory. It has no part in true Christianity. Compare Acts 20:30; 2 Cor 4:5. The Pharisees had great zeal, but it was misdirected and its results were disastrous. Their "converts" became worse than themselves. See what Jesus calls both teachers and converts - sons of hell. Compare John 8:44.

**23:16** "Blind" - on spiritual blindness see

which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold? 18 And, *you say*, whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is bound *by his oath*! 19 You fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift? 20 Therefore whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it. 22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and by him who sits on it.

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but you have neglected the weightier *matters* of the Law: justice, mercy, and faith. These you should have practiced, without neglecting the other. 24 Blind guides! *You* strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, so that the outside of

them also may be clean.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Just so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets, and decorate the tombs of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in *shedding* the blood of the prophets. 31 Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are the children of those who killed the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of *the guilt* of your fathers. 33 *You* snakes, *you* brood of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?

34 "Therefore, now I am sending prophets, and wise men, and scribes to you, and *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will beat with whips in your synagogues and persecute

vs 17,19,24; 15:14; John 12:40; 2 Cor 3:14; 4:4; 2 Pet 1:9; 1 John 2:11.

"Swears" – see 5:33-35. Here in vs 16-22 Jesus shows how the Pharisees in their spiritual blindness turned everything upside down and made much of the small, and little of the great.

**23:23** "Tithes" – Gen 28:22; Lev 27:30; Num 18:21; Deut 14:22; Mal 3:8. Again we see the Pharisees emphasis on very small matters and their utter neglect of the really important matters – Isa 1:17; Micah 6:8; etc.

**23:24** The gnat was the smallest of the animals regarded by the Jews as "unclean", the camel was one of the largest. See Lev 11:4,20-25. Pharisees strained their drinking water through a cloth to keep from swallowing a tiny "unclean" animal. In spiritual matters they paid much attention to tiny details but gulped down huge errors. In all this they were typical of many religious people.

**23:25,26** Here is another example of how the Pharisees were careful about small things and neglected the great. They emphasized the ceremonial and formal matters of religion (the outside of the "cup" and "dish"), and neglected the vastly more important inner state of the mind and heart. Evidently they could not see that before God the outer things of religion are of no use whatever to the person who is corrupt in his heart. Greed, self-indulgence, and inner uncleanness cannot be erased by ceremonial washings or observances of religious rules and regulations. Compare Isa 1:11-18; etc.

**23:27,28** Again Jesus points out the terrible error of emphasizing the outer things and neglecting the inner. He also revealed their purpose – they wanted to appear righteous

to men (v 5), but they did not care what God saw in their hearts. All their religious activity was to impress men and gain their greedy ends. The result was that those men who were so anxious to avoid any "unclean-ness" from without, were full of uncleanness within. And they made others unclean. See note at Luke 11:44. May God give us all the good sense to recognize this evil and avoid it.

**23:29-32** Hypocrites and those who are ignorant of themselves may think they are better than others and that they are not the sinners their ancestors were. It is always a large error for anyone to think he or she is better than others (Luke 18:9; Rom 2:1; 3:9,23). The Pharisees should have known from the Old Testament that all are sinners and that people of one generation are likely to do as their fathers did. Each generation adds to the sins of previous ones, and the mass of guilt in any nation continually increases. At last one generation "fills up the measure" of sin, and God will not permit them to go any further, and judgment falls (Gen 15:16; 2 Kings 17:7-23; 2 Chron 36:15-19).

So it was with the Jews of Christ's day. They condemned their ancestors for murdering the prophets, but they themselves were plotting to murder the greatest prophet of all, the Son of God Himself.

**23:33** See 3:7; 12:34; Ps 140:3; Rom 3:13.

**23:34** Jesus means the apostles, evangelists, and teachers He would send to preach and teach His gospel. Compare Luke 11:49. The Jewish leaders would treat them as their ancestors had treated the prophets of the Old Testament (10:17,23; 24:9; John 15:20,21; Acts 5:17,18,33,40; 7:57-60; 14:19).

from city to city, 35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zachariah the son of Berachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. 36 Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *you* who kill the prophets, and stone those who are sent to you, how often I would have gathered your children together, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not *have it!* 38 Now your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, You will not see me from now on until you say,

**23:35,36** Abel was the first man ever murdered (Gen 4:8; Heb 11:4). There is no record of the murder of the Zechariah of Zech 1:1. Still he may be the one Jesus referred to here. Or Jesus may have referred to Zechariah the son of Jehoiada whose murder is recorded in 2 Chron 24:21,22. It is possible that this Zechariah also had an ancestor named Berachiah.

"Son of" may mean descendent of (1:1). The murder of Zechariah occurred some centuries before the Pharisees lived. Yet Jesus charged them with it. In other words, they were one with their ancestors in those acts of wickedness. Their hearts and thoughts and attitudes were no better. They were the last generation of many which had persecuted God's servants, and they were the worst of all. And they would pay the penalty for it (Luke 13:34,35; 19:41; 21:20-24. See note at Ps 79:8).

**23:37** "How often" – it was Jehovah, the God revealed in the Old Testament, who had longed to protect and bless and nourish the people of Jerusalem (Ps 102:12,13; 126:1; 132:13-17; Isa 37:32; 40:9-11; 49:14-16). Here Jesus says it was He Himself who had longed to do it. In other words, He knew He was the incarnation of Jehovah. He did not desire the punishment of Jerusalem. He was willing and, indeed, he was longing for Jerusalem's salvation. The lack of willingness was on their part. Compare John 5:40.

**23:38** These words were spoken just before Jesus left the temple (24:1), and "house" probably means the temple. As happened once before, God was abandoning the Jews of Jerusalem to themselves (Ezek 10:4, 18,19; 11:22,23). Once again they had rejected Him and once again would have to suffer the consequences. As far as we know Jesus did not enter the temple again.

**23:39** Ps 118:26. When Jesus entered Jerusalem a crowd of His followers said these very words (21:9). But the majority, including the leaders of the nation, refused to say them and rejected their Messiah. Jesus here speaks of His second coming. Then Israel will receive Him. See Zech 12:10-14; Rom 11:26-29.

#### **Note on hypocrisy**

Of all chapters in the Bible this one reveals most clearly the nature of religious

'Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

**24** And Jesus went outside, and was going away from the temple, and his disciples came to *him* to show him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone on another, that will not be thrown down."

3 And while he was sitting on the mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of your coming, and of the

hypocrisy. Let us measure ourselves by the following:

Hypocrites like to tell others what to do, but will not do those things themselves (vs 2,3).

They do not care how heavy the burdens they put on others – they have no compassion (v 4).

In religion their sole object is to get a reputation among men (v 5) – pleasing God is not in their thoughts.

They like any outward display that causes others to think they are pious (v 5).

They love for others to honor them (vs 6,7).

The purpose of their religious activities is to make converts for themselves, and they hope to make a name for themselves for zeal and success in the ministry (vs 14,15).

They are spiritually blind, but think they are quite capable of teaching others (five times Jesus called them blind – vs 16, 17, 19, 24, 26).

They substitute small things for great, and think highly of themselves for zealously following the small (vs 16-24).

They care little for justice and mercy for others, or being faithful themselves (v 23).

Their emphasis is on outer things, not the inner things of the heart, and if they appear all right to men, they do not care how filthy they are inside and in secret (vs 25-28).

They are ignorant of their own nature and boast in a goodness they think they have but do not have (vs 29-32).

Hypocrisy is not a small, insignificant or laughable sin. It is cruel and murderous, totally opposed to God and the true people of God (vs 33,34). The fate of hypocrites is clearly revealed in vs 32, 36, 38. Let us flee from any temptation to hypocrisy as we would from a deadly danger – which it is.

**24:2** Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6. This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD. The Roman general Titus and his army utterly destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

**24:3** Observe that the disciples asked three questions. In the words which follow the Lord Jesus answered all three. In Luke 21:7 questions about Christ's second coming and the end of the age are omitted (Mark 13:4 also omits them). In Luke 21:8-28 Jesus answered the question about the destruction of Jerusalem and said little about the end of this age. But in Matthew (it seems to this writer) we have His answers to the questions

end of the world?"

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you are not troubled, for all *these things* must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these *are* the beginning of birth pains.

9 "Then they will hand you over to suffering, and will kill you. And you will be hated by all nations

about the end of the age and His second coming. In some respects the events of 70 AD are a picture of the situation as it will be at the end of this age.

**24:4** If Christians had heeded this warning there would not have been so many led astray throughout this age. Jesus knew how easily even the best of men can be deceived and how carefully they need to guard against it. Compare 7:10; Rom 16:18; 1 Cor 6:9; Gal 3:1; Eph 5:6; Col 2:4; 2 Thess 2:3; Jam 1:22; 1 John 1:8; Rev 12:9; 20:8. It was more important for the disciples (and for us) that they be not deceived than that they should know what would happen at the end of this age.

**24:5** This was true before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and throughout this age. It will be true especially before Christ's second coming (vs 23-25).

"Christ" – or "Messiah" (also v 23).

**24:6-8** This was true before Jerusalem fell, and true ever since. Perhaps Jesus meant that there would be more of such things as the age came near its end. Christ's disciples should not be alarmed when such things happen, as though they were to be unexpected and strange.

**24:8** Notice the phrase "the beginning of birth pains." The new age to come will be ushered in by many pains and sorrows in this present age (compare Rom 8:22). And wars, famines, and earthquakes will be only the beginning of those pains that will come at the age's end.

