The Pilgrim Way Commentary on
the Gospel of Matthew

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This commentary on Matthew follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound this first Gospel.

This work grew out of over 35 years of both preaching through Matthew in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through the epistle as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached from Matthew, so this fuller commentary flows from those notes and outlines. Thus, the layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. It was not written from an isolated study of a theologian who had little contact with people or practical ministerial experience. There are many such commentaries on the market and they tend to be someone dull and not very practical in their application. It is written as something of a theological reference manual to me, filled with quotes and outlines from various books in my library. I have followed the format (to some degree) of Charles Spurgeon when he wrote *The Treasury of David*. The layout and format are designed to help me in my preaching, teaching and personal study of this book. I figured there may be others out there who may benefit from this work which is why I make it available, but the work is basically laid out in a selfish manner, for my benefit and assistance. That is why I call this as “reference commentary”. You, as the reader, hopefully can find some profit in this!

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote “There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else”, he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a human, flawed, limited and uninspired theological system, as any other human theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin’s teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understandings of the truth but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems influence my understanding of what the clear teachings of Scripture is.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and sermons for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked “I milked a lot of cows but I churned my own butter.” Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the
quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings. In this sense, I have tried to follow the form of Charles Spurgeon’s *Treasury of David*, where he quoted a wide variety of other writers. I consider his commentary on the Psalms to be the greatest commentary ever in reference to its format.

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe that this is the most preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current “flavor of the month” of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version. When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birth and nurtured with an NASB? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used and that God has blessed. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Bishops Bible, and other “cousins” of our English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God’s remnant.

I have also decided to do some textual studies, mainly comparing the King James readings with the English Standard Version. I also refer to the readings in the English translations that preceded the King James Bible for sake of comparison and to examine how the English Received Text readings developed from the Tyndale Bible, through the Coverdale Bible, the Geneva Bible and the Bishops Bible.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy. It says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. We will not amend our text but will take it as it is the best we can.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of the book of Matthew. A commentary over 35 years in the making can never truly said to be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my understanding of the epistle deepens, additional material will be added and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book, especially a commentary. As one deepens and grows in his relation with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children. They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21st century but also of a Christian father for his children, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.
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It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God's saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.
Introduction to Matthew

Matthew has 28 chapters, 1,071 verses and 23,684 in our Authorized Version. Matthew also has 812 promises and 320 pericopes.

Authorship- the Apostle Matthew. It is of no value to the Bible-believing student to worry if Mark wrote before Matthew or how much, if any, Matthew borrowed from Mark. None of this has any bearing on the interpretation or application of the text, but it sure keeps them busy in the faculty smoking lounges in your nearest Bible college or seminary.

Date- mid 60s.

Theme- to present Jesus Christ as the King of the Jews, the Son of David, the fulfillment of the prophets. Matthew is the most Jewish of the gospels and he emphasizes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Millennial reign of Christ and the upcoming Jewish political kingdom, which God will usher in after the tribulation and the Second Coming. Matthew is giving the gospel from the standpoint of an Old Testament Hebrew who is awaiting the appearance of the “anointed one,” the Messiah. Matthew’s Gospel is thus placed first in the New Testament as the logical link between Malachi and the events that are about to take place around the first appearance of the Lord.

Observations
Along with Acts and Hebrews, Matthew is one of the most difficult and dangerous doctrinal books in the New Testament because of its dispensational nature. Every doctrinal division and heresy in the Body of Christ is based on misapplication of verses found in one of these three books as these people do not (or refuse to) apply dispensation principles of application to these books. Matthew is focusing on the millennium, Hebrews on the tribulation period and Acts 2-7 is the bridge between these two.

Just about all of the commentators say that Matthew would have written this gospel in Greek, but I can’t help but wonder. If Matthew was writing a Jewish gospel directed toward Jews, I wonder if he would have written in Aramaic or whatever primary tongue the Jews were speaking in Israel in his day, which then was translated into Greek. I cannot prove anything as we have no access to the “original manuscripts” (and no one has ever seen them anyway) but it is a possibility worth considering.

Matthew’s frequent use of numbers would be natural for a tax-collector. He divides things into three parts: the genealogy, the trilogies of miracles in chapters 8-9; five parts: five great sermons of Jesus, all with the same closing formula (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1); six corrections on the misuse of the Law (in chapter 5); seven woes, parables (ch. 13); etc. He also makes many references to money, which would also be normal for a tax collector. He uses unique monetary terms in 17:24,25; 18:24,25. Matthew contains the only two parables on talents (chapters 18 and 25); and he uses tax-collector-type terminology in 6:12 and 25:27.

Names and Titles of Christ in Matthew
1. Jesus Christ 1:1
2. The Son of David 1:1; 9:27
3. The Son of Abraham 1:1
4. Jesus 1:21
5. Emmanuel 1:23
6. King of the Jews 2:2; 27:11,37
7. Governor 2:6
8. A Nazarene 2:23; 26:71
9. The Lord 3:3; 7:21
10. My beloved Son 3:17; 17:5
11. The Son of God 4:6; 8:29
12. Master 8:19; 23:8
13. Son of Man 8:20
14. Friend of sinners 11:19
15. The Son 11:27
16. Lord of the Sabbath 12:8
17. The Servant of God 12:18a
18. My Beloved 12:18b
19. Greater than Jonah 12:41
20. Greater than Solomon 12:42
21. Our elder Brother 12:50
22. The Sower 13:3,37

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23. The Christ, the Son of the living God: 16:16
24. Jesus the Christ 16:20
25. Good Master 19:16
26. A Ransom 20:28
27. King 21:5; 25:34
28. Prophet of Nazareth 21:11
29. The Heir 21:38
30. This Stone 21:44
31. The Bridegroom 25:10
32. The risen Lord: 28:6

Names and Titles of God in Matthew

1. Lord 2:15,19
2. Lord thy God 4:7; 22:37
3. Father 5:16 (used 43 times in Matthew)
4. Our Father 6:9
5. Heavenly Father 6:26; 15:13
6. Lord of heaven and earth 11:25

Names and Titles of the Holy Spirit in Matthew

1. Holy Ghost 1:20; 3:11
3. The Spirit 4:1
4. Spirit of your Father 10:20
5. My Spirit: 12:18

Miracles in Matthew

Peculiar to Matthew:
1. Two blind men healed 9:27-31
2. Dumb spirit cast out 9:32,33
3. Sick healed in Jerusalem 14:14
4. Peter walking on water: 14:29
5. Tribute money provided from a fish 17:24-27

Common to Matthew and Mark:
1. Healing in Galilee 9:35; Mark 6:5,6
2. Syrophenician's daughter healed 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30
3. Multitudes healed in Galilee 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37
4. 4000 fed 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-9
5. Fig tree cursed: 21:18-21; Mark 11:21

Common to Matthew, Mark, Luke:
1. Leper cleansed: 8:1-4; Mark 1:40; Luke 5:12-14
2. Peter's mother-in-law healed: 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-41
5. Palsied man healed: 9:1,2; Mark 2:3; Luke 5:18
7. Woman's blood issue healed: 9:20; Mark 5:25; Luke 8:43

Common to Matthew, Mark, and John:
1. Walking on water: 14:22-27; Mark 6:48; John 6:19

Common to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John:
1. 5000 fed: 14:15; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14

**Parables of Christ**

Peculiar to Matthew
1. The tares 13:24-30,36-43
2. The hidden treasure 13:44
3. The goodly pearl 13:45,46
4. The draw-net 13:47-50
5. Meats not defiling 15:10-20
6. Unmerciful servant 18:23-35
7. Laborers in the vineyard 20:1-16
8. Two sons 21:28-32
9. Marriage feast 22:2-14
11. Talents 25:14-30
12. Sheep and the goats 25:31-46

Common to Matthew and Luke:
3. Lost sheep: 18:11-14; Luke 15:3-7

Common to Matthew, Mark and Luke
1. New cloth and old garment 9:16; Mark 2:21; Luke 5:36
3. The sower 13:3,18; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15
4. The mustard seed 13:31,32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18,19
5. Fig tree 24:32-34; Mark 13:28,29; Luke 21:29-31

**Passages from the Old Testament Quoted Matthew**

Behold, a virgin shall be with child 1:23 Isaiah 7:14
Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah 2:6 Micah 5:2
Out of Egypt have I called my son. 2:15 Hosea 11:1
In Rama was there a voice heard. 2:18 Jeremiah 31:15
The voice of one crying in the wilderness. 3:3 Isaiah 40:3
Man shall not live by bread alone. 4:4 Deuteronomy 8:3
He shall give his angels charge. 4:6 Psalm 91:11,12
Thou shalt not tempt the Lord. 4:7 Deuteronomy 6:16
Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God. 4:10 Deuteronomy 6:13
The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim. 4:15,16 Isaiah 9:1,2; 42:7
Thou shalt not kill. 5:21 Exodus 20:13
Thou shalt not commit adultery. 5:27 Exodus 20:14
Whosoever shall put away his wife. 5:31 Deuteronomy 24:1
Thou shalt not forswear thyself. 5:33 Leviticus 19:12
An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. 5:38 Exodus 21:24
Thou shalt love thy neighbour. 5:43 Leviticus 19:18
Be ye therefore perfect 5:48 Genesis 17:1
Depart ye that work iniquity. 7:23 Psalm 6:8
Himself took out infirmities. 8:17 Isaiah 53:4
I will have mercy, and not sacrifice. 9:13; 12:7 Hosea 6:6
Behold, I send my messenger 11:10 Malachi 3:1
Behold my servant, whom I have chosen: 12:18; 21 Isaiah 42:1-4
By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand 13:14,15 Isaiah 6:9, 10
I will open my mouth in parables 13:35 Psalm 78:2
Honour thy father and mother. 15:4 Exodus 20:12
He that curseth father or mother. 15:4 Exodus 21:17
This people draw nigh unto me 15:8, 9 Isaiah 29:13
He made them male and female 19:4 Genesis 1:27
For this cause shall a man leave father and mother 19:5 Genesis 2:24
Thou shalt do no murder 19:18 Exodus 20:13
Honour thy father and thy mother, 19:19 Exodus 20:12
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself 19:19 Leviticus 19:18
Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh 21:5 Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord 21:9 Psalm 118:26
My house shall be called the house of prayer 21:13 Isaiah 56:7
Ye have made it a den of thieves 21:13 Jeremiah 7:11
Out of the mouth of babes 21:16 Psalm 8:2
The stone which the builders rejected 21:42 Psalm 118:22,23
If a man die, having no children 22:24 Deuteronomy 25:5
I am the God of Abraham, 22:32 Exodus 3:6
Thou shalt love the Lord thy God 22:37 Deuteronomy 6:5
Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 22:39 Leviticus 19:18
The Lord said, , , , Sit thou on my right hand 22:44 Psalm 110:1
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, 23:39 Psalm 118:26
I will smite the shepherd, 26:31 Zechariah 13:7
And they took the thirty pieces of silver 27:9,10 Zechariah 11:12,

Matthew's Gospel rendering is noteworthy for five blocks of teaching or discourses which
together make up nearly three-fifths of the entire document. Each of these blocks of teaching is
highly important and significant:
    1. The Sermon on the Mount (5-7)
    2. The Apostolic Commission (10)
    3. The Parables of the Kingdom (13)
    4. The Discourse on Forgiveness (18)
    5. The Prophetic Discourse (24-25)

It is interesting to note that each of these discourses ends with a special formula of
words: "And it came to pass when Jesus had ended" (7:28: 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). (H. T.
Spence, The Canon of Scripture, page 196)."

Booklist on Matthew

$ A Treasure House of Good Books From My Library by James Alexander Stewart
! An Annotated Bibliography of Reference Works and Commentaries on the Greek New
Testament, by Jon Weatherly, Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary, for Fall Semester, 2003.
* Commenting and Commentaries by Charles Spurgeon
% The Minister's Library by Cyril Barber
@ New Testament Commentaries for Bible Expositors, 1987-92 by James E. Rosscup, The
Master's Seminary
# From notes by Dr. H. T. Spence, Foundations Bible College, Dunn, North Carolina
& Top 5 Commentaries on Matthew, Ligonier Ministries by Keith Mathison,
http://www.ligonier.org/blog/top-5-commentaries-on-the-gospel-of-matthew/

Entries with no marks are from the author, Dr. John Cereghin.
All remarks are the responsibility of the author cited and do not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of this author, except where otherwise noted.


* Adamson, H.T., *Matthew expounded*, 1871. This book reads to us like utter nonsense. We question if anyone except the author will ever be able to make head or tail of it, and he had better be quick about it, or he will forget what he meant.

* Alexander, Joseph Addison, *Matthew Explained*, 1870. Alexander's last work. He died before it was quite finished. It is complete to Chapter 16. Its value is great.

Barclay, William, “Matthew” in the *Daily Study Bible*. Liberal comments and many times, Barclay will not commit himself as to whether he believes a recorded miracle was a true miracle or not. But he still has many useful and helpful observations, so he must be used with discernment.

* Beausobre, Isaac, and L’Enfant, Jacques, *A New Version, with a Commentary*, 1790, 1823. The brief notes are purely literal or illustrative, and are remarkably pertinent. The mass of the volume is taken up with an introduction to the New Testament.

* Benham, W., *Matthew, with Notes*. 1861, With this in his hand a teacher would be much aided in conducting his class. It is written by a teacher for teachers. The remarks are not very profound, nor always such as we should endorse, but they are well fitted for their purpose.

* Blackwood, Christopher, *An Exposition upon the First Chapters of Matthew*, 1649. This learned divine became a Baptist through studying the arguments against believers' baptism. This proves his candour. His comment is somewhat out of date, but it is still good.


* Broadus, John Albert, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1886. A singularly helpful exposition based upon careful exegesis and containing practical applications of the text which will be of help to preachers. Amillennial.

# Although we would not agree with every interpretation, one can turn to almost any verse and find more practical help in understanding it than in most other writings. He defends the virgin birth and miracles.

* Bruner, D. Frederick, *The Christbook: Matthew*. 2 volumes in 1, 1987-1990. This effort to teach Matthew doctrinally is too wordy. Bruner sees a doctrinal emphasis in each chapter: chap. 1, God with us; chap. 2, man (magi, human nature under the power of sin); chap. 3, repentance; etc. He assumes Markan priority (xvii), and says that Mark is Luther, Matthew is Calvin or Thomas, Luke is Wesley or Xavier or Chrysostom, and John is Augustine or Barth (p. xvii), parallels that many find dubious. His apparent liberal orientation appears in his understanding that Matthew erred in having only thirteen names in the third part of his genealogy (p. 15) and that Jesus as a child made mistakes (p. 15). His excessive detail at times is not relevant to Matthew, but he does sometimes help, for example, in his sections "The Roman Catholic


& It is difficult to decide whether to place Carson or France in the number 1 position because both are such outstanding commentators. Ultimately, I place France slightly ahead of Carson because of France’s interpretation of Matthew 24. Carson’s commentary, however, should not be neglected by anyone doing serious study of this Gospel. Carson’s work is characterized by careful and sane exegesis and consideration of all interpretive options. His individual commentary in the series is also available separately as a two volume paperback.

@ Carson, Donald A., When Jesus Confronts the World: An Exposition of Matthew 8-10, 1987. 154 pp. Sermons at Edon Baptist Church, Cambridge, England, are sources of six chapters on Jesus’ authority, authenticity, mission, trustworthiness, compassion, and decisiveness. The book has much help for expositors and also applies some valid principles to life today.

* Clarke, George, W., Notes, 1870. Good notes for teachers. Well compiled.

% Criswell, Wallie Amos. Expository Notes on the Gospel of Matthew, 1970. Helpful devotional messages on Christ’s earthly life and ministry

@ Davies, W. D., and Dale C. Allison, Jr. The Gospel According to Matthew. 3 volumes, ICC, 1988. The first two volumes are complete and cover through Matthew 18, with a third volume yet to appear. This replaces the single-volume work by W. C. Allen (1912) in the ICC series. The volumes are very expensive, but contain an immense amount of information. It is very liberal, but informs evangelicals of differing views (e.g., eight views on the structure of 1:2-17, eight views on the Son of Man’s coming in 16:28), arguments (e.g., nine reasons Mary’s pregnancy is traced to the Holy Spirit [pp. 201-2]), and sources (e.g., the use of Hos 11:1 in Matt. 2:15 [p. 263]). The 26-page general bibliography has mostly liberal works, ignoring the work of William Hendriksen, but including that of evangelical R. H. Mounce. It has a 148-page introduction. The authors argue that the Jewish flavor and use of the Old Testament point to a Jewish author (pp. 33, 58). They see a “massive unity” in the overall structure, but a “structurally mixed” situation that does not yield a clear outline (p. 72). They advocate the priority of Mark (p. 73) and sum up the most important of Allen’s conclusions (e.g., p. 73). Helpful features include discussions of semitisms, triads, repetition, headings, and conclusions and different kinds of tables. They see a redactional source for many of the statements in the gospel. They date Matthew between 80 and 95 (p. 138) and give Antioch as the place of origin (pp. 146-47). This ranks at the top of technical works because of its exegetical detail.

& For those doing an exhaustive study of the Gospel of Matthew, the work of Davies and Allison is indispensable. Readers should be aware that it is written from a moderately critical perspective, but in terms of comprehensiveness, there is nothing quite like this commentary. It is a highly technical commentary on the Greek text and thus not suitable for lay readers, but discerning pastors who are looking for information on every conceivable issue related to the text need look no further. The three paperback volumes are somewhat expensive (See links above), but they are a bargain compared to the hardcovers, which run approximately $150 each! For those not interested in all the technical details, an abridged version is also available.
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% Davis, William Hersey. Notes on Matthew, 1962. A "thematic" approach to Matthew’s Gospel which stresses the Messianic character of Christ. However, Davis fails to organize his treatment around Matthew’s thematic outline.

* Dickson, David. A Brief Exposition of Matthew, 1651. A perfect gem. The work is, to men of our school, more suggestive of sermons than almost any other we have met with.


& A short commentary on the Gospel of Matthew has been available in the Tyndale New Testament Commentary series since 1985, but in 2007, France published a much more comprehensive commentary on this Gospel in the NICNT series — The New International Commentary on the New Testament. France’s work is thorough and solidly evangelical and will be beneficial to pastors and all serious students of Scripture. His commentary is distinctive in that he takes a largely preterist approach to much of the Olivet Discourse.

$ Gaebelein, Arnold. An Exposition of Matthew, 1910. I have consulted quite a number of books in my library, but believe this is one of the best on the First Gospel.

% A very thorough premillennial exposition. Weak in handling chapters 13 and 24-25.

% Green, H. Benedict.. The Gospel According to Matthew, New Clarendon Bible, 1975. Relying heavily on source criticism, Green provides little more than a summary of modern critical opinion regarding matters of authorship, date, etc. His comments on the text are of help to the discerning reader, but his handling of Christ’s virgin conception, ministry, death, and resurrection leave much to be desired.

Greene, Oliver B., The Gospel According to Matthew, 4 volumes, 1971. a Basic commentary, doesn’t really break any new ground. Greene is too dependent upon the Scofield Reference Bible and Albert Barnes. Greene also frequently cites “Greek scholars” or what “the Greek” says despite his having little or no training in Greek. How then would be able to critique “the Greek” and these Greek scholars? He would have done better by simply sticking with the English,

John Godwin, *New Translation, with Brief Notes*, 1863. Godwin is a painstaking elucidator of the word, and his plan is an excellent one. Students in college will value him.

Harvey Goodwin, *Commentary*, 1857. An important work, which may be consulted with advantage.


Like France and Carson, Keener is an outstanding exegete. His commentary is distinctive in its emphasis on the social-historical context of the Gospel. It also contains a very useful 150 page bibliography of secondary resources on the Gospel of Matthew.

William Kelly, *Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1868. We cannot accept the forced and fanciful interpretations here given.


Lee, Witness, *Life Study of Matthew*, Living Stream Ministry. From the Watchman Nee group, giving a unique, Oriental perspective of Scriptures. There are numerous “quirks” of interpretation and the books are pricy (including the Kindle editions) but they are still worth consulting, but with discernment.


@ MacArthur, John Jr. *Matthew*. 4 volumes, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985-90. This is a conservative, premillennial, and very readable exposition that often deals in some detail with problem verses and elaborates on vital lessons of Jesus’ teachings. The author often explains customs and gives differing viewpoints and supporting reasons. In Matthew 13, he takes only the fourth soil to represent genuinely saved people and understands the leaven in a good sense. In Matthew 24, the one taken is removed in judgment and the one left is preserved on earth safely to enter the earthly kingdom promised in the Old Testament.

MacArthur’s commentaries are “safe” but not very deep and he doesn’t break up much new ground.

* Marloratus, Augustine, *Exposition*, 1570. Marlorate was an eminent French reformer, preacher, and martyr. His commentaries contain the cream of the older writers, and are in much esteem, but are very rare. He wrote on the whole New Testament, but we have in English only the Gospels and Jude.


# This work consists of seventy-three expository messages that amount to a verse-by-verse commentary. He strongly defends the virgin birth and the other miracles.

* Morison. James, *Matthew's Memoirs of Jesus Christ*, 1870. We differ greatly in doctrinal views from Morison, but we set a great price upon his Matthew and Mark, which deserve the utmost praise.

% A practical and devotional phrase-by-phrase commentary. In many instances, provides helpful comments on textual problems. Although the interpretation of the Greek nuances is not always accurate this work should be purchased if found.

$ Morrison, George H., *Matthew*, 3 volumes, 1978. These eloquent messages expound the meaning of Matthew’s Gospel with a force that is both compelling and persuasive.

North, Gary, *Priorities and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on Matthew*, 2000, 2003, 626 pages. Not verse-by-verse but an economic commentary on selected verses. North is a Reconstructionist and anti-dispensationalist so many of his doctrinal applications but be
carefully evaluated. He does have many good practical applications.

* Overton, Charles, Course of Lectures on Matthew, 1850. Scarce. Solid, sound, soporific sermons; intended for lay helpers to read, with the prayers appended. They will not make the hearers lie awake at nights, or cause them palpitations of heart through excess of original and striking thought.

* Parker, Joseph, Homiletic Analysis. Matthew, 1870. Parker is an able though somewhat———. But stop, he is a near neighbor of ours.

* Penrose, John, Lectures on Matthew, 1832. The author says of his work, "no novelty of any kind, no originality either of thought or research will be found in it." Why, then, did he print it?

$ Pettingill, William, The Gospel of the Kingdom, 1940. Tens of thousands of believers across the American continent are deeply indebted to the life and ministry of this beloved Bible teacher. He was one of the editors of the Scofield Bible. He wrote for the busy Christian who has not too much time for meditation. A valuable addition to that of Gaebelein’s.


% Pink, Arthur Walkington, An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, 1951. A thorough exposition containing an abundance of practical material.

% Plummer, Alfred, The Gospel According to St. Matthew, 1956. A most helpful technical and critical commentary. Plummer denies Matthew’s authorship and believes that there are inaccuracies in Scripture; yet he defends the virgin birth and the reality of miracles. In spite of the weaknesses inherent in this volume, it is one of the best expository treatments of this Gospel.

% Rice, John R., The King of the Jews, 1955 Bible study lessons which have been expanded into a commentary. With Rice’s commentaries, they are rather thin and are skewed to evangelistic applications. There are some occasionally good devotional applications, but commenting was not Rice’s first calling.

@ Ridderbos, Herman N., Matthew. Bible Students Commentary, 1987, 556 pages. This work is from the famous Dutch series (e.g., Aalders on Genesis, etc.) originally published in 1950-51. It provides expositors with much help with its competent interpretations and definitions and defenses of varying viewpoints. Ridderbos is amillennial and does not deal with critical issues as much as other scholars. Because of its earlier publication, it does not reflect awareness of works on Matthew since the 1940’s.

% Robertson, Archibald Thomas, Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew, 1911. An exposition by an able exegete

@ Robinson, Haddon W., What Jesus Said about Successful Living: Principles from the Sermon on the Mount for Today, 1989. 298 pp. The author is an outstanding preacher, a former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and president at Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary and now a distinguished professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. The book is popularly written and devotionally enriching and is a resource for sermon
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preparation and life application. Like don carson, d. m. lloyd-jones, and john r. w. stott, robinson develops the meaning for today in graphic style.

% robinson, theodore h., the gospel of Matthew, moffatt new testament commentary, 1927. an exceedingly inadequate treatment.

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% vos, howard frederick, Matthew., a study guide commentary, 1979. a careful presentation. ideal for discussion groups.
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# This book by a prominent writer is both expositional and devotional. He is dispensational but premillennial.

* Ward, Richard, *Theological Questions, Dogmatical Observations, and Evangelical Essays upon the Gospel according to Matthew. Wherein about two thousand six hundred and fifty profitable Questions are discussed; and five hundred and eighty points of Doctrine noted, &c., &c.*, 1640.

A huge mass of comment, in which are thousands of good things mostly set forth by way of question and answer. Few could ever read it through; but to a wise minister it would be a mine of wealth.

% Watson, Thomas., *The Beatitudes An Exposition of Matthew 5:1-12.* A Puritan work originally published in 1660. Deeply devotional, but fails to interpret this passage in the light of the writer’s theme
Matthew Chapter 1

“When Ezra the scribe wrote his Chronicles, he had a special audience and special objectives in mind. He wrote for the pioneers who had returned from the Babylonian captivity. They had come to stake a claim in the Promised Land for the coming of the Messiah who was being so loudly heralded by the prophet Zechariah, but there was an enormous obstacle. The land was still "trodden down of the Gentiles."…the repatriated Jews had a mandate to build a temple but not a palace; to set up an altar, not a throne. Thoughtful people were asking “What has happened to God’s promise to David?” Ezra wrote to assure them that although the throne was gone because of their national sins and the debaucheries of their kings, the royal Davidic line was still there.

Then came the silent centuries. For four hundred years…God said nothing to His people. Again thoughtful people were asking “Now what has happened to the royal line of David?” They would look at the Chronicles and realize that the list of names were incomplete. The promise that the royal line would never lack a man to sit on the throne of David seemed to mock them. The royal line through Solomon had been cursed because of the sins of Jehoiachin (also called Jechonias, Jeconiah and contemptuously Coniah). It seemed as though God had forgotten His promise.

But the book of Matthew told the Jews that the royal line was still alive- until it terminated abruptly and permanently in the person of Jesus Christ. Similarly, the name of Jehoiakim is omitted between the names of Josiah (Josias) and Jehoiachin (Jechonias) (Matthew 1:11) (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, pages 27-28)."

(It is interesting to note that there were approximately 400 silent years from the last word in Malachi to the coming of the Lord in His virgin birth. There will be another 400 (or so) silent years from the giving of the Authorized Version of the Bible in 1611 until the next coming of the Lord in the Rapture and Advent. God’s people at the end of this 400 year silent period would be asking the same questions that the believing Jewish remnant would ask in their day, leading up to the birth of Christ.)

Looking at this genealogy, we see that Christ’s line was full of sinners- murderers, adulterers, prostitutes, outcasts, Gentiles, obscure people and just plain jerks. That is like everyone’s family tree. Few of us have great and mighty and moral people. Most of us have many ancestors hanging from our family tree. But a bad background can be overcome. We need not have our family or background or circumstances to hinder us from going on with God.

1. The Generation of Jesus Christ 1:1-17

1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

The last time we read of “the book of the generations” in the Bible was in Genesis 5:1, with the First Adam and the Last Adam (here). Part of the humanity of Jesus Christ is that He had a family tree, like everyone else who ever lived. And like any family tree, He has a mix of good and bad. Everyone today (or who has ever lived) can place their spiritual lineage either in the Generations of Adam (if they are lost) or in the Generations of Jesus Christ (if they are saved).

This family tree of Jesus is designed to establish His credentials as King of the Jews, being from the lineage of Abraham and David. The Matthew lineage is the official lineage that might have been maintained by the temple records, while Luke’s lineage can be considered the actual lineage. Matthew lists Jesus’ lineage from the (supposed and legal) father Joseph while Luke traces it through His mother, Mary.
A “son” can be a literal son, a grandson, a great-great grandson, a son-in-law or an adopted son. Jesus was not even David’s son by descent, literally; yet here he is called, “the son of David,” as also in Matthew 22:45. Jesus was David’s son legally, if not even biologically.


The Jews are the only nation that can trace their history and origin back to a single person and founder. The Jews knew this made them a unique nation and they took a lot of pride in it.

“The verse is the matchmeet of Genesis 5:1. A comparison of Genesis 5 with Matthew 1 will reveal some remarkable doctrinal truths. First, Genesis 5:1 is "the book of the generations of Adam". Romans 5:14 tells you that Adam is a type of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:1 is "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ," making the Lord Jesus Christ "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45). In Genesis 5, the phrase "and he died" appears about every third verse, teaching you that "in Adam all die" (1 Cor 15:22). But in Matthew 1, although it is evident everyone in the list dies, not one death is recorded, illustrating the great Scriptural truth that "in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22) Every adult on earth is either "in Adam" or "in Christ." (Peter Ruckman, Ruckman Reference Bible, page 1235)."

1:2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

Judas is Judah, the son of Jacob. His line would be the Messianic one as seen in Genesis 49:10. “Judas” is the Greek form of “Judah”. The slight differences in spelling of the proper names in the New Testament should not upset us. Pedro, Pierre, Pietro, Peter, and Petros are all the same name, but transliterating from Spanish, French, Italian, and Greek makes the words appear different.

1:3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

Adulteresses and prostitutes in Christ’s line:  
1. Tamar. “Tamar is the worst of the four women (Tamar, Bathsheba, Ruth, Rahab), for she initiated the crime that is associated with her. She, therefore, stands for sin. (In Chinese, incidentally, the word “sin” is made up of “four lawlessnesses”). (Watchman Nee, Interpreting Matthew).”
2. Rahab
3. Bathsheba (not mentioned by name in 1:6)

It was unusual for women to appear in Hebrew genealogies yet four of them are listed in Jesus line (add Ruth to the list) and three of them were either harlots (Rahab) or played the harlot (Tamar) or was guilty of adultery (Bathsheba). The other woman, Ruth, was from a cursed Gentile nation (Moab). But with such women as this (not to mention the notorious men) in Christ’s family tree, how say ye that this is a “godly line” as many commentators do, especially in dealing with the family trees of Cain and Abel/Seth after the Fall and after Abel’s murder? There is no “godly line” but there is a “messianic line”. It would be Matthew the Publican who would include these “fallen” women in the Lord’s lineage, as if he could sympathize with such people. That a professional harlot should be in Christ’s line is interesting, and yet not so
shocking when we consider the activity of Tamar, who presented herself as a harlot, Bathsheba, who stepped out on her husband and seduced David, and Solomon, who had 1,000 wives.

“According to Jewish custom, a writer of a genealogy would never include a female name; he would include only the names of males. But in this brief genealogy five women are mentioned. These five women are like the fingers of my hand: four from one group and the other one stands alone. Four of these five women were remarried, and one of the four was a harlot. It seems that the divine record here would not mention the good ones, such as Sarah or Rebekah, but the bad ones. Listen to the divine record: “David begot Solomon of the wife of Uriah” (1:6). The record does not even give her name; it gives only her history in order to remind us of what kind of person she was... Why does this brief record mention all these women? It is because they are our representatives. Do not think you are so pure that you are more pure than these women. Trace your own origin. If you do, you will find out by what way and of whom your grandfather was born, by what way and of whom your father was born, and by what way and of whom you were born. We are worse. But the worst ones are included in the generation of Christ! Praise the Lord! He is truly the Savior of sinners. (Witness Lee, Life Study of Matthew).”

1:4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

“Amminadab” is called the prince of the children of Judah, and his “chariots” are mentioned in the Song of Solomon 6:12. Amminadab’s son (Numbers 1:7) was a leading warrior in the tribe.

1:5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

Gentiles in Christ’s line:
1. Rahab, an Amorite
2. Ruth, a Moabite
   a. As a Moabitess, Ruth was not allowed to enter the congregation of the Lord. But she was seeking God and God’s people (Ruth 1:15-17; 2:11-12). This shows that no matter who we are or what our background is, as long as we have a heart which seeks after God and God’s people, we are in a position to be accepted into the beloved through the grace and love of God. Even if you were born of a poor origin and have a rough background, but do not be bothered or frustrated by that. Nothing can be worse than a person born of Moab. But as long as you have a heart to seek after God and God’s people, you will enter into the enjoyment of Christ.
3. Bathsheba, a Hittite
   a. Bathsheba is not named. David had Uriah murdered to cover his sin of adultery with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11. David was a godly man who was after God’s own heart, but he was not sinless. He confessed the sins, paid the price, and got right again, which is a great encouragement for the rest of us, as one day, we may find ourselves in a similar situation and we will desire that same divine grace.
4. Rehoboam’s mother, an Ammonite (Rehoboam’s mother)
5. The Gentiles would have a claim on Christ as well!

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1:6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

1:7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

“Roboam” (Rehoboam) is a half breed from an Ammonitess mother (I Kings 14:21). The line of Christ has its fair share of good men, bad men and very wicked men.

“Abia” here is the “Abijah” of 2 Chronicles 14. The ESV and NASV insert “Asaph” into the list. There is no one named “Asaph” in the Lord’s genealogy. “Asaph” is a known error.

1:8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

“The reader can readily identify Jehoshaphat from the list. Joram is listed as “Jehoram” in 2 Chronicles 21:1, and the “Ozias” of Matthew 1:8 turns out to be “Uzziah” of 2 Chronicles. Now the student is faced with a serious problem, which unregenerate scholarship has complicated as much as possible. In the genealogy of the kings in 2 Chronicles, we find the monarchy running—Jehoshaphat (21:1), Jehoram (21:1), Ahaziah (22:1), Joash (24:1), Amaziah (25:1), and then Uzziah (26:1). Where Matthew inserts only ONE King between Jehoshaphat and Uzziah, Chronicles lists four. Surely this must be a contradiction! No, there is no contradiction. The student noticed in the first verse of Matthew that a “son” does not have to be the actual, physical son of his immediate father. But there is another fact to consider. In Matthew 1:17, the Holy Spirit tells us that there is a purpose in cutting down the genealogy to the number of names found in chapter 1. If all four kings of 2 Chronicles were listed, the “fourteens” of Matthew 1:17 would not come out even; it would be “fourteen generations from Abraham to David” and “seventeen generations from David until the carrying away,” etc. The Holy Spirit has deliberately omitted Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah in Matthew for a purpose… Now to clear the air, let it be noticed that Ahaziah is a break in the kingly line and is not a direct descendant of Judah’s kings. Ahaziah was not Joram’s (Jehoram’s) son by his wife, but Ahaziah’s mother was Joram’s mother in law! (2 Chron. 22:9–10), whereas Joram had Ahab’s daughter for a wife (2 Kings 8:18), Ahaziah’s mother was not Ahab’s daughter—she was Ahab’s sister (2 Kings 8:26), the daughter of Omri, a wicked king of Israel—not JUDAH! Again, we find the unsearchable riches of the AV 1611 clear a lot of obscurities resulting from mishandling of the Hebrew and Greek “originals” (see Exod. 20:5–6 for why three generations were left out). Why shouldn’t there be a break in a Jewish genealogy presenting a Jewish King Messiah, when the succession from Jehoram (Matt. 1:8) goes to a Baalite from the northern tribes, whose mother was Jehoram’s MOTHER-IN LAW!? There is probably an act of immorality here, violating the Levitical law (Lev. 18:17), and there can be no doubt about the consequences; for Jehoram dies of an incurable, internal disease (2 Chron. 21:15–18), and he had no son but Jehoahaz. Ahaziah, then, was probably an illegitimate birth through immorality with a pagan “Baal worshipper,” whose relationship is forbidden in Lev. 18:17. The Bible’s critics do not have access, evidently, to the scientific and historical facts, which were available to Matthew! Matthew omits Ahaziah, and does not take up the line until Uzziah. The gap comes out happily at an exact seventy years, for upon the death of Ahaziah, Joash reigns forty years (2 Chron. 24:1). His successor runs twenty nine years (2 Chron. 25:1), and on the even “70,” Uzziah ascends the throne and Matthew takes up the genealogy again. (Peter Ruckman, The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

“Everyone recognizes the strain required to divide the Lord’s ancestry into three equal segments of fourteen names each. Between Jehoram (Joram) and Uzziah (Ozias) for example, the names of Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah are deliberately erased from the record. All three died violent deaths. Ahaziah was slain by Jehu (2 Kings 9:27), Joash was murdered by his servants (12:20), and Amaziah was put to death by the people of Jerusalem (14:19). All three kings were wicked. All three were descendants of Jehoram and his wife Athaliah, the evil daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. As son-in-law of Ahab, Jehoram did not escape God’s curse on Ahab and his house. Jehoram “died of sore diseases” (2 Chronicles 21:19). In Matthew’s omission of Kings Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, we see God’s “visiting” for idolatry was literally fulfilled “unto the third and fourth generation” (Exodus 20:4,5). Their names were blotted out according to law (Deuteronomy 29:20) (John Phillips, *Exploring Matthew*, page 27).”
1:14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

1:15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

1:16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

Nothing about Joseph begetting Jesus, since he did not. Joseph was Jesus’ legal father but not His biological father. The wording is very careful in saying that Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus.

Joseph and Mary were distantly related. Joseph was descended from David through Solomon, Mary through Nathan, the second surviving son of David and Bathsheba. This is a second witness to the legal claim of Jesus to the throne of David. It was also a form of insurance. If one side of the line was terminated (as Joseph’s was through the curse of Coniah in Jeremiah 22:28-30), the other line would still be there as a backup. Jesus is legally the son of David through Joseph but with Coniah cut off, no son of Coniah would sit on the throne. But Jesus was also related to David through Nathan on Mary’s side of the family, so the throne can still be claimed by Jesus. Joseph’s line was the one where all the action and historical interest was focused. Mary’s line was quiet and almost ignored by history.

1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Matthew has arranged and selected his genealogy to that it comes up to 42 names, three sets of 14. It took 4000 years from the first promise of a Messiah in Genesis 3:15 until the fulfillment in Christ, but the prophecy was sure. The prophecy was sure, even if the time appointed was long (Daniel 10:1).

Taking a summarized view of the generations of Christ by both Matthew and Luke would look something like this:

1. God
2. Adam
3. Abraham
4. Isaac
5. Jacob
6. Judah
7. Jesse
8. David

Nathan- Luke 3:31b
Mary

Solomon Matthew 1:6b
Jeconiah Matthew 1:11,12a;
Jeremiah 22:28,30
Joseph

Christ
Pilgrim Way Commentary on Matthew

2. The Birth of Jesus Christ 1:18-25

1:18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Mary and Joseph were engaged but not yet married. The Jewish espousal was almost as strong as an actual marriage, so the same basic procedure would be used in breaking the engagement as an actual divorce. It would appear that Joseph didn’t buy Mary’s attempts to explain how she could be pregnant, but no other man involved. How do you think Mary must have felt when Gabriel announced to her that she would become pregnant? Mary understood the risk. She would probably lose Joseph and would have to endure the label of an immoral woman. Her Son would be called a bastard (see John 8:19,41). But if this was of God, Mary was willing to put up with all this.

This shows that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, for Mary was pregnant with Jesus before she had any sexual relations with Joseph (Luke 1:34). The Most remarkable Man who ever lived will have the most unusual birth of any man who has ever lived. His birth must be according to prophecy, fulfilled to the last, exact detail, for the prophets were precise in the details as to the timing, mode and location of His birth.

1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

Now it came down to trying to convince Joseph that she had not been unfaithful. Can you blame Joseph for not accepting Mary’s explanations? She was telling him a miracle occurred to explain her pregnancy. He still loved her, but he did not want to marry someone he felt had been unfaithful to him, so he decided to end the espousal quietly. Joseph had a right to make a public example of Mary. He had a right to have her killed (stoned, as in Deuteronomy 22:17-21). Joseph was ready to apply Deuteronomy 24:1-3 and give Mary a bill of divorcement without bringing a scandal upon her. But since they had not yet come together as husband and wife, no formal bill of divorcement would be needed. He broke off the engagement but since they had not come together as husband and wife, no divorce was involved. But later they would be married, probably after Jesus’ birth. A perfect example of a righteousness that goes beyond the law. By all legal rights, under the law, Joseph had more than a right to make a public example of Mary. He had a right to have her killed (Deuteronomy 22:17-21).

1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Gabriel appeared to Mary but the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph.

1. Mary got open visitations by angels, but God spoke to Joseph directly through dreams. We wonder why God just didn’t speak directly to Joseph as He did to Mary? Revelation by dreams is always a tricky thing.
2. The first of four appearances to Joseph in these chapters (1:20, 24; 2:13, 19).
3. "Dream" Only six dreams mentioned in the New Testament, all in Matthew, to Joseph (1:20; 2:13, 19, 22); to the wise men (2:12); and to Pilate’s wife (27:19).
“Joseph, thou son of David” By use of this term, the angel:
1. Acknowledges that Joseph was in the line of David and any of his children would be as well.
2. There would be something messianic for this child to do. God was now about to work through the Messianic line, through Joseph and this unborn child.

The Lord was quite aware of the unique problems that marrying Mary would have for Joseph, considering these circumstances. Yet the Lord assures Joseph:
1. That Mary had not been unfaithful and that she was not guilty of adultery
2. Mary’s pregnancy was of the Lord and she was telling the truth about it
3. The Lord would undertake and offer divine protection and aid for this new family
4. It would take a divine intervention to get Joseph to change his mind, and he got one. The angel confirms that Mary had been faithful and that her pregnancy was a miracle of the Lord. Now Joseph had a tough decision to make. If he went through with the marriage, his wife and (step)son would be branded as immoral and illegitimate and he would be “tarred and feathered” with them. Yet he, as Mary, was willing to put up with the gossip and insults, within the will of God.
5. “fear not”, showing Joseph was afraid of the next step he thought he had to take in putting Mary away.

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

Notice Jesus would save “his” people from their sins. Although the successful work of Christ on the cross is not to be overlooked or ignored, the application is not the cross but the Second Coming and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, when all Israel shall be saved (Isaiah 45:17; Jeremiah 23:6; Romans 9:27;11:26) as “his people” must be a reference to Israel, since Jesus was a Jew and Matthew is writing to and for the Jew. So theologically, “his people’ is Israel. Practically and devotionally, it is anyone who will believe.

THE NAMES OF OUR LORD JESUS:
1. EMMANUEL—What He was- HIS PERSON.
2. JESUS—What He was to Do- HIS WORK.
3. CHRIST—What Place He was to Fill- HIS OFFICE.
4. LORD—What Claim He was to Make- HIS HEADSHIP.
5. KING—What Rank He was to Hold- HIS KINGDOM.
6. SON OF GOD—In Relation to God- HIS MISSION.
7. SON OF MAN—In Relation to Man. (Handfuls on Purpose, volume 11)

In our day, we call children by names which have no particular meaning. It was not so in Bible days. Then names meant something and were usually given as the child’s character began to emerge. With “Jesus”, “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” because he is all these.

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1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

The “prophet” is Isaiah. He clearly spoke of the virgin birth in Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew directly links the birth of Christ to a fulfillment of the prophecy.
1. Mary would be the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. In case some liberal thought the Hebrew “almah” in Isaiah 7:14 meant “young woman”, the Greek in Matthew 1:23 straightens that heresy out by insuring “almah” is translated as “virgin”. You can throw in Jeremiah 31:22 for good measure. Even the English will help here in the phrase “alma mater” that college students use all the time- that phrase means “virgin mother”. The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was given as a sign. If this is just a young girl giving birth in the usual way, how is that a sign? It happens a thousand times a day. But a virgin birth would definitely be a sign.