**24:9** See 10:17,22; 23:34; John 15:18-21; 16:2,33. The Lord Jesus never promised His disciples that they would have an easy time in life. Nor did His disciples promise this to other believers (Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3; 1 Pet 4:12). The world which crucified Christ will not love those who live as He did and teach what He taught.

**24:10** Trouble, better than anything else, reveals what people are. It strengthens and purifies those who have faith. It reveals that others who merely profess to have faith really do not. If they ever really love God they will not start hating God's true people, no matter what trouble comes.

**24:11** Acts 20:30; Rom 16:17,18; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 4:3; 2 Pet 2:1; 1 John 2:18; 4:1. There will be dangers from without, even greater danger from within the

for my name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and will deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end will be saved.

14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end will come.

15 "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea

church.

**24:12** Wickedness both outside the church and within it will have a chilling effect on Christians. At the end few will still be zealous in their love for God and man, most will go the way of the churches of Ephesus and Laodicea (Rev 2:4; 3:15). We must always remember that when love is gone all is gone (1 Cor 13:1-3).

**24:13** See 10:22. This does not say "because" some endure to the end they will be saved. Salvation is not earned, is not a reward for enduring. Those who endure do so because God's salvation is at work in them; and those whom He has made new creations in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) He will enable to hold on to their faith to the end. See John 10:28; 17:11-15; Rom 5:3-5,9,10; 8:29,30; Phil 1:6; Heb 10:35-39.

**24:14** Note on God's kingdom at 4:17. Jesus preached the "good news" of the kingdom (4:23; 9:35). It is good news because it sets forth the reign of God among men and calls people to willingly submit to God and enter His kingdom. The preaching and teaching of the kingdom was prominent throughout the ministry of the apostles (Acts 8:12; 20:25; 28:23,31; Rom 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 1:12,13; 4:11; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1; Jam 2:5; 2 Pet 1:11; Rev 1:6,9).

This work is not yet finished but is going on throughout the earth. There are still some places, some tribes where the gospel has not gone. When every "nation" has heard it, the end of the age will come. In the Bible the words translated "nations" usually means simply non-Jewish peoples whoever and wherever they may be.

**24:15** When Christ spoke these words to His disciples the "holy place" could mean only the temple in Jerusalem. On "abomination of desolation" see Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11. Some think this was completely fulfilled in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed the temple. However, the abomination of desolation Jesus speaks of here is connected with the end of this age and His second coming. A comparison of v 14 with vs 29-31 makes this clear. The abominable desolation at the hands of the Romans was only a picture, a shadow of what is yet to happen at the end. Compare 2 Thess 2:3-12.

**24:16-21** In 70 AD Christians fled Jerusa-

flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house, 18 and let him who is in the field not return to take his clothes. 19 And woe to those who are with child, and to those who nurse *infants* in those days! 20 But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on the Sabbath.

21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be *afterwards*. 22 And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the chosen those days will be shortened.

23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ,' or, 'There,' do not believe *it*. 24 For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so that, if *it were* possible, they would deceive even the chosen. 25 Now I have told you beforehand. 26 Therefore

lem and escaped into the mountains across the Jordan river. But the tribulation to come at the end of this age will be greater and more terrible than that one, great as that was (Dan 12:1; Rev 7:14; 13:15-17). Verses 17,18 suggest the suddenness of the coming trouble. In 70 AD Titus besieged Jerusalem for many months. The reference to the "Sabbath" in v 20 is another indication that the land of Israel will be the focal point of the coming great tribulation. The distance Jewish leaders allowed people to travel on the Sabbath was less than a kilometer. In that future time in Israel all transportation may possibly be shut down on Sabbaths.

**24:21** This time of tribulation is still to come, as vs 29-31 make perfectly clear. We should not confuse it with the distresses and tribulations believers throughout this age have had to face (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3,4), though it will be similar in nature.

"Tribulation" – the Greek word means "affliction," "distress," "pressure." It is suffering due to the pressure of circumstances.

**24:22** Satan and evil men will not have time to do all they would like to do. Observe that God can regulate times and activities on earth for the sake of His special people, the "chosen."

**24:24** 2 Thess 2:9-11; Rev 13:13; 16:14; 19:20. Signs and miracles alone do not prove that those who do them are sent by God. If they do not preach the truth in accordance with the Bible there is no truth in them, and their signs and wonders are deceiving (7:22,23; Acts 8:9-11; 13:6). The "chosen" are enlightened to see the truth of Christ (notes on enlightenment at 11:27; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:18). They will not be deceived by false Christs.

**24:26,27** On Christ's second coming see 25:31; 26:64; Luke 12:40; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess 4:16-5:4; 2 Thess 1:6-10; Heb 9:28; Jude 14,15; Rev 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:12.

if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the desert,' do not go out; *or*, 'Look! *He is* in the inner rooms,' do not believe *it*.

27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east, and shines as far as the west, so the coming of the Son of man will also be. 28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 And then the sign of the Son of man will appear in the sky. And then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather his chosen from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

**24:28** This comes after His warning about false prophets and false Christs (vs 24-26). So it could signify that they are like scavengers who fall on a nation, or a society, or a church, at its death. Or it could indicate the nations of earth, sent by God in judgment, falling on another nation. Compare Isa 46:11; Ezek 39:4. Or it might mean the destruction of earth's armies at the return of Christ (Rev 19:17,18).

**24:29** The following verses prove that the "great tribulation" Jesus spoke of in v 21 was not that of 70 AD, but one coming at the end of this age. These signs will occur immediately after the tribulation but before the great and terrible "day of the Lord" – that time when God arises to punish the earth for its wickedness.

It is a mistake to confuse the great tribulation (which is caused by Satan and evil men) with the time when God pours out His wrath on the world. In our interpretation of prophecy it is important to understand this. Compare this verse with Acts 2:19,20 and Rev 6:12-14. See note on the "day of the Lord" at 1 Thess 5:2; etc. Something very striking is going to happen to the sun, moon, and stars before Christ's second coming. It will happen after the great tribulation and before the day of the Lord.

**24:30** Rev 1:7; Zech 12:10-14.

"Clouds" – 26:64; Dan 7:13; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 1:7. Christ's second coming will be quite unlike His first coming. Then He laid aside His glory and came in meekness and seeming helplessness – Phil 2:5-8.

**24:31** Compare Matt 13:30,41-43.

"Angels" – Gen 16:7.

"Trumpet" – 1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thess 4:16; Rev 11:15. Paul taught that the catching up of Christ's church to meet Christ in the air will be at the "last" trumpet.

"Chosen" – John 6:37; 17:2,6; Rom 8:33; Eph 1:4; Col 3:13; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2. "Chosen" or "elect" is a name for believers now in this Church age (in the Old

32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch is still tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. 33 So in the same way, when you see all these things, know that he is near, *right* at the doors.

34 "Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things are fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

36 "But as for that day and hour, no *man* knows, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37 But *just as it was* in the days of Noah, so the coming of the Son of man will also be. 38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah went into the ark, 39 and did not know *what would happen* until the flood came, and took them all away, so the coming of the Son of man will also be.

Testament the whole nation of Israel was "elect", chosen of God – Isa 45:4; 65:9).

Observe that Jesus mentions "winds" and "heavens" in this gathering of the elect, but says nothing of "earth." Does this suggest that these elect are somewhere above the earth? Not necessarily – compare Nehemiah 1:9; Deut 30:4; Isa 13:5. It seems this was not an uncommon way of speaking then when referring to an event on earth. And compare Mark 13:27, where the word "earth" is used. On "the four winds" see Dan 7:2; 8:8; 11:4.

**24:32,33** "All these things" – a fig tree may sometimes symbolize Israel (Jeremiah chapter 24; Joel 1:6,7; Hos 9:10. See also 21:19; Luke 13:6). But here the fig tree does not signify one thing or one event. It refers to "all these things" which Jesus foretold in this chapter.

"At the doors" – see Luke 21:28,31.

**24:34** The Greek word here translated "generation" may also be translated "race", and (it seems to the author of these notes) might well be so translated here. If so, it would mean that the race of Israel, the Jewish people, would not be destroyed. The generation living when Jesus spoke these words did pass away before all these things came to pass. No such things as described in vs 27-29 happened in the generation of the apostles. But some think that "generation" here means the generation living when the signs at the end of the age begin to take place. And this interpretation is certainly not impossible.

**24:35** Compare with 5:18. Jesus knew that both the law God gave, and His own words were the very words of God and would endure for all time.

**24:36** The general time just before Christ's coming can be known by the events Jesus foretold, the signs He tells us to watch for (v 33; Luke 21:28,31). But the exact time of His coming no one can predict. If Jesus is God (who knows everything) how could it

40 "Then two will be in the field. The one will be taken away, and the other left behind. 41 Two *people will be* grinding at the mill. The one will be taken, and the other left. 42 So watch, for you do not know what hour your Lord comes.

43 "But understand this: If the owner of the house had known what time of the night the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.

45 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has made ruler over his household, to give them food at the proper time? 46 When his master comes, blessed *is* that servant whom he finds doing so. 47 Truly I say to you, he will make him ruler over all his goods.

48 "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is putting off his coming,' 49 and begins to

be that He would not know the day and hour of His coming? Rather we should say, since Jesus is God incarnate (John 1:1,14), He could choose not to know something if He wished. (In the same way, though He was all-powerful He could choose not to do things by His own power.) In any case, is it wise to insist that the Son of God is not free to limit His knowledge of a particular thing if He chooses to do so? Compare Gen 18:20,21.