2. “I asked a very fine Hebrew Christian, who is also a good Hebrew scholar, about that. He said, “Look at it this way. Suppose you went to visit a friend of yours who had three daughters and two of them were married and one was still single. He would say, ‘These two are my married daughters, and this young lady is my third daughter.’ Do you think he would mean a prostitute when he said ‘young lady’? If you would imply that she was anything but a virgin, he would probably knock your block off.” May I say, I would hate to be those who deny the virgin birth of Jesus Christ when they must come into the presence of the Son of God. I’m afraid they are going to wish they could somehow take back the things they have said to malign Him. (J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible, Matthew I: Matthew 1-13, pages 27-28).

1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Emmanuel- God with us:
1. In our sorrows
2. In our trials
3. In our temptations
4. In our failures
5. In our victories
6. In our worship
7. In our service

Seven titles/names are given to Christ before His birth:
1. Emmanuel (here).
   a. Only Matthew uses this term.
2. The Son of David (Matthew 1:1)
4. The Son of the Highest (Luke 1:32)
5. The Son of God (Luke 1:35)
6. Christ (Matthew 1:16)

1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

Joseph was a good man because he was an obedient man. Not only was Mary chosen to be the mother of Jesus, but Joseph was chosen to be His stepfather and earthly father-figure. There was something about both of them that made them so appealing for the Lord to choose them.
1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

It was Joseph who named Jesus, not Mary. This showed that in God’s eyes, Joseph would serve as the human father of Jesus and Joseph accepted that responsibility by claiming Jesus as his own son.

Joseph and Mary had other children, just like any other married couple, and they had these children “the old fashioned way” after Jesus was born. The Romanist fiction about the “perpetual virginity of Mary” is just another opium dream. Mark 6:3 and John 7:3 make this clear. Jesus had at least 4 step-brothers and 2 step-sisters. The prophecy of Psalm 69:9 also makes it clear that Jesus had siblings.
Matthew Chapter 2

3. The Wise Men and Herod  2:1-10

2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Bethlehem:
   a. Rachel was buried there (Genesis 35).
   b. Ruth lived there before she married Boaz (Ruth 2-3).
   c. It was the home and city of David.

Herod was an exceptionally wicked Idumean/Edomite (Gentile) king appointed over Judea, whom the Jews absolutely despised. He rebuilt the temple, trying to buy the favor of his subjects, but his love for all things Gentile and his vices prevented any such love or loyalty. He did some other decent things for the people, such as reducing taxes and feeding them in a time of famine, but his paranoia made him an intolerable ruler. Trying to keep track of the Herod Family Tree can be confusing so below is a chart from The Canon of Scripture, by H. T. Spence, page 151:
The Greek word “wise men” is “magi”, where we get our English word “magician”.

We are not told how many wise men came. The “three” wise men is pure speculation. If you have three such men traveling a thousand miles with valuable gifts, you can be sure they had
quite a delegation, with armed guards and the like. We do not appreciate the danger involved with a trip of probably a thousand miles, on foot and on camel, through often-dangerous terrain, a trip that could have taken months.

Men seeking Jesus travel from east to west. The wise men moved west, from the east. God’s movements in the earth are east-to-west. Whenever we see someone going from west-to-east, it is often a sign of rebellion or being out of the will of God. Even in church history, the gospel starts in Jerusalem and then generally moves west through Europe via Paul’s missionary journeys.

1. After receiving their revelation concerning the star, the Wise Men went to Jerusalem, assuming the King would be born. They may not have had Micah 5:2 about the King being born in Bethlehem. After they were corrected by the Scriptures (2:4-6), they went to Bethlehem (2:8,9), and the star appeared to them again and led them to the place where Christ was (2:9,10).

2. “They did not content themselves with admiring the star and comparing it with other stars, and taking notes as to the exact date of its appearance, and how many times it twinkled, and when it moved, and all that; but they practically used the teaching of the star. Many are hearers and admirers of God’s servants, but they are not wise enough to make fit and proper use of the preaching. They notice the peculiarity of the preacher’s language, how much he is like one divine, how much he is unlike another; whether he coughs too often, or speaks too much in his throat; whether he is too loud or too low; whether he has not a provincial tone, whether there may not be about him a commonness of speech approaching to vulgarity; or, on the other hand, whether he may not be too florid in his diction. Such fooleries as these are the constant observations of men for whose souls we labor. They are perishing, and yet toying with such small matters. With many it is all they go to the house of God for, to criticise in this paltry fashion. I have even seen them come to this place with opera glasses, as if they came hither to inspect an actor who lived and labored to arouse their leisure hours. Such is the sport of fools; but these were wise men, and therefore practical men. They did not become star-gazers, and stop at the point of admiring the remarkable star; but they said, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.” They set out at once to find the now-born King, of whose coming the star was the signal. Oh, my dear hearers, how I wish that you were all wise in this same manner! I would sooner preach the dullest sermon that was ever preached than preach the most brilliant that was ever spoken if I could by that poor sermon lead you quite away from myself to seek the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the one thing I care about. Will you never gratify me by enquiring after my Lord and Master? I long to hear you say, “What is the man talking about? He speaks about a Savior; we will have that Savior for ourselves. He talks about pardon through the blood of Christ; he speaks about God coming down among men to save them; we will find out if there is any reality in this pardon, any truth in this salvation. We will seek Jesus and find for ourselves the blessings which are reported to be laid up in him.” If I heard you all saying this I should be ready to die of joy. (Charles Spurgeon, “The Star and the Wise Men”, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Sermon 1618)"

We are not told specifically where the wise men came from, only from “the east”. It is assumed that they came from Persian, the territory of the old Babylonian Empire.

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2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.
“Where is he?” A good salvation question. Every sinner ought to ask such a question in searching for the True Gospel and the True Savior. The sinner needs to be seeking “the King of the Jews” for salvation. It is fruitless to search for a church, denomination, theological system, preacher, pope or some fraud like Mohammad or the Buddha or some god of the Hindus. None of these can save.

This is the first question in the New Testament.

“King of the Jews” Jesus is never called the King of the Church. He is the Head of the Church.

These wise men had a better understanding of and a greater expectation of the arrival of the Messiah than Israel did. These wise men caught the Jews off-guard and they were not expecting the birth of the King at this time.

1. They were not surprised as they had the writings of the Old Testament including Daniel’s prophecies. They had studied them and had taken them very seriously.
2. These verses show us, that there may be true servants of God in places where we should not expect to find them. The Lord Jesus has many “hidden ones” like these wise men. Their history on earth may be as little known as that of Melchizedek, and Jethro, and Job. But their names are in the book of life, and they will be found with Christ in the day of His appearing. It is well to remember this. We must not look round the earth and say hastily, “all is barren.” The grace of God is not tied to places and families. The Holy Spirit can lead souls to Christ without the help of many outward means. Men may be born in dark places of the earth, like these wise men, and yet like them be made "wise unto salvation." There are some traveling to heaven at this moment, of whom the church and the world know nothing. They flourish in secret places like the lily among thorns, and "waste their sweetness on the desert air." But Christ loves them, and they love Christ. (J. C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts on Matthew).

It could have taken a year for these wise men to make the trip from Babylon to Israel, so this star that they saw was not a new phenomenon. But it would appear that they were the only ones to attach prophetic appearance to the appearance of this star. They knew that His birth would be marked by a Star (as prophesied by Balaam in Number 24:17). They knew the Scriptures and knew what they were looking for. They did not rely on Eastern religions or mysticism, astrology or anything else- they read, studied and believed the Scriptures. This made these men truly wise.

What was this star? There are several possibilities:

1. A nova or supernova. The problem with this is that is no record of any such occurrence in the ancient records. Natural stars also do not move as this star did.
2. A comet- unlikely since they knew the difference between a star and a comet
3. A planetary alignment. This is also unlikely as this is a “star” singular, not plural. John Phillips takes this position (Exploring Matthew page 39). He chalks it up to an alignment of Jupiter, Saturn and Mars that only occurs every 800 years.
4. A supernatural sign. This is the most likely explanation, as this star “moved” to direct the wise men to the location of where Christ was born (2:9). Since it is called “his” star, we will lean toward a supernatural interpretation. Since the star moved and guided the wise men to location of Jesus, there must have been a supernatural element to the star.
5. It was a star in like the stars of Revelation 1:20 and 9:1. It was an angel guiding the wise men. This is the best explanation.
6. A meteor. Spurgeon hazards this guess in his commentary on Matthew but meteors only last for a few seconds and this star lasted much longer.
Who recognized the Star?
1. Wise men from the East. Gentiles who took the prophecies of Daniel seriously and believed what he wrote.
   a. Sort of the last people you would expect. This is the way it is with salvation. Sometimes, the worst “candidates” are the ones who get saved. “These verses show us, that there may be true servants of God in places where we should not expect to find them. The Lord Jesus has many "hidden ones" like these wise men. Their history on earth may be as little known as that of Melchizedek, and Jethro, and Job. But their names are in the book of life, and they will be found with Christ in the day of His appearing. It is well to remember this. We must not look round the earth and say hastily, "all is barren." The grace of God is not tied to places and families. The Holy Spirit can lead souls to Christ without the help of many outward means. Men may be born in dark places of the earth, like these wise men, and yet like them be made "wise unto salvation." There are some traveling to heaven at this moment, of whom the church and the world know nothing. They flourish in secret places like the lily among thorns, and "waste their sweetness on the desert air." But Christ loves them, and they love Christ (J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Matthew*).
   b. They saw the star. It was not enough. Now they must see the Savior. You’ve seen the signs and all the externals, it is now time to see Christ Himself in a personal manner.

2. Who missed the star? Israel. Both the people and the priests and preachers
   a. The priests and preachers may have been ignorant, but there is no excuse for that.

3. The people may have been indifferent.
   a. They were looking for a military deliverer. They got a suffering Savior, so they missed Christ as they were not looking for Him.
   b. The government. Herod and his administration missed it
   c. How few people truly care about spiritual things!

4. Some wanted nothing to do with the sign as the coming of the Messiah would upset their plans and lifestyles.

These Gentiles were ready and willing to worship the King while Herod and the Jews were not. The Babylonians worshipped Him, Herod tried to kill Him and Israel would reject and kill Him 33 years later.

The King is born, now He must be acknowledged. The worship of these Gentiles is a type and a shadow of the Gentiles worshipping Christ in the Millennium, where all nations will come to Jerusalem yearly to worship. In Zechariah 14:16,17, the prophet says “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.”

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2:3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Who was troubled by the news of the birth of Christ?
1. Herod. It's obvious why Herod was troubled- a true and legitimate king was now on the scene who could easily displace him. Herod was a foreigner placed on the throne by Rome, so he had no real claim to any throne of Israel as a son of David. He then naturally feared for his throne and his power. Power-hungry politicians do not welcome the birth of a competitor.

2. The religious leaders in Jerusalem would be troubled since if the true King and Messiah was now born, their positions of power might be in jeopardy, as they know how cold and backslidden their spiritual leadership of the nation was, and they also knew how unpopular they were with the people. They might rally around his banner and leave the Sanhedrin behind.

3. Political Rome would be troubled as this could be yet another excuse for rebellion among the Jews. Rome had a hard-enough time keeping peace and order in Israel to begin with. This kind of news wouldn’t help, as the patriots and zealots would use this as a rallying cry against Rome.

4. But were the common people also troubled? With all the turmoil of the times, they may have been concerned what this would mean with regards to the stability of an already unstable nation. If there was a competitor to Herod’s throne, the people knew there would be blood as Herod would attempt to protect his throne and eliminate any claimant to it. If the people were troubled at His first coming, how much more will they be at His second coming!

   A. Christ said He came not to bring peace, but a sword in Matthew 10:34. He divides. He does not unite. He will eventually bring peace but not until He comes to set up the Millennial kingdom. Until that day, the forecast will be “wars and rumors of wars”.

   B. Many were troubled but there is no record that anyone of them sought Christ. Many come under some degree of conviction of their sin, but few follow that conviction to salvation.

   C. In Genesis 45:3, Joseph (the greatest type of Christ in the Bible) revealed himself to his brethren and they were “troubled” at his presence when he did that.

5. “But the fact is that many are troubled (with the coming of Christ) because the gospel interferes with their sin. “If I become a Christian, I cannot live as I have been accustomed to live,” says one, “so I will not believe the gospel.” The great argument against the Bible is an ungodly life. If you probe to the bottom of the matter, some sinful pleasure is the reason of many a man’s infidelity. There is a practical reason against his repenting, he cannot give up his darling sin, he will not give that up; so he is troubled when Christ comes near to him. It is a terrible thing to cling to sin. That Spartan boy, who caught a young fox, and carried it in his bosom, and then, lest the schoolmaster should see it, and chastise him, allowed the fox to go on eating into his flesh till it ate into his heart, is like you. You are hugging this fox, this wolf, this asp, to your bosom all the while we are preaching to you. What comfort can we give you? Quit your sin, or quit all hope. Wilt thou have thy sin and, go to hell, or wilt thou leave thy sin and go to heaven? Thou canst not have Christ and sin; the two are diametrically opposed. I will not mention what your sin may be; let your own conscience tell you that. You cannot continue in the practice of any known sin, wilfully and deliberately, and yet find any comfort from the Word of God, or from the gospel. There must be, in your heart’s intent and resolve, the quitting of sin, or there cannot be the finding of the Savior. (Charles Spurgeon, “The Far Off Near, the Near Far Off”, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Sermon 2325).”

2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.
Herod didn't ask, he demanded! He was panics, upset and unsettled, so he needed this information NOW!  

2:5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the prophet,  

The scribes told Herod right away--they didn't have to check or study the question out. They knew all about the coming of the Messiah, so give them credit for that. The problem was that their knowledge was academic rather than real and personal. It was not personally meaningful to them. They are examples of people who know the history contained in the Bible and they know certain factual truths, but these things carry no personal meaning for them. They had the Scriptures in their head but no grace in their heart.  

1. Quoting Micah 5:2. That is where He was born but that is not where Jesus was now! Micah couldn’t tell them what town Jesus’s family had moved to after His birth. He assumed He was still in the Bethlehem area (2:16).  

2. There was another village named Bethlehem in the area of Zebulon (Joshua 19:15), so the one in Judea had to be specified.  

2:6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.  

Jesus would be both a ruler and a king of Israel, with control over the operations of both daily life and the government.  

2:7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.  

Herod is trying to pin down the time and location of Christ’s birth so he can send his Gestapo goon squad to kill Him. No all men who seek Scriptural information do it for good reasons. Herod put on a good show, pretending to be interested in these details so he could go to worship him. I wonder how many who heard this really believed him? Herod calls the wise men aside privately to talk with them. He would not have dared talk about worshipping this “King of the Jews” in front of the Jewish scribes and priests as they would have laughed him out of the throne room. The wise men had no experience with Herod (they may have known of him by reputation) but the priests did!  

Why the private meeting? Was Herod trying to keep the Jewish religious ignorant of his plans to eliminate this rightful heir to his throne?  

2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.  

“Bethlehem” means “House of Bread”. What better place for the Bread of Life (John 6:35) to be born?
“Young child”, not “baby”. Jesus could have been 2 years old by this time. The picture of the three wise men bowing down to the baby Jesus in a crib is pure myth.

“that I may come and worship him also” This is Herod’s “Big Lie”. I doubt many involved believed him.

Notice Herod did not go to Bethlehem, nor did any of the priests or religious leaders. They could not be bothered to take the 6-mile trip to see the King. Such is the way it usually is with the things of the Lord. People will drive 100 miles to a football game, pay $100 a ticket, fight ungodly traffic and sit in 6-degree weather for 5 hours with 50,000 drunken rowdies, but they can’t be bothered to drive across town to sit through a 60-minute church service in a comfortable church building.

Why did no one else go to Bethlehem to seek Jesus? There is no record of any Jew or any of the Jewish religious leaders going to Bethlehem, only the wise men. Luke will give the account of the shepherds going to see the infant Jesus before these events, but no one else made the trip to see Him- only shepherds and Gentiles.

2:9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

The wise men may not have realized it but they had put Jesus’ life in danger as Herod may have sent spies to track their route and the location of Jesus.

2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Because the end of their quest was in sight.

4. The Wise Men Worship Jesus 2:11,12

2:11 ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

“House”, not “manger”. Christ was a “child” now, not a baby, so this could have taken place as much as 1-2 years after His birth. This did not take place at Bethlehem. Thus 99% of the nativity scenes you see around Christmas are wrong on many levels.

Joseph and Mary did not return to Nazareth immediately after the birth of Christ but stayed in the Bethlehem area for what seems like a year or two. They were living in a house in Bethlehem. Why they stayed in Bethlehem is not revealed.

It is the “child” and then Mary, not Mary and the child. Mary always plays “second fiddle” to Christ and she would have it no other way.
They worshipped Jesus, not Mary. After all, Herod tried to kill Jesus, not Mary. He wasn’t worried about Mary at all. Apparently, Herod would not have made a very good Roman Catholic.

The treasures they present have both tremendous doctrinal and spiritual significance. At this time, Mary and Joseph were so poor that they had not been able even to offer the required sacrifice for Mary’s cleansing as a sinner. Mary, as any female sinner (Luke 1:47), needed to obey the laws of purification given to every woman in the Old Testament (Luke 2:21-24; Leviticus 12:1-6). But when she came to have Jesus circumcised, she and Joseph were so poor that they could not bring the required Lamb. Instead, they offered the turtle doves and pigeons. They had the required Lamb in their hands but did not realize it. Being this poor, there was no way they could have taken the long trip into Egypt from Bethlehem. But now with the appearance of the wise men, Joseph and Mary now have enough gold to get them through these days in exile and pay the expenses of the trip.

The gifts themselves:
1. Gold is for a king. As gold represents the highest material value, it represents the highest spiritual value. A King of divine origin would need this gift. It is also the metal of deity, so His kingship and deity are acknowledged.
2. Frankincense relates to the priesthood (Exodus 30:34-38). Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchezedek.
3. The bitter myrrh would signify the suffering that Christ would endure in His life and on the cross. It would appear again in Mark 15:23, offered to Jesus again, this time by his enemies while He was on the cross. This is a prophetic gift, looking ahead to His sufferings, so it would answer to Christ bring a prophet.

If they had gone back to Herod, he would have known where Christ was located and would have attacked Him there. In this way, Herod can only hazard an educated guess as to where to send his troops.

5. The Flight Into Egypt 2:13-15

2:13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for He rod will seek the young child to destroy him.

There was a lot of communication by dreams in this period, especially when God was communicating to Joseph.

2:14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

Having heard the divine warning and heeding the instructions, Joseph hurried to obey and leave for Egypt.

The gifts from the wise men, especially the gold, would help to finance this flight into Egypt.
2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

This is quoted from Hosea 11:1.

This is also a type of salvation, as God calls His sons (through the New Birth) out of Egypt (which is a type of the world) in salvation and the sanctification that follows.

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2:16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

Herod was determined to keep his throne at any cost. Herod casts a wide net, to kill all the boys 2 years old and younger, from Bethlehem to the coasts, in a hope that he will get lucky. It was his covetousness for power and the throne that would occasion the death of the baby boys in Bethlehem and ultimately, his own downfall.

Some liberal critics have discounted Matthew's account of Herod's slaughter of the children because there is no extra-biblical confirmation of it. However, Bethlehem was small, and many other biblically significant events have no secular confirmation. Compared to some of Herod's other atrocities this one was minor.

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2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

Quoted from Jeremiah 31:15.

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2:18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

The word “Rama” means a “high place,” spelled “Ramah” in Jeremiah 31.

Probably a figurative use of Rachel, representing the women in Bethlehem, as Rachel was buried in Bethlehem.

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7. The Return From Egypt 2:19-23

2:19 ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

“No more terrible scene is recorded in history than the death of Herod….He was coarse, heavy and almost bald. Three of his front teeth had been broken off…His legs had become great stumps, nine inches thick at the ankles. He was covered with sores and full of mortifying wounds horrible to behold. He could not eat without agony. His guards had to be changed
frequently because they could not stand the stench emanating from his rotted stomach. His breath smelled like a charnel house (John Phillips, *Exploring Matthew*, page 46)."

2:20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life.

2:21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

Like father, like son. Joseph could have no assurance that Herod’s son was a better man than Herod. Archelaus would be watching for the appearance of any Jewish young man who professed to be a “king.” Herod would not have died without giving a fair warning to his household, if they were in danger of losing the throne. Archelaus was cut from the same cloth as his wicked father. He inaugurated his reign by killing 3,000 Jews in the temple during the Passover.

Christ was born in honored Judea but was raised in despised Galilee. He was born in the esteemed town of Bethlehem but grew up in the despised city of Nazareth.

2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Back to His hometown. Christ was born in Bethlehem but his “hometown” was Nazareth.

“Nazareth” came from a Hebrew word meaning “sprout”, as in a small sprout that would shoot up after a tree was cut down. The term was used in contempt. It was not an honorable term, as Nazareth did not have the best of reputations. It would be the same today as saying Jesus was from the Bronx or Buffalo.

1. Philippians 2:5-8 is in play here, with His choosing a mean, low and humble earthly estate and reputation. The apostate emperor Julian referred to the Lord as “the Galilean”. When he died his miserable death, he cried, “O Galilean, thou hast conquered”. He was obliged to confess the Lord’s supremacy, though he still showed his contempt by calling him “the Galilean”. The Jews, when they feel wroth against Christ, are wont to call him “the Nazarene”.
2. There is no written prophecy of Jesus coming from or living in Nazareth, but the prophecy was “spoken” (not written) by an unnamed prophet.
3. The disciples were initially referred to as belonging to the “Sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5).

“I want you to notice our divine Redeemer’s condescension...It was a marvel that Jesus should live on this world at all...If he must dwell in this world, why is he born in Judæa?...If Jesus must be a man in this world, why is he not born in Rome, in the capital of the nations? Why must it be
in a little miserable country like Judaea? Yet if he shall be born in Judaea, why must he live in Galilee — that Boeotia of Israel, that most despicable part of Judaea? If he must live in Galilee, why not at Capernaum? Why does he choose Nazareth? Why must be go to the lowest of the low — that most despised place of a despised country? And if he must come to Nazareth, — follow him a stop lower — why must he be a carpenter’s son? Why, if he lives there, can he not be the son of the minister of the synagogue, or some respectable scribe? No; but he must be reputed to be a poor man’s son. And then if he must be a carpenter’s son, why can he not so constrain men’s hearts that they shall receive him? for the deepest depth of all is that even as a carpenter’s son his fellow citizens will not endure him; but they take him to the brow of the hill to cast him down headlong from the cliff whereon the city stood. Was there ever such condescension as that of the Savior? If in the lowest depth there be a lower deep, he plunges into it for our sakes. He emptied himself…Nothing was left him of honor or respect. He gave up all. “Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor” — poor to the last degree, poor in reputation. He was born a man, a Jew, a Galilean, a Nazarene.” (Charles Spurgeon, “The Nazarene and the Sect of the Nazarenes”, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Sermon 1632).

“spoken by the prophets” Not “written” by the prophets. This was mentioned by more than one prophet.
Matthew Chapter 3

8. The Ministry of John the Baptist  3:1-17

3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa,

John comes on the scene suddenly, without warning.

“The “in those days” can be dated within six months. The entire information is given in Luke 3:1–2. Augustus Caesar died August 29, 767. (John, here, has to be thirty years old to begin his work, his birth being six months before Jesus.) Tiberias Caesar had a joint-reign with Augustus two years, which would give him thirteen years beyond the date of Augustus’ death in 767. This would bring us to the Roman year 781. It would also give us the date of John’s birth in the Roman year of 751, which would date within six months the birth of Jesus Christ. (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

“During those thirty years a new generation arose. On August 17, A.D. 14, Caesar Augustus died and Tiberius, having shared the power with his royal stepfather for two years, became sole ruler of the empire. Tiberius was born 42 B.C. and died March 16, A.D. 37. He distinguished himself when a private citizen as an able orator, soldier, and civil servant; when he was the caesar, he showed himself to be lazy, licentious, malicious, cruel, and a master of deceit. In Palestine the cities of Caesarea Philippi and Tiberius were named after him (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, page 49),”

John was not a Baptist in a denominational term, but was so called because he was known for his work of baptism. Matthew gives no background of John as Luke does. The Apostle John does not refer to him as “The Baptist” in his gospel.

John was born into a priestly home and could have worked his way to the top in order to enact the needed reforms. But he decided that Israel did not need another priest after the order of Aaron, but a prophet after the spirit and manner of Elijah. Elijah did more good to Israel than a hundred priests, as did John.

John’s ministry was in the wilderness, far from the academic and ecclesiastical centers of the day, which would have had no use for his ministry anyway. It was a divine rebuke that God was working through such a man in the wilderness and not through the learned and powerful men of the day.

3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

John’s message:

1. Repent. The first word from God in 400 years was “Repent!” Every call back to God or to salvation involved repentance. The nation was in dire need of repentance from their religious formalism and deadness.
2. The kingdom of heaven is at hand
   a. The Millennial kingdom, John was preaching the Jewish idea of the kingdom, in preparation for the advent of the Messiah.
   b. It was “at hand”- the Messiah was about to appear and the events ushering in the Kingdom were preparing to take place.
i. The Kingdom was “at hand”. If Israel had accepted John’s message and ministry, he would have been Elijah and the Kingdom could have been set up in the Gospels. See notes under Matthew 11:14.

c. This is the Gospel of the Kingdom. This does not deal with the Church. The Kingdom of God is spiritual while the Kingdom of God is physical and political.

3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

This is quoted from Isaiah 40:3-8 and Malachi 3:1-3. Notice this destroys and idea of a “deutero-Isaiah” where someone else wrote Isaiah 40-66 while Isaiah wrote chapters 1-39. The Scripture makes it clear that Isaiah wrote all 66 chapters.

3:4 And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Notice how similar John’s description to Elijah. Elijah dressed in rough garb to protest against the Phoenician luxury which in his day was sapping Israel’s character. John wore it to protest against the pervading influence of Greek culture (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, page 53).

John could have fulfilled Elijah’s prophecy if Israel had accepted his message and ministry.

1. Since Israel rejected John, Elijah himself must return to fulfill as per Malachi 4:5 Behold, (I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD).

2. Elijah must return before that great Day of the Lord. Jesus says that John would have been Elijah if Israel had accepted John (Matthew 17:12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them).

3. If the Jews had received Jesus as their Messiah and His offer of the kingdom, all the prophecies in regard to the First and Second Coming in the Old Testament could have been fulfilled. See our notes under Matthew 11:14 for a fuller treatment.

The locusts were clean under the Mosaic dietary law (Leviticus 11:22).

John was about as “counter-culture” as you could get. He deliberately set himself in opposition to the religious and cultural styles of his day, just as every Christian must do. The world is to view the Christian as a misfit and the believer is to despise the generation in which he was born into. You cannot serve Christ or live for Him while being “in” or “part” of the wicked and adulterous age in which you live. You cannot live in two worlds and you cannot serve two masters and you cannot follow two philosophies. You must choose one, and only one.

3:5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan,

John had no building, auditorium, advance committee, newspaper, website, evangelistic association, radio program or promotional agency. Yet look at what he accomplished while preaching in the middle of nowhere.
3:6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

John had a following that the religious leaders in Jerusalem could only dream of. Despite his rough and odd appearance and his remote location, John’s announcement of the kingdom had caused great excitement and interest.

3:7 ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Not to be baptized of John for they did not recognize or accept his message. They came out to investigate and report to the powers-that-be back in Jerusalem.

There can be no doubt about the “wrath to come.” John is speaking from Malachi 3:2–5; 4:1-6. He is speaking of the Second Coming and the Tribulation period that will precede it.

3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

The Bible always stresses repentance in association with salvation. Once a person has repented unto salvation, there will be evidences of that salvation, since if any man be in Christ, he will be a new creature and old things (sins) will pass away (2 Corinthians 5:17).

3:9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

“We have Abraham for our father”. If anything, having Abraham as your father brings you under greater spiritual obligations and judgments (Romans 2,3).

3:10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

A warning to cold, apostate Israel that they would face judgment unless they began to bring forth spiritual fruit. To this day, they still have yet to bring forth that fruit.

3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

The “baptism unto repentance” is water baptism as a result of having repented. You are water baptized because you repented and brought forth fruits (or evidences) of that repentance,

We often hear it misquoted as the “baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire” by Pentecostal and Charismatic people, which leads to the error that there is even such a thing and that it is something to be sought or desired.
1. This is not the same fire of Acts 2:3 that is associated with the Holy Spirit, but judgment by fire, the culminates in the Lake of Fire, as by the context in the next verse. This is allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture by context. If the Jews would respond and believe John’s message, they would receive the Holy Ghost. If they rejected it, when would receive the fire. Charismatics are always wanting to be “baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire”. Do they want to receive a baptism of judgment? There is no association with a baptism with the Holy Ghost and the fire, as they are separated by the comma in our English version. Christ will baptize some with the Holy Ghost (positive) and some with fire (who reject the message, in judgment, negative). Wherever the baptism of the Holy Ghost is mentioned by name, in the Book of Acts, the expression “and with fire” is always omitted (see Acts 1:5; 11:16).

2. 3:12 Here is the context and interpretation of the “..and of fire” of 3:11- judgment with unquenchable fire!

John baptized with water but only Jesus can baptize with the Holy Spirit.

3:12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

May be some form of post-tribulation rapture. Since this is directed to the Jew, any such reference to the rapture would not be the rapture of the church (1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 4) but a post-tribulational rapture of Jewish saints,

John rips into the religious leaders in verses 8-12:
1. They were a generation of vipers 3:7
   a. The references are Proverbs 30:11-13; Job 20:16; Psalm 58:4; and Micah 7:17.
2. They rejected the threats of judgment 3:7
3. They were to repent and demonstrate that they had repented if they wanted to escape the judgment of God 3:9
4. They were not to take any comfort that they were children of Abraham as God could raise up faithful children of Abraham from the stones round about. 3:9
5. God was about to cut down the tree of dead and apostate Judaism if they did not bring forth any fruits to demonstrate their acceptance of John’s message and repentance 3:10
   a. Israel is likened to a fig tree that was threatened to be cut down. It would be cursed by the Lord because it bore no such fruit of repentance in Matthew 21:19.
   b. The root would be destroyed, precluding any chance of regeneration
6. One was coming Who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire 3:11
   a. Baptism with fire is judgment. Charismatics often misquoted this as the “baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire,” but this is a tragic error for the “fire” part of the baptism is defined in verse 12 as the wrath of God. Why would anyone in his right mind pray for this kind of a baptism?
   b. “garner” in 3:12 is the same word used in 13:30 for the “barn,”
   c. “chaff” worthless husks, which is how the Judaism of the Lord’s day was in its dead formalism, and how unbelievers will be viewed at the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20.

3:13 ¶ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.
The first time we see Jesus in 18 years, since Luke 2:42-52. Man could not have kept silent about those thirty years in the life of Christ (with that mention of when He was 12 years on in Luke 2:41-52). He has invented the apocryphal gospels and stuffed their worthless pages with prodigies and wonders, all of which can be immediately rejected.

If baptism is necessary for salvation, then why was Jesus baptized? Was He lost? Would He have been lost if He hadn’t been baptized by John? After all, He had no sins to confess (3:6).

Why was Jesus baptized of John?
1. To endorse John’s ministry and message
2. To endorse the ministry of the Old Testament prophets since John was the last Old Testament prophet
3. To identify with Israel, as He was a Jew and was their King and Messiah
4. To identify with the sinners whom He came to save
5. To stress the need for water baptism and repentance

3:14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?
John recognized Who was standing before him and He felt unworthy to baptize the King and the Messiah.
1. By being baptized by John, the Lord openly identified Himself with the sinners He came to save.
2. It takes a level of submission to be baptized as you can’t baptize yourself. Jesus had to submit to John in order to be baptized and Jesus recognized his authority to baptize.

3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:
According to the Biblical model, Jesus was fully immersed, not sprinkled. They went into the water and then up out of the water.

Not a literal dove but “like” a dove.

3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
All three members of the trinity are present at the baptism. God, unlike man, is able to separate His Body, Soul, and Spirit so that all Three can appear in separate manifestations without losing their identity.

This was the Father’s public testimony that Jesus was His Son and that He was well-pleased with Him. God said this of no other man in all of human history.
Matthew Chapter 4


4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Christ was directly and deliberately led of the Spirit to be tempted. If Christ is going to redeem man as a man, then He must be tempted in all points as we are. Since the Jews were taught to pray "lead us not into temptation," an inquiring mind would have the right to ask: "Why was Jesus led into it?" The answer is twofold:

1. He had to be tempted to fulfill the requirements of a Savior (Hebrews 2:16,17).
2. The Greek word in Matthew 6:13 in the disciples' prayer is "eisenegkas", while the one for "lead," here, is "anechthe" Abraham was "tempted" (Genesis 22:1), but the "tempting" was not the tempting forbidden in James 1:12-14, but a "testing," as is clear from Hebrews 11:17, where the word "tried" occurs.

"Perhaps you are asking, "Well then, if Jesus could not have fallen, was His temptation a legitimate and genuine temptation?" May I say to you that His temptation was much greater than any that you and I have ever had. When a new model Chevrolet or Ford or Dodge is developed, it is thoroughly tested to prove it can stand the test. And every genuine diamond is tested to show that it is not a phony. In a similar way, the Lord Jesus Christ was tested to demonstrate that He was exactly who He claimed to be. Let me illustrate with this little story. When I was a boy, I lived out in West Texas. It was a sparsely populated area in those days. The Santa Fe railroad came through our little town, but it went on by and stopped in the next little town. But it crossed the left fork of the Brazos River near our town. In the summertime there wasn't enough water in that river to rust a shingle nail, but in wintertime you could float a battleship on it. One winter we really had a flood, and it washed out the Santa Fe bridge. We were without a train for a long time. Finally, they put in a bridge. They worked a long time on it. Then one day they brought in two engines, stopped them on the bridge, and tied down their whistles. Believe me, that was more whistling than we had ever heard in our little town! All twenty-three of us ran down to see what was happening. As we were standing around, one brave citizen went up to the engineer in charge with our question, "What are you doing?" The engineer answered, "Testing the bridge." Our man said, "Are you trying to break it down?" The engineer almost sneered, "Of course not! We're testing it to prove that it can't be broken down." May I say to you, that was the exact reason the Lord Jesus was tested. It was to prove, to demonstrate, that He could not be broken down. His testing, therefore, was greater than ours. (J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible)."

"Christ must be tempted—
1. Because it was impossible that one who came to overthrow the kingdom of Satan should not be attacked by the great adversary at the very threshold.
2. It was to test him.
3. It was to prepare him, by being tempted like as we are, and yet gaining the victory, to "succor them that are tempted."
4. It was to set an example for us when we are tempted. The three great temptations mentioned by Matthew are the three great classes of temptations to which men are now exposed (Ethelbert Bullinger, Companion Bible)."

"In the wilderness" This took place away from human witnesses or interaction. Christ must fight these battles with Satan alone. Fortunately, we do not have to.

1. John preached in the wilderness. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness.
“devil” The Greek word means accuser, slanderer (Revelation 12: 9-10). The devil accuses us before God and slanders us before men.

Could Christ have sinned on earth in His human form? If not, why the point of the temptation? The issue is whether Christ could have sinned or not- was He peccable (He could sin) or impeccable (He could not sin)? Obviously, it is no sin to be tempted as Christ was tempted, but without sin.

4:2 And when he had fasting forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

“Forty” is the number of probation and testing.
1. This is the length of the rain that flooded the earth in Noah’s day  
2. The time of the wilderness wandering, in years  
3. It is the time that Goliath tested Israel in the valley of Elah  
4. It is the period from Eli to the division of the kingdom, coming in exact quantities of “forties.”  
   a. Eli is priest forty years  
   b. Samuel is judge forty years  
   c. Saul reigns forty years  
   d. David reigns forty years  
   e. Solomon reigned forty years.  
5. “Forty” stands in Scripture for “testing” and the expression “life begins at forty” is connected with the Scriptural truth.  
6. Elijah and Moses both spend forty days and nights without food when they appear before the Lord on the Mount.

4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

The first two temptations start with this phrase. “If” you are the Son of God, then prove it! Look at you! A poor, tired, emaciated man, perishing with hunger! Are you the Son of God?”  
1. “If” suggests a doubt, and, perhaps, a taunt. It is a cunning appeal to Christ to work a miracle to satisfy his hunger and to display his power.

After forty days with no food, Christ was very hungry. The temptation here is to provide for yourself instead on relying on the Father to meet your needs. This temptation would involve the lust of the flesh (1 John 2:16).  
1. When Satan suggests that you do something, one should always beware, even if it seems to be harmless to do so.  
2. Satan also came at a low point in Christ’s life physically. He had just finished a 40-day fast and was tired and hungry. That is when Satan struck.

4:3, 6, 9 Three avenues of temptation:  
1. Do it yourself- 4:3  
2. Presume upon God- 4:6  
3. Forsake God- 4:9
“The great thing Satan aims at, in tempting good people, is to overthrow their relation to God as a Father, and so to cut off their dependence on him, their duty to him, and their communion with him…Outward afflictions, wants and burdens, are the great arguments Satan uses to make the people of God question their sonship; as if afflictions could not consist with, when really they proceed from, God’s fatherly love. (Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*).

Matthew and Luke differ on how they present the order of the temptations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATTHEW</th>
<th>LUKE</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Stones to bread</td>
<td>1. Stones to bread</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Angelic care</td>
<td>2. Request for worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Request for worship</td>
<td>3. Angelic care</td>
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Why the difference unless both writers were trying to emphasize the important of the last temptation. Matthew, presenting Matthew as King and Messiah, would emphasize the last worship, in Satan trying to get Christ to surrender His crown to him. Luke would emphasize the humanity of Christ and we often place our physical needs above all else, something that Satan also included in his temptation.

1. “The order of the temptation here is different from that given in Matthew 4:1–11 because Matthew is given in a logical order of importance. Luke’s account is laid out in the theological order of 1 John 2:16—“the lust of the flesh” (vss. 3,4), “the lust of the eyes” (vss. 5-8), and “the pride of life” (vss. 9-12). (Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Luke*."

“Command these stones…” Satan does not encourage to pray to the Father to turns the stones to bread but for Christ to do it Himself using His own power, without any acknowledgement of the Father or reliance upon His power and provision. The need for bread is valid. How you go about obtaining your daily bread and provisions is what can lead to sin.

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

To counter each temptation, Jesus cites Scripture. Satan misquotes and misapplies it, but the Lord does no properly and correctly. If the Lord used only Scripture to combat Satan, then why do we think we can use any other method but this as we struggle in our temptations? Trying to rely on willpower or spirituality or any human means in combattirg Satan will end in failure as no man is strong enough to combat the devil in his own power and strength. Satan has brought down all of the mightiest men in the Bible (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon- the wisest of them all!) so he won’t have any trouble with you.

You need to saturate yourself with the word of God. David said, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word...Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:9, 11). The Lord defeated the temptations of Satan by quoting Scripture. Read your Bible daily. Reading ten full pages, front and back, will put you through it once every three months. Using Robert Murray McCheyne’s Bible reading plan will get you through the New Testament, Psalms and Proverbs twice a year and through the rest of the Old Testament once a year.

Physical bread is important, but how much more important is the spiritual bread of the word of God. You could die physically without literal bread and still go to heaven, but no man will see God’s heave who has never tasted of the Bread of Life.
Deuteronomy 8:3 is quoted in this verse.

4:5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

This sounded like a counterfeit of the Second Coming of Revelation 19.

Psalm 91:11,12 but mistranslated. This temptation dealt with the pride of life (1 John 2:16) in suggesting He could presume upon the goodness of the Father in such a reckless way as this. If Jesus had done this publicly, and if the Father would have saved Him from injury, Jesus would have had instant fame. But it would not be the kind of fame He was looking for. He was not looking to be a sideshow freak, but He wanted His teachings to be the foundation for His fame and reputation in Israel.

This temptation went something like this: “You aren't getting anywhere. Here You are, thirty years of age and You have no audience, no followers, no acclaim. You're not even known. If You listen to me and do what I say, You can be famous instantly, a celebrity overnight. Your name will be on everybody's lips. You'll be front-page news. I'll see that you get the crowds. Now here's the plan: I will set You up, up here on the pinnacle of the temple. You can't get any higher than that here in Jerusalem. The people down there in the temple courts seem as small as ants. Look! You've already attracted their attention. In a moment You can have their applause. You are now where You should have been years ago—in the public eye. Now then, I have brought You up; You cast Yourself down... You must do something daring, something spectacular. You say You trust Your heavenly Father. Well, prove it. Exercise Your faith. Show Your faith by casting Yourself down. Take Your stand on the Word of God. God's Word says, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." There! That's in the Bible. You reminded me of what the Bible says—now I'm reminding You. You believe the Bible—then do what it says. Put it to the test. The world is waiting to see a man who will go all the way with God, one who behaves as he says he believes.” (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, pages 63-64).

4:7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

An obvious ploy by the devil which was easier to refute. Why tempt God? Mark 16:16 promises protection from deadly snakebites, but Paul was no conducting a snake-handling meeting in Acts 28 when that viper bit him. Satan said “You claim to trust your Heavenly Father? Talk is cheap. Here is a chance for you to prove it!”

This is from Deuteronomy 6:16. God is not to be tempted, and yet here, God in the flesh is being tempted by Satan.

“Again”, a double witness of the written Scripture.
4:8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

This will deal with the lust of the eyes (1 John 2:16). But why would the Lord be so impressed with the glories of all the kingdoms of the world when He had been in heaven for all eternity past, viewing the infinite glories of the Father?

4:9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Why pay Satan for something the Father will give you anyway? They were his to give, as Satan was the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4). But think about who Christ would have to thank! Besides, the Father had already promised all the kingdoms to the Son (Psalm 2), so why pay Satan for what was already Christ's? The offer was that Christ could have had His kingdom without having to go to the cross and He could have avoided the suffering. But to do so would have had Christ recognize Satan’s claim to dominion and for Christ to abandon the claim of the Father to the kingdoms of the world.

The temptation to idolatry would have been the most offensive temptation of them all. This temptation went like: “I gave the world to Alexander; I have given it to Caesar. You are a much bigger man than either of them—a better man. Think how the world longs for a King like You. You are a King; all You need is a throne. Think how much good You can do. You can bring in new laws and put Your program into effect. Think of it: carpenter of Nazareth crowned emperor of the world. All of it can be Yours—not just Rome, but beyond the Euphrates, beyond the Nile, beyond the pillars of Hercules. All I ask is a small pinch of salt on Caesar’s altar, just one brief bend of the knee. All You have to do is render me one act of homage. Look at You! You have no food, no fame, no fortune. I offer you everything this world contains: the kingdom, the power, and the glory. And no cross!” (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, page 66).

If you wait long enough, the truth, or the true intent, will come out. Here is what Satan really wants—to be worshipped as God. That is what led to his fall in Isaiah 14 and in Ezekiel 28.

4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

This is from Deuteronomy 6:13.

4:11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

“the devil leaveth him” But not for long! You may be sure he'll be back.

An attack by the devil will result in a later ministration by angels.

“To sum up the temptations practically, it is obvious that the three represent the three of John’s first epistle and the three confronting Eve in the garden.

1. The lust of the flesh—the tree was “good for food”—bread (1 John 2:16).
2. The pride of life—desired to make one wise—jump off the temple roof.
3. The lust of the eye—pleasant to the eye (the fruit)—rule the kingdoms. (The references are in 1 John 2:16 and Gen. 3:6.)

4. In the first temptation, Satan is asking you to distrust God and do it for yourself. In the second temptation, he is tempting you to presume on God and make God do something for you, and in the last temptation, he is asking you to abandon God and let the devil do something for you. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*).

**General observations about temptation**

1. Satan will flee if resisted - James 4:7. Paul told Timothy to flee fornication in 1 Timothy 6:11 and to flee youthful lusts in 2 Timothy 2:22. But here is the problem- the temptation is often so packaged to make us unwilling to want to flee. Satan presents something to us that is designed to be pleasing. You can’t tempt a man with alcohol if he has no desire for it but you can tempt a drunk or a recovering alcoholic.

2. It is no sin to be tempted. Jesus was tempted, yet without sin - Hebrews 4:15.

3. Jesus was tempted in all points as we were, yet without sin - Hebrews 4:15. This does not mean that He was tempted with every kind of temptation that we are. For example, He was never married so He never had to deal with marital issues. The “all points” are the three types of temptation listed in 1 John 2:16- lust of the eyes, lust of the eyes and the pride of life, which all of these three temptations listed in this chapter are included. The three basic temptations are, do it yourself, let God do it all and let the devil do it.

4. Jesus endured temptation in order to help us who are tempted, and to be our example in how to handle temptations- Hebrews 2:18.

5. Temptations to sin come from Satan, not from God - Matthew 4:1, James 1:13. But they are allowed by God (Job 1,2).

6. God will not allow any temptation to come to us that we would not be able to handle - 1 Corinthians 10:13. Any temptation with which you are tempted is one with which I am tempted. Any temptation with which I’m tempted is one with which you’re tempted. The promise is this: God will allow no temptation to come your way that you can’t stand. The promise is that along with the temptation, the Lord provides the way to escape it.

7. With every temptation, God will make a way of escape, if we want to escape or even if we want to look for it - 1 Corinthians 10:13.

10. **Prophecy of Christ’s Early Ministry in Galilee 4:12-16**

4:12 ¶ Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

John was imprisoned for publicly confronting Herod over marrying his brother’s wife (Matthew 14). He was also in prison when he sent a delegation to Jesus in Matthew 11. With John now “off the scene”, Jesus picked up his ministry and message.

The Lord would not start or center His ministry around Jerusalem. There would be too much opposition. He went north, into Galilee, which was not a region known for its sympathy with the religious machine that was in Jerusalem.

4:13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:
“Capernaum” At that time a city of 30,000 inhabitants on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was one of the chief cities of Galilee, had a synagogue, a Roman garrison, and a customs station, with Matthew as the tax collector. It was called "Christ's own city" because he made it an earthly home. It was on the border between the tribes of Zebulon and Naphtali. It was thought that the literal “gates of hell” were located in nearby caverns, which gave the city a very bad moral and spiritual reputation. The area was also noted for the worship of the Greek god “Pan.”
4:14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

This is from Isaiah 9:1,2.

4:15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

Galilee was an area with a mixed Jewish/Gentile population, but it was an area largely identified with Gentiles.

The “sea” here is the Sea of Galilee.

4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

But how few appreciated that light or responded to it!

11. Jesus Preaching the Kingdom of Heaven 4:17

4:17 ¶ From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

This is the same message as John preached in Matthew 3:2. With John arrested, Jesus picked up his ministry and message of repentance, which showed His approval of it and vindication of it.

1. The theme of the Gospel of the Kingdom and of John is “Repent”.
2. Repentance is absolutely necessary for salvation and any relationship with God, despite what the Sword of the Lord crowd and the followers of Jack Hyles and the hyper-evangelicals teach, in their desire to water down the requirement of repentance so they can increase professions. A plan of salvation with no repentance is no sort of salvation at all.

The Kingdom of Heaven is not the Church Age. They are separate with separate gospels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KINGDOM OF HEAVEN</th>
<th>CHURCH (AGE)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Millennial kingdom</td>
<td>Takes place before the millennium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>Jewish and Gentile-universal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is “set up” (Daniel 2:44)</td>
<td>It is “built up” (Ephesians 2:20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has heirs (James 2:5)</td>
<td>No heirs (Ephesians 3:6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has children (Matthew 8:12)</td>
<td>No children (Galatians 3:26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ visible on earth</td>
<td>Christ not visible on earth, is in heaven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is coming (Matthew 4:17)</td>
<td>Is going (in the rapture) (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One thousand years in duration</td>
<td>About 2000 years in duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ends with Satan’s final rebellion and ultimate defeat</td>
<td>Ends with the rapture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Spiritual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Calling of the Early Disciples 4:18-22

4:18 ¶ And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

“The significance of the first disciples being “fishermen” is not apparent to the person who reads through Genesis 1:4-8 lightly. The Bible teaching of water beyond (northward) the galaxies and constellations is an “undiscovered” scientific truth which scientists may or may not discover later. That our Lord comes down through water to reach us is apparent by John the Baptist’s ministry and the references to Jonah (Matt. 12:40), but the further teaching of an exodus up through that water to land on “shore” is clouded to the carnal believer. (For complete information, study carefully Eph. 3:18; Amos 9:6; Psa. 148:4; Job 9:8; Psa. 33:7, 68:33, 48:2, 75:6–7; Isa. 14:13; and Job 26:7, 38:30.) (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew).”

Fishing was a humble yet honorable occupation.

John details the conversion of Andrew and Peter in John 1:40-42. They were saved there, they were called here.

4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

There are a lot of similarities between fishing for fish and fishing for men in evangelism.

1. You need bait. No one will bite at a bare hook. So you need some equipment, a rod, reel, net, boat, hook, basket, all provided at the Lord's expense.
2. You need patience.
3. There are seasons or times of the day when the fish won't bite. There will be dry spells in your personal evangelism.
4. You have to know how to clean your fish.
5. You have to go where the fish are. There is no sense trying to catch fish in a field or in a dried-up creek bed. You need a place to fish and that would be the world. This lake is large enough for all and it is stocked with all manners of fish, and in a very great quantity. There will be religious fish, irreligious fish, moral and immoral fish, concerned and careless fish...
6. You need to be willing to invest time and money in the activity. Diligence is required. Fishermen are usually up at dawn and they continue fishing till late in the afternoon. As long as hands can work men will fish. You must be willing to put the work into it, for fish seldom jump into the boat.
7. You need to know how to use your equipment (rod and reel, net...)
8. It is a useful activity. Fishing provides food for your family. To fish for men in evangelism also gives the Christian a profitable occupation.
9. You must love the work. You don't have to nag a man who loves to fish to go fish. He will do so whenever he has opportunity. So it is with a fisher of men.
10. Fishermen work in all kinds of weather, cold, heat, rain...So must the disciple also be prepared to minister in all seasons and in all circumstances.
11. Fishermen tend to be uneducated, unschooled in the sciences, literature and philosophy. Such are not requirements to discipleship. Rather, a willingness and a love for the work are more important.
12. This includes both discipleship and evangelism. Once you “catch” the fish, they need to be cleaned.
13. Jesus makes no promise of earthly success, monetary rewards or earthly honors. He really promises nothing—just a call to the work. When you decide to follow Christ as a disciple, the fishing ministry is assumed to follow as a natural follow-up to that decision. But you will not enjoy much success in this endeavor if you are not following Christ. We have had many immoral and apostate men, styling themselves as good, Bible-believing men who boasted of great numbers converted under their ministries, but we see little fruit in the long run.

“I understand this, first, in this sense: be separate unto Christ. These men were to leave their pursuits; they were to leave their companions; they were, in fact, to quit the world, that their one business might be, in their Master's name, to be fishers of men. We are not all called to leave our daily business, or to quit our families. That might be rather running away from the fishery than working at it in God's name. But we are called most distinctly to come out from among the ungodly, and to be separate, and not to touch the unclean thing. We cannot be fishers of men if we remain among men in the same element with them. Fish will not be fishers. The sinner will not convert the sinner. The ungodly man will not convert the ungodly man; and, what is more to the point, the worldly Christian will not convert the world. If you are of the world, no doubt the world will love its own; but you cannot save the world. If you are dark, and belong to the kingdom of darkness, you cannot remove the darkness. If you march with the armies of the wicked one, you cannot defeat them. I believe that one reason why the church of God at this present moment has so little influence over the world is because the world has so much influence over the church. Nowadays we hear Nonconformists pleading that they may do this and they may do that—things which their Puritan forefathers would rather have died at the stake than have tolerated. They plead that they may live like worldlings, and my sad answer to them, when they crave for this liberty, is, "Do it if you dare. It may not do you much hurt, for you are so bad already. Your cravings show how rotten your hearts are. If you have a hungering after such dog's meat, go, dogs, and eat the garbage. Worldly amusements are fit food for mere pretenders and hypocrites. If you were God's children you would loathe the very thought of the world's evil joys, and your question would not be, 'How far may we be like the world?' but your one cry would be, 'How far can we get away from the world? How much can we come out from it?' Your temptation would be rather to become sternly severe, and ultra-Puritanical in your separation from sin, in such a time as this, than to ask, "How can I make myself like other men, and act as they do?" Brethren, the use of the church in the world is that it should be like salt in the midst of putrefaction; but if the salt has lost its savor, what is the good of it? If it were possible for salt itself to putrefy, it could but be an increase and a heightening of the general putridity. The worst day the world ever saw was when the sons of God were joined with the daughters of men. Then came the flood; for the only barrier against a flood of vengeance on this world is the separation of the saint from the sinner. Your duty as a Christian is to stand fast in your own place and stand out for God, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh, resolving like one of old that, let others do as they will, as for you and your house, you will serve the Lord. (Charles Spurgeon, “How To Become Fishers of Men”, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Sermon #1906)."

4:20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

“straightway” Their response was immediate. How would you react if some stranger showed up at your office and told you to drop everything you were doing and shut up your company to
respond to some rather vague call to follow him, without any discussion or promise of income, benefits, retirement plan or what your work schedule would be?

4:21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

4:22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

Just as in 4:20. It is amazing to consider that they responded immediately (as Matthew did in Matthew 9:9 as did Paul in Acts 9:6. Here is a total stranger calling us to leave our secular employments and livelihood and to follow Him, with no promise of provision or benefits. When God calls men today, we often take extended periods to wrestle with it, making sure we have enough money and provisions to follow Christ.


4:23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

“Now, this is the “gospel of the kingdom.” It says it is, so it must be. This gospel includes the “signs and wonders” of miraculous healing that make their first appearance in Scripture with the calling out of Israel as a nation (Exod. 4:1–9). No one gets sick and gets healed until then. You can’t find a disease named or implied in fifty chapters of Genesis. Healing is a sign associated with Israel (Exod. 15:26). As such, it teaches the Jew to look for a sign (1 Cor. 1:22). He is justified in looking for one, according to his national history, for that history begins with signs (Exod. 4:30) and ends (before the present age) with signs (Mark 16). But the one sign he was told to believe, many a Hebrew missed (Matt. 12:39), for it was a sign Jonah missed since it was connected with Gentiles getting in on the blessing too! (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

Physical healing seems to be associated more with the Gospel of the Kingdom than with the New Testament Gospel.

4:24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

The Authorized Version rendering of “devils” is correct although almost every other translation and commentary wants to replace it with “demon”.

4:25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.

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Verses 24 and 25 show the early success and popularity of Christ’s ministry.

“Decapolis” = Ten Cities.
Doctrinal observations regarding the “Sermon on the Mount”:
1. There are no Christians present here. There are no New Testament writings at this time. The discourse is not addressed to the church. The application is Old Testament (and even tribulation prophetically) and is to the Jews.
2. To attempt to apply it doctrinally to the Christian is theological suicide. Imagine accepting Matthew 5:17-20 as New Testament doctrine and then refusing to believe the Seventh-day Adventist teaching against the Roman church! Or imagine rejecting the Jehovah Witness teaching on the 144,000, while refusing to recognize their “sermon-on-the-mount-conscientious-objecting” (5:39). No reasonable Christian could reconcile the passages, doctrinally, with the Pauline epistles. This is the liberal’s purpose: to destroy the belief that the Pauline epistles are of equal authority with the gospels!
3. To correctly understand what the Sermon on the Mount, we have to believe what we have read in the Old Testament up to this point. God has promised a literal kingdom with His ruler on the throne of David (see Matthew 2:6; 3:2). The ruler appears. He is heralded, and as a king, He sits (Matthew 5:1) and delivers the constitution for the kingdom, which is an earthly, Messianic, Jewish kingdom on earth—remembering, of course, that up until here, all conditions for the Second Advent of Christ are being met. The further revelation given (that it turned out to be the First Advent) is not an excuse or alibi for us to fly in the face of God with an amillennial and postmillennial “abomination of desolation.” At this point, the “day of the Lord” approaches rapidly. But don’t rush things.
4. Matthew 5-7 can be thought of as the Constitution of the Kingdom.
5. Psalm 15 can be tied into the Sermon on the Mount.

“Many years ago I played handball with a very liberal preacher who later became rather famous as a leader of the liberal wing. One day he told me that all he needed of the Bible was the Sermon on the Mount. He went even so far as to say that all he needed was the Golden Rule, as recorded in Matthew 7:12: “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” To say that this is all the Bible you need may sound good, but it is pious drivel. The question is not whether you feel that the Sermon on the Mount is your religion. The question is: Are you living it? That is the important thing, and we’ll have more to say about that later. Those who reduce the Christian message to the Sermon on the Mount represent a very large segment of liberalism in our day. But please notice that the content of the Christian gospel is not found in the Sermon on the Mount. For instance, there is absolutely no mention of the death and resurrection of Christ. Yet Paul said to the Corinthians, “… I declare unto you the gospel…..” What is the gospel? The Sermon on the Mount? No. Paul made it clear that the gospel is this: “… that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1, 3–4, italics mine). My friend, the gospel is not in the Sermon on the Mount, and that is the reason a great many people like to claim it as their religion. The preaching of that doctrine has made more hypocrites in the church than anything else. It is nothing in the world but verbiage for men to say, “I live by the Sermon on the Mount.” If a man is honest and will read the Sermon on the Mount, he will know that he is not living up to it. My friend, if the Sermon on the Mount is God’s standard (and it is) and you come short of it, what are you going to do? Do you have a Savior who can extend mercy to you? Do you know the One who can reach down in grace and save you when you put your faith in Him? To reduce the Christian message to the Sermon on the Mount is a simplicity which the Scriptures would not permit under any circumstances whatsoever. To do so is the extreme left point of view...
Testament. So how in the world can he keep, in his own strength, the Sermon on the Mount which is elevated to an even higher degree? (J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible, Matthew*).

A Listing of the Beatitudes:

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14. The Beatitudes 5:1-12

5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

We do not know which mountain this was, although there are several traditional sites. The Lord went up on the mountainside for an "elevated" pulpit, to be better heard and seen by the multitude.

“It was suitable that such elevated ethics should be taught from a mountain (Charles Spurgeon, *Gospel of the Kingdom*).”

5:2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

When the Lord preached, He did not mumble in dark sentences as did the scribes or as false teachers do. He opened His mouth so as to be heard and understood and declared the truth of God very plainly, for all to understand. He also spoke clearly, plainly and with authority. The Lord was a preacher and He preached loud, long and distinctively!

Preaching also involves teaching. You can’t separate them, nor should you try.

5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:3-5 Outline

1. The poor in spirit- 5:3
2. The pressed in soul 5:4
3. The patient in strife 5:5

The Old Testament ended with “a curse”: the New Testament opens with “Blessed.” This runs into Psalm 1:1-3 where this Blessed Man is further described. And this Blessed Man is a believer. No unsaved man can make any claim to be enjoying such blessings from God as he is still apart from God and still is at enmity with God. The first step in receiving and enjoying such blessings is the new birth. A happy man is a man who enjoys the blessing of God.
These are humble people, not necessarily poor economically, who have been broken by the Spirit of God of self and sin. They are poor in spirit in the sense that they do not magnify themselves, do not promote themselves but see themselves as God sees them, as sinners in desperate need of the grace of God.

1. Poor people are usually dependent upon other people. The poor in spirit have no power or sufficiency in themselves but rely totally upon the Lord to support them spiritually and in every other compartment of their life.

2. The first requirement for salvation is the development of this attitude, for proud men and self-sufficient men do not accept the gospel. They are “too proud to accept charity” and prefer to work their way to heaven by good works and religious rites. The rest of these proud men will deny they have any need for any salvation at all, for whatever reason. But when a sinner comes to realize his own wretched state before God and his own inability to do anything in and of himself to improve his standing before God, then he will come to the cross humbly, broken, poor in spirit, bringing no good works or religion. They will simply cry out for mercy as a condemned beggar, relying only and solely upon the grace and love of God. No man gets saved who possesses any other spirit than this. The penitent sinner is not looking for a physical healing or a raise or a new car, but for mercy and salvation!

3. The world would not honor such a humble self-image. They teach that a man is to strut and promote himself, to stand up for himself, never to allow himself to be stepped on or overlooked. But this is not a virtue in the Kingdom. We will see this theme throughout the Sermon on the Mount as the Lord extols those virtues that the world despises. But “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination to God” (Luke 16:15) and vice-versa.

4. “Poor in spirit” does not necessarily mean poor in an economic sense. A billionaire can be “poor in spirit” and a mission bum can be happy and have the joy of the Lord.

5. Also see Isaiah 66:2 “to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” The Laodicean of Revelation 3:17 was just the opposite— he thought he was rich and had need of nothing. Also compare the publican and the Pharisee of Luke 18:9-14.

“It is the opposite of that haughty, self-assertive and self-sufficient disposition which the world so much admires and praises. It is the very reverse of that independent and defiant attitude which refuses to bow to God, which determines to brave things out, which says with Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?" To be "poor in spirit" is to realize that I have nothing, am nothing, and can do nothing, and have need of all things. Poverty of spirit is a consciousness of my emptiness, the result of the Spirit’s work within. It issues from the painful discovery that all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags. It follows the awakening that my best performances are unacceptable, yea, an abomination to the thrice Holy One. Poverty of spirit evidences itself by its bringing the individual into the dust before God, acknowledging his utter helplessness and deservingness of hell. It corresponds to the initial awakening of the prodigal in the far country, when he "began to be in want. (A. W. Pink, The Beatitudes)."

This is a millennial promise for the “Kingdom of Heaven” refers to the millennial reign of Christ after the tribulation period. Since Matthew is the Gospel to the Jew, his readers would be very interested in this future political kingdom that the prophets spoke so much about. Those who were poor, weak and despised in these dispensations will be honored and promoted in the millennium.
It is remarkable that Jesus began his ministry in this manner, so unlike all others. Other teachers had taught that happiness was to be found in honour, or riches, or splendour, or sensual pleasure. Jesus overlooked all those things, and fixed his eye on the poor, and the humble, and said that happiness was to be found in the lowly vale of poverty, more than in the pomp and splendors of life (Albert Barnes).

5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

“mourn” What do they mourn over?
1. The sins and carnalities of their generation. The word really doesn’t deal with mourning over a lost loved one, for example.
2. The falling away that is present in every age. And there is certainly much to mourn over regarding the sins of our generation and the turning away from God that is accelerating in this day. A true Christian will mourn while a carnal Christian will attempt to be reconciled with the age.
3. Their own failings and corruptions that lurk in their own hearts.
4. The lost that we know of who continue to reject the gospel.
5. The wayward and the backslider. How many parents weep over a prodigal son or daughter!
6. Are not these three worthy things to spend much time concerned about and weeping over? If these items do not move the believer to a broken heart, then what would? How many believers weep when their favorite sports team loses or the politician they supported in an election loses! We tend to weep over carnal, temporary things that have no importance in the light of eternity, yet remain dry-eyed over the things that really do matter. The world certainly does not mourn over its sin, its carnality, its rebellion against God and its impending judgment, but they really should if they wished to be wise and avoid the certain judgment of God upon them.
7. There are a few verses that deal with this attitude of morning:
   a. Isaiah 61:2  To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;
   b. Isaiah 61:3  To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.
   c. James 4:9  Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. The verse in James shows that an attitude of mourning is better than one of laughter and frivolity. Many laugh and party today, not considering the fact that they are under the condemnation of God because of their sins. If they really understood their spiritual situation and danger, they would leave off the “high life” and spend time on their face before God, weeping over their sins.
8. Those who mourn in this manner, with a broken heart, will have the attention of heaven and may be sure that God hears these tears and will act upon them. They “shall” be comforted, not “might be comforted”. The promise is absolute.
9. The Church rejects this beatitude today. Modern Christianity is presented as nothing but joy, pleasure, a “good time”. John Piper presented his “Christian hedonism” heresy in the 2000s. Many church services are presented as “celebration services”. The prosperity preachers discourage any serious introspection of one’s own sins and inner corruptions. How much unlike what preachers preached on in better days. Before people got saved,
they would sometimes mourn for months and even years over their own inward corruptions and sins. They gave time for the law to do its good work in the heart in bringing a sinner to a true and genuine conversion. Today, “soulwinners” supposedly “lead people to Christ” after a 8-minute gospel presentation of their front porch. Where is the time for mourning on the part of the sinner? No mourning equals a weak salvation. As long as the church is growing numerically, as long as the money keeps coming in and as long as we occasionally get invited to the White House or asked to open the state legislature in prayer, we imagine ourselves to be doing well spiritually, with no need of any spiritual mourning. This, we lose this blessing.

5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

“meek”

1. Meekness is strength under control. It is the feeling of patient, submissive humbleness, the disposition to be patient and long suffering. It is a bending under pressure but not breaking. It comes from the Middle English, of Scandinavian origin; akin to Old Norse mjúkr “gentle”; akin to Welsh esmwyth “soft”. Meekness is not produced by self-effort but by Spirit effort. Only the Holy Spirit can produce meekness in the heart of a yielded Christian. To be meek means not to resist the world’s opposition but to suffer it willingly. If we are meek, willing to suffer the world’s opposition in this age, we will inherit the earth in the Kingdom Age.

2. Biblical revelation about the “meek”:
   a. Moses was the meekest man on the earth
      i. Numbers 12:3 Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.
   b. The meek shall eat and be satisfied
      i. Psalm 22:26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.
   c. God will guide the meek in judgment
      i. Psalm 25:9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.
   d. The meek shall inherit the earth
      i. Psalm 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
      ii. Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
   e. God lifts up the meek
      i. Psalm 147:6 The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.
   f. The meek will be beautified with salvation
      i. Psalm 149:4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.
   g. God will judge and reprove for the meek
      i. Isaiah 11:4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
   h. The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord
      i. Isaiah 29:19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
   i. The meek are to seek the Lord
i. Zephaniah 2:3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

j. The Lord is meek
i. Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

k. The Lord came in His triumphal entry meekly
i. Matthew 21:5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

l. Women are to have a meek and quiet spirit
i. 1 Peter 3:4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

3. What are some characteristics of a meek man?
   a. He is humble
   b. He is gentle of spirit
   c. He is patient with others
   d. He is longsuffering
   e. He is quick to forgive a wrong
   f. He is content with his lot in life
   h. He is everything a proud man is not and is nothing that a proud man is. He is the polar opposite of a proud man.

4. "What, then, is meekness? I think we can sum it up in this way. Meekness is essentially a true view of oneself, expressing itself in attitude and conduct with respect to others. It is therefore two things. It is my attitude towards myself; and it is an expression of that in my relationship to others. You see how inevitably it follows being 'poor in spirit' and 'mourning'. A man can never be meek unless he is poor in spirit. A man can never be meek unless he has seen himself as a vile sinner. These other things must come first. But when I have that true view of myself in terms of poverty of spirit, and mourning because of my sinfulness, I am led on to see that there must be an absence of pride. The meek man is not proud of himself, he does not in any sense glory in himself. He feels that there is nothing in himself of which he can boast. It also means that he does not assert himself. You see, it is a negation of the popular psychology of the day which says 'assert yourself', 'express your personality'. The man who is meek does not want to do so; he is so ashamed of it. The meek man likewise does not demand anything for himself. He does not take all his rights as claims. He does not make demands for his position, his privileges, his possessions, his status in life. No, he is like the man depicted by Paul in Philippians 2. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' Christ did not assert that right to equality with God; He deliberately did not. And that is the point to which you and I have to come. Then let me go further; the man who is meek is not even sensitive about himself. He is not always watching himself and his own interests. He is not al- ways on the defensive. We all know about this, do we not? Is it not one of the greatest curses in life as a result of the fall - this sensitivity about self? We spend the whole of our lives watching ourselves. But when a man becomes meek, he has finished with all that; he no longer worries about himself and what other people say. To be truly meek means we no longer protect ourselves, because we see there is nothing worth defending. So we are not on the defensive; all that is gone. The man who is truly meek never pities himself, he is never sorry for himself. He never talks to himself and says, 'You are having a hard time, how unkind these people are not to understand you'. He never thinks: 'How wonderful I really am, if only other people gave me a chance.' Self-pity! What hours and years we waste in this! But the man who has become meek has
finished with all that. To be meek, in other words, means that you have finished with yourself altogether, and you come to see you have no rights or deserts at all (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, pages 57-58)."

"they shall inherit the earth" Quoted from Psalm 37:11. This is another millennial promise (it has never happened in human history and never will until the millennium), for these with this virtue. It is not seen as a valuable trait in the eyes of the world but the Lord thinks so highly of it, He attaches a millennial promise to the meek.

They shall inherit the earth. Not just a land or a nation, but the entire earth. The rich, powerful and mighty imagine themselves to be the inheritors of all that there is but they will find themselves to be but paupers in the day when the accounts are reckoned and closed if they die without Christ. The righteous poor may have but little of the world’s goods in this day but that also shall be reversed in that day.

5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"merciful"
1. A man who does not show mercy shall not find it, either of man or God. An example is this is in Matthew 18:23-35. The Lord is talking about forgiveness in that parable but the quality of mercy also applies.
2. They obtain mercy from God since they show mercy to man. A merciful man is ready to extend mercy to others, so he shall receive it when he is in need of it, both from God and man.
3. *The following passages describe God’s mercy toward us:
   a. God’s mercy is great- Numbers 14:18,19
   b. God’s mercy is plenteous- Psalm 86:5,15; 103:8
c. God’s mercy is everlasting- Psalm 100:5  
d. God’s mercy is good- Psalm 109:21  
e. God’s mercy is tender- Luke 1:78  
f. God’s mercy is rich- Ephesians 2:4  
g. God’s mercy is abundant- 1 Peter 1:3  

5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

“pure in heart”
1. The Pharisees put all the emphasis on the externals, while Christ put the emphasis on the heart. No honest man can say that his heart is pure. How can the heart of man, which is desperately wicked, be made clean? Jesus said, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). It is by the washing of regeneration that we are made clean. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:7).
2. Purity of heart is needed to see the Kingdom. This is through the new birth and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the heart.

“they shall see God”
1. In a sense, all men will see God, either at the Bema judgment (for the saved) or the Great White Throne judgment (for the lost). But seeing God at any of these judgments is not the idea here. To see God in this context is to see Him in His holiness and glory, to see the King in his glory and majesty. This is reserved only for the pure in heart. This would involve only believers, who have had their hearts purified by the blood of Christ.
2. Once, I “saw” President Bill Clinton while in Washington, but I saw him from afar and he certainly did not see me. Although I “saw” him, he did not invite me into the White House and we never talked. Many believers “see” God in this manner. They know Who He is but really “see” very little about Him except for that which is superficial.

“Although believers in Christ do find sensibly much pollution in themselves, yet if their heart love it not; if when they come short in duties their heart is grieved for it; if the honest endeavour and study of their heart be that they may be pure and holy, they are, notwithstanding this felt sinfulness, truly blessed, for our Lord says, Blessed are the clean or pure in heart. [2.] Holiness and purity of heart is a preparative for sensible communion with God, for it is promised, They shall see God. That is, their eyes shall be opened to behold by faith the invisible God: the Lord shall make them to discern the mysteries of salvation hid from the world; he shall make them to observe the work of his providence injustice, mercy, goodness and power in the world about them; and withal to perceive lovingkindness toward themselves, and at length they shall see God face to face perfectly, in the kingdom of heaven. (David Dickson, Exposition of Matthew).”

“He means those who do not aim merely at outward correctness, but at inward holiness. They are not satisfied with a mere external show of religion. They strive to keep a heart and conscience void of offence, and to serve God with the spirit and the inner man. Blessed are all such! The heart is the man. “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7.) He that is most spiritual-minded will have most communion with God. (J. C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts on Matthew).”
“In order to be pure in heart toward God, you must be strict in dealing with yourself and merciful in dealing with others. As far as logic is concerned, there seems to be no reason for this. But our practical experience proves that it is so. If you are not right with yourself and merciful with others, you will never be pure with God. I believe that at least some of those among us in the churches have the experience of what I am speaking about here. Throughout the years, we have learned the lesson of being strict with ourselves and of not making excuses for ourselves. But we have also learned to be merciful to others, especially to those who are weaker. As a result, our heart is pure in seeking God. When we are righteous with ourselves and merciful with others, we see God. But when we are loose with ourselves and condemn others, our eyes are absolutely blind, and we cannot see God. If you excuse yourself, yet make demands of others, your heart is not pure. A pure heart toward God comes only from strict dealings with yourself and merciful dealings with others (Witness Lee, *Life Study of Matthew*).”

It’s true that the new birth imparts a new and a clean heart, but more is required. Salvation is a start, but it is not the end. Sanctification is the goal of salvation. Salvation is not just deliverance from hell, but it is conforming the life to the image and likeness of Christ (Romans 8:29).

1. Purity of heart does not mean sinlessness for no man was/is/will be sinless except Christ. Yet many sinners are said to be pure of heart or have heart purity. Noah got drunk, Abraham equivocated, Moses disobeyed God, Job cursed the day of his birth, Elijah fled in terror from Jezebel, Peter denied Christ.

2. It takes a new, regenerate heart through regeneration. No sinner can be said to be “pure of heart”. Then that believer must be striving for personal holiness, a walk with God and separation from the world system. It is a heart that hates what God hates and loves what He loves. The purer the heart be, the more conscious it becomes of, and the more it grieves over, indwelling sin and corruption. A pure heart is one which despises foul thoughts, vile imaginations, and evil desires. It is a heart that mourns over pride, unbelief and coldness of heart, and weeps over carnality.

3. Heart purity extends to both purity of doctrine, purity of intention and to purity of life. Those with this kind of heart purity will see God and experience Him and understand the Scripture in a way that no carnal Christian will. Possessing heart purity is the first step to a true a genuine Christian life and walk. Both are impossible without purity.

4. Making a heart pure is a greater miracle than cleansing a leper or raising the dead. Can one really have a “pure heart”? Is there such a hope for this kind of Christian life today? Why not? If God mentions it here and promises a blessing for those who seek it, then it must be attainable, else this beatitude is a farce.

5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

“peacemakers”

1. How this is ignored today! It is with genuine grief to see so many Christians supporting the military and military activity, all under the guise of “patriotism”. Our Mennonite and Amish cousins have the right idea in their refusal to serve in the military and our Baptist forefathers during the Reformation era also had the right idea in refusing to support governments that waged war and persecuted the saints. Now we are not wearing “rose colored glasses” in thinking that we can do away with war before the establishment of the millennium. We are fully aware that the Lord warned about an increase of war as we approached the last days (Matthew 24:6). But must we participate in it and promote it? If our lands and homes were being invaded by an invading foreign power, then there would be no question that we would be justified in
defending our homes and lands. But when our politicians try to send us to Korea, Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan to murder people who never did anything to us, then that is simply out of the question.

2. When and where possible, the Christian is to work for peace. In this fallen age, it will not always be possible and will often end in failure. The peace we would seek would be a spiritual peace, but not a political one. We are at war with the world, the flesh and the devil and that war, declared in Genesis 3, continues to this hour. No cease fire has ever been declared between God and Satan. This conflict will not be resolved until Revelation 20. That is our warfare, not fought with carnal weapons such as guns or airplanes, but with spiritual armory.

3. We should also be working when we can for peace in the church, peace among the brethren, peace among the various denominations and theological systems. This is called “irenics”. We should do this without compromising the truth. Truth is more important than unity or peace, although all three should be desired and worked for as much as possible.

4. But the peacemaker is not a pacifist. He does not want to fight and will strive for peace where he can. But when those attempts fail and conflict is inevitable, then he will fight for the right, even to the death. Pacifists want peace at any price, even to the point of compromise and apostasy. The peacemaker wants peace but never at the expense of truth.

5. Ephesians 6:15 applies this to the preacher who preaches the gospel of peace in offering the hope of reconciliation between the sinner and God through the gospel.

6. Warmongers and military apologists will not qualify here. The Jews were expecting a Messiah who would be a warrior-king, much like David. Instead, they got someone who never directly confronted Rome and talked of peace.

5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“when men shall revile you…” 1 Peter 2:19,20 certainly applies here. To be persecuted for your own sin or stupidity brings no blessing. But when we suffer for righteousness sake, there is a blessing for that.

“kingdom of heaven” This relates to the Millennial kingdom, which is Jewish in context. Would this immediate doctrinal application apply to tribulation Jews who faithfully suffered and endured during the reign of the Antichrist?

5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

There are two conditions to qualify for this blessing:

1. Persecution for Christ’s sake. Not for our sake or the sake of our denomination or our theological system, but for Christ’s sake, for His person, work and name.

2. Falsely. There is an element of slander in this criticism. You will be accused of being “holier than thou”, “thinking you are better than everyone else”, “thinking you are right and everyone else is wrong” (but no points if these criticisms are true! Only if they are said against you falsely!).

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As in 5:10, the doctrinal application is to the Jews who are persecuted by the Antichrist and His followers in the tribulation period. The will have a great millennial reward for their faithfulness during such trying times. Spiritually, this can relate to anyone who suffers similar persecution and harassment on account of Christ.

The reward is heavenly for earthly persecutions.

5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Why would we expect any better treatment than the prophets? They were all persecuted. So were the apostles. So was the Lord. If they were persecuted, and if we are walking in their way, we should expect the same fate. That means we are in the same spirit as they were and we have also aroused the same wrath and ire of the world and the devil that they did. What a glorious company to find oneself in!

15. Salt 5:13

5:13 ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Believers are called two things in verses 13 and 14:
1. The salt of the earth
2. The light of the world

Salt is a mineral that is composed primarily of sodium chloride although there are other compounds of salt. Salt flavor is one of the basic tastes, making salt one of the oldest, most ubiquitous food seasonings. Salting is an important method of food preservation. Chloride and sodium, the two major components of salt, are needed by all known living creatures in small quantities.

1. Salt was included among funereal offerings found in ancient Egyptian tombs from the third millennium B.C., as were salted birds and salt fish. From about 2800 B.C., the Egyptians began exporting salt fish to the Phoenicians in return for Lebanon cedar, glass, and the dye Tyrian purple; the Phoenicians traded Egyptian salt fish and salt from North Africa throughout their Mediterranean trade empire.
2. In the Old Testament, 35 verses mention salt, the earliest being the story of Lot's wife. When King Abimelech destroyed the city of Shechem, he is said to have "sown salt on it," probably as a curse on anyone who would re-inhabit it. (Judges 9:45)
3. In the New Testament, 6 verses mention salt. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus referred to his followers as the "salt of the earth". Paul also encouraged Christians to "let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6).
4. Salt is mandatory in the rite of the Tridentine Mass in the Roman church. Salt may be added to the water "where it is customary" in the Roman Catholic rite of Holy water.
5. In Judaism, it is recommended to have either a salty bread or to add salt to the bread if this bread is unsalted when doing Kidush for Shabat. It is customary to spread some salt over the bread or to dip the bread in a little salt when passing the bread around the table after the Kidush. To preserve the covenant between their people and God, Jews dip the Sabbath bread in salt.
6. Leviticus 2:13 commands offering with every sacrifice as it was the symbol of a binding covenant.

7. Numbers 18:19 speaks of a “covenant of salt.”

8. Job 6:6 says that God cannot “swallow” some things without salt, any more than a man can.

9. The salt is used for destruction in Ezekiel 47:11.

10. Salt is:
   a. An antiseptic. It cleanses and kills the germs of corruption.
      i. Christians need to be clean and holy in their walk.
   b. A flavoring. It makes bland things taste good.
      i. Christianity is the spice of life! We have the greatest life there is and we pity the sinner in his misery and drudgery,
   c. A preservative. It keeps things from going bad.
      i. As bad as things are now, how much worse would they be if there was no Church on earth? America is in horrible shape but how much worse would we be without our churches? And how much worse will things get in the Tribulation when the Church is removed from the earth in the rapture?

   1. The Romans saw salt as the purest thing on earth because it came from the purest of things, the sun and the sea.

5. A miracle. It is made up of sodium, necessary for life and chlorine, which is poisonous. But combine them and they form an essential ingredient for life.
   1. The Christian is a miracle- the poison of his sin nature and sin practice are transformed into something healthy by contact with the Holy Spirit
   2. Hypostatic union- made up of something poisonous- sin, and something good- the divine nature.

6. It can create thirst.
   1. Do we create an interest in the things of God by our testimony? Our lives and witnesses should create a “thirsts” for spiritual truth in the lost around us.

7. It is an irritant.
   1. Do we irritate sinners, and the backslider? Our lives and witnesses should always have a “bite” to it.

Israel, when obedient, has always been a blessing to the whole earth. When Israel is out of sorts with God, God seems to be out of sorts with the earth.

“lost its savor…” This is a warning. Stale salt that has lost its flavor cannot be re-salted. Once you lose your godly influence and testimony, you cannot get it back. Testimony and reputation lost are lost forever. Flavorless salt is good for nothing but to be used for traction, to be used to step on. Disqualified Christians who have lost their power or testimony are useless in the program of God.

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16. Light 5:14-16

5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

See Philippians 2:15, where Paul applies this name to the Christian. Christians are even called “children of light” (1 Thessalonians 5:5), which is also applied to Jews before the crucifixion in Luke 16:8.
As “the light of the world”:
1. We reflect Christ’s light, for He is “the light of the world”.
   a. John 8:12 He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
   b. John 9:5.
2. As the moon has no light of its own but reflects the light of the sun, so the Church has no light of its own but reflects the glory of God
   a. Song 6:10 Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?
   b. Job 25:5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not.
   c. The believer is dead in Christ, since the moon is a dead planet (Galatians 2:2 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”)
   d. The moon is bound to the earth by gravity. The Church is bound to Christ as His bride and by His power and grace.
   e. The believer still bears the marks of sin as the moon shows craters spots (the “seas”).
   f. Occasionally, he suffers a total eclipse when the world (1 John 2:15) comes between him and his “Sun.”
      i. The light of the moon waxes and wanes, so does the light of the Christian. Sometimes the Body of Christ gives off a bright, shining light, and sometimes it doesn’t. The testimony of the Church ought to be strong and powerful so that it guides and moves things in the world like the moon moves the tides. But the sad fact is that the testimony of the Church today is so sorry, so lukewarm, so weak, and so worldly that it has little influence on the community around it.
3. The Christian can be compared to the golden candlesticks in the Tabernacle in Exodus 27:20,21. They were fueled by “pure olive oil, beaten for the light”. The oil had to be purified in order for it to shine the brightest and purest that it possibly could. The same goes for Christians and especially ministers.
   a. a. “I once asked a rabbi why the children of Israel had to use olive oil that was beaten to be used to light the tabernacle as expressed in Exodus 27:20. The rabbi knew of my experience as a camp director and as any good rabbi would do, he answered my question by asking a question. He asked me what I would do if a log did not burn. Just because I was a camp director, I really knew nothing more about camping than the residents of the camp who were all inner city teenagers. But I just happened to know the answer to that question because I faced it many times. I replied that you chop the log up into splinters and start the splinters on fire. The rabbi smiled and said: “Does not God do the same with us so He can start a fire in us.” I am always amazed as I read the first five books of the Old Testament as to how God would ask the children of Israel to do some seeming impractical thing. Our Western thinking causes us to first ask, “What practical value would beaten olive oil have to be used for the light of the tabernacle. Regular olive oil would do just fine and be more plentiful. Beaten oil should be used for special occasions like anointing or medication rather than burned quickly away for lighting purposes. Is it because beaten oil would burn brighter, or longer? Yet, if we think like a Hebrew, our first thought should be, “What is God trying to illustrate here?” You get two types of oil from the olive. The first which is the most pure, the finest and, of course, the most expensive is the beaten oil. The word in the Hebrew is katith which means to break into pieces. The first oil to be extracted from the olive does not come from pressing the olives, but breaking, cutting or tearing them into pieces. Olives spring from a
tree and turn a dark green. When they are ripe they turn black and inside the
olive are a couple drops of liquid gold as it is called. This is the beaten oil, the
purest and finest. This is used for anointing, medicinal purposes and other
specific uses. After the liquid is drained from the olive by bruising it, so to speak,
it is then crushed or pressed to extract the oil contained in the meat of the olive.
This oil is not as pure and is used for cooking and put into lamps for light.
However, for the light in the tabernacle the people were instructed to use only the
pure, beaten oil. The beaten oil is considered to be the first fruit of the olive and
it is this oil that is used to provide the light in the tabernacle...The olive is
afflicted in every way to extract the pure oil, but it is not crushed because once it
is crushed the oil mixes with the impurities and it is no longer pure...Sometimes
God has to break us up into little splinters in order for us to catch the fire of God,
God will break us into splinters or in pieces to extract that which is pure. Yet, He
will not crush us such that the impurities mix with the pure resulting in a lesser
quality...God wants to extract that which is pure, the life of Jesus Christ, from us.
However, sometimes we are like that old log that will not catch fire. We just
cannot catch the fire of Jesus. So God has to put us through the type of
difficulties that have the potential of crushing us, but He will not allow us to be
crushed, instead what He will do is to strip us of all our trust in ourselves so that
the world can see that our trust is in God and God alone. The world will be able
to see that which is pure, Jesus Christ, the first fruit that lives inside our earthen
vessels. (from the website https://www.chaimbentorah.com/2014/10/herew-}

b. How is this oil beaten? It involves purifying something through either an
application of intense heat or a filtering or a physical manipulation of the object to
grind out any impurities or imperfections. This is what must happen to the
preacher. He has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him but his relationship to the
Holy Spirit may not be pure and it may not be what it ought to be. He may not be
filled with the Spirit so his spiritual relationship and power is not what it ought to
be. In order for him to have any impact for God and in order for him to shine with
the spiritual light that he needs, he be purified. He needs to be beaten and thus
trials, tribulations and testings come into the life of the preacher and these are
designed to beat the preacher and to purify him. This will bring a refining in his
life, with the purging of sin and the magnification and promotion of godliness and
spirituality and a development of Christ-likeness and a lessening of the influence
of self and the flesh in that preacher’s life.

t. Robert Murray McCheyne, when being asked of his view of diligent
preparation for the pulpit, he quoted Exodus 27:20, where he mentioned
“beaten oil, beaten oil for the lamps of the sanctuary”. Just as the lamps
of the sanctuary required the purest of olive oil in order for them to shine
and to illuminate the Holy of Holies, so must the minister be similarly
beaten and purified in order that he might shine bright enough to
illuminate the house of God for the people of God.

c. God “beats” His ministers in order to purify them and to purge them from sin
and self so they can shine as they ought. This “beating” comes in the forms of
trials and tests. No one who ever accomplished anything for God did it without
spending much time in the crucible. This is why trials are allowed to come into
the life. A man who runs from them will never learn the lessons they are
designed to give nor will he ever see any spiritual improvement in his walk with
God.
i. The more you are “beaten” by God, the brighter and purer the light shines.
ii. We are to be the “light of the World” in Matthew 5:14.

d. Some examples:
   i. Moses - 40 years in exile
   ii. David - persecuted by Saul
   iii. Peter - imprisoned and almost killed
   iv. Paul - see 2 Corinthians 4:8-18; 11:24-29
   v. John - exiled on Patmos
   vi. McCheyne - constant physical issues
   vii. Spurgeon - constant depressions
   viii. Carey - a wife who suffered from a nervous breakdown
   ix. Judson, thrown into a death prison
   x. Patton - burying wife and children on the mission field

“This title had been given by the Jews to certain of their eminent Rabbis; with great pomp they spoke of Rabbi Judah, or Rabbi Jochanan, as the lamps of the universe, the lights of the world; it must have sounded strange in the ears of the Scribes and Pharisees, to hear that same title, in all soberness, applied to a few bronzed-faced, and rough-handed peasants and fishermen who had become disciples of Jesus. Jesus, in effect, said: “Not the Rabbis, not the Scribes, not the assembled Sanhedrim, but you, My humble followers, you are the light of the world!” (Charles Spurgeon, “The Light of the World”, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Sermon 1109).”