**24:37** "Noah" – Genesis chapter 6.

**24:38,39** Jesus here emphasizes the suddenness of the disaster that overtook the people of Noah's day, and the ignorance of the people then. They were abandoned to their own way of life, did not know what God was going to do, and did not want to know (compare 2 Pet 2:5).

**24:40,41** Verse 31.

**24:42** Verse 36; 25:13; Mark 13:37; Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 5:1-6; Titus 2:13; Heb 9:28; 2 Pet 3:12,13; Rev 3:3.

**24:44** In verse 42 Jesus says "watch." Here he says "be ready." These are two duties of His disciples regarding His coming. Actually they are more or less the same. See note at 25:13. "Watching" does not mean to be like spectators at some public event. We cannot know the exact time, so we are to be on the lookout and keep ourselves spiritually prepared at all times – 25:10; 1 Thess 5:6-8; 1 John 2:28.

**24:45** See 25:21,23. Jesus refers to pastors and teachers in the churches. They are to give spiritual food to God's people (John 21:15-17). This is far more important than trying to figure out the times and dates God has set (Acts 1:7). To feed God's people well much wisdom and faithfulness are required – 1 Cor 4:2; 2 Tim 2:2; Jam 1:5,6.

**24:47** See 25:21,23; Luke 19:17,19; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:21-23; Rev 21:7. This will take place at Christ's second coming.

**24:48-51** There are those who profess to be servants of God, who are pastors and teachers in churches, yet who are "wicked"



beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come in a day when he is not looking for *him*, and at an hour he is not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with hypocrites. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**25** "Then the kingdom of heaven will resemble ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps, but did not take any oil with them. 4 But the wise took oil in their containers with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom delayed, they all got drowsy and fell asleep.

6 "And at midnight there was a cry: 'Look, the

and like hypocrites. Their doom is certain (2 Pet 2:1-3; Jude 4,12-15).

"Gnashing of teeth" - 8:12.

**25:1** "Then" - at the end of this age, as chapter 24 shows. Note on kingdom of heaven at 4:17. The picture here is true to the customs of that day. The ten virgins were waiting for the bridegroom to come to the bride's house to conduct her to the wedding feast in the bridegroom's house. The bridegroom signifies the Lord Jesus. The bride, of course, is the true church made up of a great many individuals (see 9:15; Rev 19:6-8).

Who, then, are these ten virgins? Perhaps they are leaders in the church who are responsible for preparing the bride for the Bridegroom (the "servants" of 24:45-49. Compare Paul's statement in 2 Cor 11:2). Or perhaps these "virgins" may represent individuals in the outward professing church who think they are members of the true church and have hopes of sharing in Christ's kingdom. In this case, the wise and foolish would be a contrast between true and false Christians, those born again by God's Spirit (John 3:3-8), and those who are Christians in name only. In the Bible the word "virgin" used figuratively does not always signify the true people of God. See Isa 23:12; 47:1; Jer 46:11.

**25:2** What is meant by wise and foolish can be seen in 7:24-27. See also the contrasts between the wise and the foolish in Proverbs (1:7; 10:8,14; 12:15; 13:16; 14:1, 8,16; 16:22).

**25:3,4** It seems from this that those foolish ones never had oil. In the Bible oil can signify the Holy Spirit (note at Ex 27:20). Among those who say they are Christians the wise have the Holy Spirit, the foolish do not. In many ways the ten were very similar - all are called "virgins," all had lamps, all knew something of the truth, all thought they would be ready to meet the bridegroom, all went out to meet him. But the foolish ones were without the one essential thing - oil. Compare Rom 8:9; Jude 19. There are many who are outwardly Christian, inwardly not. They are like trees without fruit, clouds without rain.

**25:5** Observe that they all "fell asleep" -

bridegroom is coming! Go out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps.

8 "And the foolish *ones* said to the wise, 'Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, or there may not be enough for *both* us and you. Instead, go to those who sell *oil*, and buy for yourselves.'

10 "And while they were going away to buy *it*, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage. And the door was shut. 11 Afterwards the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, Lord! Open to us.'

12 "But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I don't know you.'

13 "Watch therefore, for you do not know either the day or the hour when the Son of man

even the wise have not always been as alert as they should have been. In church history there have certainly been some very "drowsy" times.

**25:6** At the time of the end there will be warnings and signs of Christ's near coming, and those will alert the church.

**25:8** They tried to light their lamps. Apparently the dry wick caught a flame but could not hold it. Without God's Spirit no one will have the inward grace and the light on his pathway that the genuine believer and true child of God has. Outward profession can never make up for inward lack.

**25:9** No person ever has too much of the Spirit of God. And no one can lend God's Spirit to others, or the experience of the light the Spirit gives on the way. It is a personal experience which must come from God. Each person must go to God and "buy" (compare Isa 55:1-3; Prov 23:23; Luke 11:13; Rev 3:18). This is figurative language. The Spirit of God is not for sale. No money can purchase an interest in Him (compare Acts 8:18-21). The purchase of this "oil" does not cost money - it costs ourselves (10:39; 16:24-26; Luke 9:23; 14:26,33). This is one reason why comparatively few people do this "buying."

**25:10** Christ will arrive just as He said He would. Then there will be a great "feast" for His believers - Rev 19:9. But the door of opportunity will be shut for those who heard the truth but did not act on it. Compare Luke 13:24,25; Gen 7:13,16; 2 Cor 6:1,2; Heb 3:7-11.

**25:11** Compare Prov 1:28-32.

**25:12** "I don't know you" - this is evidence that the foolish virgins represent unsaved people in the church. Compare 7:23. Contrast John 10:14; 1 Cor 8:3; 2 Tim 2:19.

**25:13** See 24:42,44. This is the one great application Christ makes of this parable - which does not mean there are not other lessons to be learned from it. "Watch" means to be spiritually prepared. In the parable all ten virgins went to sleep and were unconscious for a while, but five of them were still prepared for the announcement of the bridegroom's coming. It is God's Spirit in the heart who makes Christians prepared.

comes.

14 "For *the kingdom of heaven is* like a man *planning* on a journey to a far country who called his own servants, and entrusted his goods to them. 15 And he gave five talents to one, two to another, and one to another, to each one according to his own ability. And immediately he went on his journey.

16 "Then the one who received the five talents went and traded with them and made another five talents. 17 And in the same way the one who *received* two, also gained another two. 18 But the one who received one went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 "After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 And so the one who received five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. Look, besides those I have gained five more talents.'

21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few

things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

22 "Also the one who received two talents came and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. Look, besides those I have gained another two talents.'

23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

24 "Then the one who received the one talent came and said, 'Master, I knew you, that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter. 25 And I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have yours.'

26 "His master answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I have not scattered? 27 Therefore you should have put my money with the bankers, and *then* when I returned I would have received my own with

Without Him all following of any religion, and all effort to be good, and all trying to meet Christ the Bridegroom will be in vain. It is foolish in the extreme to try to make a Christian life without the one absolute essential for the Christian life - Christ's Spirit. Notes on the Holy Spirit at 3:11,16; John 14:16,17; etc.

**25:14** The "man" signifies Christ. His journey was to heaven. The "property" He entrusts to His servants are the things of His kingdom (21:43), His work on earth and the resources to accomplish that work.

**25:15** "Talents" - see note on the meaning of talent at 18:24. Here talents signify abilities, spiritual gifts and resources. Some of God's people have more of these than others (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11). But one main point of the parable is that equal faithfulness, even though abilities differ, will bring equal rewards. A talent was first a unit of weight (about 34 kilograms). Afterwards it became a unit of value amounting to 34 kilos of gold or silver - worth a great deal of money in any age.

**25:16-18** There are vast differences in the ways men use what God gives them. Compare Luke 19:13-21. In the case of these servants it was all a question of obedience or disobedience, faithfulness or unfaithfulness.

**25:19** "After a long time" - by such words was Christ not suggesting that His coming would not be in the immediate future? However that may be, He will return as certainly as the man in the parable returned.

"Accounts" - Rom 14:12; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 4:13.

**25:20** What will we be able to say when we stand before the Lord?

**25:21** The manner of our service on earth for God will have results that will reach into the ages to come. Notice again the

emphasis on faithfulness - 24:45; Luke 16:10; 1 Cor 4:2. The reward for it will be great indeed - positions of trust and responsibility and honor in the future manifestation of God's kingdom, and a share in the joy of the Lord Jesus.

**25:23** Compare v 21. The whole basis of the master's approval was faithfulness in what was given, regardless of the amount given. It is not the business of those with little ability or resources or opportunities to envy those with much. They must serve the Lord heartily with what they have.

**25:24** He thought he knew the master, but surely he did not. In these words he actually slandered him to his face. People may think they know God, yet have all sorts of false ideas about Him.

**25:25** "I was afraid" - if he had truly been afraid of his master he would have been afraid of offending him by disobedience, afraid of wasting time and opportunities. Notes on the fear of the Lord at Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7. The Christian who does nothing is not afraid of the Lord; more than likely he is afraid of work.

**25:26** The master calls him "wicked" because he did not obey his master (disobedience is wickedness), and "lazy" because he did not work for him. He had a sinful, slothful spirit and did not overcome it. See note on this at Prov 6:6-11; 15:19; 22:13; 24:30-34. Here the master was not saying that he was like this servant thought him to be. He was saying "Was this your estimate of my character? Did you really think I am like that? Then you should have been careful to act accordingly."