5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

This is illogical- why go to all the trouble to light a candle and then hide it? They may be ashamed or embarrassed by the candle for some reason. How many times do we fail to witness or give a good word for Christ because we are embarrassed or ashamed of Christ! When we do that, we put the candle of our witness under a bushel, where it becomes worthless.

1. “The candle “under a bushel” can also be misplaced “under a bed,” according to Mark 4:21, which indicates that there are two dangers in regard to an effectual witness for Jesus: commercialism and laziness! (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew)."

Notice the candle and the candlestick. The believer’s “light” is likened to a candle. It is small and does not put out much light, but it can be vitally useful still to illuminate your immediate surroundings. The believer is not a torch or a lighthouse or a searchlight but is a candle. The best place a Christian can shine is in a local church for a local church is referred to as a candlestick in Revelation 1:20. The believer, who is likened to a candle, may not give off much light but he should give off some light and illuminate the area he occupies. Maybe I cannot illuminate China, but I can illuminate my little corner of the world.

1. "Household piety is the best of piety. If our light is not seen in the house, depend upon it we have none. Candles are meant for parlors and Bedrooms (Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Matthew)."

Biblical revelation about “candles”:

1. The candle seems to be related to the life of a man, or at least his inner, spiritual life
   a. Job 18:6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.
b. Job 21:17 How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger.
c. Psalm 18:28 For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.
d. Proverbs 20:27 The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.
e. Proverbs 24:20 For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out.

2. It speaks of diligence and work
a. Proverbs 31:18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

3. A candle is meant to be used and seen. It is useless if covered
a. Matthew 5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.
b. Mark 4:21 And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?
c. Luke 2:8:16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.
d. Luke11:33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

4. Candles speak of the testimony of the believer or a local church
a. Luke 11:36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.
b. Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

5. The only source of light in the tabernacle was by the seven candles of the golden candlestick.
6. Local churches are likened to candlesticks in Revelation 1:20.

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5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Our public testimony, as seen by our good works to both saint and sinner alike. This is a form of “lifestyle evangelism”, which is so hated by the hyper-evangelicals of the Sword of the Lord crowd.

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17. The Law 5:17-20

5:17 ¶ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

This was a constant complaint by the Jewish religious leaders, that Jesus was “against” Moses and that He was trying to change the laws and the customs Moses (supposedly) delivered to them. But as we know, it was the Jews that had totally misinterpreted the Law and who were misapplying it. Jesus was simply correcting their errors and was trying to steer them back to the
proper understanding and application of the law. Who else better to “re-discover” the “original intent” of the Law than the One Who gave it?

1. The preceding verses were so opposed to the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees that some might assert that he was a destroyer of the law. He replies that he has not come to destroy it, but to fulfill. He does not say that he has come to perpetuate it and fulfill it.

Christ is the end, or the fulfillment of the law to those who believe in Romans 10:4. The law was never destroyed as we will see it again in the tribulation and probably in the millennium.

5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

The Scriptures MUST be fulfilled, and God will move heaven and earth to ensure that it is, they are that important in the sight of God. The Jews counted 613 separate precepts of the law and the Lord said they must all be fulfilled.

5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Also see James 2:10. If you break one commandment, you have broken them all, and it doesn't matter which commandment you break, as one is as important as the rest and they all stand equal in authority. The Pharisees taught that some commands were more important than others, and that it was a trivial matter to break the smallest commands. Roman Catholics still divide sin into mortal sins and venial sins.

5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

This was impossible, since the Scribes and Pharisees considered themselves perfect. But even perfect human righteousness is not good enough for salvation, as even the scribes and Pharisees did not have enough (self-)righteousness to get into the kingdom. No one has enough self-righteousness, which is why we must depend upon the righteousness of someone else. But the scribes and Pharisees were still outwardly moral and religious, so humanly-speaking, it would be very difficult to surpass them.

1. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was a self-righteousness based on a keeping of certain religious laws and regulations. It was a horizontal righteousness that men could obtain to say that they did this and did that and to look good in front of other men, but it was not accepted by God. Righteousness before God involves an acceptance of the imputed righteousness of Christ and to stop relying on our own righteousness. The only way to be righteous before God is to admit that we have no righteousness at all and to fully depend on the imputed righteousness of Christ to be our only claim to have any righteousness at all.

2. The doctrinal interpretation here is Jewish and millennial, since Christ is talking about having the necessary righteousness to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, which is millennial. This may be aimed at the tribulation Jew who has to work (to some degree) to “earn” his righteousness, unlike the Church Age saint who receives his righteousness from Christ.
freely at the New Birth. This is why it is so important to make the dispensational distinctions when studying Matthew, otherwise you will have Christians trying to be self-righteous and trying to earn their way into heaven. It is imperative that the student have a proper and accurate understanding of what exactly the Kingdom of Heaven is while studying Matthew.

18. Anger 5:21-26

5:21 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

“Ye have heard it said”. These are oral traditions, not written ones. Oral traditions seldom agree with the scripture.

“thou shalt not kill”. This refers to the sixth commandment in Exodus 20:13.

5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

“without a cause” is missing in modern versions.
1. If “without a cause” is dropped, that makes Jesus a sinner as He got angry in Mark 3:5, thus making Him a sinner.
2. I’m sure the Lord was also rather angry when He cleansed the temple in John 2:15.
3. Whenever the Lord did get angry, He did so for a righteous reason, not a selfish one. When we get angry, it is because we have been offended in some way.
4. Paul commands us to get angry about certain things in Ephesians 4:26, but we must be careful not to sin in that anger.

“angry”. This is mental murder. The Old Testament dealt with the actual act of murder, while the New Testament deals with the heart attitude that leads to murder.

“Raca”. Vain, empty, as if saying “You empty headed fool!”

“in danger of the judgment”
1. Not applicable in the Church Age. After all, if we called someone a “fool”, what council would we be in danger of?
2. Such an act does not place one in danger of hellfire.
3. This must have a Jewish dispensational doctrinal application, probably millennial.

“hell fire”
1. Jesus believed and taught literal hell fire and a literal hell.
2. Most of the liberals who talk about “living by the Sermon on the Mount” are the same kind who deny the truth of a literal hell, despite the fact that the Preacher Who taught the “Sermon on the Mount” also warned a literal hell.
3. The ESV has “the hell of fire”, whatever that is supposed to mean. The ESV couldn’t ignore “hell fire” here, as much as it wanted to, so they tried to dilute the reading as much as possible. Most of the other versions and translations would also take out the “hell fire”.

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In 5:22, there are three kinds of judgments.
   1. The first is the judgment at the gate of the city, which is the district judgment.
   2. The second is the judgment by the Sanhedrin, which is a higher judgment.
   3. The third is the judgment by God in the fire of hell and eventually the lake of fire, which is the highest judgment.

5:23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

“bring thy gift to the altar”
   1. You can’t apply this to a Christian doctrinally, for we have no altar.
   2. An altar implies either a temple or a tabernacle and there are neither in this dispensation.
   3. There will a temple and an altar in the tribulation and in the millennium (Ezekiel 40-48).

5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

5:25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

“deliver thee to the judge”
   1. Avoid going to court at all costs. If you go to court, the judge may impose a settlement that neither side will like but they will be compelled to agree to. Decisions of a judge are always unpredictable. It might be better for you to resolve your issue and take a loss than to risk a judge imposing a harsher sentence.
   2. If you have a dispute with someone, do everything you can to resolve it between yourselves.

5:26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

“uttermost farthing”
   1. In hell, you never can pay that last farthing, so you never get out.
   2. If a judge imposes a harsh sentence on you, you will be compelled to fulfill it to the letter.
   3. The Church of Rome uses verses 25 and 26 for a proof-text to support their doctrine of purgatory.
4. A **farthing** is an insignificant copper coin, of very little value.

**19. Adultery 5:27,28**

5:27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

“Ye have heard it said”
1. It’s odd that the Lord phrases it this way, for the prohibition against adultery is part of the written scripture in Exodus 20:7.
2. The Lord is rather dealing with the erroneous traditional interpretation of the elders here.

5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

The Old Testament deals with the act, the New Testament as a motivation of the act.
1. No penalty is associated with this “mental adultery”, else we would all be stoned.
2. Adultery was a major problem in this day, especially among men. A man would expect his wife to be morally pure but society held the husband to no such standard. The Lord places the burden here on the man, not the woman, to avoid adultery. This showed the Greek influence of the day. The Romans never tolerated divorce or adultery. But then Rome conquered Greece militarily, and Greece responded by conquering Rome morally (John Phillips, *Exploring Matthew*, page 102).
3. This loose attitude toward the family and sexual morality eventually corrupted the Jews. The Jewish rabbins held that a man was guiltless who did not commit the act.

“looketh”
1. This is directed towards the men, despite that women are just as guilty in initiating adulterous relationships as men are.
2. The “looking” is more of a male thing than a female one, for men are drawn to what they see and women are drawn to what they hear. Women’s fashions and the cosmetics industry have always been designed to make a man want to look at a woman.
3. Sins of the flesh usually begin with the the gate, when a man sees what he ought not.

**20. Offenses 5:29,30**

5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

The idea is to remove stumbling blocks and occasions to sin. This won’t keep you out of hell, but it may make it easier for you to stay out of hell by removing such opportunities to sin.

5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.
The “church father” Origen (one of the greatest and most destructive heretics in church history) interpreted these verses literally (one of the few passages he did not spiritualize) and castrated himself to prevent looking upon women with lust. The problem is that you can cut off the offending “member”, but lust starts in the heart, not in your physical anatomy.

21. Divorce 5:31,32

5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

The Lord references the requirements of divorce in Deuteronomy 24:104.

1. Divorce became cheap and easy in the Lord’s day due to the corrupting influence of the Greeks.
2. It is easy in Islam where a man can simply say to his wife “I divorce you” three times and the marriage is dissolved.
3. It is also very easy and common in America.
4. The Lord made it clear that He hated divorce (Malachi 2:16). Yet it was allowed, again for the hardness of men’s hearts.
5. But it should have been a rare thing, something drastic. But here, it was reduced to a simple piece of paperwork, where a man could divorce his wife for the most trivial of matters.
6. The wife had no such power to initiate a divorce.

5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Fornication is a ground for divorce.

1. See the book of Hosea as an example of God divorcing Israel for their spiritual fornication, only to be taken back by God.
2. While a divorce is permitted under such a circumstance, it is not required.

22. Swearing Oaths 5:33-37

5:33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

See Deuteronomy 10:20 and James 5:12.

5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne:

“Never mind the misinterpretation of the scribes- here is what it really means…”

This deals with the prohibition of oaths in court. How can you presume to swear by God when you do not control God, or have no authority over Him?
“swear not at all” The statement is sure proof of inspiration, for He who made the tongue [and called it “a world of iniquity,” and “untameable” (James 3:5–8)] puts His finger on the exact expressions this member uses. Who has not heard: “Heavenly days!”, “My heavens!!”, “My stars!”, “Thank Heavens!!”, etc….Nor by the earth” goes further into such ejaculations as “My lands!”, “Land o goshen!!”, “Land’s sakes!”, “Land o love!”, etc. (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

5:35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

5:36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

Swearing by one’s self is also forbidden.

5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

When you say “yes”, let it mean “yes”. When you say “no”, let it mean “no. Oaths to emphasize this should be unnecessary for the believer. If you are a liar to begin with, swearing by God or anything else will not automatically make you a truthful man. We also should be people of our words.

23. “Eye For An Eye”  5:38-42

5:38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:


5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

“resist not evil”
1. When people smite us  5:39
2. When people sue us  5:40
3. When people seize us  5:41
4. Jesus does not forbid the judicial application of the law, but personal revenge, such as was common among the Jews. Instead of turning upon those who injure us, and becoming a party to personal broils, it is the duty of Christians to suffer meekly.

“turn to him the other also”
1. A hard thing to do because of pride, but a (spiritually) strong man can turn the other cheek to prevent further strife.
2. The Lord did this as His trial in John 18:22,23.
5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

We should go beyond what the Law might require.
1. You have been wronged? The Law might allow you to take vengeance or revenge, but it does not force you to do so.
2. Grace will give you an alternative- love, grace, peace and forbearance.
3. If you have a debt that you are not paying that required the debtor to sue you for what you rightfully owe, you are to pay it back.
4. A man’s cloak could be held by a creditor in Exodus 22:26,27, but it had to be returned to him for the evening so that the man could keep warm.

5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

“mile”
1. The old Roman mile, about a thousand paces or 1,520 yards.
2. According to Roman law, a man could be impressed to service if the state required it. See the example of Simon the Cyrenian in Matthew 27:32 and Luke 23:26, where he was compelled to help Jesus bear His cross.
3. Various navies would do this when they encountered a private vessel. They would literally kidnap any able-bodied men they might find and force him into service. Such service is naturally despised, but if it is our lot, we are to fulfill these obligations as best we can.

5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

When asked for help, offer it if you can.
1. If lending money, do so without charging interest.
2. 1 John 3:17 says that such liberality is a true test of Christian love.
3. Israel was swarmed with blind, lepers, and maimed, who were dependent on charity.

24. Love Thy Neighbor 5:43-47

5:43 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

“love thy neighbor”. The Jews gave the command a very limited application and they certainly didn’t apply it to Gentiles. For Christ's application, see parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37.

“hate thy enemy”. The Jews used Deuteronomy 23:6 to justify hatred for a perceived enemy.

5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
We are to forgive our enemies but we are not told to forgive God’s enemies. We have no authority to do that. God’s enemies should be our enemies as well.

5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

The sending of rain on the just and the unjust occurs today, but in the Millennium, no rain will come on unjust kingdoms (Zechariah 14:17-18).

5:46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

We are to go beyond the sinner (tax collectors in this context) in these things. Sinners do it, why can’t we? And why can’t we do it better than the sinner?

5:47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Anyone can salute a friend, but can you salute an enemy? Christians should always outdo sinners and the world, and that is something that world should rightly expect from us. The Jews usually would avoid speaking to or even acknowledging a Gentile if possible. They also tended to ignore “sinners”. They would only salute other orthodox Jews.

25. “Be Ye Perfect” 5:48

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

“perfect”
1. Not sinless perfect but maturity and a complete and perfect love toward God.
2. It must be possible for us to attain, else why would God command it of us?
3. Compare with the call to Abraham in Genesis 17:1.
Matthew Chapter 6

26. Alms 6:1-4

6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

The alms are gifts given to (poor or needy) people, as in Acts 3:3, 10:2.

“You cannot expect to be paid twice, if therefore you take your reward in the applause of men, who give you a high character for generosity, you cannot expect to have any reward from God.” (Charles Spurgeon)

6:2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

“When”, not “if”. The Lord assumes you give alms.

Do not draw attention to yourself or make a scene or a big production of your prayers.

6:2, 5 “hypocrites”

1. A hypocrite is literally an actor, a stage-player, one who wears a false face. Here, the hypocrite is a man who makes himself out to be spiritual when he is anything but. He plays the part of a righteous man, but it is just a part to him. Hypocrites certainly pray as do unsaved men.

2. The word “hypocrite” can mean an “actor,” or by another derivation “hyper-critical”. Both translations suit the individual Pharisee, who personified hypocrisy (Matthew 23:3–23) and was critical to the extreme. They found fault with everything Jesus did and totally ignored the miracles. They were very good at criticizing while they themselves did nothing to further the kingdom of God. They are professional fault-finders who imagine themselves more spiritual and more holy than anyone else. That kind of spiritual arrogance will not result in any power with God in prayer. The hypocrite places all the emphasis on the form of his prayer and is not concerned with its content.

If you do good works (praying, preaching, witnessing, giving alms…) just to be seen of men and to demonstrate to everyone just how godly you are, that will be your reward—the praise of men, for however long that lasts. But you will not receive any praise from God. The true test here is “Why am I doing this? To serve and honor God or to make a name for myself?”

6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

6:4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

That which is done before God is rewarded by God. That which is done before man is rewarded by man.
27. The Model Prayer 6:5-15

6:5 ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

“when thou prayest”. The Lord assumes you will pray. You may as soon find a living man that does not breathe, as a living Christian that does not pray.

This is a negative example of prayer- how not to do it. We need to be told what not to do as much as we need to be taught what we ought to do.

How do hypocrites pray? They do indeed “pray” after a fashion, with loud, public prayers made in places where everyone can see them and where they can put on a good show. It is not that they love to pray, but they love to be seen praying so that they can cultivate a reputation of being holy and spiritual when, in fact, they are anything but.

1. “The Jewish phylacterical prayers were long, and the canonical hours obliged them to repeat these prayers wherever they happened to be; and the Pharisees, who were full of vain glory, contrived to be overtaken in the streets by the canonical hour, that they might be seen by the people, and applauded for their great and conscientious piety (Adam Clarke).”

Their reward is the praise of men. They prize that more than the praise of God so that is exactly what they will receive. How fickle is the approval of man! One day you are being crowned and the next, you are being crucified. But they who seek the approval of man will never receive the approval of God. And he who has the approval of God will not need the approval of man.

6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

“enter into thy closet”

1. Go into a secret place, an inner chamber, where no one can see you. This would be a separate apartment, one’s private chamber, a literal closet, or “den” where he can withdraw from the world and shut the world out and commune with God. The world is too profane and treacherous to be of the secret. We must shut the door against it: endeavor to forget it, with all the affairs which busy and amuse it.
2. Prayer requires retirement, at least of the heart.
3. This is exactly the opposite practice of the hypocrites in 6:5 who seldom prayed in private but always prayed in public.

“reward thee openly”

1. This is the secret of answered prayer- that which the Lord sees in private He answers publicly.
2. Do not use this idea to develop any opposition to public prayer (such as in a church service) as that is not what Jesus is condemning.

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6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

“vain repetitions”
1. The best example of this is the Roman Catholic rosary, where over one hundred “Hail Mary’s” are said, in addition to other “prayers”. They are not the only ones. The Lamas in Tibetan Buddhism use a prayer wheel. Muslims just recite their memorized prayers and Koran portions when they “pray”.
2. “To repeat a form of prayer a very large number of times has always seemed to the ignorantly religious to be a praiseworthy thing; but assuredly it is not so. It is a mere exercise of memory, and of the organs of noise-making; and it is absurd to imagine that such a parrot exercise can be pleasing to the living God. The Mahometans and Papists keep to this heathenish custom; but we must not imitate them. (Charles Spurgeon).
3. After a Mohammedan funeral in some countries, devout men assemble, and repeat Allah el Allah. "God is God," three thousand times.
4. The Tyndale version translates this as “babble not much” which is a good idea of “vain repetitions”. These people think the more you pray, the better your prayer is.
5. Prayer is measured by heart and fervency, not by length or eloquence.
6. Peter’s three-word prayer “Lord, save me” in Matthew 14:30 accomplished more than two hours of public prayer by these hypocrites.
7. Acts 19:34 and the “prayers” of the mob at Ephesus would be a good Scriptural example of “vain repetitions”. The worshippers of Baal in 1 Kings 18:26 are another good example.
8. Repetition in prayer is not forbidden in itself, but “vain” repetitions are. This does not mean that we should not repeat our prayer. The Lord repeated His prayer three times in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:44), Paul prayed the same prayer three times (2 Corinthians 12:8), and the great multitude in heaven praised God repeatedly with hallelujahs (Revelation 19:1-6). It means that we should not repeat empty words, words spoken in vain.

Prayers are not measured by the yard in heaven but by the pound.

6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

If this is the case, then why pray?
1. To express our needs
2. To acknowledge our dependence of God by asking and that we would not depend upon our own power or resources to meet our needs
3. To acknowledge that He is our heavenly Father by asking Him for the things we need
4. To exercise our faith
5. So that He might answer our prayers.

6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

What we should pray for in the Model Prayer:
1. Acknowledgment of the Father
2. Blessing/glorifying His name
3. Yearning for the establishment of the Kingdom  
   a. This is Jewish, but there is no reason why a Christian cannot desire this and ask for it as well.
4. Desiring that God’s will be done in both heaven and earth  
5. Asking for personal forgiveness of sin  
6. That we would forgive others who have sinned against us  
7. Divine protection from temptation and evil

“after this manner, pray ye”
1. This is not the Lord’s Prayer, for that is found in John 17.
2. This is a template for prayer, what our prayers should consist of.

“our Father”
1. Only believers can pray this prayer as non-believers have no heavenly Father. They have a Creator, but their father is the devil.
2. If we have a Father then it presupposes we have sons, for I call no man my father on earth except my natural father, my father-in-law, and my God.
3. I certainly would never call a Romanist priest “father” for that would be the height of blasphemy.

The Disciple’s Prayer is laid out like the Ten Commandments, with the first half dealing with relation to God and the second half dealing with our obligations to our fellow man. The first table contains the laws that are the hardest to obey sincerely; the first leaf, the petitions that are the hardest to pray sincerely. Obeying the laws of the first table is what qualifies us to obey those of the second. Praying the petitions of the first leaf is what qualifies us to pray those of the second.

6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Our lives and attitudes on earth should reflect those in heaven. What heaven does, we should do. What heaven thinks, we should as well. What they hold to be important we should agree with and what they despise should be what we despise.

6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

“our daily bread”
1. We are to pray for today’s bread, not tomorrow’s. We can’t eat tomorrow’s bread. It is all that we can do to worry about today’s provision instead of also worrying about the provisions for tomorrow.
2. Also see Matthew 6:34.

6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

“forgive”
1. If we expect and desire forgiveness from God for our sins, we must be willing to extend that forgiveness to others- Matthew 6:15; 18:21-35.
2. Sin is likened as a debt and sinners as debtors to God.
6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Most translations omit “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever”.  
1. “All the critical texts wrongly omit this doxology; for, out of about 500 codices which contain the prayer, only eight omit it. It is found also in the Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, Gothic, Sclavonic, and Georgian Versions (Companion Bible).”  
2. When you see the party line of “all the earlies and best manuscripts omit”, you know you are dealing with either a liar or an ignorant writer. The guilty parties among the translations include the English Revised Version, American Revised Version, New International Version, New Living Translation, NET Bible, Rheims Douay Version, English Standard Version.

6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

“transgressions”. A deliberate and willful stepping over a line or a boundary.

6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

“forgive”
   1. For an example, see Jesus forgiving His killers while He was on the cross (Luke 23:34).
   2. The Lord teaches on the importance of forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-35 in the parable of the servant who was forgiven of an immense debt of 10,000 talents but would not forgive a fellow servant who owed him a few cents.
   3. Also see Colossians 3:13.
   4. The Corinthian church forgave the man in incest (1 Corinthians 5) in 2 Corinthians 2:7.

28. Fasting 6:16-18

6:16 ¶ Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Summary on fasting:
   1. Fasted by Israel- Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6; 1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12; Nehemiah 9:1
   2. David practiced it while praying for the life of his son. 2 Samuel 12:21-23
   3. Used by Jezebel to murder Naboth- 1 Kings 21:9,12
   4. Used in repentance 1 Kings 21:27; Joel 2:12
   5. Jehoshaphat called for a fast- 2 Chronicles 20:3
   6. Ezra called for a fast- Ezra 8:21,23
   7. Nehemiah fasted- Nehemiah 1:4
   8. Esther requested a fast on her behalf- Esther 4:3,16
   9. Used to humble the soul- Psalm 35:13
   10. Used to chasten the soul- Psalm 69:10
11. There were fasts that the Lord did not pay any attention to- Isaiah 58:3-6; Jeremiah 8:5; 14:12
12. Jehoiakim called for a fast- Jeremiah 36:9
13. Fasting in mourning- Daniel 6:18
14. Used in seeking God- Daniel 9:3
15. Joel called for a fast- Joel 1:14; 2:15
16. Nineveh fasted in the face of judgment- Jonah 3:5
   a. This also involved putting on of sackcloth
   b. It also extended to the animals
17. Traditionalism of fasting- Zechariah 7:5; 8:19
18. Jesus fasting 40 days- Matthew 4:2
20. Proper fasting- Matthew 6:18
21. The Pharisees fasted often as did the disciples of John – Matthew 9:14
22. Some devils can only be cast out by fasting- Matthew 17:21
23. Practiced in the early church- Acts 13:3

6:17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

“anoint thy head”. Dress and act as you usually do.

6:18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth

“That thou appear not unto men to fast”. When you fast, do not put on a religious show. Go about your daily business and your normal routine and don’t let it be known to anyone that you are fasting. It is a practice between you and God, not something to do to make everything think you are spiritual. And what you do in secret, in the heart, the Lord will reward openly.

29. Laying Up Treasures 6:19-21

6:19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt,

Verses 19-24 all deal with the issues of divided loyalties. Jesus says that no man can have a divided, or a double heart. Such a man is unstable in all of his ways (James 1:8). Man is so built that he cannot “multitask”. He must focus his loyalties and heart on one thing at a time. Spiritually, his heart is directed toward either a spiritual thing or a carnal thing, but never both at once. Many try to be the first to accomplish this. Christian Rock and Southern Gospel “artists” try to use carnal music for spiritual ends. It never works. Church music must be all spiritual or it is not Christian music. Many contemporary churches try to use carnal means to lure carnal people to a spiritual service, which is totally illogical.

1. In verses 19 and 20, make up your mind. Either serve God or mammon. Pick one. You must. But you cannot choose two (Matthew 6:24).
2. In verses 22 and 23 is the teaching on a divided heart. Man must have a single eye, a heart that is focused on one object. You cannot look at two things and the same time, even if you have two eyes.
3. Verse 24 is the classic warning about either being spiritual or carnal. You must be one or the other.

I’ve heard and read of some preachers (like John R. Rice, in his commentary on Matthew) say that they would not take out a life insurance policy based on these verses, assuming that it displayed a lack of faith. How they came to such a conclusion is beyond me. All a life insurance policy does is to help cover your funeral expenses and provide money for your family upon your death. It can be a wise financial investment and I have several policies for the benefit of my family upon my death. We should do what we can to provide for ourselves and our families and then rely on the Lord to do those things that we cannot. That is not a lack of faith, that is wise planning.

The treasures that we lay up for ourselves on earth is subject to risk. That which we do for the cause of God will surely last. Time is not a reliable vault for treasure. Things can change overnight that destroy the best laid plans of men. Where should men put their faith? Not in things temporal. The person who amasses wealth on earth is too short-sighted. He is building up capital that may be lost and will surely be useless to the capitalist after his death. The post-funeral question, “How must did he leave behind?” has a universal answer: “All of it”.

6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

The only “stocks and bonds” Paul had were on his feet and on his hands (Acts 16:24, 26:29). The only way you can e rich in heaven is to send it all ahead. You can’t take it with you for hearses do not come with trailers. Naked you came into this world and naked you will leave. But the treasures you invested in heaven can be waiting for you when you arrive if you shipped them there ahead of time.

1. You will store up treasure on earth that will burn one day OR you will store up treasure eternal treasure in heaven that will never corrupt, and that the IRS will never be able to touch.
2. The safest place for treasures is in glory, where the corruptions and sins of this world cannot touch them.

“In Bible times much of what was treasured was in the form of costly fabrics- purple and fine twined linen. Alongside that, the Lord laid the word “moth”. Other treasure was in the form of costly metal. Alongside that, the Lord placed the word “rust”. People put their treasures in safe places. Alongside that precaution, the Lord laid the word “thieves” (John Philips, Exploring Matthew, page 118).”

6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

“there will your heart be” That is where your god is. If your desires are on things of the earth, then that is where your heart is and where your god dwells. But if we have the “upward look” and send all of our treasures on ahead, then we have a true God Who dwells in the heavens.

30. The “Eye” 6:22,23
6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

You need to have a singleness of purpose and focus. Dedicate yourself totally to something, either in a carnal application or spiritual. If God calls you to preach, dedicate yourself to it. If you must an outside job, see it as a means to an end to finance that call.

1. This includes bi-vocational pastors. It is hard to dedicate yourself fully to the ministry if it is necessary to work on the outside to finance your family. You also can't fully dedicate yourself to your secular job as you are also preaching. It is a difficult situation as you are forced to divide your loyalties in these situations.

2. Even if you have a hobby, dedicate yourself totally to it.

3. No one likes a person who cannot commit to anything, who gads about from Dan to Beersheeba (Jeremiah 2:36). Pick something and stick with it. You can only focus on one thing at a time and you can only fix your gaze on one object at a time. Man cannot multitask well. You will end up taking your gaze off of what you should be looking at to focus on something less important and that is “evil”.

6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

The “darkness” is the polluted motivations corrupt all service and devotion.

31. Serving God or Mammon 6:24

6:24 ¶ No man 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. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Elisha challenged the nation of Israel with this in 1 Kings 18:21. Either serve God or Baal. If Baal is god, then serve him. If Jehovah is God, then serve Him, but make up your minds! Joshua also issued the similar challenge in Joshua 24:15.

There are two “masters” that a man may serve:

1. Satan
2. God

A man will serve one. He must. He cannot be neutral. He will pick one and he should be loyal to the master whom he does pick, else he will be guilty of treason. No man can waffle back and forth in his service. If he does, he shows that he is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8).

Too many “halt” between two opinions (or masters) as Elijah rebuke the nation for in 1 Kings 18:21. If God is God then serve Him. If Baal or Mammon is God, then serve them. No one respects a man who cannot make up his mind and who plays for two teams. Pick one and stick with it.

“ye cannot serve God and mammon”

1. But how many try! They have two loves, serve two masters, live two lives and have two hearts. You cannot sail under two flags. No one has managed to do this in 6,000 years but there is always someone out there who imagines that he will be the first to accomplish this impossible task. Serving two gods will mean that they will eventually come into conflict and you will eventually be required to choose.
2. Here is a double-minded man who is trying to serve both God and mammon. He makes a profession to be a Christian but continually backslides into the world. He is very worldly in his thinking despite sitting under the ministry of the word. He does his religious duties on Sunday then goes back out into the world Monday. He has no firm loyalty to either God or man as he constantly shifts between them.

3. Churches are like this as well, as they cannot make up their minds where they stand. They have a "traditional service" at 8 AM on Sunday and then their "contemporary service" at 11 AM. They do not know if they are traditional or contemporary. They sing the good hymns of the faith set to drums and electric guitars. They will preach a strong gospel message out of the ESV. They will talk about spiritual discipline yet will come dressed to church in a slob manner.

4. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” because both will demand your total loyalty and dedication and will not accept or tolerate half-hearted service and devotion.

“serve” is the Greek word δουλεύειν, Not merely ‘serve,’ but in that closer sense in which he who serves is the δοῦλος of, i.e. belongs to, and obeys entirely (Henry Alford, The Greek New Testament).

“mammon” material wealth or possessions especially as having a debasing influence.

1. “What do I mean by worship? Above all, I mean sacrifice. That to which you give your life – your time, your dreams, your reputation – is your god. You invest your emotions and efforts in this god. You also expect something in return. It might be happiness, pleasure, fame, power, respect, or any of mankind’s long list of personal goals. Men sacrifice to their gods for the sake of rewards – positive sanctions. A god that offers no rewards is not taken seriously. Men ask themselves, “What’s in it for me?” Then they decide which god to worship. “The worship of any god involves making estimates. Which rewards are worth sacrificing for? Which are actually available? What is the likelihood of non-payment by the god? What is the past performance of the god in question? How much is expected of me? What happens if I promise to pay, but fail to deliver? Then there is the question of loyalty. Is there a bond other than legal between man and his god? Is there a personal relationship? Is there grace? Does a god extend mercy to his worshippers? But there can be no question of service. A god that has no servants is not a god. To gain what man wants from his god, he must serve. He may receive something for nothing from a gracious god, but not everything for nothing. No god extends all of his blessings gratuitously. Jesus made this plain in this passage: choose wisely which god to serve (Gary North, Priorities and Dominion, pages 139-140)."

2. “God says, "My son, give me thy heart." Mammon says, "No, give it me." God says, "Be content with such things as ye have." Mammon says, "Grasp at all that ever thou canst. Rem, rem, quocunque modo rem—Money, money; by fair means or by foul, money." God says, "Defraud not, never lie, be honest and just in all thy dealings." Mammon says "Cheat thine own Father, if thou canst gain by it." God says, "Be charitable." Mammon says, "Hold thy own: this giving undoes us all." God says, "Be careful for nothing." Mammon says, "Be careful for every thing." God says, "Keep holy thy sabbath-day." Mammon says, "Make use of that day as well as any other for the world." Thus inconsistent are the commands of God and Mammon, so that we cannot serve both. Let us not then halt between God and Baal, but choose ye this day whom ye will serve, and abide by our choice (Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible)."

32. Worry 6:25-34
6:25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

These are needed and honorable needs. We must eat, drink and be clothed and make sure that our families are well provided for. But to stay up all night and worrying about it accomplishes nothing. It is much better to trust the Lord to provide those things we need, especially for those needs that we cannot provide for ourselves. How much time, effort and money is invested in the simple act of buying clothes today! But it was even more important in the Lord’s day, due to the costs and scarcity of clothes.

6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

This does not promote laziness! God feeds the birds, but He does not throw the seed in their nests. And He gives them their needed daily bread, as we are to ask for. They do not plow, sow, reap, harvest or store in barns. Nor do you see birds worrying and fretting as to where their next meal will come from, even in the dead of winter with snow covering the ground.

1. If God puts forth the effort to feed sparrows, how much will He work to feed one of His own children? The birds trust their Creator more than Christians trust their Father! They cannot sow or reap. They are totally at the mercy of God. We can do some work but we should still cast ourselves on the mercy and goodness of God as much as the birds do.

2. God also cares for the oxen (1 Corinthians 9:9).

6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

“taking thought”

1. All that work for worry and are you bettered by it? What did it accomplish? None of you can improve your status by worrying about it.

2. Worrying about a lack of food and raiment is like worrying about one’s lack of height.

6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

If God is careful to preserve even the unregenerate and to supply their physical needs (Matthew 5:45), will He not much more provide all to those that are trusting Him?

1. This is not a justification for laziness! God provides for the birds and the flowers because they are doing what they were created to do. God provides for man as long as he is doing what he is supposed to be doing.

6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

The humblest flower is arrayed in greater glory than a man sporting a thousand dollar suit.
6:30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

“O ye of little faith”. This phrase seemed to be a favorite rebuke of Jesus in connection with Israel at the time of his earthly ministry (Matthew 8:10; 14:31,17:17).

6:31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Food and clothing- the two biggest worries of all men.
   1. These are honest and legitimate needs, but we are to turn these concerns over to the care of our Father, Who has promised to provide.
   2. Do your duty, with a full trust in God that He will see that you do not lack for these things that you need for your daily provision.

6:32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

As they have no spiritual concerns, so they place all their emphasis on the carnal matters of life. The unsaved run around in a panic as they have to heavenly Father that provides for their needs. Believers do, so we have no reason to fret as the Gentiles do.

This is a reassuring promise to all believers. I have needs, problems and burdens and the Lord knows of each one!

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

While the Gentiles are scratching around for food, drink and clothing (and a million other carnal things) the believer is to be putting his primary emphasis on spiritual things.
   1. If you put God’s kingdom and His needs first, He will then put our needs first on His list. If we make God’s business our business, then He will make our business His business.
   2. This is the great benefit of service the God of the Bible. He offers those who worship and serve Him freedom from want and worry. He does nor promise riches on earth (but He does in heaven) but He does promise the security of provision.
   3. The greater your faith, the less your worry, and vice-versa.

6:34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

“evil”
   1. Not moral evil, but the “evil” that denotes trouble and affliction.
   2. It’s all you have to do to worry about today without borrowing tomorrow’s worries. It is not that I should ignore the needs and burdens of tomorrow. We are not to allow those burdens to consume us.
Matthew Chapter 7

33. Judging 7:1-5

7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

The verse has suffered more abuse in the hand of the Liberals than any other passage. By constant repetition of this verse, these apostates have cowed Protestants, Baptists and Bible Believers into shutting their mouths against condemning their sin.

This verse must be lined up with other verses that allow and even command judgments:
1. He that is spiritual judgeth all things (1 Corinthians 2:15)
   a. So it would be an unspiritual man who refuses to judge anything!
2. Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? (Luke 12:57)
3. We shall judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).
   b. We might as well get some practice in now
4. Judge righteous judgment (John 7:24)

Everyone, saved and unsaved, judges a thousand times a day. We judge which clothes to wear, if an apple is good or rotten, which route to take to work, whether we like a certain song, if we trust a certain salesman, if we believe if a politician is trustworthy, and so on. Christians are not prohibited from judging, just admonished to do it correctly.

7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

A summary of the Biblical teaching of judgment:
1. The Christian is to judge things in his own life and the lives of others (1 Corinthians 5:3; 6:2,4; 11:13).
2. He is not to judge a brother as unsaved if that brother disagrees with him on minor doctrinal points of practice or application (Romans 14:1-10, 13).
3. He is not to judge anything hastily or when not required or unmercifully or from an unscriptural standpoint. Judge nothing before the time (1 Corinthians 4:5).
4. He is to clearly mark out and avoid preachers and teachers who do not believe the word of God, or who profess to believe it and deny it by their preaching and teaching (Matthew 7:15; Romans 16:17,18; Philippians 3:18,19).
5. The Christian must be willing to be submitted to the same standard of judgment that he judges by (Matthew 7:2: Romans 2:1,2)
   a. The Jews were guilty of much hypocritical judgments, condemning others (especially Gentiles) for sins they were also guilty of.

“with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” If you judge others, you will be judged on that same basis.

7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

“mote”. A dust mite, something so small you can hardly see it. In this context, a flaw so minor as to be unimportant.
7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

To complain about a minor flaw in another while ignoring the glaring character flaw and sin in your own life is to be guilty of the height of hypocrisy.

1. Before we can preach to others, we must preach to ourselves (Romans 2:21-24). If we are called upon to tend other people’s vineyards, we must make sure ours is well-kept (Song of Solomon 1:6).

Verses 4 and 5 are also an example of divine use of sarcasm.

7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.

“then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.” How can you hope to see anything clearly with a log stuck in your eye?

34. Pearls Before Swine  7:6

7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Hyper-Calvinists (not necessarily evangelical Calvinists) will sometimes use this as a proof text against evangelism and missions, and that sinners have no “duty” to believe on Christ and that Christians have no “duty” to preach evangelistically to sinners, but mainline Calvinists don’t hold to those errors.

1. It has the main idea of not to lower the gospel or the things of God to the level of the world. In the zeal to be evangelistic, many contemporary churches will lower the level and spirituality of the preaching, music and standards to the level of the world in an attempt to increase attendance. But we are to be bringing people up to the level of the gospel, not lowering the gospel to the level of the world. Maintain your spiritual standards!

35. Principals of Prayer  7:7-12

7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Three principles of prayer:

1. Ask
   a. Prayer involves asking. In order to pray for things, we must first ask for them.
   b. Asking implies faith, respect and the belief that the one to whom we are praying is ready, willing and able to answer.
   c. Asking involves confidence in that we believe the person we are asking is ready, willing and able to fulfill our requests.
d. We ask as a child would a father
   i. The Father is able to answer
   ii. The Father is willing to answer
e. Ask. We are beggars at, the door of divine mercy. We are destitute of all spiritual good, and it is God alone who can give it to us. We have no claim but what his mercy has given us.

2. Seek
   a. To ask is one thing. To seek after the answer is something else.
   b. We ask but then we must actively seek out and wait for the answer.
   c. It has the idea of to seek a thing of value
   d. Leave no stone unturned there is no peace until you get your desired answer from God.
   e. If prayer is not answered at once we are to seek further by endeavoring to learn more clearly the mind of God in the matter, that we may pray better and more intelligently (Isaiah 26:9).

3. Knock
   a. This is the persistence in prayer. Knock at the door until someone answers!
   b. When I was a boy, my friends and I would often play a game where we would knock on someone’s door and then run away. Many of us pray like that. We ask once, we knock once, then we run away before the Lord opens the door.
   c. Knock in earnest. Be importunate in your desires of God.

The Lord encourages us in our prayers! Laboring in prayer always carries a reward. The promise is attached to this:

1. If you ask, you will receive
2. If you seek, you will find
3. If you knock, it shall be opened to you
4. There is also a progression here in intensity - ask, then seek, then knocking. The Christian prayer should keep on asking (Philippians 4:6), seeking (1 Timothy 2:1), and knocking (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

7:8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Assurance given in prayer. God would not so encourage us in prayers and to pray if He did not promise success in our prayers. When God's conditions are complied with, the answer is sure

7:9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

When God answers prayer, He answers in a positive sense and gives only good things to His children, as any earthly father would. This is similar to the temptation in Matthew 4 where Satan tempted Christ to turn stones into bread. Here, we have stones instead of bread being offered. Some stones in Israel look like loaves of bread. God will not give us an answer that looks like what we prayed for but in reality, is something that is inferior. He will give is what we ask for and better.

"give a stone...give him a serpent" To literally do this would be cruel. Would we expect the Lord to act like this?
7:10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

Satan and the world would give serpents for fish or stones for bread- the best stuff at the first and then the worse later. But God never operates on this principle with His children. This would be a deception rather than an answer to prayer.

Also see Luke 11:11-13.

7:11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

God will either give us what we ask for- or better, but not worse. Human fathers, being sinners as they are, know how to give good gifts to their children. How much more then will an infinitely holy God give even better gifts to His children?

No good thing will He withhold to them that walk uprightly (Psalm 84:11).

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

The so-called “Golden Rule”. This is how Christ viewed the Law- not as a list of “do's and don’ts.” The parallel to this is in Luke 16:16.

36. Two Gates 7:13,14

7:13 ¶ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:


“broad is the way” Hence our term “Broadway” for the widest street in town.

“many there be which go in thereat”

1. The crowd, and the majority, are wrong in just about any topic, especially when it comes to matters of faith. Most people believe that if you “live it” and are moral, you’ll be okay and will get into heaven…eventually. The majority do not believe in hell, judgment or the existence of a literal devil. The majority believe in salvation by works or by church membership. The majority believes that Acts 2:38 is the plan of salvation or that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But the majority is wrong.

2. Consider the following image:
7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

“the way” Jesus identified Himself as The Way in John 14:6.

“narrow is the way” It is too narrow for you to take in your pride, ego, good works, religion, etc.

“life” True life is only found in Jesus Christ- John 10:10.

There are many professors but few true conversions- those who find the true way. They don't find it because:

1. They are not looking for it as they have no real interest in it. They don't want to find it else they become accountable to it. Ignorance is bliss to them, and they think it will protect them from judgment.
2. They are looking in the wrong place. They are looking for the truth in the wrong churches.
3. They don't know what they are looking for and wouldn't know it if they found it. But if it sounds good, they follow it.
4. “Few there be that find it” compare with Luke 18:8 “When the Son of Man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?” The answer is implied in the negative, meaning few would be truly saved at His coming.

The way of truth is:
1. Narrow, not much room to deviate from orthodoxy
2. Unpopular, otherwise more people would be on that way and our churches would be larger
3. Fraught with spiritual dangers
   a. Compromisers
   b. Apostates
   c. Many who would seek to turn us from the way
4. But look at where it eventually ends- in glory!

By contrast, the way of error is:
1. Wide and broad
2. Easy to travel, even if the way of the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15). The world thinks the way of sin is easy but the saints know better.

3. Popular
   a. The majority is usually wrong
   b. Truth is not determined by popular vote or popular opinion

4. Crowded

Notice the clear distinction between the two ways. They are different, separate, distinct and cannot be reconciled. You must choose one and you will travel on it to its ultimate destination. And the Lord only identifies two ways, not six or eight or ten. There is true way and a false way only. There is no third way.

1. The Lord is elaborating on a familiar doctrine from Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25. Both verses say the same thing, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are he ways of death.”

“few there be that find it” The reason that men do not find it is not because it is hard to find, but because men prefer to walk in the broad way or in a way of their own choosing and creation.

“The road to Hell is the broad road entered by means of the wide gate. It is a popular road, crowded with the careless throngs of those who are blinded by the world. The broad path offers pleasure, promotion, possessions, power, and piety of a sort; customs and culture; and a varied menu of distractions and delights. Gifted men and great are on this road, as are all kinds of vices, vanities, and violence. Ever amid the violets lurk the vipers.

The broad way gets narrower as it goes along. It is brooded over by a lord whose realm is darkness, whose rule is bondage, and whose reign is characterized by revenge against God—revenge in the form of the ruin and damnation of mankind. This road offers no real joy, no genuine or lasting pleasure, and only fleeting moments of happiness at best… The broad path gets narrower still as old age creeps in with its handicaps and limitations. Ill health becomes the norm, faculties begin to fail, friends die, and the way grows increasingly lonely and frightening. Then death comes and those who reach the bitter end of the broad road discover too late that Jesus was right all the time.

A false gospel circulating today is patterned after the slick advertising of Madison Avenue. One is almost led to believe that Jesus would have us mail out four-color brochures proclaiming to prospective tourists that the way to Heaven is one of guaranteed luxury—wealth and health all the way. Preachers urge us to practice “possibility thinking” and invite us to invest in Disney-World-style ventures. The Christian life is presented as a round of fun and frolic—to be poor or sickly is a sign of sin or lack of faith, and God, it would seem, wants us to be like the rich fool who boasted that he was “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Revelation 3:17). Such teaching is a Laodicean gospel for a Laodicean church in a Laodicean age.

Not so did the Lord depict the way to Heaven. He said we must begin at the “strait” gate—literally the “narrow” gate. At the entrance there are no giant posters offering material benefits, physical well-being, or escape from peril, persecution, famine, and sword. There is no implied promise that we can have the best of both worlds, no intimation that we can go on living the same old way and still be sure of Heaven. (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, pages 126-128).”

37. False Prophets 7:15-20
7:15 ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

If there are true prophets, then we would naturally expect Satan to counterfeit them and have his “prophets”. They must be marked, warned of, preached against and separated from.

1. Romans 16:17 says “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”
2. Paul would also warn “Paul, announced, "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch” in Acts 20:29-31.

2. A false prophet is not necessarily a “false foreseer” but is also a teacher of false doctrines. There are such things as false prophets, so you might as well acknowledge that every “preacher” out there is not preaching the truth and not every “church” out there is preaching the gospel.

a. You need to be able to identify these false prophets so you can avoid them and warn others about them. The entire New Testament is greatly concerned with the “false prophets” and with the danger of the Christian being deceived by them (2 Peter 2; 1 Timothy 4; Jude 4-18; Matthew 23; 24:5,11; Luke 6:26; 1 John 4:3; 2 Corinthians 11:12-14). The “Sermon-on-the-Mount” preachers rarely spend any time of this part of the Sermon.

3. The “false prophet” in the New Testament turns out to be a man (or woman!) who loves long robes (Mark 12:38), loves to be called “father” (Matthew 23:9), and denies the Blood Atonement (2 Peter 2:1,2). In keeping with the “broad way,” it is said that “many” will follow these false prophets, and they will do what they do “in thy name”- the name of the Lord (Matthew 7:22) They can be spotted by their attitude toward the revealed authority of the word of God (Mark 7:1-13; Genesis 3:1).

4. The false prophet here is classified with (spiritual) dogs (2 Peter 2:22; Revelations 22:15; Philippians 3:2), yet as such, he parades as a sheep. Note that the warning is not against thieves, harlots, drunkards, dopers, or Communists, but against men who appear as sheep! A sheep would appear innocent, gentle, and meek, and this again accurately describes the men we are to carefully “look out” for. They do not appear as wolves. The ideal false prophet would be a shrewd, slick, talented, well-bred, mild-mannered, polished individual who operated primarily through sophistry, subtility, scholastic appeal, and flattery. Inside, he is a wolf (John 10:12).

5. When they come in sheep’s clothing, they come in the garb of
   a. innocence, with motives as pure as the wind-driven snow.
   b. weakness, they wouldn’t hurt or deceive anyone!
   c. gentleness, with a very pleasant manner and presentation.

Material on false prophets:

2. They use visions and divinations to deceive- Jeremiah 14:14
3. They are often immoral and crooked- Jeremiah 23:14
4. They often prophesy peace and positive things- Ezekiel 13:22; Micah 3:5
5. They are in it for the money- Micah 3:11; 2 Peter 2:3
6. They are deceivers- Matthew 24:4
7. There shall be many of them- Matthew 24:4
8. They shall deceive many- Matthew 24:4,11
9. Many of them will claim to be Christ- Matthew 24:5,24
10. They shall show signs and great wonders- Matthew 24:24
11. Their heresies are damnable - 2 Peter 2:1
12. They come under false pretense - as true men of God who only care about your welfare, while in reality they only care about using you and devouring you spiritually.

Who should we beware of?
1. Men- Matthew 10:17
2. The leaven (teaching) of the Pharisees and the Sadducees- Matthew 16:6,11
3. The scribes- Matthew 12:38
5. Dogs- Philippians 3:2
6. Philosophy- Colossians 2:8
7. Vain conceit- Colossians 2:8
8. Being led away with the error of the wicked- 2 Peter 3:17

7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

This is how you spot a false prophet, not by what he says or does, but by the fruit he produces.
1. Check their public ministry and doctrine
2. Check their private life
3. Check out how their churches are operated.

What are their activities?
1. He may teach solely for gain. It beats manual labor any day. And such ministries can be profitable.
2. He may teach solely for prestige. There will be many who will sing his praises.
3. He may teach solely to transmit his own ideas. The false prophet is out to spread his version of the truth.

Seven Ways False Prophets Are Known:
1. By outward general conduct (Matt 7:15; 5:20; 6:1-24; 23:1-33; 2Tim 3:5)
2. By inward state (Matt 7:15; 5:22; 5:28; 23:25-28; Mark 7:21-23)
3. By the kind of fruit in works produced (Matt 7:16-20; 23:1-24; 2Cor 11:13-15; Phil 1:15-17; 3:3; 3:17-19)
5. By professing to do, not doing the will of God (Matt 7:21; 5:20; 23:1-33)

The basic fault of the false prophet is self-interest. The true shepherd cares for the flock more than he cares for his life; the wolf cares for nothing but to satisfy his own gluttony and his own greed. The false prophet is in the business of teaching, not for what he can give to others, but for what he can get to himself.
7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

If their teaching makes you better, if it makes you love God, if it draws you to holiness, if it inspires you with noble and heroic sentiments, so that you imitate Christ, then listen to them.

7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

No matter how hard they try, a bad man cannot bring forth good fruit and a good man will not bring forth bad fruit. A carnal man will not bring forth spiritual fruit either. How can these carnal churches, with the drum sets, “praise and worship bands”, “worship leaders” and “pastors” who preach in torn jeans and tennis shoes hope to produce spiritual people? It makes no difference what their doctrinal statement looks like or if they are “King James Only”, if they are carnal, they will bring forth carnal fruit. It is not so much your doctrinal statement that defines you as it is your heart.

7:19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

This can refer to the fact that the unfruitful professor was not really saved, despite any profession be may have made, so he goes to hell. But since this is a dispensational gospel with many doctrinal applications to Israel, the tribulation and the kingdom, this may involve a different kind of judgment than just an unsaved Gentile going to hell.

7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

“fruits”

1. Not by their results, the size of the churches, the number of books they have written, how many stations they are on, but their fruits will reveal who they are. People do not judge of a tree by its leaves, or bark, or flowers, but by the fruit which it bears. The flowers may be beautiful and fragrant, the foliage thick and green; but these are merely ornamental. The fruit reveals the tree. If I see apples, I know I am dealing with an apple tree. If I see apples, I know I am not dealing with an orange tree. If I see bad spiritual fruit, then I know I am dealing with a carnal professor. If I see spiritual fruit, I know I am dealing with a spiritual man, regardless of what their theological position might be.

2. Thus the necessity of judgment is seen here. We must judge men who claim to be preachers and teachers, else how will we know if they are true or not? They must be judged by both their lives and their doctrines. Both must align with the Scripture of they are to be accepted as true prophets.

3. If you don’t know what kind of tree you are dealing with, just shake the tree and see what kind of fruit falls!

4. This corrupt fruit (and its source) is identified in the context as the work of false prophets; they can be easily spotted by anyone versed in Scripture due to the following traits:
   a. They minimize sin.
   b. They humanize God.
   c. They deify man.
   d. They teach self-atonement.
38. False Professors 7:21-23

7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Mere acknowledgment of the lordship of Christ, while necessary, will not get a man saved without faith and repentance.

See 2 Peter 1:10- make your calling and election sure. Also 2 Corinthians 13:5 “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”

7:22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

“that day” One of the days of judgment for Israel, like the judgment of Matthew 25:31-46.

False prophets and lost people can do miracles, just see the exorcisms that Roman Catholic priests profess to be able to perform. They are able to put on good religious shows and can make convincing professions yet be totally lost.

1. This sounds like charismatics. They had some spiritual works and some external spiritual fruits they could point to as “proof” they were of God, but they were not saved. Such works and professions are useless and void if they are not accompanied by saving faith.

“Demons” is never used in the Authorized Version. It is always rendered “devils”.

7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

The Lord did not acknowledge or recognize their professions or their works and rejected them as any kind of basis for salvation. Despite any profession or spiritual works that they did, they are lost and go to hell.

“I never knew you”

1. Of course God knew them in His omniscience. But He did not know (recognize) them as friends, followers, genuine believers or followers.


39. Two Foundations 7:24-27

7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
There are two spiritual foundations a man can build his life upon:

1. Rock - this is done by building your life on the teachings of Jesus and Biblical revelation. This foundation will last and will be able to stand the storms of life. A man who does this is called a “wise man”.
2. Sand - this is built on religion, philosophy, the teachings of man, etc. This is a weak foundation that would not be able to withstand any storm for very long before it collapses. The man who chooses this foundation is liken to a “foolish man”.

“Inspirationally, one may say that the builders were alike in that—

1. They both heard.
2. They both saw the need.
3. They both made an effort.
4. They both were confident they would stand the test.
5. They both were exposed to the testing.

The two builders were different, however, in that—

1. They responded to the message differently.
2. The foundation they chose was different.
3. And the results of the testing naturally differed. (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

7:25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

“the floods came, and the winds blew”

1. The storms and trials of life. If Christianity is worth anything in a practical manner, it is worth something in times of storms and trials. But how many professions falter at the first sign of a storm!
2. Storms reveal the type and quality of foundation that the building has. You cannot inspect a foundation just by looking at the house. But when the storm comes, the foundation will be revealed by how well the house withstood the storm.

7:26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

Hear, and do. Many hear but do not respond or obey.

7:27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

40. The Reaction to the Sermon 7:28,29

7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

They had never heard preaching like this or a sermon like this! Jesus had the absolute of Scripture for His foundation. The scribes had the shifting sands of human tradition. The scribes
always appealed to tradition, not to Scripture, much like the Roman Catholics. But Jesus, as King and Lord, spoke with corresponding authority.

1. The issue is authority, including final authority. Jesus has the authority to exercise judgment - John 5:27

2. “Christ’s dogmatic teaching is set in contrast to the “we-may-reasonably-assume” type of instruction dished out by the “scribes”… If the student will borrow (don’t buy!) a set of the Pulpit Commentary or the Interpreter’s Bible, he will be astonished to find the first-century scribe still teaching with no authority, for every page is replete with such unauthoritative guesses as: “we may assume,” “it is supposed,” “in all probability,” “it is highly probable,” “it is not impossible,” “he may have meant,” “it would seem under the conditions,” “perhaps it should have been,” “let us not be dogmatic,” “it would be reasonable to suppose,” and so on into the night. Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the contrary, says: “It is THIS WAY.” There are no “seems,” “supposes,” or “probabilities” about it. It is no wonder that his audience was astonished at this didactic and dogmatic form of discourse. They had been feeding 400 years (Malachi to John the Baptist) on the dried-up husks of the Talmud, Midrashim, Kaballah, Mishna, and Gemara as taught by the “fathers” (Matt. 23:9). (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*)

7:29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

They had no source of authority as all they had was the constantly shifting and changing opinions and teachings of men.
Matthew Chapter 8

41. Healing of a Leper 8:1-4

8:1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

8:2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

8:3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Jesus violated the law by touching a leper (Leviticus 13:45,46) but the priests could touch a leper by means of shed blood (Leviticus 14:14).

8:4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

From the top of the mountains into the lowlands of the mundane and sinners. If you are going to see sinners saved, you have to come off the mountain and go down into the plains where the sinners are.

Jesus was very popular and was generating a lot of interest at this point of His ministry.

After the preaching, it was time to put legs to the Sermon on the Mount. All preaching should have some sort of practical application. You should be able to take what you heard on Sunday and do something with it on Monday.

Also see Mark 1:40-44 and Luke 5:12.

Leprosy was usually seen as a judgment of God on the victim, so any attempt to heal the leper was discouraged, since it was thought that he “deserved” it.

1. Leprosy is to the body as sin is to the soul- loathsome and horrible in the extreme. Its treatment was described in Leviticus 13 and 14.
2. “Have you ever stopped to think that this man not only had the physical disease of leprosy but that he had a psychological hang-up that was terrible? I do not know this man’s background, but I imagine that one day he noticed a breaking out on his hand. Perhaps he had been out plowing, came in, showed his wife, and she put some ointment on it. The next morning it was just as red as it could be, and he went out and plowed again. This went on for about a week, and his wife started getting uneasy. She suggested he visit the priest. He went to the priest who isolated him for fourteen days. At the end of this period of time the disease had spread. The priest told him he had leprosy. The man asked the priest if he could go and tell his wife and children and say good-bye. The priest said, “I’m sorry, you cannot tell them good-bye. You cannot put your arm around your wife again or hold your children in your arms anymore. When anyone comes near you, you must cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’” He saw his children grow up from a distance. They would leave food in a certain place, and he would come and get it after they withdrew. He could not touch them. In fact, he had been able to touch no one,
and no one had been able to touch him. (J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible*). Sin and leprosy both bring separation.

3. 8:3 Lepers were not supposed to be touched as their condition was highly contagious.
   a. Christ is violating the law (Leviticus 13:46); yet the Mosaic priest is allowed to touch the leper by means of shed blood (Leviticus 14:14). Christ bore our infirmities as well as our sins (Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 8:17), and as our great High Priest (Hebrews 3:1), He can apply the remedy for the leprosy of sin.
   b. As leprosy is contagious, so is sin, as it infects all who come into contact with it.

4. Only Christ can cleanse the leper of sin. The Law couldn’t do it. The dead religion of the Jews couldn’t do it. The leper couldn’t cleanse himself by positive thinking or science or reason or by indulging in “eat, drink and be merry”. Only the touch of the Sinless One could heal him. And he was healed.
   a. Christ never had a “dud” or a “misfire” when He healed someone.

5. Christ did not fear the disease nor was He embarrassed to be seen with a sinner such as this. He is the Friend of Sinners (Matthew 11:19) and spent much time with the publicans and harlots as they are the ones who need the physician the most. No matter how far down a sinner has sunk, Christ was willing to come to him in salvation. The “cure” by touching would have been offensive to many but to be healed/saved, the leper/sinner is going to have to endure some offense.

6. Christ said, “I will, be thou clean.” He did not say, as Elisha to Naaman, “Go, wash in Jordan”. Christ did not put him upon a tedious, troublesome, chargeable course for a cure, but only spoke the word and healed him. He was healed without works, just as the sinner is saved without works.
   a. It is the will of God to cleanse the sinner in the same way that it is not the will of God that any should perish but that all should saved (2 Peter 3:9).

The leper calls Jesus “Lord” here, which is the first time in the New Testament we find Him addressed as such. The last man to talk to Him before He died was a criminal, who said: “Lord, remember me....” Lepers and criminals! No wonder it was written that He was “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

The leper may have heard the Sermon and came to believe that Jesus was able to do the impossible in healing his leprosy. This would be a case of “faith cometh by hearing (Romans 10:17)."

“If thou wilt”
1. Not “if thou canst”. The leper knew that Christ could heal him.
2. The question is not the power of God but the will of God. I know He can, but will he?

This was an obvious miracle, just as saving of a soul from sin is also a miracle. The greatest miracle you will ever see will be the salvation of a soul from sin. There is none greater.

“tell no man”
1. Evangelism forbidden! We are not told why Jesus did not want this healing advertised. It was necessary to go to the priest first for validation of the cleansing anyway.
   a. The Lord forbade this kind of telling in other verses in Matthew, as in 9:30; 12:16; 16:20; 17:9
2. In Mark’s account, we find that this man disobeyed. He was so overjoyed that he went out and told everybody he met. He “blazed it abroad.” Consequently, the crowds pushed in on our Lord, and He was forced to retire from the city and stay in desert places.
3. See Leviticus 14:19-24. Jesus is still following the Law and is giving honor to it here.
4. This was forbidden until the man was officially declared to be healed. He could not enter society until the priest had so declared. To blaze the story abroad as a miracle of Jesus might prevent such a declaration on account of prejudice

“shew thyself to the priest” This testimony would be to the priests, who would have examined the cleansed leper to declare him clean.

42. Healing of the Centurion’s Servant 8:5-13

8:5 ¶ And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

Every centurion presented in Scripture is presented as an honorable man.
1. It is a centurion who bears witness to Christ’s righteousness and deity at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:54; Luke 23:47).
2. It is a centurion who helps trigger the Gentile Pentecost in Acts 10.
3. It is a centurion who is responsible for Paul’s release at the time of his “examination by scourging” (Acts 22:26). He was a Gentile, in a profession that was unfavorable to piety.

“It is sometimes said that religion is not a thing for men.
1. Look at this soldier’s faith. It Was the faith of a man; no sign of weakness or effeminacy.
2. Look at this soldier’s humility. It was the humility of a man; not mere subservience, which bends before title, wealth, and perhaps not before God. It is an elevating thing to bend before such a God as ours.
3. Look at this soldier’s affection. Human affections not to be sneered at. These are the qualities of true manhood. (A. G. Bowman, cited in The Biblical Illustrator: Matthew.)"

8:6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

“palsy”
1. Some sort of paralysis but this was a very severe case of it.
2. He was seeking help for a servant, who may have been little better than a slave. But this must have been a very valuable servant for the centurion to seek help for him.
3. The centurion was not a selfish man but had consideration for others under his care and command.

8:7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.
8:8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

Military men tend to be proud and arrogant but not this centurion. He recognized that he was in the presence of a Man greater than he and his attitude reflected that.

“speak the word only”
1. “When William, Prince of Orange, was invited to come to England and be king, he promised certain offices to his friends, and he gave them written pledges. But when he offered such a pledge to the man who was to be his Lord Chamberlain, that nobleman replied, “Your Majesty’s word is sufficient. I would not serve a king if I could not trust in his word.” That saying pleased the king, and he who showed such faith in him became his favourite minister. Should we not be willing to take the word of the King of kings? (The Biblical Illustrator: Matthew).”

2. When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Christ only marveled at two things:
1. Faith (here). And it was a Gentile’s faith that impressed Him. He never reacted this was to a Jew’s faith. This Gentile out-did the Jew in reference to his faith!
2. Unbelief- Mark 6:6

8:9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

8:10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

8:11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

These “many” are believing Gentiles, to the exclusion of the Jews, who should have known better and should have out-done the Gentiles when it came to faith and belief. The reference is millennial and references the blessing of the Gentiles in the millennium.

8:12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

These “children” are not Christians as you would have born-again people going to hell if it were true. These would be those born during the Kingdom Age (not the Church Age) who have not
made any profession of faith or belief in Christ who are excluded from the Millennium and are cast into out darkness.

8:13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

Another healing with no delay, as in 8:3

43. Healing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law 8:14,15

8:14 ¶ And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever.

“his wife’s mother”
1. The first “pope” was married. The only way to get a mother-in-law is to marry!
2. Since Peter was married, Rome has no justification to insist on a bachelor priesthood.
3. No pope ever followed Peter’s true example of life and ministry for more than 5 minutes.
4. Of course, it is possible that Peter was a widower at this time, with his mother-in-law surviving. But that still does not let Rome off the hook because even if he was a widower, that means he was still married at one time.

Being a disciple (and later an apostle) did not exempt Peter from the common trials of life.

“How do you account for the prevalence of fevers at Capernaum? for it was there, of course, that "Peter’s wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever." Fevers are still prevalent in this region, particularly in summer and autumn, owing to the extreme heat acting upon the marshy plains, like that of El Bithah,, at the influx of the Jordan. (W. M. Thomson, D. D., cited in The Biblical Illustrator).”

8:15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

Every healing was unique and was handled differently. Here, Christ simply touched her hand and the fever left.

8:15 is one of the verses that faith-healers use as a proof-text for a “point of contact” to do healings. See also Acts 19:12. But they overlook the fact that Christ did not need any “point of contact” in Matthew 8:8,13.

44. Healing of Many Devil Possessed Persons 8:16-17

8:16 ¶ When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

“Devils”, not “demons”.
Several things stand out regarding Jesus’ “healing crusades”:

1. There were no failures, misfires or “duds”.
2. Jesus never took up an offering or charged admission.
3. Jesus never rented an auditorium.
4. No “mood music” was playing in the background.
5. No one pre-screened the candidates to make sure they were “easy cases” or to ensure they would make for a good presentation.
6. No one was “slain in the Spirit”.
7. Nothing mentioned about anyone having any “faith to believe” in order to be healed. In James 5:15,16, we are told that the fault in a cure lies not with the sick man, but with the man who is praying for him.
8. Jesus didn’t make a big deal about the healings. Fakers and frauds like Benny Hinn or Oral Roberts were never in the running when compared to the Great Physician.

Devil activity and possession seemed to be widespread and common in Jesus’ day. Where there is great divine activity in an area, expect Satan to do what he can to counter it. We also see a widespread instance of this in the West today.

8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

And the Scriptures must be fulfilled- Isaiah 53:4.

“Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”

1. Charismatics are forever quoting this verse for today in their belief that physical healing is in the atonement (Isaiah 53:4), but the context is the earthly ministry of Christ. Carnal people stress the physical manifestations and benefits of salvation, but they make little of the greater spiritual benefits. If someone is emphasizing the money and the healing, know that you are dealing with a carnal profession.

   a. How many spiritual, genuine Christians have suffered physical infirmities and never received their healing? Were they carnal or backslidden?

2. This is because He was our Great High Priest Who understood our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15). Christ did not take away our sicknesses but He “bare” them. He suffered our infirmities and sicknesses, so He could sympathize with us who also suffer from them.

“The reader is quick to notice the change of quotation. Where Isaiah 53:4 reads: “borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,” Matthew quotes: “took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.”…The Holy Spirit, in Matthew, is giving you a second meaning of Isaiah’s words; there is no contradiction. As Matthew quotes the text, it is apparent that healing IS IN the atonement. To avoid this deduction is cowardly. The passage in Isaiah is on the atonement, even if the passage in Matthew is referring to Christ’s “active obedience” in the flesh before the Atonement.

“The Holiness people carry the reasoning a little farther; if healing is in the atonement (as well as salvation from sin), why cannot anyone by faith, avail themselves of it? After all, do we not avail ourselves of salvation by faith? The argument is logical. It is so plausible that it is accepted blindfolded by millions and reinforced with such texts as 1 Corinthians 12:9 and 3 John 2. However, let us not stop here. Let us really examine the atonement. Are healing and
salvation the only things Christ took care of when He died? Not quite. When we examine the atonement carefully, we suddenly discover:

1. He died for the curse God placed on nature. Thorns came from this curse, and thorns were jammed on His head.
2. He died for the curse placed on animal life, for animals were vegetarians before the fall, and they return to this state at the Advent (Isa. 11), when the work of the Atonement is complete.
3. He died for the curse placed on the world itself, for He is said to have bought this world (Matt. 13:38, 44) by His blood, as well as the purchase of the redeemed sinner.
4. In short, He died not only for sin, but for sickness, poverty, cruelty, damnation, destruction, and even physical disturbances, which came as a consequence of sin (Rom. 8:20–23).

Now we can find the correct meaning of “healing in the atonement.” Healing is IN THE ATONEMENT, but you cannot get all the benefits of the atonement now. Many of the benefits await the Second Coming (Phil. 3:20–21). You cannot claim a lion (by faith) to start eating straw, but this is in the atonement; you cannot claim (by faith) for your body not to rot in the ground, but a new body is in the atonement (1 Cor. 15); you cannot claim (by faith) that all the earthquakes and tidal waves will stop, but this is in the atonement. In short, God can heal you and may heal you, and praise the Lord if He does. He may do it by medicine (1 Tim. 5:23; Isa. 38:21) or without medicine (Acts 3:7), or He may leave you sick (2 Tim. 4:20; 2 Cor. 12:5–8); but healing is still in the atonement and God is still the author of any healing that is done. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*).

Why just limit this to physical infirmities and physical healings? Carnally-minded people would do that. We also have spiritual infirmities that need divine attention. We have weaknesses, fears, failings, faults and flaws that we must bring to Jesus for His dealing and for our strengthening. What kind of infirmities and weaknesses should we bring to Jesus?

1. Our weaknesses (of character)
2. Our personality flaws and defects
3. Our failures
4. Our fears (2 Corinthians 7:5)
5. Our victories. Yes, we need God to sanctify our successes and victories as much as we need Him to strengthen us in our failures and weaknesses.

45. Self-Called Men Examined  8:18-22

8:18 ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

“great multitudes”

1. The crowds came, and Jesus left. They heard of the miracles and the healings and they sought Him out. Some came for the preaching, but most came for the excitement.
2. Jesus did not necessarily welcome the crowds because:
   a. Crowds tend to be unruly
   b. You can’t do “one-on-one” discipleship with a crowd
   c. Crowds are mainly made up of curiosity-seekers
   d. Crowds are fickle. They love you one minute, they turn on you the next.
   e. Truth is never popular. Unless you are in the middle of a full-blown revival, beware of the crowds flocking to you. Some will come for truth but the numbers
will seldom be large. The preacher with the crowd has usually drawn them with something besides truth.

8:19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

Scribes were the interpreters of the law.
1. Ezra is the best-known scribe in Scripture.
2. 8:20 The Lord did not outright reject this scribe but He did lay out to him the high cost of discipleship. We are not told of his ultimate reaction.

It is nice to have some to volunteer to follow you but do they really know what they are getting into? The Lord picked his disciples, none of them volunteered. He knew what He was looking for.

1. Why do some volunteer to follow Christ and to go into the ministry?
   a. It looks like fun
   b. It looks interesting
   c. If going to the mission field, some like to travel and explore the world
   d. It looks easy- only work a few hours a week (!)
   e. If a man is religious (but lost) they may see it as a way to “earn” their salvation
   f. Some go in for political reasons.
   g. If you follow Christ, you might be poorer than birds. Christ did everything He could to discourage this scribe and it seemed to work. This scribe, like many after him, had not counted the cost. Being a disciple of Christ may seem to be exciting and glamorous, until you are told that there is very little glamour in it. Some men may like the limelight, the excitement or the possibility for advancement or recognition, but none of these are good motivations for service and ministry. Here, Christ is discouraging any hope of obtaining riches and a fancy house as some sort of reward for going into the ministry. What a rebuke for the prosperity preachers of our day! They claim Jesus was rich and that every Christian should be rich and that poverty is of the devil. Such preachers are fleshly and carnal, lust after filthy lucre and blaspheme the Scripture by ripping out proof-texts to try to justify their greed.
   h. “That it is strange in itself, that the Son of God, when he came into the world, should put himself into such a very low condition, as to want the convenience of a certain resting-place, which the meanest of the creatures have. If he would take our nature upon him, one would think, he should have taken it in its best estate and circumstances: no, he takes it in its worst...Our Lord Jesus, when he was here in the world, submitted to the disgraces and distresses of extreme poverty; for our sakes he became poor, very poor. He had not a settlement, had not a place of repose, not a house of his own, to put his head in, not a pillow of his own, to lay his head on. He and his disciples lived upon the charity of well-disposed people, that ministered to him of their substance, Luke viii. 2. Christ submitted to this, not only that he might in all respects humble himself, and fulfil the scriptures, which spake of him as poor and needy, but that he might show us the vanity of worldly wealth, and teach us to look upon it with a holy contempt; that he might purchase better things for us, and so make us rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9 (Matthew Henry).”
   i. If we meet a man who thinks he is called to the ministry; he should be given “full disclosure” of what the true ministry is like such as a careful reading of 2
Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians, Paul uses the following works to describe the ministry: “anguish, perplexity, devour, smite, bondage, weak, forsaken, faint, persecuted, sorry, grieved, down, perish, burden, cast down, groaning, poor, chastened, hunger, beaten, perils, pain, infirmity, stoned, reproaches, offended, weariness, mourning, trembling, fear, poverty, affliction, despair, necessities, imprisonments, distressed, destruction, tumults, killed, tribulation, dying, suffering, terrified.” Now, are you still willing to follow the Lord with that insight of the ministry?

8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

“Son of man”
1. This phrase is used 83 times in the New Testament, 80 of those are in the gospels. The other three are in Accts 7:56, Revelation 1:13 and 14:14.
2. The Hebrews 2:6 usage is not a reference to Christ.
3. Paul does not use the phrase.
4. The Church worships the “Son of God”, not so much the “Son of Man”.

8:21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

8:22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

8:21,22 He would follow Christ after his father died and fulfill his family obligations before following Christ.
1. Family obligations are important, but they should not hinder spiritual obligations we should have to serve and follow Christ. This seems rude and insensitive by the Lord but many have used some sort of family obligation to wiggle out of a clear call of God. After all, his father could have lived another 30 years! And then this man would have been willing to follow Jesus. It is like many men who say, “I’ll serve God when I retire or when I get the mortgage paid off or when the kids are through college”, but they just never get around to it.

46. Jesus’ Control of the Waves 8:23-27

8:23 ¶ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

8:24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

Sudden, violent storms were common on the Sea of Galilee, as the winds would sweep down the surrounding mountains.
1. Just because you are a Christian and have the presence of Christ does not mean you will be exempt from the storms of life.
2. How many young converts have been lied to by unfaithful ministers into believing that once they are saved, all their troubles would be over, and that they would get a big promotion at work, a new car, physical healing, their debt paid off, etc. In reality, if you truly get saved, you will probably have more trouble AFTER your salvation than you had in the days of your sin! Just ask Paul!

3. Blessed is that man who can truly follow the example of Christ and not fret when the storms of life arise. This also shows the full humanity of Christ- He slept! He was weary and tired and needed rest as any other man.

8:25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

“Lord, save us”
1. It was a good prayer:
   a. He went to the right person
   b. He made a good request
   c. He recognized the danger

8:26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Little faith equals much fear.

No doubt there was a certain divine dignity and calmness in the Lord’s manner here. He had created the sea and the storms and was not awed by either, but made it clear He was their Master and they both were under His full control and authority. Only Christ can bring great calm in the midst of great storms.

8:27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

“What manner of man”. What manner of man indeed! He is a man, but He is more than just a man, He is the God-Man, the Son of God, Second Person of the Godhead. Christ is certainly more than “the Great Physician” or “the Great Teacher” or “Our Great Moral Example” or something like that. He is clearly God and any other title that does not infer that is an insult to His deity.

“even the winds and the sea obey Him”. That is because He is their Creator and is still God over all the earth. Christ also had power over roosters (Matthew 26:34, 74, 75), fish (John 21:6), fig trees (Mark 11:12-14, 20, 21) and death (John 10:17, 18).

47. Healing of Two Men of the Gergesenes 8:28-34

8:28 ¶ And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.
“You will notice that while Matthew tells you about “two possessed with devils”, Mark tells you only about one (Mark 5:2). You will find a similar thing in the story of “blind Bartimaeus” (Mark 10:46, cf. Matthew 20:30). Infidels will present these accounts as “contradictions” in the Scriptures. Obviously, Mark is giving you the details of one individual while Matthew is giving you the full account. Such a practice is not a contradiction; it’s a cause of personal perspective (Peter Ruckman, Ruckman Reference Bible, page 1248).” One of these two men was dominant so both Mark and Luke concentrate on him while Matthew mentions them both.

Characteristics of devil-possessed people:
1. They are fierce
2. They hang around dead things
3. They interfered with the lives of other people
4. They recognized the Lord and acknowledged Him as the Son of God. No devil is an atheist!
5. They desired to possess a body and did not want to be cast out. They’d rather be in pigs than in the pit, or to be disembodied.
6. They knew they were going to be tormented and judged by the Lord

8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

These devils believed- and trembled (James 2:19) showing that mere head belief in the deity of Christ is not enough for salvation. It must go beyond the head into the heart.

8:30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

This was a Gentile area as Jews wouldn’t be keeping pigs. Or they were backslidden Jews who were keeping the pigs, with the intent of selling them to Gentiles.

8:31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

Better in pigs than in the pit.
1. Devils want to be in a body more than in a spiritual state without a body.
   a. “Why do demons crave embodiment? We are not told. One supposition is that they are actually disembodied spirits of an alien race who at some time in remote and unrecorded history lived on the earth. Because of their extraordinary wickedness they were unclothed of their bodies by an act of divine judgment (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, page 157).”
   2. How humiliating it must have been for these unclean spirits to have to beg permission from the Lord to possess pigs, a despised animal!

8:32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

The Lord wastes no time with the devils, but only gives them the benefit of a single word.
The first case of deviled ham. The pigs did not appreciate or tolerate the possession even for a minute. Men tolerate devil possession than pigs do. But suicide is a common side effect of devil possession.

8:33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

You are not going to be able to keep something like that quiet for long.

8:34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

The residents cared more for the pigs and the property than for the miracle and the deliverance of these two men.

1. The residents lost a lot of money in the death of the pigs and in order to reduce further loss, they begged the Lord to leave them.
2. Every town in America would make a similar request of the Lord of He had done a similar miracle among them. The Lord is too controversial. He causes too much trouble and excitement. He is too disruptive. He is hurting business. Notice the Town Fathers would never complain about the local pornographers, dope peddlers, liquor merchants, head-bangers, prostitutes and lawyers. But the Lord can't stay!
3. See Acts 16:19-23 for a similar reaction to the power of God and the preachers in Philippi.
Matthew Chapter 9

48. The Healing of the Man With The Palsy 9:1-8

9:1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

Capernaum ("City of Nahum"), which was the "headquarters" for the Lord during His Galilean ministry. Capernaum never realized or appreciated the honor bestowed unto it by the Lord that He chose it to be "His own city". Yet the city rejected Him, provoking the Lord's condemnation in Matthew 11:23.

9:2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

When the Holy Spirit inserts a "behold! look at this!", then it would be worth our while to stop and take a look at it.

"palsy"
1. Some sort of paralysis.
2. It was the faith of his friends that Jesus saw, not the faith of the sick man, as in Mark 2:3-12. Compare this with the vicarious faith of Galatians 2:20.
3. The Lord had a quick eye to spot manifestations of faith and He never failed to call attention to it.

"their faith"
1. The faith of the sick man’s friend. The sick man may have been too sick to exercise much faith himself, but the faith of his friends did the trick.
2. His friends had concern enough to get him to Jesus for a healing.

9:3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

"This man blasphemeth"
1. This was the most frequent charge brought against the Lord.
2. Blasphemy is the charge brought against Christ at His trial in Matthew 26:65 and John 19:7 and before Pilate.
3. If Jesus had not been God, they would have been correct. But since He was still God while on earth, they were the ones who were blaspheming.
4. They dare not make the accusation verbally, but it made no difference, as the Lord still knew about it.

9:4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

"Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" Jesus still maintained a level of omniscience while on earth. He knew what they were thinking. Omniscience might not have been necessary if one understood how religious hypocrites thought. Probably even seeing the look of their faces would have told anyone what was really in their hearts.
9:5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

“For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?” For God, it was as easy to do one as it was to do the other.

9:6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

Jesus never laid hands on the man- no “point of contact” here.

Jesus “put His money where His mouth was”. Not only did He claim to be God and to be able to forgive sins, but He then demonstrated that authority by healing this man. Talk is cheap, but if you can follow up your claims with actions, then that means something. If the claim that only God could forgive sins was valid, then Jesus demonstrated He was God by not only forgiving this man’s sins, but then healing him, something the Jewish religious leaders could not do.

9:7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

This paralytic was brought to the Lord by others, but he went home by himself. This indicates that it is not that the sinner can go to the Lord, but that the sinner can go from the Lord by the Lord’s salvation.

9:8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

49. The Calling of Matthew 9:9

9:9 ¶ And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Most publicans were too ashamed to sit publicly at the receipt of custom like this- they would hire someone to do it for them, someone who didn’t care about public opinion or his own reputation.

1. Matthew does mention is call but only devotes one verse to it. Many Christians would have written a 500-page book describing how they “left all” of Christ and what great “sacrifices” they made.
2. “Mark and Luke call him Levi; it was ordinary for the same person to have two names: perhaps Matthew was the name he was most known by as a publican, and, therefore, in his humility, he called himself by that name, rather than by the more honourable name of Levi. Some think Christ gave him the name of Matthew when he called him to be an apostle; as Simon, he surnamed Peter. Matthew signifies, the gift of God, Ministers are God’s gifts to the church; their ministry, and their ability for it, are God’s gifts to them. (Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible).”

Matthew’s call:

1. The call
a. It was a call of grace.
   i. Jesus has a way of calling men the world never would. Men look for
      personality, qualifications, education and talent. God overlooks all human
      qualifications and bases His calls on other things that He does not always
      reveal. There was something in Matthew that God saw that no other man
      would have seen.
   ii. No doubt the other disciples were taken aback by Jesus selecting
      Matthew, a hated tax collector, the lowest rung on the ladder in Jewish
      society! But a man so ostracized by “polite company” can reach others
      who are in the same circumstance better than anyone else could.

b. It was a royal call.
   i. When the King calls you to service, you respond!
   ii. When Jesus calls you to service, you respond!

c. It was a personal call.
   i. It was not the general call of Isaiah 6.
   ii. Matthew call personally called by name by Christ. Christ specifically
      wanted him.
   iii. Similar to the calls to Peter and Andrew in Matthew 4:18-22.

d. It was an “ordinary” call.
   i. There were no miracles, visits by angels, shining lights, “foxhole”
      conversions or anything out of the ordinary- just a simple verbal call.

e. It was a call to a busy man.
   i. Satan may tempt the lazy, but Christ only calls diligent men.

f. It was a passing call
   i. Jesus only passed by once and offered the call once. If Matthew had
      turned down the call or did not respond, there may never have been
      another call or opportunity.

2. The response
   a. Matthew’s response was a daring one.
      i. He did not say “let me bury my father first (Matthew 8:21). He did not
         say “What about my business? Do you offer a good retirement plan?
         What are the hours?” Matthew sacrificed any future money and income
         in responding to this call.
      ii. Jesus said nothing to Matthew about anything- nothing about the
         suffering, the persecution, the martyrdom. Matthew had no idea what he
         would be walking into. All he knew was that the Son of God wanted him.
         Matthew responded in faith.

   b. Matthew’s response was an immediate one.
      i. This reminds us of a Moravian, when approached about going to
         Greenland as a missionary responded that he would go. When asked
         when he would be ready to go, he said “As soon as my shoes come back
         from the cobbler”. When his shoes were ready, he went.
      ii. He did not say “I will come when I retire, or when the kids are through
         school or when I get my mortgage paid off”.
      iii. Matthew did not “consult with flesh and blood” (Galatians 1:16).

50. Calling Sinners, Not the Righteous 9:10-13

9:10 ¶ And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans
and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.
This took place at Matthew’s house.

Matthew had brought a lot of his friends and associates to meet and hear Jesus. This is the best form of evangelism. This is also a good sign on a genuine conversion, although Matthew does not come right out and say this was in his house or that he threw this feast, but no doubt he did. No doubt some of Matthew’s fellow tax-collectors were also present and this would put Jesus in badly with Jewish public opinion as tax collectors were considered little better than traitors since they collected the taxes imposed by the hated Roman Empire.

1. As a former tax collector, Matthew would have had access to this class of despised people that none of the other disciples would. This is why the Lord calls men and women from all walks of life, so He can access people in all walks of life. A Harvard-educated preacher would not have much of a ministry among the “down andouters” at the rescue mission, just as the uneducated mountain “hick” would not be that successful preaching in Washington D.C.

2. Jesus had a good ministry among such people. The religious and the educated tended to reject Him, but the overlooked, despised and shunned tended to respond better. I think Jesus enjoyed ministering among such people more than He did dealing with the religious hypocrites in Jerusalem.

“sinners”

1. Also see Matthew 11:19, where Jesus identifies Himself as a friend of sinners, as He demonstrated here and throughout His ministry, and which He still demonstrates today.

2. These were people who were excommunicated from the synagogue for whatever reason. No one was supposed to have any associations with these people.

3. The term “publicans and sinners” shows that the Jewish religious leaders classified only the lowest class of people as sinners, like, the fallen woman (Luke 7:39) and the blind man (John 9:31,34).

4. “Sinners,” in Bible language (and this accounts for the tremendous antipathy found among cultured people to the Bible), means the envious, the lazy, exaggerators, gluttons, the self-righteous, the proud, the deceitful, the stubborn, and those who refuse to recognize Truth. In our text, Christ had truly “gone to eat chicken dinner with a sinner,” but who is not a “sinner,” but Christ only? (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

In their cowardice, they asked the disciples rather than the Lord Himself.

1. A better question, that could have been asked of these Pharisees, would have been “why don’t you?” The Pharisees though themselves too good to associate with such rabble, especially with men like Matthew. The Lord then rebukes this haughty and arrogant attitude in verses 12,13. This question indicates that the self-righteous Pharisees did not know the grace of God. They thought that God deals with man only according to righteousness, that the man had to make himself righteous before God would have any dealing with him. Since these “publicans” and “sinners” were unrighteous in the eyes of the Pharisees, why would Jesus be dealing with them if He claimed to be God? They expected Jesus to confirm to their ideas of what God would do and how He would act according to their misunderstandings of God’s character.
2. These Pharisees did not participate in this meal, but they were watching it from a safe distance, lest they contaminate themselves.

9:12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

“physician”
1. If Jesus likened Himself to a physician, it shows that going to doctors and using medicine is not sinful but is also a God-appointed and God-approved way of treating sickness.
2. This also shows that Jesus never had anything bad to say about physicians and other medical men, although many modern-day “faith healers” do. It is no sin to go to a doctor, especially if your medical treatment is accompanied by prayer.
   a. Being anointed with oil isn’t bad either (James 5:14,15).
3. This would render the quack “faith-healers” as unnecessary.
4. Paul had Luke, who was a physician, on his missionary team and you know Paul used Luke’s services frequently, knowing the physical issues Paul suffered from.
5. This is like a doctor who won’t go to sick people. A preacher who refuses to go to where the sinners are is not of much use to God or man.
6. The sick must realize they are sick, and they need to call upon the Great Physician for spiritual healing through the new birth, but how few do! Why don’t they call for the Doctor?
   a. They don’t know they are sick or won’t admit they are
      i. They deny it. Many self-righteous sinners deny that have any sin problem at all. Or they can be like the so-called “Christian Scientist” who deny sin altogether.
      ii. The reject it. They know there is something wrong with them but just don’t want to bring themselves to admit to the reality of an unpleasant truth. It is like being diagnosed with cancer, but it won’t go away if you deny it or ignore it.
   b. They don’t trust the diagnosis. Some people think all doctors are quacks and that they can’t be trusted. These are the ones who don’t acknowledge Jesus as God, so they don’t trust His diagnosis of their spiritual condition.
      i. These people may trust Mohammad, or the Buddha more than they do Christ to diagnose their condition.
   c. They don’t like the treatment
      i. If they do accept the diagnosis, they reject the plan of treatment and the medicines offered.
   d. They don’t trust doctors
      i. Many people think doctors don’t really know what they are talking about
      ii. Many people think that Bible preachers don’t know what they are talking about, that they are all frauds or fakes, just after your money.