**25:27** If the man honestly thought he was incapable of doing anything profitable with the money, he should have put it in the hands of those who were capable.

interest.'

28 "Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. 29 For to every one who has will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from him who does not have will be taken away even what he has. 30 And throw the unprofitable servant into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

31 "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory, 32 and all nations will be gathered in his presence. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates *his* sheep from the goats. 33 And he will put the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left.

34 "Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the

**25:28** Faithfulness was further rewarded. The "ten-talent" man had proved he knew how to behave when something was entrusted to him.

**25:29** Compare 13:12.

**25:30** The wicked, lazy servant is here called "unprofitable." Compare Luke 13:6,7; John 15:1-6; Heb 6:7,8. If we are worthless in the Lord's work, wicked and lazy, we should not vainly imagine that He will accept us and reward us. He will never say "well done" to those who have not done well. See the doom of the "unprofitable." Compare 3:10,12; 8:12; etc.

**25:31** "Son of man" - 8:20.

"Glory" - 16:27; 19:28; 24:30; John 1:14; 12:41; 17:5; Rev 1:16.

"Throne" - 19:28; Luke 1:32. It seems there is a difference between what Jesus here calls "His throne" and the throne of God the Father where Jesus now sits - Rev 3:21.

**25:32** "All nations" - this phrase, if taken literally, will include both Israel and the other nations of the world. This separation must mean separating individuals from one other. No nation as a whole has fulfilled the picture Christ gives in vs 34-36. Some individuals in every nation have done so, but not any people in general. Not all individuals in any country, at any time, have been Christ's "sheep" (see John 10:1-16,27,28). This is the only place in the New Testament where goats are a symbol of unbelievers.

**25:34** "Blessed" - notes at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; 119:1; Matt 5:3-10; etc.

"Inherit" - 5:5; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 6:9,10; 15:50; Gal 5:21; Eph 1:11,14; Heb 6:12; Rev 21:7. Notes on God's kingdom at 4:17. How was the kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world? Since it is for men, and men were not in existence before the foundation of the world, the preparation was in the mind, purpose, and plan of God.

**25:35,36** We might expect the Lord to say "Inherit the kingdom because you believed in Me," for salvation is by grace through faith, and not by works (Eph 2:8-10; Titus

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me *something* to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. 36 I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and fed *you*? Or thirsty, and gave *you something* to drink? 38 When did we see you as a stranger, and took *you* in? Or naked, and clothed *you*? 39 Or when did we see you sick, or in prison, and came to you?'

40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, anything you did for one of the least of these my brethren, you did for me.'

41 "And then he will say to those at the left

3:3-7). True, but God's judgment of men is always said to be about works (16:27; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12). He will judge us at last not merely by what we have said, or intended, or taught to others, but by what we have actually done or not done. Works prove the reality of faith, and faith without works is dead (Jam 2:14-19,26). The good works of God's children are not the cause of their being saved, but they are the evidence that they are saved.

Six works are here listed, but they only represent good works in general and do not exhaust all the possibilities. Compare this list with what some think are wonderful works in 7:22. The works Christ here approves are not striking or glamorous, or much noticed by men. This passage follows directly the parable of the talents and shows something of what Jesus meant by using the talents.

**25:37-39** "The righteous" - those who are righteous by faith and give evidence of it by works (5:6,20; Rom 2:7-11; 3:21-24; 5:1; 8:1-4). They know they have performed acts of kindness to others, but they do not have a high view of their own works. They well know they could have done much more and could have done better the things they did do. And they are not much conscious that every act they did for others was actually done for Christ, thinking they only did what they ought to do for fellow men. They were not trying to pile up merit, but helped simply because they had God's love in their hearts. Their helping others was not disguised selfishness (see 1 John 3:17,18).

**25:40** Who are these "brethren"? Evidently Jesus was referring to the "sheep" of v 32. See also Rom 8:29; Heb 2:11,12. We are told to do good to all men but especially to believers in Christ (Gal 6:10). What we do to them is what we do to Christ, for He and they are united (John 17:20-23; Acts 9:1-5). If we really believed this, would we be slow to perform acts of kindness and helpfulness to others?

**25:41** "Depart" - from the source of all blessedness and joy. Compare 7:23;

hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry, and you did not give me food. I was thirsty, and you did not give me *anything* to drink. 43 I was a stranger, and you did not take me in. *I was* naked, and you did not clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me.'

44 "Then they too will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not serve you?'

45 "Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly I say to you, since you did not do *it* for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

46 "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

**26** And it happened *that* when Jesus had finished *speaking* all these words, he said to

2 Thess 1:9. The "cursed" are those who do not believe in Christ, and prove they do not by failing to do good works for His people (Gal 3:10-13; Heb 6:8; 2 Pet 2:14). God's curse will be on them forever.

"Fire" – 3:10,12; etc. Hell was not prepared for men but for Satan and his angels. But if men insist on following Satan and refusing God's truth and God's way, they will share the punishment of Satan. And they will deserve to share it – otherwise God would not send them to that place. Since sinners deserve such punishment, we should understand that sin is a much more terrible thing than men usually think it is. Note on the devil at 4:1.

**25:42,43** The emphasis in their judgment is not on the evil works they did (though those too will be judged – Rom 2:6,8,9), but on the good works they did not do. In other words, they reveal their lack of faith and salvation by what they neglect to do. The things they leave out of their lives show they have no love for Christ or His people. God's work of salvation in the heart of a any person impels him or her to do good works. Sins of omission are just as revealing as sins of commission, and just as worthy of judgment and punishment. Compare Num 32:23; Judges 5:23.

**25:44,45** In vain men will try to defend themselves. Their professed ignorance will not be acceptable as an excuse. The one relevant fact is this: needy, suffering people of Christ were in their neighborhood and they did not lift a finger to help them. And Christ takes this as neglect of Himself. From this we see again how Christ loved the poor, the weak, the needy. Compare 11:5; 19:21; Luke 4:18; 6:20; 12:33. When His people who are poor suffer, He suffers with them – Acts 9:5; Isa 63:9.

**25:46** There will be no altering of one's state after the judgment. Compare Luke 16:26; 2 Thess 2:9. Both the punishment of unbelievers and the life of believers with God are eternal. On eternal life see John

his disciples, 2 "You know that after two days *the feast of* the Passover arrives, and the Son of man is *to be* handed over to be crucified."

3 Then the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and plotted together to seize Jesus by trickery, and kill *him*. 5 But they said, "Not on the feast *day*, or there may be a riot among the people."

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very valuable fragrant oil and poured it on his head, as he sat *at the table*. 8 But when his disciples saw it, they were indignant and said, "Why this waste? 9 For this oil might have been sold for a large *sum*, and *the money* given to the poor."

10 But aware *of this*, Jesus said to them, "Why

3:16,36; 5:24; 6:47; etc.

**26:2** "Passover" – a very important feast of the Jews – Lev 23:5; Exodus chapter 12. God chose the time of the Passover for the death of His Son for sinners. And the time was very appropriate to signify the meaning of His death. The Passover lamb was a sacrifice to protect the children of Israel from judgment in Egypt. Jesus was the lamb of God, a sacrifice which takes away the sins of the world and so provides a way of escape from God's judgment against sin (John 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7).

**26:3,4** They behaved like this because of their ignorance of God, their hatred of the truth, because the Lord Jesus exposed their sinfulness, and because the wicked will always be opposed to the righteous (Ps 37:12; John 3:19,20; 7:7; 8:40; 15:18-21; 1 John 3:12).

**26:5** At the time of the Passover great crowds flocked to Jerusalem from all over Israel. Jesus' enemies knew that many of those people admired Jesus. They feared trouble if they killed Him at that time.

**26:6** Simon was probably a man healed at some time by Jesus. Notice where Jesus the King from heaven (2:2; 27:11) spent time when He came to Jerusalem, the city of the great King (5:35). He chose the home of a humble man who had been an outcast, not some mansion, palace or fine hotel. Would that all who profess to be His followers were of the same mind (Phil 2:5-7).

**26:7** See John 12:2.

**26:8,9** It seems that the source of such a remark was the traitor Judas Iscariot (John 12:4-6). Apparently other disciples agreed with him. The perfume was very costly. Mark 14:5 says (in Greek) that it was worth 300 Denarii. One Denarius was the accepted daily wage of a laborer (Matt 20:2).

**26:10** The act of this woman was "good," because it was a pure expression of love. Those who have a fervent love for God are willing to pour out all they have at His feet. They do not worry about what it costs them

trouble the woman? For she has done a good deed to me. 11 For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me. 12 For when she poured this oil on my body, she did *it* for my burial. 13 Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told in remembrance of her."

14 Then one of the Twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, 15 and said, "What will you give me? I myself will hand him over to you." And they agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from that time he looked for an opportunity to betray him.

17 Now on the first *day* of the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying to him, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

18 And he said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'"

or what others may say about it.

**26:11,12** If the disciples wanted to show their love and concern for the poor, there would always be opportunity. But the Lord Jesus was soon going to die, and it seems the woman knew that. It was the custom in those days to anoint the dead with spices and perfumes before burial (Luke 23:55 - 24:1; John 19:39,40).