9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

“the righteous”
1. The self-righteous would respond anyway as they do not see themselves as sinners in need of the grace of God.
2. Jesus did not need their sacrifices, but He wanted them to display mercy.
3. "Go ye and learn," the Lord added, applying a well-known rabbinic formula used by Jewish teachers when confronted with superficial knowledge. His critics thought they knew so much about the law, and Jesus said, "Go ye and learn!" He directed them to Hosea 6:6 and repeated the gist of it: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." (John Phillips, *Exploring Matthew*, page 163).

“sinners to repentance”
1. Jesus did not call sinners to mere belief or mental assent, as the devils also believe (James 2:19) but without repentance.
2. Belief is the foundation of salvation, but it must be accompanied by repentance from sin and evidence of that inward heart change.

51. Old Wine and New Wineskins 9:14-17

9:14 ¶ Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

“fast”
1. Fasting is never commanded in Scripture, but it is still a good practice, if done Scripturally.
2. The Jews had reduced it to a ritualistic religious practice, done on schedule and not as needed. It had degenerated to nothing more than a tradition.
3. It should be practiced when there is a spiritual need that is so strong that you are willing to deprive yourself of necessary food so that you can concentrate on prayer regarding the issue.
4. There was no set time for the length of the fast. It was continued until the answer came.

“…thy disciples fast not.” Implying they weren’t spiritual. But when you fast, you must fast for the right reasons, not simply because it is “time to fast” or just to be seen of men.

9:15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

“From here on, the ministry of our Lord is marked by constant questions of religious controversy. They never let Him rest a minute; from here, till the great debates and questions of the “Passion Week,” Jesus is constantly being “put on the spot.” (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew*).”

No one fasts when full of joy. Fasting is reserved for times of grief, sorrow, repentance after sin or to seek the will of God. No one fasts at a banquet. While Jesus was with them, there was no reason to fast. But after his ascension, when He would leave them, then there would be plenty of reasons to fast.

1. Prophetically, Israel will do much “weeping and fasting” during the tribulation, until the Bridegroom returns in the Second Coming.
9:16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

Verses 16 and 17 are usually interpreted as speaking to the incompatibility of the Old Covenant with the New. The new wine of the upcoming Gospel dispensation in the Church Age is not compatible with the Law and the Jewish, Mosaic Covenant, despite the eternal attempts of the Seventh-Day Adventists and other Galatian-type groups (such as many of the Messianic Jewish groups) to merge the two, something Paul condemned in Galatians.

9:17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

“new wine” Unfermented wine.

52. Power Over Death 9:18-26

9:18 ¶ While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

Not since the visit of the Magi have we read of anyone worshipping Christ. When someone does worship Him, He does not refuse it. Christ always accepts worship as the natural and right thing (see Matthew 14:33, 28:17; John 9:38, 20:28).

This “ruler” may have been the man in charge of the local synagogue.

9:19 And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

9:20 ¶ And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

9:21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

The idea of a “point of contact”, which is so popular with so-called “faith healers” false prophets.

“The other Gospels add details regarding the woman's condition. She had spent all her money trying to find a cure. Luke, who was a doctor, said that no physician had been able to heal her (Luke 8:43). Mark, looking at the case from a layman's point of view, was more caustic; he said that she "had suffered many things of many physicians... and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse" (5:26). The doctors had taken her money, treated her inadequately, caused her unnecessary pain, built up her hopes, dashed them, and left her worse than they had found her. Now she made up her mind to come to the great physician who never lost a case and never charged a fee. The woman's disease rendered her ceremonially unclean and, according to
Mosaic law, excommunicated her (Leviticus 12:1-7). Everything she touched was considered unclean (15:19-33). The same Levitical law gave the husband of such a woman the right to divorce her (Deuteronomy 24:1). (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, page 167).”

“touch His garment” “The Jews paid to the fringe a superstitious reverence. Sharing the superstition, this woman touched it in hope of cure (Ethelbert Bullinger, Companion Bible).”

9:22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Mark adds more details in Mark 5:35-43.

With the throng pawing and manhandling Him, Jesus was still able to discern that one needy person touched Him. Mark 5:25-34 is the parallel passage. The physicians were unable to help her, so she touched Jesus’ garment. He then realized that someone gave Him a “special touch” and He asked who touched Him, when hundreds were touching Him at that time.

9:23 And when Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

The funeral party, with the hired mourners.

9:24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

“They laughed him to scorn” It did seem like an insensitive remark. Everyone knew she was dead, and it was apparent that she was dead.

9:25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

Just a simple touch was used in this raising.

“When the people were put forth” Christ would not work with these mockers present.

9:26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

53. Power Over Doubt 9:27-31

9:27 ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

This is recorded only by Matthew.

“Thou Son of David”
1. It is interesting they use this title in addressing Christ. These blind men had seen something about Christ that the religious leaders had not.
2. This is a messianic term, so the idea that Jesus was the long-prophesied Messiah was starting to take hold among the people.

9:28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

“Believe ye that I am able to do this?” A key question Christ asks of all of us when we bring prayer requests to Him.

9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

9:30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

“See that no man know it.”
1. Evangelism forbidden.
2. While events like this would increase interest in Jesus’ ministry, it would also increase the opposition. The danger was that now they might start talking about the miracle instead of the Messiah.

9:31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

“spread abroad his fame in all that country”
1. This would have contributed to the popular notion that Jesus was more of a healer than a teacher and preacher. This will not do.
2. Jesus is the Great Physician, but that is all some people see Him for, just as a glorified doctor or financial consultant or psychologist.
3. If He is not recognized as God first and foremost, then He is not receiving the proper glory and recognition that He deserves.

54. Power Over Devils and Dumbness 9:32-35

9:32 ¶ As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

“a dumb man possessed with a devil” Sometimes, dumbness and deafness are caused by devil possession, but we would obviously not imply that all deaf or dumb people are possessed by devils.

9:33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

9:34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.
This is blaspheming the Holy Spirit (the Unpardonable Sin)- attributing the works of God to Satan.

1. It was an illogical charge anyway- see Matthew 12:25-29.
2. The Pharisees had to try to discredit the miracle somehow, and this is the best they could come up with- “Jesus is in league with devils, which is why they obey Him!” But it would have been just as likely that Jesus had power over the devils because He was God and had power over them.

9:35 And Jesus went about 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.

Healing was associated with the Jewish Gospel of the Kingdom.

1. We don’t preach this today, which is why we don’t expect such healings today.
2. The Gospel of Grace, preached during this Church Age, has no mention of physical healing (see 1 Corinthians 15:1-4) and physical healing is not associated with it.
3. It was more valid during the Lord’s ministry and during the transitional period of Acts 2-7 and we may see a renewed emphasis on it in the tribulation, but it is not of primary importance now.
4. This shows that if physical healings are associated with the Gospel of the Kingdom, then it is dispensational in nature.
   a. Modern-day faith-healers are correct in their doctrine, but they are applying it to the wrong dispensation.
   b. This shows that many doctrinal errors in the church today stem from improper dispensational applications.

55. The Prayer For Laborers 9:36-38

9:36 ¶ But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

“compassion”

1. Compassion usually starts with seeing first.
2. These were people with no spiritual shepherd to guide them, feed them or protect them. They were easy prey for the spiritual wolf.
3. There are so many towns in the United States and Canada that do not have a good Bible-preaching church and a true Biblical pastor nearby to provide these spiritual services to that area. What a blessing it is when God has put such a church and man in a town, but 99% of the population cares nothing for it.
4. One attribute of God is compassion upon the weak, sick, lost. We should also adopt that for our lives as well.
5. Christ was also “moved with compassion” in:
   a. Mark 1:41 as He cleansed a leper.
   b. Mark 5:19 where he healed a man possessed with a devil.
   c. Luke 7:13, with the raising of son of the widow in Nain.
   d. Matthew 20:31 when He healed the two blind beggars.
6. “The Lord saw lost people as having no real goals. They were "scattered abroad"—like sheep. Sheep are neither strong, nor smart, nor swift. They are somewhat stupid, having a propensity to go astray and wander aimlessly farther and farther away. Lost
sheep have no goal, no instinctive sense that will bring them back to the fold. Jesus saw lost people as sheep wandering here and there through life, with no sense as to where it all leads and where it all ends. He also saw them as having no real guides, "as sheep having no shepherd." What did they have? They had the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and rabbis. But those men were as lost as the people they were attempting to lead (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, page 174)."

9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

Much work to do but few people willing to get out into the fields and do it. There were many who had no one to watch over their souls or express any spiritual concern over their lives.

9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

“he will send forth labourers”

1. God must call them. The church does not call these laborers. Their families do not call them. Bible colleges do not call them, nor do mission boards. It must be the Holy Spirit who identifies them, burdens them, equips them, confirms them and sends them (Acts 13:2).

2. What kind of laborers are they? God calls all sorts of people to ministries such as pastoring, working on a pastoral staff, evangelists, teachers, missionaries and laymen in the local church that can undertake the more “menial” ministries (which is the work of a deacon) to assist the pastor and to take some of the day-to-day burdens off of him (Acts 6:2,3).

3. What is the harvest? Any time of ministry that involves evangelism or confirmation and strengthening of believers and local congregations.
Matthew 10 is one of the most dispensational chapters in the Bible, which should be no surprise since Matthew is a dispensational gospel. Most of the doctrinal applications in this chapter are applicable to Israel in the tribulation period.

56. The Sending of the Twelve 10:1-15

10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

The power granted to them by the Lord:
1. Against unclean spirits
2. To heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases
3. This is dispensational as Paul mentions none of this in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 as he defines what the New Testament/Church Age gospel is.
4. This kind of ministry will also reappear during the tribulation period

10:2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

This list of apostles is repeated in Mark 3:16-19 and Luke 6:14-16.

1. They are listed by twos, as they went out in pairs, which is always the best way to work, for two are better than one (Ecclesiastes 4:9).
2. An “apostle” is “one sent with a commission”. We get our word “postal” from this.
3. Peter is mentioned first as he was the most prominent, until Paul’s ministry really got started.
4. Peter, James and John were the “inner circle” of the disciples.
5. “There are two facts about men which are bound to strike us at once.
   a. They were very ordinary men. They had no wealth; they had no academic background; they had no social position. They were chosen from the common people, men who did the ordinary things, men who had no special education, men who had no social advantages. It has been said that Jesus is looking, not so much for extraordinary men, as for ordinary men who can do ordinary things extraordinarily well. Jesus sees in every man, not only what that man is, but also what he can make him. Jesus chose these men, not only for what they were, but also for what they were capable of becoming under his influence and in his power. No man need ever think that he has nothing to offer Jesus, for Jesus can take what the most ordinary man can offer and use it for greatness.
   b. They were the most extraordinary mixture. There was, for instance, Matthew, the tax-gatherer. All men would regard Matthew as a quisling, as one who had sold himself into the hands of his country’s masters for gain, the very reverse of a patriot and a lover of his country. And with Matthew there was Simon the Cananaean. Luke (Luke 6:16) calls him Simon Zelotes, which means Simon the Zealot.
      i. Josephus (Antiquities, 8. 1. 6.) describes these Zealots; he calls them the fourth party of the Jews; the other three parties were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. He says that they had "an inviolable
attachment to liberty,” and that they said that “God is to be their ruler and Lord.” They were prepared to face any kind of death for their country, and did not shrink to see their loved ones die in the struggle for freedom. They refused to give to any earthly man the name and the title of king. They had an immovable resolution which would undergo any pain. They were prepared to go the length of secret murder and stealthy assassination to seek to rid their country of foreign rule. They were the patriots par excellence among the Jews, the most nationalist of all the nationalists.

ii. The plain fact is that if Simon the Zealot had met Matthew the tax-gatherer anywhere else than in the company of Jesus, he would have stuck a dagger in him. Here is the tremendous truth that men who hate each other can learn to love each other when they both love Jesus Christ. Too often religion has been a means of dividing men. It was meant to be--and in the presence of the living Jesus it was--a means of bringing together men who without Christ were sundered from each other. (William Barclay, The Gospel of Matthew, The Daily Study Bible, volume 1, pages 358-359).

10:3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus;

This is Thomas, nicknamed “Doubting Thomas”.

“Matthew the Publican”
1. Matthew gives himself that title. He may have done it to remind himself what kind of life he came from and to remind others that no one is beyond the grace of God, no matter how bad their life is. Mark and Luke listed Matthew before Thomas (Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15), but Matthew, the writer of this gospel, listed himself after Thomas, showing his humility.

“James of Alphæus”
1. He is listed in Acts 1:13, is most certainly not the “Lord’s (half-)brother,” although this one could possibly be a cousin, and Judas, his brother, also a cousin. Since eleven names are listed in Acts 1:13, these must be the eleven apostles that are left after the apostasy and defection of Judas Iscariot. Consequently, it follows that they must match the list in Matthew 10. Lebbæus whose surname is Thaddæus is the only one who can fill the bill; therefore, the “Judas” (“not Iscariot”) must be this man. This leaves us with three James’. 1. James Zebedee, John’s brother. 2. James of Alphæus, Christ’s cousin. 3. James the less, the brother of the Lord, by Mary. (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

“Judas”

10:4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

“Canaanite”
1. Not a racial Canaanite but a member of a certain political affiliation.
2. “The Zealots formed a fourth party in Israel, the other three being the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes. Zealous for the law, Simon’s party cited the example of Phinehas (Numbers 25:7,8) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:40) as their authority for taking the law into their own hands. They punished and lynched people they considered offenders. As the time approached for the fall of Jerusalem, the Zealots went to great lengths to enforce their will and, perhaps more than any others, brought about the destruction of the city. They refused to give anyone the title of king...In their ambition to rid their country of Roman rule, the Zealots were prepared to assassinate anyone. If Matthew had met Simon the Zealot before they both met Christ, Simon would have been quite prepared to kill him (John Philipps, Exploring the Gospel of Matthew, page 186).”

3. For Christ to call a man who was opposed to His claims of Kingship is as fascinating as Christ calling Judas, the man He knew would betray Him.

“Judas Iscariot”
1. The Son of Perdition (John 17:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3), called “a devil” by Christ. (John 6:70).
2. He is last in every list of the apostles.
3. His name has 13 letters in our English language and “13” is the Biblical number for rebellion.
4. Judas was the only disciple from Judea. The rest were from Galilee.

10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

“Samaritans”
1. They would go to the Samaritans and Gentiles later in the book of Acts. This would later change by Acts 8.
2. The Samaritans were half-breed Jews, imported into the land of the northern kingdom during the Assyrian invasion in 722 B.C. They were hated by the Jews.
3. The Samaritans had developed a syncretic religion that combined Judaism and pagan teachings and practices.

10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

“go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” “To the Jew first”. They would later go to the Gentiles in the book of Acts, but not at this time.

10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

“preach” Preaching is always the most important ministry, that does the greatest good.

“The kingdom of heaven is at hand”
1. We do NOT preach this today, except prophetically. This is not the message of the New Testament Church. It deals with the tribulation and the events leading up to the Second Coming and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.
2. This kingdom is “at hand” since it would have started if Israel had either accepted the offer of the Kingdom during Christ’s earthly ministry or the second offering during the book of Acts.
3. Any attempt to make the gospel of Matthew 10:7 equal to the gospel of 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Galatians 1:6-12 and Ephesians 3:1-13 will result in hopeless theological confusion, garbling of texts, and mangling of passages.

4. There is more than one gospel in the Bible. We talk about “the gospel” in reference to the gospel of grace that the Church preaches today, but there are dispensational gospels.

   a. The Gospels in the Bible:
      i. The gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).
         a. We preach this today.
         b. Paul would refer to this as “my gospel” in Romans 2:16; 16:25; 2 Timothy 2:8.
      ii. The gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23).
         a. Preached by John, Jesus and the early church up until Acts 8.
         b. It is Jewish in nature and deals with the Kingdom.
      iii. “The everlasting gospel” (Revelation 14:6),
         a. Preach by an angel toward the end of the tribulation after the Two Witnesses ascend into heaven.

5. Dispensational observations about preaching that the “kingdom” was “at hand”:

   a. No Gentiles are to be preached to.
   b. The message is to the House of Israel (Acts 2:36-38).
   c. The message is not the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

A good summary of the Second Offer, by J. Sidlow Baxter in *Explore the Book*: “Such plain speaking cannot be misunderstood. Had there been a national repentance and acceptance of Jesus as indeed Israel’s Messiah-Saviour-King, the return of our Lord in public glory would have happened without further postponement. In other words, the second coming of Christ was contingent upon Israel’s reaction to the new message through the apostles. Very clearly, then, we can see why, when the disciples asked, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6), He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.” To have known the day and hour in advance would have been to know Israel’s reaction before ever the renewed offer of the kingdom was made. Truly, in the words of James: “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18); and it is in the light of His perfect foreknowledge that He preadapts and prearranges and predetermines. Thus, while He never leaves His ultimate purposes at the mercy of human uncertainty, in the outworking of things to the predetermined end He recognizes the free-will of man all through, and prearranges according to His foreknowledge of what man will do. Thus it is that events are allowed in the main to take their natural course, while at the same time God foreknows and overrules all to the fulfilment of His ultimate purpose. Thus, in all genuineness, the renewed offer of the Messianic kingdom was made to the Jews, as recorded in the Acts; and the return of Christ was for the time being contingent upon their reaction. This has a bearing upon the Epistles. In those to the Thessalonians the second coming of Christ is represented as though it might have burst into sudden occurrence in the imminent future. In some of the other Pauline epistles there is a noticeable shift of emphasis: the wondrous hope still gleams ahead, but there is not the same impression of impending fulfilment. This has been a problem to thoughtful readers; but once again, when we see the Acts as distinctively the renewed offer of the kingdom to Israel the problem evaporates. The period covered by the Acts, we repeat, was a suspense-period. So long as the kingdom was being re-offered to the nation the return of the Lord could have happened without any delay upon the fulfilment of the conditions. The offer was real; the promise was true; the crucified but ascended Son of Man was indeed “standing at the right hand of God,” ready to descend again in kingdom
blessing. Would Israel respond, repent, receive? That was the suspense-point. Now it is in those epistles which were written during this suspense-period of the Acts, when there was still hope of Israel's repentance, that we find the seeming imminence of the Lord's return. Of those epistles, the earliest were 1 and 2 Thessalonians (written A.D. 53). 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, were written four or five years later, when Jewish antipathy was becoming more firmly crystallized, but when to assemblies of believers all over the Roman world the hope of Christ's return was still that which filled the immediate horizon (hence such words as Romans 13:11,12; 1 Corinthians 7:26,29, 15:52,58, 16:22; 2 Corinthians 4:14). When we turn over to Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, however, there is a noticeable new emphasis. The grand prospect of the Lord's return is still there, and still as bright: but there is not just the same sense of impendence. A great new conception swings into commanding prominence, taking the precedence for the time being, and claiming the soul's wonder—that is, the CHURCH as the mystic body and bride and temple of the eternal Son. These epistles were not written until A.D. 64 (or possibly even later), i.e. after the culminating pronouncement of Acts 28:28. We do not say that there is a hard-and-fast division between these two groups of epistles. The hope of the Lord's return is found in both; but there is modification as the later developments recorded in the Acts clarify the situation. Similarly, the Church is found in both; but there is profounder conception of it as the wonderful Divine "mystery" is more fully revealed. We do not say there is a rigid demarcation between the two groups; yet the difference of emphasis is distinctly there; and the explanation is found in a true understanding of the Acts as the further offer of the kingdom to Israel. Another point on which it is well to be precise is that the two Thessalonian epistles, although they certainly give the impression that the Lord's return was expected in the very near future, do not anywhere actually state that it was thus impending. With that more-than-human genius which everywhere characterizes the Scriptures a fine point of balance is maintained, so that while the sense of expectancy is stressed and even encouraged, there is no actual commitment as to the "day" or the "hour." In this connection it is important to distinguish between what Paul thought and what Paul taught. Maybe Paul himself thought that the Lord's return was close at hand; but he never actually wrote so. We do not claim inspiration and infallibility for all that the apostles thought; but we do claim it for all that they taught. Thus, these two Second Advent letters to the Thessalonians preserve a kind of sensitive poise between an encouraged expectancy on the one hand and a careful indefiniteness as to time on the other. Does this seem unfair to those early believers? Actually, it was the very opposite. Looking at things from the human side, our Lord's return might have happened then; for as we have seen, it was a contingent prospect. Looking at things from the Divine side (which the now-completed Scriptures permit us to do) there could have been no renewed offer of the kingdom without this contingent promise. Certainly, the further Jewish refusal lay in the foreknowledge of God, but so did His larger purpose through the Church and the eventual return of Christ after the calling in of the Church's elect members. In keeping with this, the great hope was set before those early believers so that they might have—along with all who have followed them—this sanctifying intelligence concerning the eventual consummation.”

Summary:
1. All the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Millennial Kingdom (hundreds of verses too many to list here)
2. Christ offered the Kingdom to Israel and was rejected
3. The Kingdom is offered again here in Acts 3
4. It will be offered again by Stephen in Acts 7
5. Israel rejects both offers. Christ sits back down at Stephen’s death. He arose because He would have returned if the nation had repented at Stephen’s message.
6. God now withdraws the offer and the gospel goes to the Samaritans in Acts 8.
7. The apostle to the Gentiles is saved in Acts 9.
11. Acts 28:28 wraps up the current state of the “kingdom offer” and the status of Israel up until the rapture and tribulation period.

10:8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils”
1. All this is dispensational. Christ does heal but healing is not part of the Church Age gospel. Neither is casting out devils.
2. The Christian “Science” cult uses this passage in their logo, showing how ignorant they are of Scripture.
3. Many Charismatics also “double down” here, showing they are unable to rightly divide the word of truth dispensationally. This would change in Luke 22:35,36.
4. Here, the disciples were told not to make any provision or preparations for themselves as they went on their preaching tour. Now, after Luke 22, they are told to make as many provisions for themselves as they could, as the dispensation was changing.
5. We would see a resumption of such ministries in the tribulation by the 144,000 as they will no doubt have apostolic signs and wonders to demonstrate of Israel in that day.

“devils” The word “demon” never appears in our Authorized Version. It is always “devil”.

“freely as ye have received, freely give”
1. This means exactly what it says. Make no charge at all for any of your services or ministry. Don’t charge “admission fees” for your services. Give all of your books and CDs away for free. This would also forbid offering “gift offer 666” which is a ball-point pen with “Jesus Saves” written on the side of it for a “gift” of $25. If this passage was in effect during the church age, 99.9% of all ministries would be in violation of this command.
2. No modern-day fakirs who claim to be following the instructions of Matthew 10 observe this, for they are all in it for the money. Can you imagine a false teacher like Binny Hinn to go on a three-week preaching tour and not take his wallet, check-book or any of his credit cards? And then to take no financial gifts???

Modern day preachers who claim to be able to do any of these four activities should be able to do all four! The disciples were do to all four and they were able to do all four. You can’t cherry-pick this. If you are a true apostolic preacher, you must be able to all four of these or you are a fraud.

10:9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

There would be divine provision for the disciples with this mandate but it obvious that it changed by Luke 22:35,36. Church Age work requires money and provisions and we either have to provide it ourselves or have it supplied to us by missionary support. As the Church Age would soon begin, the disciples are there told to make as many preparations and to take as many provisions as they can for their future work. We wish we were back in a day when God would
make supernatural provisions for His work and He still does. But now, the worker must plan, save, invest and make preparations to finance the work.

10:10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

We are going to make a lot of tribulation applications in this chapter. The 144,000 would not be able to provide much for their ministries in terms of finances during the first half of the tribulation, so they would have to rely upon the provision of God and of sympathetic hearers.

10:11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

10:12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

10:13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

There were no motels or inns in these days so the evangelists would be dependent upon the hospitality of any local families to house the evangelists and to help provide for them.

10:14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

“shake off the dust of your feet”
1. This would be kicking the heels of the sandals together, to bang the dust out of them, or better still, for the rejected messenger to walk to the front door (or city gate), remove his sandals, bang the soles of them together till the dust came out like a beaten rug, and then put them back on and walk off. If that town rejected the message of the evangelist, then this act demonstrated the Lord rejecting that town in return.
2. In the tribulation, many towns, both Jewish and Gentile would probably reject the preaching of the 144,000 while some would accept it.

10:15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

T. 10:15 Also mentioned in Matthew 11:24 in relation to the rejection of the Lord’s ministry in Capernaum. This is because Sodom and Gomorrah did not receive the witness that these cities would receive. Angels did visit Sodom but did not preach there and gave no warning or call to repentance. There are degrees of punishment and judgment, both here on earth and in the lake of fire.
1. In tribulation Israel, the geographic location of Sodom and Gomorrah are not too distant, so any of the tribulation preachers could simply point “down the road” to remind the villages that rejected their message of these consequences. Sodom was destroyed for receiving less light than you did! Same with Jerusalem, which is called “Sodom”
spiritually in Revelation 11:8. Jerusalem may reject the preaching of the 144,000 in the tribulation (as they rejected and killed every other prophet that was sent to them (Matthew 23:37). If God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, then Jerusalem, which had many greater witnesses (even visits by the Lord Himself) would certainly not escape judgment.

2. This shows that the Lord considered the events of Genesis 19 to be historical.

57. “Beware of Men” 10:16-40

10:16 ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Four animals listed in this verse:
1. Sheep- a type of the believer
2. Wolves- a type of false teachers
3. Serpents- a type of Satan, devils and false teachers
4. Doves- a very clean animal

“sheep” But don’t be stupid or naïve! Be “worldly-wise” about your generation. You may to be “sneaky” like Paul was in Acts 16:37; 22:29 and 23:6. You have to learn to use the laws and the ways of the world against the world at times (in an honorable manner without sin) to get the gospel out at times.

“in the midst of wolves”
1. In the tribulation, the 144,000 will be going out into the worst conditions possible. The Church is gone. The Holy Spirit is also not active in the earth as He was in the Church Age. There is no spiritual restraint at all. The Antichrist is present and growing stronger every day. They will need all their wits and talents just to stay alive during such a dangerous period.
2. “When Ernest Shackleton proposed his march to the South Pole he asked for volunteers for that trek amidst the blizzards across the polar ice. He expected to have difficulty but he was inundated with letters, from young and old, rich and poor, the highest and the lowest, all desiring to share in that great adventure. It may be that the Church must learn again that we will never attract men to an easy way; it is the call of the heroic which ultimately speaks to men's hearts. (William Barclay, Gospel of Matthew, The Daily Study Bible, volume 1, page 375)."

Jesus offered His disciples three kinds of trial:
1. The state would persecute them; they would be brought before councils and kings and governors. When Christ's apostles were brought to court and to judgment, they were not to worry about what they would say; for God would give them the necessary words. God had promised Moses the same thing in dealing with Pharaoh in Exodus 4:12. It is not the humiliation which we may dread, not even the pain and the agony or torture. We may very well fear our own unskillfulness in words and in making our defense in which we might injure rather than commend the faith. It is the promise of God that when a man is on trial for his faith, the words will come to him.
2. Religion would persecute them. They would be scourged in the synagogues. Religious leaders do not like to be upset and has its own ways of dealing with disturbers of the peace.
3. The family would persecute them; their nearest and dearest would think them mad and shut the door against them. Sometimes the Christian is confronted with the hardest choice of all—the choice between obedience to Christ and obedience to kindred and to friends.

10:17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

Councils are generally noted for persecuting the saints and/or spreading false doctrine (and then persecuting those who do not accept decisions of such a council).

10:18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

“ye shall be brought before governors and kings” Paul would also do this (Acts 9:15). The tribulation preachers will endure the same fate, by both the unbelieving Jews and the Gentiles. Persecution and death will be their lot.

10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Verses 19 and 20 shows a precious promise for anyone suffering for Christ’s sake in any dispensation. In such a situation, it will amaze us at the wisdom of our responses, things we never could imagine we would be wise enough or have the knowledge to say in our defense.

1. We often talk about “dying grace” and if you don’t have “dying grace” now, it means you don’t need it as you are not about to die. The same here. You may feel tongue-tied and unable to speak in your own behalf in defense of the gospel, but just wait until you are “put on the spot” in a situation like this. You will be amazed as the words the Lord will give you in that day.

“the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” This is primarily a tribulational application for the 144,000 Jewish preachers, who will have divine aid as they preach. These apostles would need it as well in their upcoming preaching mission.

10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

Family ties mean nothing in the tribulation.

1. We see this even today. If an orthodox Jew converts to Christ, his family will disown him and have a funeral for him.

2. I know of Christians who suffered similar fates, especially Roman Catholics who leave the church for Biblical Christianity. In many of these cases, they were also disowned by their families.
10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Tribulation preachers will be universally hated as they will stand against the Antichrist and his universal following. We should also expect similar treatment even today. Something is very, very wrong with any preacher or ministry that receives praise and support from this wicked and adulterous generation.

“endure to the end”
1. Also see Matthew 24:13, which is the same meaning. This is tribulation in context. It has nothing to do with New Testament salvation, but rather, with the Jewish believer enduring faithful until the end of the Tribulation without falling away. The Church Age saint does not need to “endure to the end” for fear of losing his salvation for he is eternally secure in Christ if he is genuinely born again.
2. The “end” of what? It would refer to the end of the age, Second Coming, the end of the tribulation period. The doctrinal and prophetic application is to the Jew in the tribulation. When an unsaved Jew goes into the tribulation, he has to “endure” all the way until the Second Coming when he will see Jesus physically descending from the clouds in Revelation 19. He has to accept any tribulation gospel message preached at this time (by the 144,000 for example) and resist believing The Lie that the Antichrist is God. He also has to avoid being killed by any of the tribulation judgments. If he makes it all the way through the tribulation, he will see Christ coming and a nation (Israel) will be born in a day as all Israel will be saved in that day (Isaiah 66:8; Romans 11:26). This then has no doctrinal application to a Christian in the church age.

10:23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

Avoid martyrdom if you can. It is no shame to flee persecution. You can often do more when you are alive than if you are dead.

“Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.”
1. What exactly this phrase means baffles the commentators and I have no real good answer either. It probably has a tribulation context, maybe in relation to the ministry of the 144,000? They will all be martyred anyway but stay alive for as long as you can for you can do more good alive than dead!
2. “There is a chance that the 11 Apostles ill return to fulfill this passage. Moses, Elijah and Judas Iscariot will return for the Tribulation (David Hoffman, The Common Man’s Reference Bible, page 1419).”

10:24 The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

The Lord suffered persecution, even to the death. If they have done so to the Master, why should the disciples expect any better treatment? If they crucified God in the flesh, they will not fear to subject you to the same fate.
10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?

“Beelzebub”
2. If they call Jesus the “Prince of Devils” or the “Lord of the Flies”, what do you think they will do to His disciples? We may expect worse treatment. Since this is a Jewish gospel, this goes right into the anti-Semitism of the church age, where unsaved Gentiles accuse Jews of all manner of sin and evil. This will be especially true of the Jewish remnant in the tribulation period. There will be saved Jews in the tribulation, so someone is attacking them. It could be unsaved Gentiles, agents of the Antichrist and even other unsaved Jews, accusing them of treason, or worse. Their blasphemies against the Lord in the tribulation will be like nothing we have ever heard as the filth of fallen human nature will come to fruition.

10:26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

It will all come out in the judgment and all with be dealt with by God.

10:27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.

The preacher should keep nothing back. What God tells us in your devotions and in our quiet time with Him in the closet, should be proclaimed from the housetops. A test of a true preacher is how well he can deliver an unpopular message.
1. The 144,000 in the tribulation will proclaim the most unpopular message of all at the worst possible time to preach it- that Jesus is the Messiah and the Antichrist is a false messiah. Will they be able to deliver such a burden faithfully, knowing the penalty that awaits them?
2. What Samuel went through in 1 Samuel 3:1-18 is a good example of this.
3. Radio, television and internet are great ways to fulfill this “preaching from the housetops”, to preach so as to be heard by many people over a wide area. In the Lord’s day, you would climb on your roof and preach. Today, you can set up a website almost for nothing or buy airtime.

10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The soul is not killed but is destroyed (or ruined) in hell. This does not mean annihilation but being ruined and unusable for an intended use. You have only One Person to fear ultimately, and that is God, Who is able to cast both body and soul into hell. All man can do is kill the body but no man, or religious system, can put you into hell. The Roman Catholic imagined that it had the authority to put people in hell when they would taunt a martyr with “I separate thee from the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant” or some other blather. Yet that faithful martyr split heaven right open, despite and pronouncement by any deluded religious fool on earth. The
144,000 in the tribulation will be facing the Devil Incarnate in the person of the Antichrist, but all he can do is kill the body, therefore do not fear him, no matter how fearful he is!

1. The soul is not the body and the body is not the soul. Man is a trinity, made up of three parts:
   a. Body - his physical part
   b. Soul - his personality, will, intellect. You are a soul.
   c. Spirit - God-consciousness

2. “destroy” is not “annihilate”. To go to hell and the lake of fire is not to be annihilated but destroyed. To destroy something is to ruin it, make it unfit for any use or for an intended use. Souls are immortal and are not annihilated.
   a. Mark 9:44,46 gives an idea of what the destruction of a soul would be like, if the final state of a condemned soul is a worm. If the saved receive a glorified body that is fitted for eternity in glory, what sort of an “unglorified” body do the lost receive when they go into the lake of fire? It is a terrifying thought!

10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?” They are of so little worth that you need two of them to get any value. Yet God knows of them and cares and provides for them.

10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

God knows more about you than anyone else ever will, or even that you will ever know about yourself. He keeps track of His people and His preachers, even if forgotten by the world. Many saints are suffering horribly in North Korea and yet probably no American can name a single North Korean saint and we probably do not know the full extent of their suffering. But God knows ALL about it and He will never forget them.

10:31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Sparrows have a value, just not much, two sparrows for a farthing or two for five (get one free! They are on sale). But man has an infinite value to God and the very Son of God paid the ultimate price to redeem him from sin. Christ died for no animal, only man, and made salvation possible for him at the cost of His own blood.

10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Verses 32 and 33 illustrate the principle of retribution, both in a positive and in a negative way. Deny Christ on earth and He will deny you at the judgment. Confess Him on earth and He will confess you in heaven.
There is a good tribulation application to this as well. Can you confess Christ in the face of a generation that is following the Antichrist and murdering saints wholesale? Can you confess Christ even if it means unspeakable sufferings, accompanied with great cost? It is easy to confess Christ during a revival or in days of no persecution, but the acid text of discipleship comes if you can do it when it will cost you your life.

10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Christ divides- He does not unify, also in 10:36. This is a fact that the ecumenical movement has never understood or accepted. All these religious leaders who are continually praying for “world peace” (outside the establishment of the millennial kingdom) also fail to grasp the meaning of the verse and are anti-Biblical in their thinking. In His first coming, He did NOT come to bring “peace of earth” (Luke 2:14) but rather controversy and division. “Peace on earth” will not come until after His second coming when He establishes the millennial kingdom. That is coming but only after the Second Advent.

10:35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

The gospel even splits even the closest of earthly bonds- family ties. The ultimate fulfillment of this will be among Jewish households during the tribulation period where they will turn on each other in their attempt to stay alive in the face of the assaults of the Antichrist against all believers and Jews.

10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Quoted from Micah 7:5–6, expressed again in Mark 8:34-38. Also commented on under 10:21.

10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

“This “hating” is defined in Genesis 29:30–31 and Deuteronomy 13:6, 33:9, and it brings up an interesting moral and ethical speculation that the sophists of our universities have never considered: namely, “What is WRONG with loving your MOTHER?” The answer is: “Plenty, if you believe what Jesus said about His Deity and power to save and your mother doesn’t.” (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).” Or if you love your mother (father, wife, husband, kids, dog…) more than Christ.

10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

“take up the cross”

1. To take the cross is to take the shame and reproach that comes with it. This is the true meaning of discipleship. Without taking the cross, there can be no true discipleship or Christian life.
2. This is a personal cross. You must take your unique, individual cross. You cannot take someone else's nor can anyone take yours. Discipleship and a Christian life is a personal thing.

3. It is also a volitional act. You must do this deliberately. No one takes up a cross by accident.

4. If anyone refuses to do this, they cannot be Christ’s disciple (Luke 14:27).

5. This is done daily (Luke 9:23,24), showing this is a daily, continual way of life.

6. What is the Cross?
   a. The giving up of worldly pleasures and fame
   b. The endurance of reproach or poverty.
   c. The suffering of losses and persecutions for Christ's sake.
   d. The consecrating all to Jesus at the cost of the things of this world
   e. The endurance of my heavenly Father's will.

7. What do we do with the cross?
   a. I am to deliberately to take it up.
   b. I am to boldly to face it. It is only a wooden cross after all.
   c. I am to patiently to endure it, for I have only to carry it a little way.
   d. I am to cheerfully to resign myself to it, for my Lord appoints it.
   e. I am to obediently to follow Christ with it.

8. What should encourage us in this?
   a. Necessity: I cannot be a disciple without cross-bearing.
   b. Society: better men than I have carried it.
   c. Love: Jesus bore a far heavier cross than mine.
   d. Faith: grace will be given equal to the weight of the cross.
   e. Hope: good to myself will result from my bearing this load.
   f. Zeal: Jesus will be honored by my patient endurance.
   g. Experience: I shall yet find pleasure in it, for it will produce in me much blessing. The cross is a fruitful tree.
   h. Expectation: glory will be the reward of it.

9. What does it mean to take the cross?
   a. Take the shame
   b. Take the reproach
      i. Criminals were crucified in Jerusalem. It was the custom for the condemned person to carry his own cross. To identify with the cross was to identify oneself as a criminal in the eyes of the world. It is to voluntarily identify with a horrible, violent death.
   c. Take the rejection
   d. Take the pain
   e. Take the death
      i. Galatians 2:20, I am crucified with Christ.

“not worthy of me”

1. No sinner is worthy of Christ. The closest a man can get to being considered “worthy” in a human sense if he is saved and is following Christ as a disciple.

10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Save your life now and you will lose it at the judgment. Spend your life for Christ now and you will find it at the judgment and be rewarded.
58. Receiving a Prophet  10:40-42

10:40 ¶ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Verses 40-42 are in anticipation of the disciples being sent out on their preaching tour in chapter 11.

If you receive an ambassador or a representative of someone, then you also receive the person or organization that sent him. This also applies if you reject that same person.

10:41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward.

10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Even a seemingly insignificant offering or token of service will not be ignored or unrewarded. There are many Christians who cannot do much to advance the gospel due to lack of resources or talent. But everyone can do something, no matter how seeming insignificant it may seem. And the Lord will take notice of it and reward it. This should be a great encouragement to us all!
Matthew Chapter 11

59. The Sending of the Twelve  11:1-6

11:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

The first preaching tour. These cities are probably ones around the Sea of Galilee.

11:2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

See Matthew 14:1-12 for more background on John's arrest.

“Herod Antipas of Galilee had paid a visit to his brother in Rome. During that visit he seduced his brother's wife. He came home again, dismissed his own wife, and married the sister-in-law whom he had lured away from her husband. Publicly and sternly John rebuked Herod. It was never safe to rebuke an eastern despot and Herod took his revenge; John was thrown into the dungeons of the fortress of Machaerus in the mountains near the Dead Sea. For any man that would have been a terrible fate, but for John the Baptist it was worse than for most. He was a child of the desert; all his life he had lived in the wide-open spaces, with the clean wind on his face and the spacious vault of the sky for his root And now he was confined within the four narrow walls of an underground dungeon. For a man like John, who had perhaps never lived in a house, this must have been agony...John must have been like that; and there is nothing to wonder at, and still less to criticize, in the fact that questions began to form themselves in John's mind. He had been so sure that Jesus was the One who was to come. That was one of the commonest titles of the Messiah for whom the Jews waited with such eager expectation (Mark 11:9; Luke 13:35; Luke 19:38; Hebrews 10:37; Psalms 118:26). A dying man cannot afford to have doubts; he must be sure; and so John sent his disciples to Jesus with the question: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" There are many possible things behind that question. (William Barclay, The Gospel of Matthew, The Daily Study Bible, volume 2, pages 1-2)."

11:3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

John was human. Sitting in prison, the devil had time to work on him and introduce doubt into his mind, which led to self-doubt, questions and ultimately offense. John had borne witness of Christ back in Matthew 3, John 1:26-36, but now, he had doubts and probably some depression and needed a strengthening and a reassuring. Although he was the greatest man born of woman, he was still human. Or was he starting to get offended, as per the context in 11:6?

John R. Rice, in his commentary on Matthew (page 164) has a major problem when he says, “This is the hardest temptation Christian workers face after the stress of a great revival campaign is over”. Rice tries to make John a Sword of the Lord-type revivalist evangelist, which he certainly was not. If John were alive today, the Sword wouldn’t publish any of his sermons nor invite him to preach in any Sword Conference. And why does Rice limit this only to those involved in “great revival campaigns”? Evangelists are not the only ones to suffer these kinds of discouragements and let downs. All Christian workers suffer from such periods, not just Rice-style evangelists, but that is not the context of John’s question.
Some think that the question was asked, not for John's sake, but for the sake of his disciples. It may be that when John and his disciples talked in prison, the disciples questioned whether Jesus was really he who was to come, and John's answer was: "If you have any doubts, go and see what Jesus is doing and your doubts will be at an end."

11:4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

There is no word of rebuke from the Lord, only confirmation and encouragement.

11:5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Evidences of Christ's messiahship (His signs and wonders) included:

1. The blind receive their sight
2. The lame walk
3. Lepers are cleansed
4. The deaf hear
5. The dead are raised
6. The poor have the gospel preached to them
   a. Probably spiritually poor, not economically poor, although the poor in riches tend to be neglected in visitation at times, so they should never be despised or by-passed.
      i. A poor man should be as welcomed in the local church as a rich man. Do reject the poor man is to have respect of persons and is sin.
      ii. This will often involve visitation, street preaching, tract distribution where they are, often on the “wrong side of the tracks”.
   b. The Old Testament prophets mainly preached to kings and princes, but Christ and His preachers did much of their ministry among the poor.
7. These signs identify Christ as the Prophet like unto Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18).

Christ also makes a partial quote from Isaiah 35:5,6

11:6 And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

"offended"

1. John was starting to be offended, but here, he is encouraged to keep his faith up.
2. His “offense” included the idea of “He is in jail for preaching the truth. He is in there after heralding the approach and coming of a King-Deliverer. All right, put yourself in John’s sandals. “If Christ is the King and Messiah and if I am His forerunner, what on earth am I doing in prison? Did I get it right? Did I miss something? Did I do something wrong?” He did not know about the Church and believed that the Kingdom was coming in very short order. If this was the case, then why was the Herald sitting in prison?

60. Jesus’ Estimation of John the Baptist 11:7-15
11:7 ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, 
What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

Many religious personalities are like this. They have no true convictions but practice religious pragmatism, using any method that works and teaching anything that will draw a crowd, build the numbers of their church and bring in the money.