**26:13** Her act is recorded for all time in God's word. So much the Lord delights in the love shown by His people.

**26:14,15** Only one motive for this act of base treachery is recorded in the Bible. Judas wanted money. John 12:6 reveals one thing he was willing to do to get it. His love of money, which he did not conquer, and perhaps did not even resist, in spite of the teaching of Jesus about it (6:19-21,24; Luke 6:20; 12:15-21; 14:33), completely ruined his character, helped to make him like a demon (John 6:70,71), and at last moved him to sell the Son of God. So see 1 Tim 6:8-10. Thirty silver coins was the usual value of a slave. See Ex 21:32; Zech 11:12.

**26:16** Judas was not overcome by a sudden temptation. He was deliberate and calculating in his betrayal of Jesus.

**26:17** Note at Lev 23:5,6. The Passover was considered the first day of the seven day observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

**26:18** All the time Jesus knew just when and how and why He would die (16:21; 20:28; John 7:30; 10:17,18; 12:23).

**26:21** From the beginning Jesus knew this also (John 6:64).

**26:22** Each of them knew something of his own sinfulness and weakness, but probably none (except Judas) thought he could betray Christ and so commit the worst of sins. Compare vs 33-35. They were sad at the very thought that anyone called a disciple would or could do such a thing.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus ordered them, and prepared the Passover.

20 Now when evening came, he sat down with the Twelve. 21 And as they ate, he said, "Truly I say to you, one of you will betray me."

22 And they became exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to him, "Lord, is it I?"

23 And he answered and said, "The one who is dipping *his* hand with me in the bowl, he will betray me. 24 The Son of man is going just as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

25 Then Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, "Teacher, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said *it*."

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed *it*, broke *it*, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat. This is my body."

27 And he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For

**26:24** Judas in betraying Jesus was fulfilling the Scriptures (John 13:18; Ps 41:9). But Judas was free and responsible for his acts. God's foreknowledge did not interfere with His freedom to act. It is true of all who permanently refuse, reject or betray Christ that it would be better if they had not been born.

**26:25** It does not say that Judas was sorrowful (as the other disciples were - v 22). To keep up the pretense that he was like them, he asked the same question they asked even though he knew the answer.

**26:26** "My body" - Jesus did not mean that the bread became His body. This was quite impossible since He was there before them in His body. He meant that the bread was a symbol of His body. See notes at John 6:53-58. His body was soon to be crucified. The result of this event was eternal life and spiritual food to all who receive Him as Lord and Saviour. A literal eating of His flesh could not give spiritual life and food to anyone. The Bible is full of symbolism and figurative language, and we must recognize this or fall into many errors. See 16:6-12; John 6:35,53-58; etc.

**26:27,28** "Gave thanks" - 14:19. The wine in the cup symbolized the blood of the Lord Jesus soon to be shed on the cross. This shedding of His blood meant agony and sorrow to Him, but He gave thanks because He knew it was the way God the Father had appointed to save men and glorify Him.

The wine did not become His literal blood when they drank it. His literal blood still flowed in His veins and drinking it could bring no good to anyone. For salvation from sin men do not need anything physical. What they need is spiritual life in the inner person (John 1:12,13; 3:3-8). This comes by trusting in the Lord Jesus and believing His blood was shed to take away our sins (John 3:16,36; 6:47,63; Rom 3:22-25; Eph

this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 But I say to you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the mount of Olives.

31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will stumble because of me this night. For it is written,

I will strike the shepherd,  
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

32 "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

33 Peter answered and said to him, "Even though everyone stumbles because of you, I will never stumble."

34 Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me

1:7; 1 Pet 1:18,19; 1 John 1:7).

"New covenant" – by His blood the Lord Jesus established this covenant. It is "new" in contrast to the old one God made at Sinai with Israel. See notes at Ex 19:5,6. On the new covenant see Hebrews chapter 8; Jer 31:31-34; 2 Cor 3:6-18. The old covenant was one of law and works. The new covenant is a one of grace. In it God promises forgiveness to all who trust in the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:46,47; Acts 13:38,39).

"Many" – this means the many who receive the Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior. He died for all, but only those who trust in Him receive the benefits of His death.

"Forgiveness of sins" – see 6:12; 9:5-7; 12:31; 18:23-35; Eph 1:7.

**26:29** "Kingdom" – 4:17.

**26:30** Psalm 118 was often sung at the time of the Passover in Israel.

**26:31** Verse 56; Zech 13:7.

**26:32** See 16:21; John 10:17,18. Before His death He said He would rise from the dead. After His death He rose. This is the greatest possible evidence that He is the Son of God – Rom 1:4.

**26:33,34** Here is boastful self-confidence, or possibly the thought that he loved Jesus enough to overcome any temptation to deny Him, or ignorance still of the depths of his sinfulness and weakness, or perhaps all of these. Compare 1 Cor 10:12. Ignorance of ourselves, trusting in our own nature and strength can mean many a grievous fall.

**26:35** Peter was not alone in his self-confidence. They all still had much to experience before they were able to depend on God's strength and renounce their own. Observe Peter's unbelief of Jesus words, his flat denial that Jesus knew what He was talking about. This is another glimpse of the unbelieving folly which Christ's disciples sometimes displayed. When will we learn that not one word of the Lord Jesus will fall to the ground unfulfilled? And when will we see that our own opinions are completely worthless

three times."

35 Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, yet I will not deny you." And all the disciples said the same.

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy-hearted. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Wait here and watch with me."

39 And he went a little farther, and prostrated himself and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as you *will*!"

40 And he came to the disciples, and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What, could you not watch with me for one hour? 41 Watch and

in matters He has already revealed?

**26:36** Gethsemane was a garden a short distance outside the walls of Jerusalem at the foot of the mount of Olives.

**26:37** The two sons of Zebedee were James and John (4:21).

**26:38** Here was a burden of sorrow so great it was pressing the life out of Him. What was the reason for such sorrow? He, the utterly Holy One, was about to bear the sin of the world on the cross, and to experience the punishment of that sin, and be forsaken by God the Father (27:46; John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21). He wanted these disciples to watch with Him. Did His human nature long for companionship in this hour of suffering? Certainly He wanted witnesses of this event.

**26:39** Prostrating Himself indicated great agitation, a sense of crisis, an agonizing desire for help. Compare Heb 5:7. The "cup" was a symbol of the fearful and terrible experiences which lay before Him. He was about to "become sin" (v 38), to drink the cup of God's wrath against human sin. This He had come to do (John 12:27; 18:11). But now that the moment had come the prospect was so dreadful, so appalling that His holy nature shrank from it. And He prayed that He might not have to drink that cup, if God could find another way to accomplish His purposes for men. But it was not possible, and even with His soul in agony (Luke 22:44) Jesus accepted the will of God the Father.

He here utters a prayer that all men should learn to pray. God's way, God's will is always best, and those who best accept it will be the most blessed, even though for a time it may mean suffering and loss.

**26:40** Verse 38. The Lord Jesus was fighting the greatest battle of His life, and, as usual, found no help from men. Compare Ps 22:11.

**26:41** The disciples were about to enter into a time of great trial. Sleeping was not the way to prepare for it. The flesh will always fail us in time of temptation. It is like a traitor in our own bosom. For our spirits to

pray, so that you do not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, “My Father, if this cup may not pass from me, unless I drink it, your will be done.”

43 And he came again and found them asleep, for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then he came to his disciples, and said to them, “Are *you* still sleeping and taking rest? Look, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Get up, let us go. Look, the one who is betraying me is near.”

47 And while he was still speaking, suddenly Judas, one of the Twelve, came. And with him *was* a large crowd with swords and clubs, *coming* from the chief priests and elders of the people. 48 Now he who betrayed him had given them a signal, saying, “The one I kiss, he is the one. Seize him.” 49 And immediately he came up to Jesus, and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” Then they came, put their hands on Jesus, and held him. 51 And, suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out a hand, drew

win the battle against temptation we need these two things very much – watchfulness and prayer (Eph 6:10,11,18).  
**26:42-44** Verse 39. Three times Jesus prayed the same thing and then stopped. Compare 2 Cor 12:7,8. It is not wise for us to go on requesting God for something He denies three times.

**26:45,46** Jesus was fully prepared to face any pain or suffering that might come to Him, ready to die in the place of sinners. And this preparation was a knowledge and acceptance of God’s will. So He made no attempt to escape from danger, or to satisfy the natural longing of His human nature to avoid pain and suffering and death. Knowledge and acceptance of God’s will are the greatest preparation for anything anyone ever has to face. And how is God’s will known? By studying His Word and by giving ourselves completely to Him as the Lord Jesus did (Rom 12:1,2; Col 3:16).

**26:47-49** The Jewish leaders were afraid of the people, and did not want to try to take Jesus in daylight surrounded by the crowds who eagerly heard Him. So they bribed Judas and hired mercenaries that they might capture Him in secret and at night. The mercenaries would not have known where Jesus might be, and might not have been able to recognize Him in the dark. So Judas, who knew Jesus’ habits, led them and gave them a sign. No sign could have been more hypocritical, none could have shown more clearly Judas’ fundamental depravity, insincerity, and amorality.

“Rabbi” is a Hebrew word meaning “My teacher.” But Judas had never learned to

his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

52 Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back in its place. For all those who take up the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that now I cannot pray to my Father and he will immediately give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that say it must happen like this?”

55 At that same time Jesus said to the crowd, “Have you come out as against a thief with swords and clubs to take me? Daily I sat with you teaching in the temple, and you did not seize me. 56 But all this has happened, so that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him, and ran away.

57 And those who seized Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But Peter followed him, at a distance, to the courtyard of the high priest, went in and sat with the servants, to see the outcome.

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and the whole Council, were looking for false testimony against Jesus, to put him to death, 60 but did not find any; even though many false witnesses came

behave like that from Jesus. In fact, it seems he learned very little of anything from Him. This is because he did not have a spiritual mind, one receptive to the truth.

**26:50** Notice the word “friend” (Ps 41:9). Some men hated Jesus, but He hated no one.

**26:51** John 18:10.

**26:52** See 5:9,10,39.

**26:53** A Roman legion was between three and six thousand men. All the armies of heaven would have come to the defense of Jesus if He had so prayed – not that He needed angels (John 10:17,18; 18:6).

**26:54** “Scriptures” – the Old Testament (John 2:22; 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16). He was referring to those which set forth His suffering and death. For example, see Isaiah chapter 53.

**26:56** See 5:17; Luke 24:25,26,44-46.

“The disciples. . .ran away”–vs 31, 35.

**26:57** “Priest” – Ex 28:1. The Romans ruled Israel, and the Jews had no king of their own, so the leader and judge of the people was the high priest.

**26:58** It was probably fear which kept him at a distance.

**26:59** “Council” – the Jewish court, the Sanhedrin – 5:22. This shows the depraved character of the leaders of Israel. They wanted to achieve their own ends and cared nothing for truth and justice. See the command of the law they professed to love and uphold – Ex 20:16; 23:1,7. Compare 1 Kings 21:1-16. The leaders of Israel were guilty of the same sin as one of the greatest enemies of Israel.

**26:60** This shows the perfection of Jesus’ life. Even His bitter enemies could find noth-

forward, they did not find any. Finally two false witnesses came forward, 61 and said, "This *fellow* said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and build it in three days.'"

62 And the high priest got up and said to him, "Do you give no answer? What *is this that* they testify against you?"

63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest responded and said to him, "I put you under oath by the living God: Tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God."

64 Jesus said to him, "You have said *it*. Moreover, I tell you *that* hereafter you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of authority, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What need do we have of any more witnesses? See, now you have heard his blasphemy. 66 What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is worthy of death."

67 Then they spit in his face, and beat *him* with fists. And others slapped *him*, 68 saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who is the one who hit you?"

69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a *servant girl* came up to him, saying, "You were also with Jesus of Galilee."

ing with which to accuse Him. See also 27:19; Luke 23:4; John 19:6; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet 2:22.

**26:63** Isa 53:7; 1 Pet 2:23. What was going on was plain to everyone, and there was no need for Jesus to say anything. He here set an example of how we should behave when falsely accused (5:11; 1 Pet 2:21). The high priest was not looking for the truth. He thought that Jesus was a mere man, and that if He said He was the Son of God they could have grounds to accuse Him.

"Christ"—or "Messiah". See note at 1:1.

"Son of God" - 3:16,17; 11:27; John 3:16; 5:18-23.

**26:64** "You have said it" - in the idiom of those days this was a definite "yes." He would not defend Himself against false charges, but gave a clear answer to a question about His nature and office. He then connected His name for Himself ("Son of man" - 8:20) with a passage in the Old Testament about the Messiah, the anointed of God (Dan 7:13,14. See notes there).

**26:65** The high priest knew exactly what Jesus meant. Tearing his clothes was a sign of the alarm he felt - or pretended to feel. In spite of all the evidence of Jesus' life, teachings, and miracles, he refused to believe He was more than a mere man. So in his eyes, when Jesus said He was the Son of God, He was guilty of blasphemy. See also John 5:17,18; 8:58; 10:31-33.

**26:66** According to the law of Moses there were many offenses that deserved death. See note at Ex 21:36. Jesus was guilty of none of them. They were basing their

70 But he denied *it* in front of *them* all, saying, "I don't know what you're saying."

71 And when he had gone out on the porch, another *servant girl* saw him, and said to those who were there, "This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 And again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man."

73 And after a while, those who were standing near by came up to *him* and said to Peter, "You also are certainly *one* of them, for your accent gives you away."

74 Then he began to curse and swear, *saying*, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, who said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out, and wept bitterly.

**27** When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people consulted together against Jesus to put him to death. 2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away and handed him over to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that *Jesus* was condemned, felt remorse and

judgment on their interpretation of Lev 24:16.

**26:67** See here the hate of fallen human nature against the holy God (John 3:19; 7:7; 15:18,24; Rom 1:30). It is the hate of error against truth, evil against goodness, unrighteousness against justice, sin against holiness. And we should not think that by nature we are better than they (Rom 3:9,19; Eph 2:3). Their spitting on Him fulfilled Isa 50:6.

**26:68** They said this after they had blindfolded Him (Mark 14:65). The people regarded Him as a prophet (21:11,46). The leaders were mocking the idea.

**26:69-75** These verses are a fulfillment of Jesus' words in v 34. The Bible reveals people as they were and does not hide the sins and failures of God's servants. See Gen 9:21; 12:13; 27:18-26; Ex 32:2-4; Num 20:12; 2 Sam 11:1.

**26:73** Peter was a Galilean, and their way of speaking was different from that of people of Jerusalem.

**26:75** His own behavior cut Peter to the heart and overwhelmed him with a sense of failure and grief, which led to repentance. Compare 27:3-5; 2 Cor 7:10.

**27:1** See 26:66.

**27:2** The land of Israel was ruled by Rome, the most powerful empire of that day. Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea where Jerusalem was situated. They took Jesus to Pilate because they did not have the authority to put anyone to death (John 18:31).

**27:3** 1 Tim 6:10. Judas did not repent and trust in God's mercy, as v 5 makes clear. He added one more sin to his many other sins.



brought the thirty pieces of silver back to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What *is that* to us? You see *to that*."

5 And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he left, went away and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them in the treasury, because it is the price of blood."

7 And they consulted together, and bought the potter's field with them, to bury foreigners in. 8 So that field has been called, "The field of blood" to this day. 9 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

And they took the thirty pieces of silver,  
the price of the one whose value was  
estimated,  
whose price was set by the children  
of Israel,

10 And gave them for the potter's field,  
as the Lord ordered me.

11 And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, "Are you the King

His sorrow was only the worldly kind of sorrow, the kind that works death – 2 Cor 7:10. **27:4** Judas knew, as everyone else knew, that Jesus was innocent of any wrong doing (26:60). In the Bible there are other examples of wicked men who confessed they had sinned – see Ex 9:27; 1 Sam 26:21. Confession without forsaking sin is useless (Prov 28:13). Here the Jewish leaders showed themselves more hardened, merciless, and depraved than even Judas himself.

**27:5** Suicide is self murder, and the Jews rightly regarded it as a terrible sin. People have no more right to kill themselves than to kill others.

**27:6** They called it blood money because they paid it so they could take Jesus and put Him to death. They knew this was no fit offering for God. See how they were concerned to keep up outward forms even at the time they were determined to murder God's holy Son. Compare 23:23,24. Now if we reject Him what good are all our religious beliefs, customs and rituals?

**27:7-10** This was in fulfillment of Jer 32:6-9 and Zech 11:12,13. Jeremiah wrote of buying a field, Zechariah wrote of thirty pieces of silver and a potter (perhaps the words he spoke were originally spoken by Jeremiah but not recorded in his prophecy). Compare Acts 20:35 (a saying not recorded in the Gospels), and Jude 14 (not recorded in Genesis). But see how God works even in the minds and actions of ungodly, unbelieving men to fulfill His word. Compare John 11:49-53; Acts 2:22,23.

**27:11** Another accusation the Jewish leaders brought against Jesus was that He was trying to set Himself up as a literal King in Israel in opposition to Rome. See Luke

of the Jews?"

And Jesus said to him, "You say *it*!"

12 And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. 13 Then Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear how many things they testify against you?"

14 And he did not answer him a word, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

15 Now at *that* feast the governor used to release to the people a prisoner, chosen by them. 16 And at that time they had a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. 17 Therefore when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas? Or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew that they had handed him over out of envy.

19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent a *message* to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I have suffered greatly in a dream because of him."

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor responded and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to

23:2,14; John 19:12.

"You say it" – in the idiom of the language this meant a definite "yes." But though Jesus answered "yes," He did not mean He had been trying for political power on earth – John 18:36,37.

**27:12-14** See 26:63; 1 Pet 2:23. Pilate had tried many cases, but probably had seen few, if any, accused persons who did not deny the charges against them, or at least make some sort of excuse.

**27:15** He did this each year at the time of the Passover.

**27:16** Barabbas was guilty of rebellion and murder (Mark 15:7; Luke 23:19).

**27:17** Pilate said this hoping they would ask for the release of Jesus. He knew how to weigh evidence and he soon realized that Jesus was innocent and wished to have Him off his hands (Luke 23:4,7,16,22; John 19:12).

**27:18** See how deadly a sin envy is. Compare Acts 7:9; 13:45; 17:5. Let us beware of envy. It could lead us into opposition to God, and cause us to commit even terrible crimes (Prov 14:30; 27:4; Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 3:3; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:26; Jam 3:14,16).

**27:19** Once again the innocence of Jesus is stated – this time from an unexpected source. But it did not prevent Pilate from having Jesus crucified.

**27:20** Crowds are often easily swayed by strong and unscrupulous leaders. God warns us about being swept along in a crowd to do evil ((Ex 23:2). When the crowd is bent on doing wrong, it requires great strength of character to stand against it and do what is right.

**27:21** They preferred a murderer to the holy Son of God (Acts 3:13,14). Let us not think we are better by nature than those people.

release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!"

22 Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" *They* all said to him, "Let him be crucified!"