John was obviously not a reed shaken in the wind. Any man who would “tell a king off” and make him try to live right (Mark 6:20) is not that kind of man. John had a spine of iron that would not bend or collapse under any circumstance.

11:8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses.

“soft raiment”
1. The Greek word means “effeminate”, sometimes associated with homosexuality.
2. “A man who tells Roman legionnaires where to head-in (Luke 3:14) will hardly be found playing an organ in a cocktail lounge. (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”
3. Today, this would refer to a preacher on a million-dollar platform or on an elaborate set on TBN television, with a $1000 suit and a $500 haircut. He also was not the kind of man who would violate or compromise his principles just to get out of jail or to get in good with the local politicians.
4. Such a man would be a courtier and John was not a courtier. He knew nothing of the courtier’s art of the flattery of kings; he followed the dangerous occupation of telling the truth to kings. John was the ambassador of God, not the courtier of Herod.

11:9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

“what went ye out for to see?”
1. Why do you go to church? For entertainment? Out of a sense of duty? To meet friends? Or to hear a prophet?
2. If these people went out to see a prophet when they went to see John, the Lord assures them that they indeed saw a prophet, more than a prophet, the greatest Old Testament prophet who was the greatest man born among women. The other Old Testament prophets foretold of Christ, but John was His herald and forerunner, which made him greater than the other prophets.
3. We listed some wrong reasons to “go to church” above. The good reasons to go include:
   a. To hear a prophet, to hear a man of God.
   b. To hear the Scripture taught, expounded, applied (2 Timothy 4:2)
      i. Not for the miracles, as John did no miracle (John 10:42).
   c. For instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:6)
   d. As a testimony, when others see you going to church
   e. For fellowship, as no Christian is an island and we all need encouragement (Proverbs 27:17).

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11:10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

This is a fulfillment of several verses:
1. Isaiah 40:3- The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
2. Malachi 3:1- Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he cometh, saith the LORD of hosts.
3. Malachi 4:5- Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.

“Shall prepare thy way before thee” introduces a curious change of “person,” for when we read the text in Malachi (not Isaiah), we find “me” for thee, and “my” for thy. This is tremendously important for the “me-my” of Malachi is Jehovah of the Old Testament. Jesus’ quotation of the verse then clearly identifies Him as Jehovah manifest in the flesh. This is what He professed (John 20:28), and it is what His enemies understood Him to profess (John 10:33, 8:58). (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

11:11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

What a testimonial by God Himself! John’s public ministry only lasted about 6 months, but he was greater than Isaiah, Jeremiah, Samuel, Ezekiel, and any other Old Testament prophet.

“notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”. This is a paradox. John was the greatest Old Testament prophet but the least in the millennial kingdom is greater than John. The exact interpretation of this is difficult, but there is obviously something going on in the millennial kingdom where even the most obscure preacher or minister (or any other kind of spiritual personage) would be considered greater than the greatest Old Testament prophet. Abraham lived to be 175. Moses led Israel for 40 years and David ruled for 40 years. But what John accomplished in 6 months was greater than even these great men!

11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

“There are several volumes of notes by various commentators seeking to find an explanation. The two main ones which do any amount of justice to the text are: (1) That it takes a violent pressing or determination to accept the message of John the Baptist, and the publicans, harlots, and soldiers represent this “taking by force.” (See Luke 16:16, 3:12–14; and Matthew 21:32.) [John 6:15 may explain the attempts of the “violent” to take the kingdom.] The kingdom of heaven, as such, it must be remembered, always refers to the literal, visible, heavenly reign of God over the literal, visible heavens, which will begin again with a literal, physical, visible, Messianic, Davidic King at Jerusalem (Matt. 6:33). Attempts to force the doctrine into any other setting ends where all amillennial and postmillennial reasoning ends—on the ash heap. (2) The only other rendering of the passage is that the “violent” are the unlawful usurpers of the Kingdom: i.e., the priests and Pharisees (Matt. 21:43–46). This may be the case, as verses 12–13 clearly divide the kingdom into three dispensations: A. The Old Testament of the Law and
the Prophets, ending at John. B. An interim period of John, until the crucifixion of Christ. C. A future period (Matt. 8:11), at the Second Coming. This further checks with verse 14, a verse always aiming at the Second Advent (Mal. 4:5). John then is the “heading up” of the Old Testament. He is not the first Baptist in the Baptist church; he is the end of the Old Testament Jewish prophets. In connection with this, it may be observed that the “golden rule” goes out with John (Matt. 7:12)—a bitter pill for a man to swallow, who is counting on it for self-justification before God! (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*).

1. “Most governmental policies operate through violence and deceit (Micah 6:12). No product or service should be provided at the barrel of a gun or any kind of violence (Mark 10:42) (David Hoffman, *Common Man’s Reference Bible*, page 1420).”
2. There have been groups that have sought to assist God in bringing in the Kingdom. The Catholic Church and many Protestant groups have sought to bring in the Kingdom. Every political and economic philosophy is built on this hope. The Munster Prophets of the 16th century and the cultic groups also have tried their hand at it. All the wars and miseries of the last 6000 years have come from man’s rejection of God’s kingdom and the attempt to establish a replacement kingdom based on humanism. But the kingdom is not brought in by such means.

11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

John was the last Old Testament prophet and the end of that dispensation.

11:14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

John said he wasn’t Elijah in John 1:21 but Jesus said he was. Contradiction? No. John may not have fully understood the role he would have played in Israel had accepted his ministry and witness of Christ, or he just did not see himself as any sort of successor to Elijah. Moses and Elijah are both associated with the Second Coming of the Lord to reign and establish the millennial kingdom (Malachi 4:1-5). In Revelation 11:8, they both appear to announce His coming and both are beheaded (Revelation 20:3-6), as John was beheaded. John is a type of Elijah who will appear later; but he already has appeared in the sense that if Israel had accepted Christ, John would fulfill for the prophecy of Malachi 3:1,2 and 4:4,5. Gradually the “postponement theory” of the millennial kingdom becomes established as a Bible fact, rooted and grounded in both Testaments. John is a type of Elijah, and if the Tribulation had begun with a rapture in Acts 7, all prophecies in the Old Testament would have been fulfilled. The conversion of the Gentiles could have taken place through Israel during a millennium with Christ on earth, instead of a Church Age with Christ in heaven!

Summary:
1. All the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Millennial Kingdom (hundreds of verses too many to list here)
2. Christ offered the Kingdom to Israel and was rejected
3. The Kingdom is offered again here in Acts 3
4. It will be offered again by Stephen in Acts 7
5. Israel rejects both offers. Christ sits back down at Stephen’s death. He arose because He would have returned if the nation had repented at Stephen’s message.
6. God now withdraws the offer and the gospel goes to the Samaritans in Acts 8.
7. The apostle to the Gentiles is saved in Acts 9.
11. Acts 28:28 wraps up the current state of the “kingdom offer” and the status of Israel up until the rapture and tribulation period.

Also see notes under Matthew 17:11,12.

As in 11:23, Jesus, in His omniscience, knows the outcomes of the ‘what-if” scenarios.

11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”
1. These doctrines are too hard or deep or “strange” for many commentators! It requires a dispensational approach to the interpretation of these Scriptures to understand the Lord’s teachings, but you must be willing to hear and accept these teachings, even if the go against what you were taught in Bible College!
2. This phrase is used 15 times in Scripture by the Lord. Only the Lord used this phrase, it was never used by a mortal man.

61. “This Generation” 11:16-19

11:16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

All generations are like this, but especially the Lord’s generation. They were one of the worst. Christ stepped into human history in a very bad day, in the days of Herod and Rome.

11:17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

11:18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

John didn’t dance. He wasn’t necessarily a “people person”. He wasn’t a social mixer. He was rough in spirit and language. He could be harsh. He didn’t always use deodorant and sometimes his tie didn’t match his shirt. He split his infinitive when he preached, used double negatives and dangled his participles. He never read the book “How to Win Friends and Influence People”. He didn’t know how to “tiptoe through the tithers” and he was no good at navigating the treacherous waters of church politics. John was no “fair-haired evangelist”. So, he “had a devil” was the verdict passed against him.

11:19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

You are damned if you do, damned if you don’t. You can’t win with this generation. Jesus was everything John was not. Jesus was sociable and good with people. So they accused Him of being a winebibber and gluttonous who liked to hang out with the wrong class of people. You
simply have to learn to ignore the criticism and be who you are and do what God calls you to do, regardless of public opinion, because you will be criticized no matter what you do or how you do it.

“a friend of sinners”
1. The world is no friend to sinners, and neither is Satan. There is no true love in the world. You see some occasional examples of compassion and pity but no true divine love. You may save a man from a burning house, but there is no love of God unless you attempt to save him from the fires of hell. Satan has no care for those in his thrall. They are going to hell and it bothers him not in the least. Sinners are forever telling each other to “go to hell” or they mock and jest at the idea of eternal punishment. A man may live and die in this world alone and have none but the gravedigger as his pallbearer. But if a man knows Christ in a saving way, he is never alone, even if his mother and father forsake him. He also has the brotherhood of millions of Christian in the world. The saint has a friend that sticketh closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24).
2. The “sinners” is the generic term for any sinner, even the “moral” and “respectable” ones, but the publicans are the lower-class of sinners that even “regular” sinners would despise. Matthew would appreciate this as he was a “publican” and Jesus showed love and mercy toward him. Today, this would include those in jail and rescue missions, dope addicts, drunkards and others who are socially “undesirable”.
3. An example of this friendship is seen in Matthew 9:10, where the Lord sat down to eat and fellowship with the publicans and sinners, and the Pharisees couldn’t understand why He was so friendly with them.
4. Consider Romans 5:7, For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. Men might die for a friend or for some great cause, but it is a rare brand of man who would die for his mortal enemy. In contrast to the selfishness of the natural man, Christ died for His enemies, so they might be His friends. Who would die for an enemy? Who would give his life knowing that the person would not appreciate the sacrifice and would vilify the memory of the man who died for him? Christ did! He died for the sin of the world, knowing full well (ahead of time-foreknowledge) that the majority of men would reject that sacrifice and would remain His enemy. Yet Christ died for His enemies as well as for those who would become His friends. This is called “divine love”. Human love will not suffer for an enemy but divine love does so gladly in the hopes that he who was once an enemy may become a friend.
5. Christ died for sinners not saints. He died for all men and not just the “elect”. The elect would certainly be the righteous and there is no question that Christ died for them. But Christ also died for sinners and for His enemies! Get this down- Christ died for “reprobates!” Christ died for all men- “elect” and “non-elect.” Limited atonement, as presented by orthodox Calvinism, is a heresy and the universal extent of the atonement is a theological fact.


11:20 ¶ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

A rebuke in the sharpest terms, because of their unbelief, even when the apostolic signs and wonders were demonstrated right in front of their face.
The English word has the idea of a braided whip, which is used as a verbal “lash” or attack. The Lord would give these cities a verbal whipping or “tongue-lashing” because they refused to repent of their sins, despite the personal visit and ministry of the Lord in their cities. They heard and saw and refused to believe and repent.

11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum would all be singled out for condemnation. These cities were visited by the Lord and they heard Him preach and saw His miracles, and still did not respond. They had a burning and a shining light for a witness and did nothing with it. This is why Sodom, Tyre and Sidon would receive a lesser judgment. They didn’t have nearly the witnesses these cities had. Jesus never personally visited either Tyre, Sidon or Sodom. All three were judged and rightly so, but they would be beaten with fewer stripes than would Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum. This same principle applies to other nations as well as individuals. The United States will receive a harsher judgment than Bolivia as we had a much greater gospel witness, with revivals, great evangelistic movements and hundreds of thousands. Both counties will be judged (Matthew 25 and the Judgment of the Nations) but the nation with the greater witness receives the greater condemnation.

1. This also shows again that just because you may be able to do great signs and wonders, that is no guarantee that people will repent. This goes contrary to the idea of “power religion”, that teaches that if you can show people signs, wonders and miracles, you’ll see a great number of conversions. But Jesus did these miracles and did not see many conversions. John did no miracle (John 10:41) but accomplished great things.

2. They could have repented and chose not to. They had free will and used it to reject God. This shows the error of the Calvinists who wrongly insist that the workings of the Holy Spirit cannot be resisted (the “I” in their TULIP). These three cities did resist the Holy Spirit and God holds them accountable for it. A lack of repentance always brings judgment.

11:22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

Tyre and Sidon did not have the witnesses from the Lord as the three cities above did. They would also be judged but less severely (see notes under Matthew 11:24).

11:23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

As in 11:14, Jesus, in His omniscience, knows the outcomes of the ‘what-if” scenarios. Can you imagine that about Sodom? The Lord knew that if He had visited them as He did Capernaum, Sodom would have repented like Nineveh did under Jonah’s witness. This makes Capernaum a worse city than Sodom, although I am sure Capernaum didn’t have a tenth of the vice Sodom did. Your city doesn’t have to be a Sodom to be a Capernaum to receive this kind of judgment. We are not told why the Lord did not give Sodom a better than what they got, but they did not respond to what little witness they did receive. If they had shown any indication of responding
to the dealings of God, God would have sent them more light. But if there is no reaction, then the Lord is just as liable to abandon that person, or city, and no more witness will be given.

1. See the grace of God in all of this, that He even gave these cities a witness at all, and any chance to repent at all!
2. Ezekiel 16:53-55 say that in the millennium, “Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate”. What exactly does that mean? In some manner, Sodom and the other cities nearby will be restored, but in what form, as desolations to remind all of the judgment of God, or to the state they were in before God judged them?

11:24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

Repeated from Matthew 10:15.

Sodom was in the same situation as Tyre and Sidon in 11:22. Sodom had an angelic visitation (but only to get Lot out) and they had a righteous man living there (Lot) who offered little, if any witness. Sodom did not have the level of witness that Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum had. All the cities listed in this passage will be judged (and some already were) but the severity of the judgments will depend on the level of witness they received. If Sodom was destroyed in the manner it was with the very small witness it received, how much more severe will the judgments against Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum be? Sodom had little or no witness and they were destroyed. These cities received a greater witness and rejected it, so their judgment will be greater.

Luke 12:47 and 48 shows the degrees of punishment, with people being beaten with either few stripes or many stripes. Just as there are degrees of blessedness in heaven (to be determined at the Bema Seat Judgment), there will also be degrees of punishment in hell, dependent upon the amount of light and witness they received and rejected.

The obvious application can be made to modern nations. The United States will suffer extreme judgment in that day as seen in the massive gospel witness this country has had through its entire history. Yet we have continually rejected God and have refused to repent of our national sins. Some areas of the United States may receive greater judgment than others. Consider New England, with the great gospel witness it had up through the 19th century. Look at New England today. Consider cities like Pensacola or Memphis. Cities like that have churches on every corner. While visiting Memphis in 1990, I counted over 600 Baptist churches in the city (listed in the yellow pages) and that did not include all the other types of churches. Yet Memphis (or any city in the so-called “Bible Belt”) is as much of a spiritual hellhole as Pyongyang or Calcutta. Now of those three cities, which one will receive the greater condemnation? All three will be judged, but Memphis will be beaten with many stripes while the other cities would be beaten with few stripes.

63. Revealed to Babes 11:25-27

11:25 ¶ At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.
The world, by wisdom, knew not God (1 Corinthians 1:21). There are many spiritual truths you will not learn in Bible college from “doctors” using your intellect. If God doesn’t reveal them to you, you’ll never get it and if He doesn’t unfold it to you you’ll never understand them. It takes a humble and child-like attitude to become a genuine God-led student of the Scriptures. Heart attitude is more important than head knowledge. But the wise and prudent were too smart, too clever for God so God bypasses them. But He will reveal Himself to anyone with an open heart, regardless of education or intelligence, This is what the “scholars” can’t stand, how an uneducated hillbilly can often times outdo them in terms of Scriptural knowledge and relationship with God.

11:26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

This shows the sovereignty of God.

11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

There is a level of knowledge and intimacy between the Father and Son which no man is privy to and that we can never know. This leads to the truth that in order to know the Son, you must know the Father, and vice versa.

64. The Great Invitation 11:28-30

11:28 ¶ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Come unto Me…”

1. This is invitation language, given to all and without any limitation or exclusion.
   a. Not just an invitation for salvation but also one for sanctification and for living the Christian life, to stop your works-based attempts to justify yourself and to earn God’s favor, as so many believers do. They are toiling in the mines of legalism and religion, with no rest in sight.
2. This is expressed an urgent appeal NOW- why linger to go to Christ? Are you lost? Why linger until the bitter end and hope to be saved on an uncertain death-bed? Are you a saint needing comfort or forgiveness or cleansing or heart purity? Why linger? Why not deal with those needs now? What is the profit in delay?
3. This invitation is given to Jews who are laboring under the lash of the legalism of the scribes and Pharisees, with their 613 precepts of the law and the multitude of traditions which were impossible to fully catalogue, much less obey.
4. We must come, willingly and voluntarily, to Jesus for the rest in salvation and sanctification. He will not drag us or force us. We must want this rest and the blessings that come with it and we go to the right source of this rest, Jesus Himself, Who alone can provide this rest.

What other “religious leader” would dare say this? Allah never said it, not did his boy Mohammad. The Buddha never said it, nor did any of the millions of God of the Hindus. Not even any other Bible character would dare utter such an invitation. See the exclusiveness of Christ here. He recommends no other save Himself as the object of such an invitation.
The context is those who are weighed down with religious burdens, trying to earn their way to heaven. There are multitudes making pilgrimages, doing novenas and “stations of the cross”, washing in the Ganges River, peddling magazines door-to-door, keeping the Law and the Sabbath, abstaining from pork and caffeine, getting baptized in every baptistery in town, keeping the Golden Rule, etc., etc., etc., Christ invites these people to cease from their own strivings and works, come unto Him, rest in His finished work and let Him handle their salvation. This “rest” does not imply any sort of spiritual laziness, for after you have come to Jesus and have been saved, you will work for Him, but not to get saved, but because out of gratitude that you are saved.

“Jesus spoke to men desperately trying to find God and desperately trying to be good, who were finding the tasks impossible and who were driven to weariness and to despair. He says, “Come unto me all you who are exhausted.” His invitation is to those who are exhausted with the search for the truth. The Greeks had said, "It is very difficult to find God, and, when you have found him, it is impossible to tell anyone else about him." Zophar demanded of Job: "Can you find out the deep things of God?” (Jb.11:7). It is Jesus’ claim that the weary search for God ends in himself. W. B. Yeats, the great Irish poet and mystic, wrote: “Can one reach God by toil? He gives himself to the pure in heart. He asks nothing but our attention.” The way to know God is not by mental search, but by giving attention to Jesus Christ, for in him we see what God is like. He says, "Come unto me all you who are weighted down beneath your burdens." For the orthodox Jew religion was a thing of burdens. Jesus said of the Scribes and Pharisees: “They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders” (Matt. 23:4). To the Jew religion was a thing of endless rules. A man lived his life in a forest of regulations which dictated every action of his life. He must listen for ever to a voice which said, “Thou shalt not.” (William Barclay, “Matthew” in The Daily Study Bible).

“There is nothing more certain than that all who have ever tried the self-improvement plan have found it an utter failure. They have begun in darkness, continued in misery and ended in despair. Yet, strange to say, in view of the numberless beacons which are ranged before us to warn us of the folly and danger of traveling that road, we are sure at the first to adopt it. In some way or another, self is looked to and worked upon to procure a warrant to come to Christ. “They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10: 3). Nothing can possibly be a more dreary, depressing, hopeless task than “going about to establish one's own righteousness.” Indeed, the dreariness of the task must always be commensurate with the earnestness and sincerity of the soul that undertakes it. Such an one will sooner or later have to give utterance to the cry, “O wretched man that I am!” and also to ask the question, “Who shall deliver me?” (Rom. 7: 24). There can be no exception. All with whom the Spirit of God has ever worked, have in one way or another been constrained to own the hopelessness of seeking to work out a righteousness for themselves. Christ must be all; self must be nothing. This doctrine is easily stated, but oh, the experience! The same is true in reference to the grand reality of sanctification. Many who have come to Christ for righteousness have not practically and experimentally laid hold of Him as their sanctification. But He is made of God, unto us, the one as well as the other. “But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1: 30-31). The believer is just as powerless in the work of sanctification as in the work of righteousness. If it were not so, some flesh might glory in the divine presence. I could no more subdue a single lust or trample underfoot a single passion or gain the mastery over a single temper, than I could open the kingdom of heaven or establish my own righteousness before God. This is not sufficiently understood. Hence, many true Christians
constantly suffer the most humiliating defeats in their practical career. They know that Christ is their righteousness, that their sins are forgiven, that they are children of God, but they are sorely put about by their constant failure in personal holiness, in practical sanctification. Again and again they experience some unhallowed desire or unsanctified temper. Again and again they are compelled to retire with shame and confusion of face. A person or a circumstance crossed their path yesterday and caused them to lose their temper. Having to meet the same today, they resolve to do better, but sorrowfully, they are again forced to retreat in disappointment and humiliation...True, I can come over and over again and pour into my heavenly Father's ear the humiliating tale of my failure and overthrow. I can confess my sins and find Him ever "faithful and just to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1: 9). But we must learn Christ as the Lord our sanctification as well as "The Lord our righteousness." Moreover, it is by faith and not by effort that we enter into both the one and the other. We look to Christ for righteousness because we have none of our own, and we look to Christ for practical sanctification because we have none of our own. It needed no personal effort on our part to get righteousness because Christ is our righteousness, and it needs no personal effort on our part to get sanctification because Christ is our sanctification (C. M. Mackintosh, Expository Writings, volume 2)."

11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

The greatest study for human scholarship is the study of the person and work of Christ. Theology used to be known as the “Queen of the Science” and all other academic disciplines radiated out from it as spokes on a wheel. But no more.

“rest” Rest from what?
1. Striving against sin
2. Working for your own salvation
3. Trials and burdens of your everyday duties of life
4. Worry, about the future, provisions, salvation...

Also see Hebrews 4:9 for the “rest” given to the people of God. This is a rest that has not yet been realized, but that is promised. It is still waiting for us. Ultimately, it is a millennial rest, where God’s people can finally rest against the assaults and attacks of the world, the flesh (old sin nature) and the devil, all three of which will be rendered inoperative in the millennium and beyond. We are not there yet, but that time of rest is promised unto us and it is something that every child of God should be longing for.

1. Spiritually, this rest is a rest from our works in order to try to earn favor from God or to try to show how spiritual we are. When one comes into a correct understanding of the atonement and the grace of God, that person will stop trying to earn his favor or acceptance from God and will simply rest in the finished work by Christ on the cross. People tend to do this when they have little or no relationship with God. They have to try to rest on their works in order to earn the favor of God, instead of on the completed and finished an accepted work of Jesus.

2. Christ is the One Who ultimately gives us the rest that we desire and seek- Matthew 11:28-30 “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

3. This rest remains only for the people of God. It’s interesting that the phrase people of God is used here. The Church and Christians are never referred to by this term in Paul’s epistles or in the Book of Acts, which leads us to believe that the doctrinal implication an
interpretation of this passage is tributional and is directed towards tribulation believers, not to modern day Christians. We can make any spiritual application that we want, but the doctrinal application is probably beyond the Church Age.

This rest is reserved for the “people of God”, for believers only. This rest is not promised to or provided to the world that is in rebellion against God. They have no peace and no rest (Isaiah 57:20,21). This is why this generation (and every generation before it) is so restless and unsatisfied, in stark contrast with God’s people.

11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

“yoke is easy, and my burden is light:

1. Certainly so, especially compared to the yokes of works laid upon the followers of every single religion besides Biblical Christianity. Do this, that, the other thing, every day, for the rest of your life, and MAYBE you’ll go to heaven when you die, but we just can’t really be sure! Have you done enough works? For long enough? Did you do then well enough? The poor man trying to work his way to heaven never knows and can never have assurance as the religion he is following does not want to give him that kind of assurance. This keeps the poor soul in bondage to that religious system, with both his loyalty, attendance to services and money.

2. The Christian life is the easiest life there is, for the way of the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15). They think they have it easy, with their philosophy of “eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die”. But they are living life the hard way, under the harsh and constant lash of the world, the flesh and devil, none of which ever take a day off or lessen their demands on the sinner. They go through life bearing their own burdens, for they have no invisible means of support. By contrast, the Christian life is the easiest and greatest kind of life there is. I have been living it since 1978. I have a heavenly Father and a great Elder Brother in Christ. I have the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide and direct. I have a Holy Bible to instruct me and to comfort me. I count over 13,000 promises in that Book that I can claim. I have the fellowship and prayers of innumerable saints around the world. My Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills and His divine Son has promised never to leave me or forsake me. And at the end of all this, I have the promise of heaven, eternal life, a glorified body and eternal fellowship with God, the saints and the heavenly beings forever. But I hear a critic say “But you cannot wallow and engage in the delights of the world. You don’t smoke, drink, chew go to the theater, or indulge in the lusts of the flesh.” Are those supposed to bring me sorrow? I delight that I have no such desires. I was delivered from the hog-pen at my salvation. Why should I desire to return to such a low and generate “life” when Christ came to give me life and that more abundantly (John 10:10)?

3. But there is a still a yoke and a burden in the Christian life, the yoke of service and the burden of sanctification and a Christian walk. Both are made easier and bearable by Christ.

   a. It seems a contradiction that we can rest while wearing a yoke, for yokes are for work.
   b. The yoke is easy, the burden light.
      i. The yoke of legalism and religion are heavy, but Christ’s yoke is easy.
         We must wear one yoke. We either try to earn our own salvation and justification or we accept that which is found in Christ. We can do it the hard way or the easy way.
ii. The burden is light. The burden of legalism and religion is so heavy as to crush many and drive them wither to despair or a form of hyper-legalism. But Christ’s burden is no burden at all as it is fitted by love and grace.

We must come to a rest about our Christian works and living the Christian life. We must come to despise trying to live the Christian life on our own, through the power of the flesh and the spiritual weariness that brings. People try and try and work and work, trying to earn God’s favor by their own works and holiness, only to fail. They have good intentions, but they believe they must work and work instead of resting in the work Christ has done for them. Why try to earn that which is given to you freely?

1. Many put the emphasis on works in order to earn God’s favor. They pray, go door-to-door and work on bus routes, busy themselves around the church, because they are told that work is the greatest thing a Christian can do. While we ought to labor for the Lord, it is not those works that sanctify. But many will use works as a substitute for sanctification. Since they have no walk with God and have no burden for a walk with God (probably because their pastors never taught them about this truth), they believe the only way they can earn the favor of God is by works and results. The more souls you win, the more God favors you. The larger your church is, the closer you are to God. But nothing could be further from the truth!

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Come unto me and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast.”

I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary and worn and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
And He has made me glad.  
(Horatius Bonar)
Matthew Chapter 12

65. The Lord of the Sabbath 12:1-9

12:1 At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

The corn would be planted in long, narrow strips and the land between the rows was considered a right of way.

This was legal and not considered to be stealing, as long as they only used their hands and no other instruments (Deuteronomy 23:25).

12:2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

The Pharisees jumped at this, as if they were following Jesus and His disciples, just waiting to pounce the minute they did something they could exploit and use against the Lord.

“which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day”

1. It was deemed to be unlawful since it involved physical labor.
2. “The Sabbath Law was very complicated and very detailed. The commandment forbids work on the Sabbath day; but the interpreters of the Law were not satisfied with that simple prohibition. Work had to be defined. So thirty-nine basic actions were laid down, which were forbidden on the Sabbath, and amongst them were reaping, winnowing and threshing, and preparing a meal. The interpreters were not even prepared to leave the matter there. Each item in the list of forbidden works had to be carefully defined. For instance, it was forbidden to carry a burden. But what is a burden? A burden is anything which weighs as much as two dried figs. Even the suggestion of work was forbidden; even anything which might symbolically be regarded as work was prohibited. Later the great Jewish teacher, Maimonides, was to say, “To pluck ears is a kind of reaping.” By their conduct the disciples were guilty of far more than one breach of the Law. By plucking the corn they were guilty of reaping; by rubbing it in their hands they were guilty of threshing; by separating the grain and the chaff they were guilty of winnowing; and by the whole process they were guilty of preparing a meal on the Sabbath day, for everything which was to be eaten on the Sabbath had to be prepared the day before (William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, The Daily Study Bible, page 22).”

12:3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hunged, and they that were with him;

When confronted, Jesus is always taking His accusers back to the Old Testament. “Have ye not read”? You should. You are EXPECTED to know the Old Testament well enough to teach it, yet you missed this simple lesson?

Jesus compares Himself to David here, which has obvious messianic implications.

Jesus appeals to two Scriptural facts to answer the charges of Sabbath breaking.

1. David broke it (1 Samuel 21:1-6).
2. The priests themselves break it as they fulfill their temple duties on the sabbath (12:4,5, citing Numbers 29:32). Work done for God on the Sabbath is no profanation of the Sabbath.

12:4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

12:5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

The priests had to break the Sabbath every day in their tabernacle and temple work, yet they were not punished for it.

The Lord hits them with another “have ye not read?” implying they were very ignorant of the Scriptures they were expected to be experts on.

“profane” “Our Eng. word "profane" = far from the temple. The Greek word here = to trample down and thus treat as common. Cp. Act 24:6 (Ethelbert Bullinger, Companion Bible).”

12:6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.

The Lord of the Sabbath was greater than the Sabbath and the Lawgiver was greater than the Law He gave.

12:7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.


12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Especially on the Sabbath day since He created the Sabbath day!

12:9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue.

“Our synagogue”, not just “the synagogue”, a note of disapproval here.

66. Healing on the Sabbath 12:10-13

12:10 ¶ And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

Christ had just finished preaching on the Sabbath, then the Jews turn right around and test Him on it! They used this poor man with the deformity as an excuse to accuse the Lord of violating
their interpretation of the sabbath. They had no concern or compassion for the man’s condition and the Lord had no concern or compassion for their misunderstanding of the sabbath.

The Pharisees never denied Christ’s power to heal. The attacked the way He healed, without regard to their laws and rituals. They admitted His power to heal without acknowledging it.


12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?

Any of them would, out of sympathy for a helpless animal, or to prevent an economic loss.

12:12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

“How much then is a man better than a sheep?”
1. Refutes the animal rights/PETA crowd, as a man is worth more than a sheep. After all, Christ died for men, not for sheep.
2. If you would help a wounded animal on the Sabbath, why not a wounded man, who is worth more than a sheep?

12:13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

The Lord went out of His way to violate the inaccurate interpretation of the Sabbath that was currently being taught.

Mark 3:5 adds that Jesus was angry when He said this.

67. Opposition to Jesus 12:14-21

12:14 ¶ Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

The signs of a religious hypocrites include a violent reaction whenever their rituals are ignored, and their authority is not acknowledged.

“The synagogue was too hot for the Pharisees, and so they went out. Utterly routed, they retire from public gaze, hating the man who had so completely baffled them. They could not silence him, and so they would slay him (Charles Spurgeon, The Gospel of the Kingdom, page 178).”

12:15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;
A strategic withdrawal. It is not a sign of cowardice to do this. It was not yet His time to die or to be put to death. When that time did come, He did not withdraw or shirk from it.

“He healed them all” A true faith healer will have a 100% success rate, with no duds or misfires. The fakir can blame the ‘lack of faith” of the person involved or other excuses but Jesus had no such problems.

12:16 And charged them that they should not make him known:
Evangelism forbidden.

12:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

12:18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

12:19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

Christ’s public ministry was quiet, dignified, moderate. This would come as a shock to many modern preachers who put on a show and play the fool when they preach. He was not a rabble-rouser or a trouble-maker.

1. This is in contrast with many so-called “Independent Fundamental Baptists”. They major much of “preaching” as they define it, but their sermons are all noise, bluster and emotionalism (“Billy Sunday preached that way so that must be a good way to preach!”) with little theological content or true exposition. Since they have little theology and must fill up 45-60 minutes, so they tell many stories as filler, and, of course, they are always the hero in their stories.

2. Christ preached strongly and forcefully but He relied on the content of His sermons to make their impact, not in the way He preached them.

3. A man can preach quietly yet forcefully and truthfully, if he is preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit. Volume does not equal spirituality in a sermon.

The Lord did not aim at raising himself in the esteem of the multitude by successfully contending with the Pharisees; for his method was of another sort. Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, and the force of truth, would he prevail. The wrath of man in controversy, the frenzy of wild rhetoric, the torrent of popular declamation; all these he left to mere pretenders. Too many men thrive on controversy to promote themselves, but Christ would have us wait on God if we would see such successes and promotions.

1. “Isaiah predicted that Messiah would minister with gentleness and humility. He would not present Himself arrogantly or brashly. He would be very compassionate (v. 20). He would not advance His own program by stepping on others. He would bring salvation finally to the harassed and helpless (9:36) as well as to the weary and burdened (11:28) without crushing the weak. This concept of Messiah was much more gentle than the one Jesus’ contemporaries held. They expected Him to crush all opposition…Consequently
2. “The word that is used for to cry aloud is the word that is used for the barking of a dog, the croaking of a raven, the bawling of a drunken man, the uproar of a discontented audience in a theatre. It means that Jesus would not brawl with men. We know all about the quarrels of conflicting parties, in which each tries to shout the other down. The hatred of theologians, the odio theoligicum is one of the tragedies of the Christian Church. We know all about the oppositions of politicians and of ideologies. In Jesus there is the quiet, strong serenity of one who seeks to conquer by love, and not by strife of words (William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, The Daily Study Bible, pages 33-34).”

3. “Religious extroversion has been carried to such an extreme in evangelical circles that hardly anyone has the desire, to say nothing of the courage, to question the soundness of it. Externalism has taken over, God now speaks by the wind and the earthquake only; the still small voice can be heard no more. The whole religious machine has become a noisemaker... The old question ‘What is the chief end of man?’ is now answered ‘To dash about the world and add to the din thereof.’ And all this is done in the name of Him who did not strive nor cry nor make His voice to be heard in the streets (Matthew 12:18-21). We must begin the needed reform by challenging the spiritual validity of externalism. What a man is must be shown to be more important than what he does... While the moral quality of any act is imparted by the condition of the heart, there may be a world of religious activity which arises not from within but from without and which would seem to have little or no moral content. Such religious conduct is imitative or reflex. It stems from the current cult of commotion and possesses no sound inner life... The desire to be dramatically active is proof of our religious infantilism; it is a type of exhibitionism common to the kindergarten (A. W. Tozer, “The Root of the Righteous” cited in The A. W. Tozer Bible, page 1130).”

The doctrine here laid down is full of comfort and consolation. There are thousands in every church of Christ to whom it ought to speak peace and hope. There are some in every congregation, that hear the Gospel, who are ready to despair of their own salvation, because their strength seems so small. They are full of fears and despondency, because their knowledge, and faith, and hope, and love, appear so dwarfish and diminutive. Let them drink comfort out of this text. Let them know that weak faith gives a man as real and true a saving interest in Christ as strong faith, though it may not give him the same joy. There is life in an infant as truly as in a grown up man. There is fire in a spark as truly as in a burning flame. The least degree of grace is an everlasting possession. It comes down from heaven. It is precious in our Lord’s eyes. It shall never be overthrown (J. C. Ryle, The Gospel of Matthew).”

12:20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

“bruised reed”
1. The “bruised reed” is the wounded man, maybe one who has suffered some loss in his service to God. Paul would qualify as such a man in 2 Corinthians 4:8-15. The Lord will not wound a wounded man.
2. Man tends to judge, be harsh and condemn others in these seasons of life but God instead takes pity and compassion on us, knowing that we are dust.

“smoking flax” The “smoking flax” is a man who was once “on fire” for God but has since cooled off and is backslidden. He might be like Jeremiah in Jeremiah 20:9. He was fed up,
discouraged and wanted to quit but God sustained him through his discouragement. The Lord will not discourage a discouraged man.

“till he send forth judgment unto victory”. Is this a second advent application?

Look at how Christ dealt with those men who were defeated, discouraged, beaten down:

1. Elijah in 1 Kings 19
2. Peter in John 21:9-17
3. Paul in Acts 18:9. Which of us have not been in a position of failure, uncertainty, despair or depression, especially in the ministry? It is good to know that the Lord is very compassionate (Psalm 103:8) tender, longsuffering and pitiful towards us (Psalm 103:13).
4. Psalm 103:8-14 is the Psalm that speaks to us during these times.

12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

And we do, as seen by the growth of the Church! Many Gentiles trusted Christ during His earthly ministry and many more after His death and resurrection. More Gentiles would trust in His name than the Jews would, until the Millennium.

68. A Kingdom Divided Against Itself 12:22-30

12:22 ¶ Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

These conditions are sometimes (but not always) caused by devil possession. Don’t automatically assume every deaf or blind person is devil possessed. This poor man was struck blind and dumb, utterly helpless and in a miserable state. Devils care not what misery they bring to their hosts, as long as they have a body and can avoid the pit.

12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

This question was unacceptable to the Pharisees. They could not let this exaltation of Christ go unchallenged. They could not deny the miracle, so they sought to slander it.

12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

“This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”

1. Illogical. Why would Satan cast out Satan? Why would he work against himself?
2. The objections of the Pharisees can only be traced to one cause: they cannot understand how the miracles could be anything but of devil origin, since the man that is doing them will not keep their interpretation of ceremonial sabbath.
3. This was the only position they could take. Since the Pharisees rejected Christ since He did not acknowledge their authority, they could not acknowledge that His power was divine. If it didn’t come from God, then it must come from Satan. There was no other explanation they could come up with.
12:25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:

Jesus, as omniscient Deity, “knew it all,” but He confined to a body of flesh. He sometimes was limited in energy, thought, and perception by His humanity, as in John 4:6.

12:26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

Satan does have a kingdom and he is not going to destroy his own kingdom.

12:27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.

Jesus was casting out devils the same way the Jews were.
   1. If Jesus was doing it by the power of the Devil, then how were the Jews doing it?
   2. “The thought is: “When your sons return after a ‘casting out’ and talk with you about it and you tell them what I have been doing, they will decide for themselves whether it is God or Satan doing the casting out, and they’ll ‘eye you’ close if you imply that it is Satan that is doing it; that will reflect on them.” (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew)

12:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

12:29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

The “strong man” is Satan.

12:30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

The impossibility of neutrality when it comes to Christ. You are either for Him or against Him. To declare neutrality is to be against Him.
   1. “There are three things which make a man seek this impossible neutrality.
      a. There is the sheer inertia of human nature. It is true of so many people that the only thing they desire is to be left alone. They automatically shrink away from anything which is disturbing, and even choice is a disturbance.
      b. There is the sheer cowardice of human nature. Many a man refuses the way of Christ because he is afraid to take the stand which Christianity demands. The basic thing that stops him is the thought of what other people will say. The voice of his neighbors is louder in his ears than the voice of God.
c. There is the sheer flabbiness of human nature. Most people would rather have security than adventure, and the older they grow the more that is so. A challenge always involves adventure; Christ comes to us with a challenge, and often we would rather have the comfort of selfish inaction than the adventure of action for Christ (William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, The Daily Study Bible, page 40).

69. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit 12:31-33

12:31 ¶ Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

The Holy Spirit is a person.
1. He is spoken of in the masculine pronoun
2. He has will
3. He has personality
4. He has emotion

The definition of the Unpardonable Sin.
1. Verse 32 says it involves speaking against the Holy Spirit (12:32), so it is not necessarily a thought-based sin but is something that is verbally spoken.
2. The “unpardonable sin” occurs at the crisis of the kingdom when Christ was on earth showing His Messianic credentials.
3. It is recorded that the sin is committed (or was nearly committed—see Mark 3:29) by the Pharisees. A number of them rejected Christ fully and finally here and never repented, even after His resurrection.
4. There are always people today who are worried that they have committed this sin and thus can’t be saved. Yet most of these people couldn’t accurately define what this sin is or what the reference is that describes it.
   a. Professing Christians who do not believe in the security of the believer (like most Pentecostals) also worry about committing this sin and thus losing their salvation.
5. Mark 3:30 says that the Pharisees claimed that Jesus Christ had an unclean spirit. As to how this can be applied to the Church Age, “this side” of the resurrection, is a problem. No one would be tempted to say it; if they have, it has been such a rare occurrence that it is not mentioned in any church history, any gospel tract, or any set of sermons published by anyone, in the last 400 years.
   a. Job 7:16–19 is abundant proof that telling God to “get away” and leave you alone and quit dealing with you is not the “unpardonable sin.”
   b. The unpardonable sin” occurs at the crisis of the kingdom-question when Christ was on earth showing His credentials. It is recorded that the sin is committed (or was nearly committed—see Mark 3:29) by the Pharisees; a number of them rejected Christ fully and finally here and never repented, even after His resurrection.
   b. Ultimately, this sin could be committed during the Lord’s earthly ministry or during the Millennium, since this is dealt with in Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom.
6. People (usually shallow or Charismatic-type Christians) who worry about the “unpardonable sin” usually seem not to be so concerned with committing other sins.

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12:32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

12:33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

Words reveal what is in our heart. If we utter hateful or blasphemous, it reveals how dark our hearts are.

1. *The heart is the root, the language is the fruit* (v. 33); if the nature of the tree be good, it will bring forth fruit accordingly.

2. *The heart is the fountain, the words are the streams* (v. 34); Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, as the streams are the overflowings of the spring. A wicked heart is said to send forth wickedness, as a fountain casts forth her waters, Jer. vi. 7.

3. *The heart is the treasury, the words are the things brought out of that treasury* (v. 35); and from hence men's characters may be drawn, and may be judged of. (Matthew Henry, Commentary, pages 1266-1267).

70. Condemned or Justified By Your Words 12:34-37

12:34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

The quality and the purity of the water from a pump depends on the well from which it was drawn from. The pump doesn't change the quality of the water, it only delivers what is put through it.

12:35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

A man's heart will eventually be revealed by his words.

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

In the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin (Proverbs 10:19). The police always warn a criminal “Anything you say can be used against you in a court of law”. The Lord operates on the same principle in that what we say today may come back to bite us at the judgment. Be careful what you say, especially when you are attacking the Lord and trying to attributes His miracles to Satan.

12:37 For by words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

This is associated with the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
71. **The Sign of Jonah 12:38-42**

12:38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

“Master, we would see a sign from thee.”

1. “Master”, not “Lord”.
2. The gall! Ordering Christ to do a miracle, just for them! They wouldn’t believe anyway, just as the past miracles of Christ had done them no good. They had just seen a healing (and thus, a sign) but they rejected that one since they accused Jesus of doing that sign by the power of Beelzebub in 12:24). If they rejected that sign, what right did they have to ask for another? And why would they believe a second sign if they rejected the first sign? They didn’t believe the signs Christ already provided, they would not believe any future signs He might provide. Israel had a right to ask for the apostolic signs and wonders if Jesus was the Messiah (Exodus 4:9-30). But even if they had seen them (and they did and would again), they still refused to accept them or Him, so what was the point?

a. The main problem here is they had already been presented with a thousand signs and had rejected all of them (Matthew 8:4, 14, 16, 34, 9:6, 22, 26, 30, 10:8, 11:5, 6, 23, 12:13). The question is one of a bigoted hypocrite, with his mind already made up. It is like the saying: “I’ve got my mind made up; don’t confuse me with a lot of facts (or truth)."

12:39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

Israel would only get one sign- the resurrection, as evidenced by Jonah.

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign”

1. A fitting verse for charismatics and other sign-seekers. Gentiles have no business asking for messianic signs and wonders because:
   a. We are to walk by faith,
   b. We are not looking to establish the messianic credentials of Jesus.