23 And the governor said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let him be crucified!"

24 When Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but *that* instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed *his* hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous person. You see *to it*."

25 Then all the people answered and said, "His blood *be* on us, and on our children."

26 Then he released Barabbas to them, and when he had Jesus beaten with a whip, he handed *him* over to be crucified. 27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's palace, and gathered the whole company *of soldiers* around him. 28 And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. 29 And when they had woven a crown of thorns, they put *it* on his head, and *put* a reed in his right hand. And they knelt in front of

him, and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 And they spit on him, and took the reed and beat him on the head. 31 And after mocking him, they removed the robe from him, put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify *him*.

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon, and made him carry *Jesus'* cross. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, 34 they gave him wine vinegar mixed with gall to drink. And when he had tasted *it*, he refused to drink *it*.

35 And they crucified him, and divided his garments, casting lots, so that there might be a fulfilment of what was spoken by the prophet,

They divided my garments among  
them,  
and cast lots for my clothing.

36 And sitting down they watched him there. 37 And they placed over his head this written accusation against him,

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Instead let us learn what our fallen nature is like (Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9,19,23).

**27:22** Pilate's question is one all should ponder. What we do with Christ will determine our eternal destiny. If we receive Him, believe Him and love Him we will live with Him in heaven forever. If we do not, our portion will be in the lake of fire (25:41,46). To reject Him is to take the side of His enemies who crucified Him.

Crucifixion was a Roman form of execution. A horizontal beam of wood was fastened to a vertical beam. Then the feet of a person sentenced to death were nailed to the vertical beam, his hands to the horizontal beam, and the cross was lifted up and placed in the ground. It was a very cruel and barbarous form of execution. Jesus' worst enemies could not state a single evil act He had done (see also 26:59,60). All they could do was rage and shout against Him.

**27:24** This attempt to escape responsibility was useless. Pilate was there to administer justice. But in his sinful weakness he was willing to abandon a just man to a cruel death to pacify the Jews. In doing so he shared their guilt. There is never a way that we can wash our hands of the responsibility God puts on us. And sin and guilt can be washed away only in the blood of the One Pilate gave up to crucifixion (26:28).

**27:25** "Blood" means the responsibility for His death. They were willing to be guilty of the murder of Jesus and to make their descendants guilty as well. So great was their unreasonable hatred of Him. Men abandoned to sin would kill God if they could get at Him – indeed they did when He, incarnated in the Lord Jesus, put Himself in their hands.

**27:26** Pilate violated the laws of his country, the law of God, and his own conscience.

The flogging alone was sometimes enough to kill a man. In his depraved weakness Pilate gave Jesus up both to that and to crucifixion.

**27:27-31** Pilate was also responsible for this. They were his soldiers. One accusation against Jesus was that He was making Himself a king (v 11). The mocking of the soldiers was related to this. The scarlet (or purple) robe was the color of royalty. The reed was a mocking symbol of a king's scepter. And kings have crowns, so they gave Jesus one. Jesus is the King of heaven, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16). Man's fallen nature would try to deny Him that and make a cruel mockery of it all. Let us learn what Rom 8:7 means.

**27:30** See 26:67.

**27:32** At first Jesus bore His cross (John 19:17). Was He unable to continue because of physical weakness caused by the beating He endured?

**27:33** Golgotha is the Hebrew name for Calvary and means the same ("a skull"). The place was outside the walls of Jerusalem.

**27:34** Ps 69:21. The idea was to stupefy those about to be executed and relieve their pains to some extent. Jesus chose to face the full force of sufferings for the sins of mankind.

**27:35** Verse 28. This fulfilled the prophecy of Ps 22:18. "They" means the Roman soldiers.

**27:36** Their job was to see that He died and that no one rescued Him before then.

**27:37** This was Pilate's work (John 19:19). He was mocking the Jews who had rejected Jesus as their king, but he wrote more truth than he believed or imagined. It was the custom when crucifying people to put the accusations against them on a board over

38 At that time two thieves were crucified with him, one at the right hand, and another at the left. 39 And those who passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save yourself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41 In the same way the chief priests also, with the scribes and elders, mocking *him* said, 42 "He saved others. Himself he cannot save. If he is the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 "He trusted in God. Let him deliver him now, if he wants him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

44 Also the thieves who were crucified with him, in the same way heaped insults on him.

45 Now from noon there was darkness over all the land up to three in the afternoon.

46 And about three Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" That is to say, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

47 Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, "This *man* is calling for Elijah."

48 And immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, filled *it* with wine vinegar, put *it* on a reed, and their heads.

**27:38** Isa 53:12.

**27:39-43** Ps 22:6-18 reveals the inner experience of the Lord Jesus at this time.

**27:40** Again they twist His words (26:61).

**27:42** The Lord Jesus could not save Himself, only because He would not. Compare 26:53. His very purpose in coming to earth was to give Himself to suffering and death as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (20:28). If He had listened to the taunt of the Jews and come down from the cross, no one would ever have been saved from sin, no one would have been able to enter God's holy heaven.

**27:43** Jesus' trusting in God did not mean deliverance from the cross. It meant something much greater - deliverance from the tomb and the bonds of death (28:6; Acts 3:15).

**27:44** One of these robbers later changed his mind (Luke 23:39-43).

**27:45** "From noon. . .to three" - this was a striking sign from God. It signified the realm of spiritual darkness Jesus entered as a just suffering for sinners. See Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Luke 22:53; Eph 5:8; Col 1:13; 2 Pet 2:4,17; Jude 13. Only Jesus knows what it cost Him, the Light of the world (John 8:12), to be plunged into darkness.

**27:46** "Forsaken me" - Ps 22:1. See note there. In this also Jesus was bearing the punishment sinners deserve (7:23; 25:41; 2 Thess 1:9). God the Father forsook Him. The light of God's face, the joy of His presence were gone. It was the Lord's will to crush Him (Isa 53:10), and He, made sin for us (2 Cor 5:21), experienced God's

gave it to him to drink. 49 The rest said, "Let *him* alone. Let's see whether Elijah will come to save him."

50 Jesus, when he had cried out again with a loud voice, gave up *his* spirit.

51 And immediately the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks split, 52 and the tombs opened up, and the bodies of many of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, 53 and came out of the tombs after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many.

54 Now the centurion and those who were with him guarding Jesus, seeing the earthquake and the things that happened, were very frightened and said, "This really was the Son of God."

55 And many women were there, watching at a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, performing service for him. 56 Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 When it was evening there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate, and requested the body of Jesus. Then Pilate

anger against sin.

**27:47** They did not understand His words.

"Elijah" - 1 Kings 17:1.

**27:48** Ps 69:21.

**27:50** John 19:30 tells us what He said. The Lord Jesus voluntarily gave up His spirit - no one was able to take it from Him (John 10:17,18).

**27:51** Another marvelous sign from God. For the significance of this veil see the note at Ex 26:31-33. Can we doubt that God Himself tore this veil in two pieces? The tearing of the veil meant that the way into God's presence was opened by the sacrifice of Christ - Heb 9:3,8; 10:19-22. About this time of day a priest would have been burning incense in the holy place in the temple.

**27:52,53** This is the only reference to this event in the New Testament. We do not know what happened to these saints after this. Fallen asleep (v 52) is a way of speaking of death often used in the Bible (notes at John 11:11,14; Acts 7:60).

"Holy city" - Jerusalem.

**27:54** The Roman soldiers confessed this, but the Jewish religious leaders denied it even after these events. Thus they showed themselves more hardened, more determined in their opposition to God's truth than the rough soldiers of a foreign power.

**27:56** See 10:2; Mark 15:40; Luke 8:2. .

**27:57-61** "Arimathea" - a village about 30 kilometers from Jerusalem. Joseph is an example of a rich man who did enter the Kingdom of God. Compare 19:22-24. Joseph openly and boldly made known his connection with the Lord Jesus at a time when Jesus' closest disciples were confused

commanded the body to be handed over *to him*.  
59 And taking the body Joseph wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and put it in his own new tomb, which he had cut out of the rock. And he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away. 61 And Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

62 Now the next day, the one following the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember that when he was still alive that deceiver said, "After three days I will rise again. 64 Therefore, give an order that the tomb be made secure until the third day, or his disciples may come at night and steal him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last error will be worse than the first."

65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go

make *it* as secure as you can."

66 So they went and made the tomb secure, putting a seal on the stone and posting a guard.

**28** After the Sabbath, as dawn was breaking on the first *day* of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And, suddenly, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow. 4 And from fear of him the guards shook and became like dead *men*.

5 And the angel responded and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not

and fearful (John 20:19). Jesus' burial in a rich man's tomb fulfilled Isa 53:9.

**27:62** This was the Preparation Day for the Passover.

**27:63-66** These religious leaders brazenly called Jesus a "deceiver," though they had no evidence whatever for that, and much evidence to the contrary. Hate blinds men to the truth, and drives them to oppose it. In this case their hate was used by God to make the evidence of Christ's resurrection more clear and certain. For, because of them, the tomb where He lay was sealed and guarded. God is able to turn all the malice of men and the tricks of Satan to His own good purpose and to the blessing of His own people. See note at Gen 50:20. It is a striking fact that the enemies of Jesus remembered Jesus' words that He would rise again, but His own disciples did not!

**28:1** This was the third day after Jesus was crucified (Acts 10:40; 1 Cor 15:4).

"Sabbath" - Ex 20:8-11.

"The other Mary" - the mother of James and Joseph (27:56).

**28:2** "An angel of the Lord" - note at 1:20. The angel rolled the stone away from the door of the tomb, not so Jesus could get out, but so Jesus' disciples could get in and see that it was empty (v 6). Note on angels at Gen 16:7.

**28:3** Ezek 1:13,14; Dan 10:6; Rev 15:6; 18:1.

**28:4** Dan 8:17; Luke 1:12; 2:9. If men are so alarmed in the presence of an angel, what will they do when they stand before God Himself (Rev 20:11,12)?

**28:5** The greatest day in human history had dawned. It was a time for joy, not fear. But he did not tell the guards not to fear, only the women who were seeking for Jesus. Christ's disciples need not fear many things that other men fear. And what is a source of great joy to them may be a cause of dread to others (16:21; 27:23; 20:19; John 10:17,18).

**28:6** The Lord Jesus said He would rise from

the dead, and He did so in spite of the attempts of His enemies to prevent it. Even for a person to predict that he will rise from the dead is an extraordinary thing, unheard of in the literature of the world. Actually rising again is a marvel without compare. Observe carefully the words of the angel. The total person of the Lord Jesus rose and came out of the tomb - His body, soul and spirit. The body which had died and been placed in the tomb was no longer there, and the women could see this for themselves.

By rising from the dead the Lord Jesus proved that He was the Son of God from heaven (Rom 1:4), and that He was no deceiver (27:63). He proved Himself the conqueror of death and the giver of eternal life as He had said He was (John 5:21-29; 11:25,26). For some other truth that can be learned from Christ's resurrection see 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Do we have any evidence that should cause us to doubt this word of God's angel "He has risen?" None whatever. All the evidence points to the fact that He did rise from the dead.

First, and most importantly, we have His own word for it (16:21; 17:23; 20:19; John 10:17,18; Luke 24:45).

Second, a large number of people saw Him after His resurrection, and these eye witnesses were willing to suffer and die for saying He had risen (as the book of Acts makes very clear. See also 2 Cor 11:23-27). The eleven original apostles were with the Lord Jesus for forty days. They saw Him, had conversations with Him, and heard Him teach. There was no possibility of being deceived in this matter. They knew beyond any shadow of doubt that Jesus who had been crucified, who had suffered death and been buried in the tomb, was risen and alive and with them.

Third, God worked with them in great power establishing the truth they proclaimed (Heb 2:3,4. See Acts 5:12-16; 9:40,41; 20:9,10; 28:7-10; etc).

Fourth, millions of individuals in the world

here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and now he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you."

8 And they hurried away from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to take word to his disciples. 9 And as they were going to tell his disciples, suddenly Jesus met them, saying, "Greetings." And they came *to him* and clasped his feet and worshipped him.

10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brethren that they should go to Galilee, and that they will see me there."

11 While *the women* were going, some of the guard appeared, coming into the city. And they

today have had their lives changed by the Lord Jesus, and testify that He is real and true and living.

For a fuller account of Jesus' appearances to these eye witnesses than we have in Matthew see Luke chapter 24, John chapters 20 and 21, and Acts 1:3-9.

**28:7** Verses 10,16. The order of events after Christ's resurrection is not clear. No Gospel records all of them, and each writer gives the account in the way God led him. It seems that the Lord Jesus appeared on at least eleven different occasions between His resurrection and ascension to heaven.

The order was probably like this: He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; John 20:14); then to women returning from the tomb without Mary Magdalene (Matt 28:9,10); then to Peter (Luke 24:34); then to two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:34); then to a group of disciples in Jerusalem when Thomas was absent (John 20:19); then to the same disciples again when Thomas was present (John 20:26-29); then to seven disciples at the lake of Galilee (John 21:1); then to a group of disciples on a mountain in Galilee (Matt 28:16); then to more than five hundred at one time (1 Cor 15:6); then to James (1 Cor 15:7); finally to the eleven apostles on the mount of Olives (Luke 24:50,51; Acts 1:9-12).

Other unrecorded appearances there must have been, for He appeared to the apostles over a period of forty days (Acts 1:3), but these appearances are not recorded.

**28:8** Ps 2:11. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a source of joy forever to those who really believe it (Luke 24:52; John 20:20).

**28:9** John 20:17.

**28:10** The blessed truth of the resurrection should remove our fear and send us out to speak of it. "My brethren" means the disciples (12:48,49; Heb 2:11,12). They did not immediately set out for Galilee (they were very slow to believe in Christ's resurrection - Mark 16:11,13,14). So He appeared to them in Jerusalem (John 20:19-29).

**28:11-15** Here is another example of

reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. 12 And when they had met with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large *sum of* money to the soldiers, 13 saying, "Say that his disciples came at night, and stole him *away* while we were sleeping. 14 And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him, and make your *situation safe*."

15 So they took the money, and did as they were instructed. And this story has been spreading among the Jews to this very day.

16 Then the eleven disciples went away to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying,

hatred of truth leading men further away from truth. That the story invented by these Jews was utterly false soon became clear to those in Jerusalem and to people around the world. And the behavior of the disciples afterwards was not that of deceivers who stole the body of Jesus and hid it somewhere - they suffered and died for their teaching that Jesus had risen from the dead.

**28:13** What strange instructions! If they were asleep how could they know what happened to the body of Jesus? Surely no law court in the world would accept such testimony.

**28:16** Verse 10.

**28:17** "Worshipped Him" - see 2:11; 4:10; 14:33.

"Doubted" - it does not say what they doubted, but it is clear from the Gospels of Luke and John that the appearance of Jesus after His resurrection was not altogether the same as before, and sometimes He was not immediately recognizable (Luke 24:16,31,36-43; John 20:15; 21:5). Jesus removed their doubts by coming near and speaking to them. But even to mention these doubts shows the honesty of the Gospel writers. If Jesus had not risen, but they were trying to convince people He had, would they have spoken of doubts and inability to recognize Him?

**28:18** "All power" - the Greek word also means authority. See John 3:35; 17:2; 5:22,23; Acts 2:32,33,36; Phil 2:9-11. The Lord Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16). Blessed are all those who receive Him as such and trust in Him (Ps 2:6-12). He is directing events on earth and fulfilling His purposes. This authority was "given" to Him. By whom? By God the Father who has a higher place in the administration of the universe than the Son (John 10:29; 14:28; 1 Cor 15:22-28).

Notice the all-inclusive words Jesus used in the last three verses of this Gospel-"all power" (v 18), "all nations" (v 19), "all things" (v 20), "always" (v 20). His disciples can go to all people groups, make disciples everywhere, and teach everything He commanded them because He has all power and authority both in heaven and earth and

"All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them

to observe everything that I have commanded you. And see, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age."

Amen.

will be with them always and everywhere, empowering them and using His authority and power on their behalf.

**28:19** Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47-49; John 20:21; Acts 1:8. In verses 19 and 20 Jesus commanded the apostles to do three things: Make disciples, baptize, and teach those who become disciples to do as they themselves had been commanded.

"Make disciples" – this is the meaning of the Greek word. The word translated "teaching" in v 20 is a different word altogether. To make disciples means his followers are to make disciples for Christ, not for themselves (as some preachers like to do). Because Jesus has authority over all people (John 17:2), His servants would be able to do what He here commands. Making disciples for Christ means to preach the gospel and proclaim the truth of God's Word (and live) in such a way that people trust in Jesus, begin to love Him above everything and everyone, and become willing to die to self and follow Him whatever the cost. If those in the ministry are not doing this they are not doing what Jesus commanded us to do. See notes on discipleship at Matt 10:1 and Luke 14:25-35.

"All nations" – this is the great missionary commission and task for every generation of Christians, and to be obedient to Christ believers must place this very high indeed in their list of priorities.

"Baptizing them in" – the word "them" refers only to the disciples that are made. Jesus did not tell His servants to baptize anyone else. The Greek word translated "in" may also be translated "into". See note on baptism at 3:6. Discipleship speaks of death to self and a new life in which Christ is the center and the chief object of love (Matt 10:37-39; Luke 9:23; 14:26,27; etc). Baptism also speaks of these two things.

Compare Rom 6:3-6.

Since Jesus here declared that He wants disciples to be baptized, any believer today who wants to please Him should be baptized.

"Name" – the Lord Jesus now gives the final revelation of the name of God. "Name" is singular not plural, because Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three gods but one God perfectly united in nature and attributes. To reveal God's name is to reveal what God is like – John 17:6; Ex 34:5-7. God is a Trinity. See also 3:16,17; 11:27; John 1:1,14,18; 5:30; 10:30; 14:16, 17; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6.

**28:20** "Teaching them" – those who become disciples in every generation need to be taught to obey all that the Lord Jesus taught and commanded. By becoming disciples they have started on the path of obedience. But they will need to understand more truth and become fully obedient to it. Faith, discipleship, and obedience are all closely linked together and no one should try to separate them (see Matt 7:21; 1 John 2:3-6; note at Acts 22:10; etc). The apostles took the command of Jesus very seriously and worked mightily to do just what He told them to do. This is clear from the book of Acts and the letters they wrote.

"I am with you" – this means not only with the apostles who were present then, but with their successors throughout this age, as is plain from the concluding words. Each generation needs faithful men to carry on the work the apostles began. And Christ Himself will be with all of them always. In the first chapter of Matthew we have the announcement of the coming of Emmanuel – God with us (1:23). Here in the last verse is the promise that Emmanuel will be with His people to the end of the age. See also 18:20.