2. **Adulterous** in the sense of immoral, unfaithful, apostate.
   a. Israel was guilty of spiritual adultery from God by their formalism and spiritual blindness, substituting their own narrow and legalistic interpretations of the law for the true meanings and applications of the law.
   b. Many today are guilty of the same sin of “sign seeking” in failing to put their total trust in the written Scripture. The Bible is not sufficient for them, so they need something external to “prove” the Bible or to strengthen their faith.
   c. Who is guilty of this?
      i. Charismatics. Obviously, with so many Charismatic preachers continually harping on signs and wonders, physical healings, financial blessings, etc.
      b. Revivalists. Many Independent Fundamental Baptists are continually harping on “revival”. They read about the various moves of God in history (as in the First and second Great awakenings) and declare that we need God to “do it again” so we can have a great number of “souls saved” and
see and increase of excitement and interest in our churches. To them, “normal” preaching and “normal” Christianity is not enough, and God can’t do His work unless we can somehow coax Him to “send down a might revival”. So they try their best to “earn it” and “work for it”. They are looking for a sign of something they would call a “revival” to somehow justify and vindicate their ministries and to demonstrate that they are true and genuine “men of God”. But do we need “revival” to accomplish that? Wouldn’t “normal” moves and workings of God accomplish that, and more? Have they turned “revival” into some sort of religious “fetish” (like bus ministries and their versions of “soulwinning”)?

12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

As Jonah was 3 literal days and nights in the whale’s stomach, so Christ would be in three literal days and nights in the heart of the earth.

1. Jesus took the account of Jonah as literal history, so shall we. Some observations about the incident with Jonah:

2. Scripture does not say Jonah stayed alive while in the whale’s belly. The “sign” turns out to be the sign of the resurrection. Jonah was not alive three days and nights. He was dead (Jonah 2:2, 6; Acts 2:27-34).

3. There are historical accounts of whales that have swallowed men and disgorged them long after three days, and there are whales big enough to keep a man alive three days.

3. Since Christ turns out to be in the earth an exact even three days and an exact even three nights, there is no need to compromise with the “good Friday” Catholic fiction, by reducing the days to one and one-half. The Scriptural days listed from Palm-Sunday to Christ’s burial are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday—6 p.m. There is no way Christ could have been crucified on a Friday.

a. He came in Sunday morning (Mark 11:11).

b. He slept at Bethany Sunday night (Mark 11:12).

c. He cursed the fig tree Monday morning and saw it withered Tuesday (Mark 11:20).

d. Tuesday evening at 5 was two days before the Passover (Mark 14:1).

e. Passover was eaten after 6 Thursday (Matt. 26:1). Disciples went out to find a room on Tuesday (Luke 22:7).

f. Tuesday evening at the end of the third day of the week the Passover is killed—not eaten (Matt 26:1).

i. The Bible lists no extra day between Sunday and Wednesday morning at 9 o’clock, when He is crucified. The plain truth is that Christ is crucified Wednesday and is in the tomb at 6 p.m., making exactly three nights of twelve hours each and three days of twelve hours each in the tomb. He comes out the first day of the week—Saturday night at 6 p.m. The angel descends at midnight Saturday night and the women come at 5:30 a.m., Sunday morning.

William Barclay, in his Daily Study Bible on Matthew (volume 2, pages 49 and 50) claims that “The fact is that Matthew understood wrongly the point of what Jesus said; and in so doing he made a strange mistake for Jesus was not in the heart of the earth for three nights, but only for two. He was laid in the earth on the night of the first Good Friday and rose on the morning of the first Easter Sunday.
The point is that to the Ninevites Jonah himself was God's sign, and Jonah's words were God's message.” But a man writing under divine inspiration is not going to make any such mistake, but a liberal, writing under the crippling effects of critical scholarship, would make such a mistake. Barclay can be occasionally useful, but he must always be read with discernment because of his liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. A man writing under divine inspiration and who was a physical disciple of Jesus who heard His teachings over a three-year period “misunderstood”? More likely that Barclay misunderstood!

12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

The people of Nineveh repented when they heard the preaching of Jonah. The Lord’s generation received a greater witness that Nineveh did and they would not repent. These Jews would be judged harsher than the heathen in Nineveh.

12:42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Queen of Sheba.
1. This believing Gentile would condemn unbelieving Israel at this judgment. She travelled hundreds of miles, uninvited, at great expense to hear Solomon, based on a mere report of his fame. This generation wouldn’t walk across the street to hear a Greater Than Solomon. She came uninvited, on a mere report and at a great expense to hear Solomon.
2. It would cost these Jews nothing to hear the Lord, but they did not take advantage of their opportunity.

72. The Danger of Exorcisms 12:43-45

12:43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

12:44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

“The foul fiend calls the man, “My house.” His audacity is amazing. He did not build or buy that house, and he has no right to it. He speaks of his leaving the man as a mere coming out: “I came out.” He says, as if it were an easy matter, “I will return.” Evidently, he considers that he has the freehold of man’s nature and can go and come at his pleasure. If Satan quits a man of his own will, he is sure to return just when it suits his purpose. Only the divine force which ejects him can secure his non-return. Reformations which are not the work of conquering grace are usually temporary, and often lead up to a worse condition in after years. (Charles Spurgeon, Gospel of the Kingdom, page 192).”
The heart of the man is swept from certain grosser sins and garnished with some pretty morality or religion; but the Holy Spirit is not there, and no divine change has been wrought, and therefore the unclean spirit is as much at home there as ever he was. The devil may appreciate that his former house has been improved in his absence with a good cleaning and a new coat of paint.

12:45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

If an unsaved man has devils cast out of him, he stands in danger of being re-possessed by even more devils unless he gets saved. The devil is cast out in 12:43 but he leaves a spiritual void in the life and body of the person unless that person is saved and has the Holy Spirit come in to fill that void. Otherwise the “house” is swept, varnished and clean but it is empty, ready for a new occupant. If this person does not accept Christ, the devil may decide to return to the body of his previous victim and the victim would become possesses again, and probably with an even greater number of devils, so his new condition would be worse than his first possession.

73. Who is My Mother? 12:46-50

12:46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

Christ was always being interrupted!

“brethren”

1. Mary had at least 4 half-brothers and 2 half-sisters, born after Him. The Romanist teaching of the “perpetual virginity” of Mary is a myth.
2. Jesus is called Mary’s firstborn in Matthew 1:25 and Luke 2:7. This presupposes other children.
3. Jesus was an alien to His mother’s children- Psalm 69:8,9.
4. James is called the Lord’s brother in Galatians 1:19.

12:47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

“who is my mother?”

1. Anti-Romanist teachings on Mary worship.
2. No Biblical writer ever encouraged the practice of worshipping Mary or elevating her in any way.

No special favors or recognition for family, especially Mary.
12:49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

Spiritual ties are often stronger than family ties.

12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

It is not family ties that grant any sort of special relationship with Christ. It is doing the will of God that grants that sort of relationship that transcends family.
Matthew Chapter 13

74. Parable of the Sower 13:1-9

The problem with evangelism is what do you do with the converts? You hope they attend a good church and start to grow spiritually but that is not always the case. Sometimes you get just a verbal profession with no real change of heart. People may make a profession in the heat of an emotional moment that quickly wears off. Some may have no good church to attend or may start going to a weak or compromised church where they will end up servicing the apostasy. The cults may pick off some of the converts. They have a true gift of spotting a young convert who is not able to defend themselves against their errors. Only a handful will truly go on with God. Look at all the multitudes that followed Jesus at various times in His ministry. Yet there were only a handful of people at the cross. The Parable of the Sower below describes all this in more detail.

13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

13:2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

“It shows a definite turning-point in the ministry of Jesus. At the beginning of his ministry we find him teaching in the synagogues; but now we find him teaching on the seashore. The change is very significant. It was not that the door of the synagogue was as yet finally shut to him, but it was closing. Even yet in the synagogue he would find a welcome from the common people; but the official leaders of Jewish orthodoxy were now in open opposition to him. When he entered a synagogue now, it would not be to find only an eager crowd of listeners; it would be also to find a bleak-eyed company of Scribes and Pharisees and elders weighing and sifting every word to find a charge against him, and watching every action to turn it into an accusation words (William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, The Daily Study Bible, pages 53-54).”

13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

“Behold…” As Jesus was preparing to preach this sermon, He may have seen a man working in a nearby field, and He directed the attention of His audience to that man to develop this parable.

Four soils, or hearts:
1. Wayside- no effect of the seed/word at all
2. Stony- Can't take root, no soil
3. Thorny- choked by cares of this world
4. Good, leads to salvation

“Theoretically, the seed, being the Word of God, should produce the same kind of fruit regardless of the spiritual condition of those who scatter it; but it does not work that way. The identical message preached to the heathen by men of differing degrees of godliness will produce different kinds of converts and result in a quality of Christianity varying according to the purity and power of those who preach it. Christianity will always reproduce itself after its kind. A
worldly minded, unspiritual church, when she crosses the ocean to give her witness to peoples of other tongues and other cultures is sure to bring forth on the other shores a Christianity much like her own. Not the naked Word only but the character of the witness determines the quality of the convert. The church can do no more than transplant herself. What she is in one land she will be in another. A crab apple does not become a Grimes Golden by being carried from one country to another. God has written His law deep in all life; everything must bring forth after its kind (A. W. Tozer, "Of God and Man" cited in The A. W. Tozer Bible, page 1132).

The sower is Christ. The seed is the word of God. The fowls of verse 4 are devils sent by Satan. The ground represents the heart of a man by the wayside. He is lost. The “stony place” hearers, where there is no “earth,” are those that “joyfully receive the word” (Matthew 13:20) and believe, without a “root” taking place in the heart. They pass off as Christians until either persecution, affliction, or temptation put them to the test and expose him.

“The great interest of this chapter is that here we see Jesus beginning to use to the full his characteristic method of teaching in parables. Even before this he had used a way of teaching which had the germ of the parable in it. The simile of the salt and the light (Matthew 5:13-16), the picture of the birds and the lilies (Matthew 6:26-30), the story of the wise and the foolish builder (Matthew 7:24-27), the illustration of the garments and the wine-skins (Matthew 9:16-17), the picture of the children playing in the market-place (Matthew 11:16-17) are all embryo parables. They are truth in pictures. But it is in this chapter that we find Jesus’ way of using parables fully developed and at its most vivid. As someone has said, "Whatever else is true of Jesus, it is certainly true that he was one of the world's supreme masters of the short story." Before we begin to study these parables in detail, let us ask why Jesus used this method and what are the great teaching advantages which it offers (William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, The Daily Study Bible, page 54).

13:4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

The seeds are the various applications of the word of God. Sometimes, we give the word but it has no effect on the sinner to whom it is given. This includes most people, who simply have no interest in spiritual things.

When Christ sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside: even when the Chief Sower is at work, some seed fails. We know he sows the best of seed, and in the best manner; but some of it falls on the trodden path, and so lies uncovered and unaccepted of the soil.

13:5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

“Stony places”
1. This may not have been a field full of rocks, but ground that had a shallow layer of topsoil that covered a hard, rocky foundation underneath.
2. Any seed that fell here would not be able to put down any roots.

13:6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
13:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

The third “hearer,” is a man who hears and evidently receives, for he had a possibility of bearing fruit. Further, “he becometh unfruitful,” indicating that at one time he did bear fruit. The word is in him. He has some fruit that is not perfected. Three things keep this man from being a fruitful Christian, and they are listed by Luke as: “cares...riches, and pleasures.” Mark lists them as: “cares,” “deceitfulness of riches,” and “other things.” How telling of modern life where we get too busy to pray or consider spiritual things. We have college, career, marriage and pleasures that keep us out of church and away from the prayer closet. So many today are just too busy and wrapped up in things of this world to stop and give the gospel any serious consideration. They also claim to be too busy to go to church but they always seem to find the time to take their boat out on the lake or go on a trip with their RV.

13:8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

The fourth hearer is described as “ground that has been well prepared for planting”. He understands and “bears fruit”, with both Matthew and Mark showing varieties of “fruitfulness” among the saved—30, 60, 100. This hearer keeps the word and brings “forth the fruit with patience”. If you can’t bring forth 100-fold, at least strive to bring 30-fold.

1. For every 4 people that hear the gospel, only 1 will genuinely accept it and be saved. And for every 3 men that do respond, only 1 will bear fruit a hundredfold. So only about 1 out of every 7 people who hear the gospel will respond in the best way possible. But there will be a harvest! You may only be able to glean a partial harvest from all the seed that was sown, as drought, bugs, disease and the rabbits will devour some of the seed, but faithful sowing will result in a harvest. It may not be as large as we would hope but there will be some fruit of our labors, even if we do not see it.

2. We must never rush the harvest or else we will pick unripe fruit. The harvest comes on nature’s timetable, not ours. It may take decades for the seed of the gospel to germinate in the heart of a man. This is a day of the quick conversion and getting people saved between traffic lights. I have seen claims by hyper-evangelicals of leading a man to Christ in ten minutes, as they knock on his door, rush through the Romans Road and pry some sort of profession or prayer out of the prospect in less time than it takes to eat a hamburger. We may have instant coffee and instant potatoes, but instant conversions are a thing foreign to the spirit of Scripture. There is always a period of preparation of the soil before any harvest can be expected.

“When a man sows the seed of the word, he does not know what he is doing or what effect the seed is having. H. L. Gee tells this story. In the church where he worshipped there was a lonely old man, old Thomas. He had outlived all his friends and hardly anyone knew him. When Thomas died, Gee had the feeling that there would be no one to go to the funeral so he decided to go, so that there might be someone to follow the old man to his last resting-place. There was no one else and it was a wild, wet day. The funeral reached the cemetery; and at the gate there was a soldier waiting. He was an officer, but on his raincoat, there were no rank badges. The soldier came to the graveside for the ceremony; when it was over, he stepped forward and before the open grave swept his hand to a salute that might have been given to a king. H. L. Gee walked away with this soldier, and as they walked, the wind blew the soldier’s raincoat open to reveal the shoulder badges of a brigadier. The brigadier said to Gee: “You will perhaps
be wondering what I am doing here. Years ago, Thomas was my Sunday School teacher; I was a wild lad and a sore trial to him. He never knew what he did for me, but I owe everything I am or will be to old Thomas, and today I had to come to salute him at the end.” Thomas did not know what he was doing. No preacher or teacher ever does. It is our task to sow the seed, and to leave the rest to God (William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, *The Daily Study Bible*, pages 62-63)."

“The harvest was not equally great on every spot of fertile soil: it varied from an hundredfold to thirtyfold. All good ground is not alike good; and, besides, the situation may differ. Harvests are not all alike in the same farm, in the same season, and under same farmer; and yet each field may yield a fairly good harvest (Charles Spurgeon, *Gospel of the Kingdom*)."

13:9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

L. 13:9 You can hear it if you want or you can reject the message. The choice is up to the hearer.

75. Why Parables? 13:10-17

13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

The parable is explained to the disciples in private but not to the crowds in public. The crowds would not believe or receive these mysteries, so these truths are withheld

“It is given unto you to know.”

1. This statement implies that God Himself is selective and selects and gives to certain people what He does not to others. If a child learns his arithmetic right, he will be given a chance at math. If he learns this right, he will be given a chance at algebra, etc. If a man goes by the truth God gives him and believes what God has said about fundamental basic things (i.e., sin, death, judgment, and salvation), then God will increase his ability to learn greater truths, and he may go deeper into revelation. The disciples have obeyed “John’s Baptism,” and they have followed Christ and listened to Him, thus far, without criticism or “hardness of heart.” They are going to learn something the Pharisees are not going to be able to learn because God will not show them.

2. It must also be remembered that God is not under obligation to reveal the truth to a man who doesn’t want it (John 7:17). To some “it is not given” because they don’t want it and care nothing for it.

“The outstanding thing one can learn from this first parable is that, contrary to scholarly tradition, every parable has an exact meaning for everything in it. Since most Bible scholars from 1600–1960 were unable to handle the parable of the prodigal son and the parable of the lost coin, they have adopted the curious and apologetic dictum that “a parable cannot be used to teach doctrine, but only presents a central truth.” Far from being an honest statement, this is merely a frank admission that a man with two legs of different length has a hard time walking (see Prov
26:7). Jesus deliberately assigns a DETAILED meaning to every detail He named of the only two parables He ever explained (Matt. 13:18–23, 37–42) (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

“The parable always makes truth concrete. There are very few people who can grasp and understand abstract ideas; most people think in pictures. We could for long enough try to put into words what beauty is, and at the end of it no one would be very much the wiser; but if we can point at someone and say, "That is a beautiful person," no more description is needed. We might try for long enough to define goodness and in the end leave no clear idea of goodness in people’s minds; but everyone recognizes a good person and good deed when he sees them. In order to be understood, every great word must become flesh, every great idea must take form and shape in a person; and the first great quality of a parable is that it makes truth into a picture which all men can see and understand (William Barclay, "Matthew Volume 2", The Daily Study Bible, page 54)."

“Kingdom of Heaven” This phrase identifies these parables as Jewish, especially with a tribulation application, as they deal with the Millennial kingdom and the events leading up to it. As such, they would not have a direct theological application to Christians or the Church Age, although you can always make a spiritual application to anyone.

13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Christ used parables to keep the truth from the masses.

13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:


“This prophecy of Isaiah is referred to so many times in the New Testament that it merits the closest examination. It is cited in John 12 immediately before the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, and it is cited again in Acts 28, following the rejection of the risen Messiah by Jews of the dispersion. These three places are not Scriptural “misfits.” In Matthew 13 the unpardonable sin has been committed and the mystery form of the kingdom is revealed which will fill the gap between Acts 28 and the Second Coming. In John 12, the final rejection of Christ’s earthly ministry heralds His crucifixion, and the passage in Isaiah 6, from whence the verses are taken, heralds the great tribulation (see Isa. 6:6–13). In Acts 28, the citation heralds the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles and the calling out of that great body of Believers known as the Church (1 Cor. 12:13). (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).” It also speaks of the rejection of Christ by Israel in the Church Age.
13:15 For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

“Waxed gross” implies grown heavy in the sense of thick layers of fat covering the heart so that it cannot function properly or rendering it incapable of receiving spiritual truths. Spiritual rebellion and rejection of revealed truth will result in this kind of heart.

13:16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

The disciples had spiritual advantages not available to Abraham, Moses any other Old Testament character. Today, we have even greater advantages with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and a completed Bible, not to mention good-sized theological libraries that most of us have. I have a bigger and better theological library than any of the “great teachers and preachers” in church history ever had. This is due largely to the proliferation of books in electronic format that are either free or of a very small cost. I can carry an entire theological library on my phone or tablet.

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

13:18 ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

13:18-23 The four responses:
1. 19- outright rejection
2. 20- a shallow, temporary profession that fades away at the first trial
3. 22- a reception that suffers due to worldliness and carnality
4. 23- a genuine conversion that results in fruit bearing

Or:
1. The word is ignored by the indifferent.
2. It is listened to and discussed, but, then, is discarded.
3. It is accepted, but, then, later, disobeyed.
4. It brings forth fruit in three categories: thirty, sixty, and “an hundredfold” (Matthew 13:23).

13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;
13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

High-pressure evangelism often results in shallow professions. The “soulwinner” is under so much pressure to produce results (conversions) that he resorts to similar high-pressure tactics to wrangle some sort of a profession from the “prospect”. As long as he can get a verbal profession or some sort of prayer out of the sinner, he counts it as a conversion, despite the fact that the sinner has little, if any, idea of what he did. I’ve seen video presentations where the “soulwinner” knocks on a door of a prospect and “leads him to Christ” after a ten-minute “presentation”. How can you lead a sinner to Christ in ten minutes if they have never had a clear presentation of the gospel before? There is so much spiritual truth to process and you have to give the Law time to do its work in the heart of the sinner. It can take years to get a genuine profession out of a sinner. Any “profession” under these circumstances is shallow at best and is not permanent.

13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

In summary:
1. The sower is Christ.
2. The seed is the word of God.
3. The fowls of 13:4 are devils.
4. The ground represents the heart of a man by the wayside. He is lost as the word never takes root in his heart.
5. The “stony place” hearer, where there is no “earth,” are those that “joyfully receive the word” (Matthew 13:20) and believe but without a “root” taking place in the heart. They pass off as Christians until either persecution, affliction, or temptation put them to the test (like in the parable of the tares). The persecution that reveals their true nature is connected with “because of the word” in Matthew 13:20,21.
6. The third “hearer,” in Matthew 13:7, is a man who hears and evidently receives, for he had a possibility of bearing fruit (John 15:1-7). However, “he becometh unfruitful,” showing that at one time he did bear fruit. Further, the word is in him (Mark 4:19) and he has some fruit that is not perfected (Luke 8:14). Three things keep this man from being a fruitful Christian, and they are listed by Luke as: “cares...riches, and pleasures.” Mark lists them as: “cares,” “deceitfulness of riches,” and “other things.”
7. The fourth hearer is described as “ground that has been well prepared for planting”. He understands and “bears fruit” (Matthew 13:23). Both Matthew and Mark showing varieties of “fruitfulness” among the saved—30, 60, 100. This hearer keeps the word (Luke 8:15; John 15:7-10) and brings “forth the fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15).
13:24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

This sower would be Christ.

13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

“tares”
1. Tares are not weeds. A weed is easy to spot in any garden. A tare resembles the good plant but it is a counterfeit, not easy to identify.
2. You can dig up a weed with little or no damage to the good plants, but if you uproot tares, you will do damage to the good plants. They get harvested together and then are separated.
3. It shows that Satan himself is in the midst of believers and in the churches. Satan is found as an enemy within the churches, trying to destroy the work by a counterfeit. Exodus 12-15 shows an example of this work in the “mixed multitude” that departed from Egypt, many of them with no change of heart to match the believers with them.

The tares were not discovered until the harvest. Tares were a weed called bearded darnel (Lolium Temulentum). In their early stages the tares so closely resembled the wheat that it was impossible to distinguish the one from the other. When both had headed out it was easy to distinguish them; but by that time their roots were so intertwined that the tares could not be weeded out without tearing the wheat out with them. The Jews called the tares “bastard wheat”. The wheat and tares could not be safely separated when both were growing, but in the end they had to be separated, because the grain of the bearded darnel is slightly poisonous. It causes dizziness and sickness and is narcotic in its effects, and even a small amount has a bitter and unpleasant taste. In the end it was usually separated by hand. The picture of a man deliberately sowing darnel in someone else's field is by no means only imagination. That was actually sometimes done. To this day in India one of the direst threats which a man can make to his enemy is "I will sow bad seed in your field." And in codified Roman law this crime is forbidden and its punishment laid down. (summarized from William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, The Daily Study Bible, pages 72-73)."

“His enemy” The Lord has a definite enemy and it is Satan and those who follow him.

The tares were planted in secret, while men slept. The destructive forces within the churches are planted there by “the devil” while believers sleep or are otherwise unawares. This is why spiritual diligence is required for all Christians, especially church leaders.

13:26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

13:27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?
13:28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

The Lord obviously has an enemy, Satan and those who follow him.

13:29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

The Lord is the one who will eventually separate the wheat and the tares as only He can discern between them properly.

13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

"time of harvest"
1. This is at the end of the age, in this Jewish context, the end of the tribulation.
2. Even before then, at the end of the Church Age, leading up to the rapture, there would be many spiritual counterfeits in the churches that make a very credible public profession of Christianity but who are not saved. At the end, our churches will be stocked with a mixed multitude, the lost mixed in with the saved, and it will be difficult to tell the saved from the lost. The spiritual state of local churches will grow worse and worse the closer we get to the rapture, not better.
3. Any post-millennial idea that the world and the church will gradually improve through time is an idea that has no scriptural support.

The idea is there are unbelievers alongside believers in every church and it can be difficult to tell them apart. The percentage may run as high as 90% unbelievers in some churches.

Both this parable and the parable of the net in 13:47-50 both involve a separation of good and bad at the end of the age.

78. The Parable of the Mustard Seed 13:31,32

13:31 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

This is one of the “kingdom parables,” which has application to both the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, for it is also repeated in Luke 13:18,19.

13:32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Trees grow slowly but herbs grow quickly. Due to its rapid growth, the mustard tree does not develop the strength of a woody trunk as a tree would.
The herb can get too big and can attract demonic attention and activity- the birds. The development of the Kingdom starts small but soon grows to be larger and greater than all other kingdoms. There were millennia where the idea of a literal, political Jewish kingdom was absurd and few believed it. Israel was scattered among all the nations of the earth and the land of Israel was a desolate wasteland. But the progress of the Kingdom grows through time and at the fulfillment, it will dominate all the other kingdoms of the earth in the Millennium.

1. Great things always start from small ideas, even apostasy and error. The early church started with 120 people in an upper room. The nation of Israel began with one couple. The Mormon cult began with one man who was a treasure hunter. The birth of the modern missions movement was credited to one man, William Carey. One man, Charles Finney, did more to damage evangelism than any one man in modern church history. If one sinner can destroy much good (Ecclesiastes 9:18), also consider how much good one saint can do. What can one man do? What can one small church do? More than we can imagine.

2. In Matthew, the faith is “in the world” (John 1:3-10). The roots of this faith are “in the world”. This “faith,” although classified as an “herb” in 13:32, becomes a tree. Trees in Scripture are assorted in ethical and moral values. The wicked is a bay tree. The righteous is a palm. Self-righteousness is a fig tree. Israel is an olive tree Christ is likened to an apple tree (Song 2). The “birds lodging in the branches” classify in an evil context. The birds of the air are devils.

3. This tree is identified with a tree like the one in Daniel 4. As a type of Antichrist and the Antichrist’s kingdom itself, this tree is a religious monstrosity shading pigs, bears, bats, snakes, and wolves, instead of sheep ad it is associated with a heathen government.

4. We can also compare the church at Pergamos in Revelation with a church that allowed itself to be corrupted by Satanic influences.

79. The Parable of the Leaven 13:33

13:33 ¶ Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Since the parable is also found in Luke 13:20–21 as applying to “the kingdom of God,” we see that false doctrine is not only found in the professing bodies of “Christendom,” it is also found within the body of born again believers, in the Body of Christ and in Bible-believing local churches.

“a woman” This woman is false religion (Zechariah 5:9-11) and her leaven is false doctrine as she sows it into the good churches.

“There are women in the Scriptures engaged in religious activities, but the woman of the Thyatira church (which incidentally matches this fourth parable) is an adulteress (Rev. 2:20), and the woman of Revelation 17:1–5 is a whore. Worse than that, she is defined by the Holy Spirit, apart from private interpretation, as being a city built on seven mountains, who murders Christians, and whose symbol is a golden cup and who loves purple and scarlet (Rev. 17:3–4, 6, 18). No reasonable man in his sound mind would have any trouble identifying the woman from Scripture, if he were allowed the American, Christian privilege of reading it and believing what he reads. The Woman is that old purple clad mother of abominations, the Papal Roman “Church.” All reformers understood this. All premillenialists understand it. No born-again Christian in any denomination has any trouble identifying it if the passages are read aloud,
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without comment. The only way the pope can bury this stinking corpse that clings to his religious organization is to pretend that Revelation 17 refers to past history and pagan Rome, thus dissecting the passages from the Second Advent. This accounts for the entire Protestant system of amillennialism, which is in line with Roman tradition (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

Why “three measures?” Peter Ruckman has it as representing the three main branches of Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox churches and the Protestant churches. But since Baptists and Baptist-type churches are not included in any of these three groups, if Ruckman is correct, the apostasy and error in Christianity does not come from Baptist and Remnant churches, but rather from the errors in the doctrinal teachings and practices of the Roman Catholics, the Orthodox and the Protestant churches.


13:34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

13:35 That it might be fulfilled which 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.

13:35 “That is a quotation from Ps.78:1-3, and in it the Psalmist knows that what he is saying will be understood, and that he is recalling men to truth that both they and their fathers have known.

“The truth is that the words of Isaiah, and the use that Jesus made of them, must be read with insight and with an attempt to put ourselves in the position both of Isaiah and of Jesus. These words tell of three things.

“(i) They tell of a prophet’s bewilderment. The prophet brought a message to people which to him was crystal clear; and he was bewildered that they could not understand it. That is repeatedly the experience of both the preacher and the teacher. Often when we preach or teach or discuss things with people, we try to tell them something which to us is relevant, vivid, of absorbing interest and of paramount importance, and they hear it with a complete lack of interest, understanding, and urgency. And we are amazed and bewildered that what means so much to us apparently means nothing at all to them, that what kindles a fire in our bones leaves them stone cold, that what thrills and moves our hearts leaves them icily indifferent. That is the experience of every teacher and preacher.

“(ii) They tell of a prophet’s despair. It was Isaiah’s feeling that his preaching was actually doing more harm than good, that he might as well speak to a brick wall, that there was no way into the mind and the heart of this deaf and blind people, that, as far as any effects went, they seemed to be getting worse instead of better. Again, that is the experience of every teacher and preacher. There are times when those whom we seek to win seem, in spite of all our efforts, to be getting further away from, instead of nearer to, the Christian way. Our words go whistling down the wind; our message meets the impenetrable barrier of men’s indifference; the result of all our work seems less than nothing, for at the end of it men seem further away from God than they were at the beginning.

“(iii) But these words tell of something more than a prophet’s bewilderment and a prophet’s despair; they also tell of a prophet’s ultimate faith. Here we find ourselves face to face with a Jewish conviction apart from which much of what the prophet, and of what Jesus, and of
what the early Church said is not fully intelligible (William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, The Daily Study Bible, pages 69-70).

81. The Parable of the Tares Explained 13:36-43

13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

Jesus goes back to the house and explains what He was teaching in the field privately to the disciples.

The parable summarized:
1. “The field is the world.”
2. The enemy is the devil.
3. The tares are counterfeit believers.
4. “The children of the kingdom,” can’t refer to Christians so it must refer to a group of people in the tribulation who are not truly “saved” (in respect to the salvation requirements of the tribulation). These “the children of the kingdom” in Matthew 8:12 are also said to go into “outer darkness”.
5. “The harvest is the end of the world” (13:39) which would be the end of the tribulation period.
6. “While men slept...tares.” Men slept, not God. The pastor-watchmen let the enemy slip in the tares. Either they were lazy, incompetent, busy with non-spiritual things or were co-operating in this act of sabotage.
7. The separating is indicated in a unique way. “Gather ye together first the tares.” This gathering is done with a reference to a future burning, but it takes place before the burning (13:40), and it takes place before the wheat goes into the garner. A study of Hosea 10:10; Matthew 3:12; Zephaniah 3:8; Isaiah 9:11; Zechariah 12:3; and Zechariah 14:2 will help at this point.
8. “Children of the wicked one”. Everyone is most certainly not a child of God. Satan not only has “children,” (John 8:44) but he has a specific “seed” (Genesis 3:15) to imitate the Messiah.

13:37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

13:38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

The “children of the kingdom” are not Christians, so this phrase identifies the parable as a Kingdom parable.

13:39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

13:40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.
Hell fire? It is obvious that the tares are not truly saved so there is an ultimate judgment for them. Also in 13:42.

13:41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

13:42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

13:43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

This is a common phrase, meaning that many will hear the parable but will not accept it, consider it or act upon it. To “hear” is to listen with comprehension with the goal of applying the truths of what was taught. Few hearers will do this. With them, it is literally “in one ear and out the other”.

82. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure 13:44

13:44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

“In the ancient world there were banks, but not banks such as ordinary people could use. Ordinary people used the ground as the safest place to keep their most cherished belonging. In the parable of the talents the worthless servant hid his talent in the ground, lest he should lose it (Matt. 25:25). There was a rabbinic saying that there was only one safe repository for money--the earth. This was still more the case in a land where a man's garden might at any time become a battlefield. Palestine was probably the most fought over country in the world; and, when the tide of war threatened to flow over them, it was common practice for people to hide their valuables in the ground, before they took to flight, in the hope that the day would come when they could return and regain them. Josephus speaks of "the gold and the silver and the rest of that most precious furniture which the Jews had, and which the owners treasured up underground against the uncertain fortunes of war." (William Barclay, “Matthew Volume 2”, The Daily Study Bible, page 84)."

What is hidden in the field? It’s not Christ, as He is not hidden. The Christian has nothing for sale, and he cannot buy Christ, and you can’t buy the church. Someone hid this treasure in the field and the field is the world (13:38), so this treasure is in the world but hidden until discovered by an individual. The “treasure” is probably Israel as this is a Jewish parable, given to Jews, in the context of Israel. The buying is Christ purchasing not only the church, but the world (with His blood). Christ died for the whole world to make salvation possible and available to all. Somewhere in the world is hidden a true remnant of believing Israel that is very precious to the Lord that He will redeem in that day.
83. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price 13:45,46

13:45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly
pearls:

13:46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had,
and bought it.

"pearl"

1. A “pearl” stands for a person and usually for a woman.
2. The “merchant man” is Jesus Christ. We know that Christ did buy something (the
Church), and we know what the price of the purchase was (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter
1:18,19; Acts 20:28).

More about pearls:

1. A pearl is organic in nature, unlike other precious stones, which are all inorganic. It
comes from a living organism, an oyster.
2. It is the only jewel that would be ruined if it was divided. Other stones can be divided
into smaller stones.
3. A pearl is found on the bottom of the ocean in a dirty or muddy place for that is where
oysters live.
4. It is found in an oyster and is formed by a secretion, which is put forth to cover an
injury.
5. It is the favorite ornamental jewel for kings and queens.
6. The Jews did not highly regard pearls, but Gentiles did.

The “pearl of great price,” if it represents people (and all precious stones do, 1 Peter 2:5; 1
Corinthians 3:10,12), can only refer to one group of people on earth, the Church. The pearl
comes from the body of the oyster just as the Church is liken as the “Body” of Christ. This
church is a living organism (1 Corinthians 12), purchased by suffering. The saved sinner thus
comes from a muddy place of sin under the wrath of God; he is covered with Christ’s
righteousness, which was only made available through the suffering of Christ. Thus, covered by
the blood and with the righteousness of God, he is destined to reign as a king (Revelation 1:1-
6). The Man is Christ. The Pearl is the Church. The Great Price is the blood of Christ.

84. The Parable of the Net 13:47-50

13:47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and
gathered of every kind:

“As the goodly pearl in the last parable can represent the Philadelphia church period in history
(Rev. 3), so this last parable may represent the Laodicean period (Rev. 3). It is peculiar indeed
that only seven parables are given in this chapter as a warning of the Church Age to come
(which no one in the audience would understand until the revelation is given by Paul in Eph. 3),
while the remaining five parables occur later in Matthew. This total of twelve hearkens to Israel,
and so the remaining five parables all deal with Israel’s situation in the Great Tribulation at the
end of the Church Age (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”
If the Pearl of Great Price represents that “pearl” of the seven church ages (Philadelphia), then the Parable of the Net would be a good representation of the Laodicean church age, which is a mixed, mongrel period of church history.

The fact that there are seven parables dealing with the ends times naturally makes us think of the seven church ages of Revelation 2 and 3. We don’t know how far we can go in this comparison since the Matthew 13 parables have their primary application to Israel but there are many Church Age applications as we have already seen. But the descriptions of the parables and the corresponding church ages is just too strong to ignore.

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<th>PARABLE- Matthew 13</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ephesus</td>
<td>Sower 13:3-23</td>
<td>Sowed good seed but later devoured by birds, a picture of devils, lost or cooling love and zeal, the initial sowing of the gospel by the early church, with varying results.</td>
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<td>Smyrna</td>
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<td>Good fruit but Satan was busy sowing the tares of the developing false church</td>
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<td>Mustard seed 13:31,32</td>
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<td>Thyatira</td>
<td>The leaven 13:33</td>
<td>Leaven has a negative type in Scripture, the spreading internal corruption of the church. “That woman Jezebel” is active in this church and it is a woman who is putting the leaven in the church.</td>
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<td>Sardis</td>
<td>Treasure of the field 13:44</td>
<td>The Reformation church was a buried treasure but was still “in the world”, the unfulfilled promise of the Reformation. It was a move of God and ordained of God but it did not live up to its full potential. The true Reformers (the Baptist churches, such as</td>
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Mennonites, Brethren, Waldensians, etc.) were overwhelmed, overshadowed and generally ignored by historians as to the extent of their contributions— they are “hidden” by history.

| Philadelphia | Pearl of great price 13:45,46 | A “pearl” of a church age, precious |
| Laodicea | The net cast into the sea 13:47,48 | A mixed multitude from the “sea” or the world. This is an “unseparated” catch. We can apply this to the last days church with its lack of separation (Half-way Covenant of the American Colonial period) |

13:48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

The problem with dragnet evangelism is that you catch a lot of fish you can’t keep. There will be many bad professions, shallow professions and false professions. Using “mass evangelism”, you get all sorts of fish— some good, most bad. You will have to spread out the net and manually examine each fish, individually, to judge which ones are valuable and which ones are worthless.

1. In the last days of the church age, Laodicean “evangelism” will boast great numbers being saved, but in reality, the number of genuine conversions will be small. Most professions and professors will be spiritually worthless and will have to be “thrown back” to the world.
2. “Good and bad fish” are obviously both saved and lost men.
3. We are allowed to judge professions. The fisherman judges between good and bad fish. He keeps the good ones and discards the bad ones. We must do the same thing spiritually. Not every one who says “Lord, Lord” is a good fish. We must judge them by their fruits.

13:49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.

13:50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

85. The Instructed Scribe 13:51,52
13:51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

“The householder” is a steward and as a good steward over a household, he has charge of the “treasures”.

1. The treasures are good things in “the heart” (Matthew 12:35).
2. The “old and new treasures” must refer to some kind of a relationship between the Old and New Testaments (Covenants).

86. Offended in Christ 13:53-58

13:53 ¶ And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

13:54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

His own country would be Galilee, where the Lord based His ministry and where He was from.

13:55 Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

13:56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

13:57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

Psalm 69:8 shows Christ as an alien and a stranger even in His own household.

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

Christ will not work where He is not welcomed or honored. Since the people in His hometown were scandalized in Him, He would not honor their attitude with any real manifestation of the power of God.
Matthew Chapter 14

87. The Death of John 14:1-12

14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

“tetrarch” The Greek word transliterated means a governor over the fourth part of any region; but the word subsequently lost its strict etymological meaning, and came to denote any petty prince not ruling over an entire country.

14:2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

Herod was certainly under conviction for killing John.
2. Herod was also you standard politician, who was afraid of his wife (Matthew 14:3), a preacher (Mark 6:20), the people (Matthew 14:5) and ridicule (Matthew 14:9).

14:3 ¶ For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife.

14:4 For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

Trying to keep up with the Herods was like trying to untangle a soap opera.

“After Herod the Great died, his kingdom was divided among three of his surviving sons: Archelaus, Philip, and Antipas. Archelaus was deposed before Jesus came to manhood. He inherited all his father’s vices and nothing of his greatness. Philip, the son of the beautiful Cleopatra of Jerusalem, fell heir to the poorest part of the kingdom, the desert region northeast of Galilee and south of Damascus. Antipas, who inherited Galilee and Perea, was the Herod who murdered John and mocked Jesus. Antipas was not a violent man like his brother Archelaus, but he was sly. It was Antipas who founded Tiberias, a city considered unclean by the Jews because it was built partly over a cemetery. On a visit to Rome, Antipas stayed with another of his half-brothers, a man named Herod Philip (not Philip the tetrarch, but another son of Herod the Great). Herod Philip had retired from the Herodian jungle in Palestine and had moved to Rome, where he lived as a wealthy citizen. His wife Herodias, a woman of great beauty and ambition, was the granddaughter of Herod the Great. The marriage was therefore consanguineous, as were so many of the marriages within the Herodian family. Herodias’s brother Agrippa was a close friend of Caligula. When Caligula became emperor, he gave the spendthrift Agrippa the Palestinian estates left by Philip the tetrarch upon his death. The emperor also gave Agrippa the right to wear a crown and be called a king. This preferment stirred the fury and jealousy of Herodias. While Antipas was visiting Herod Philip at Rome, Herodias entered into an intrigue with him. She had long since tired of the life of a wealthy Roman matron, and she saw in Antipas an opportunity for excitement and advancement. So she ran away with him to Galilee. Antipas divorced his legal wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Petra, and married Herodias. Thereby Antipas made an enemy of the Nabateans, made the fortress of Machaerus more necessary than ever, and made himself guilty of entering into a
marriage that was both adulterous and consanguineous. John the Baptist denounced the whole affair and consequently earned the implacable hatred of Herodias. Herod Antipas, spurred on by his vengeful wife, arrested John and imprisoned him at Machaerus. But Herod vacillated. On the one hand was the goading of Herodias to get rid of John; on the other hand was the power of John's personality. Herod also hesitated because he did not want to make John a martyr, for he was still popular with the masses (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew, pages 289-290).

14:5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

The fear of man (or the multitude) bringeth a snare (Proverbs 29:25).

14:6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

This was probably a very seductive type of dance. When we see dances like this, something bad is going to happen. In this case, the "greatest man born of woman" lost his head. These dances are usually performed for a purpose- to try to get a man to do something he ordinarily would not do.

14:7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

No doubt Herod was enflamed and probably drunk when he said this.

14:8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

A "charger" is like a deep salad bowl.

14:9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.

Herod had backed himself into a corner with his public promise and he could not lose face by backing down. He knew he acted stupidly but there was nothing he could do if he was going to salvage what little honor he had.

"Here, then, is a perfect example of the attitude, make up, motives, and "religion" of a typical Christ rejecting sinner. He fears EVERYTHING he shouldn't, and NOTHING he should. Herod's conscience is weakened under John's preaching (Mark 6:20), it is outraged at a dance (Mark 6:22), and it is dead by the time Herod is confronted with the decision to receive Christ (Luke 23:8–12). It is significant that where Herod and Pilate cannot be tolerant and broadminded and cooperate in political matters, they can agree that a Scripture-quoting, Bible believing Saviour should be "gotton rid of." (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew)."

14:10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.
14:11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.

What did she do with John’s head? We can image they both looked at John’s head with a mix of triumph and victory, mistakenly thinking they finally rid themselves of this troublesome preacher. But this vile act must be accounted for in the day of judgment and no doubt John will be there are their judgment to bear witness against them.

14:12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Wicked people gloated over John’s death but honorable men gave John a decent and honorable burial.

88. “Come Apart and Rest” 14:13,14

14:13 ¶ When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

No doubt news of John’s murder shocked the disciples and Jesus was upset by it as well. He knew His disciples needed a break to process the news of John’s death, but the demands of the crowds were constant and insistent.

14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

89. Feeding of the Five Thousand 14:15-21

14:15 ¶ And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

The Lord will provide a great feast to His followers from very meager means.

In parallel accounts, we can pick up a number of other details.
1. The time was far “passed” as well as “past” (Mark 6:35).
2. The word “bread” is substituted for “victuals” (Mark 6:36).
3. They argued with Jesus in unbelief before He commanded them to bring the food (Mark 6:37; John 6:7-9).
4. The word “meat” is used in Luke 9:13 for “bread” and “victuals.”
5. The desert place turns out to be not a sandy desert, but a grassy desert (John 6:10). If this seems strange to the inexperienced traveler (and nearly all Hebrew and Greek scholars are “stay at home” folks!), it must be remembered that the word “desert” is kin to “deserted” and means “empty, barren, void of any person”. The Gobi Desert is largely a rock desert, the Sahara a sand desert, and the deserts in Mexico and Arizona cactus
and sage brush deserts; nevertheless, they are deserted and qualify as “deserts.” (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*).

6. They sat down by companies or ranks (fifty in each rank-Mark 6:39–40).

7. The loaves are blessed and broken before they are given (Matthew 26:26), and this contains a tremendous spiritual truth. The word of God has to be broken to be given out (Luke 24:45). The Christian has to be broken to be a blessing. He has to be blessed by God to endure the breaking which follows (2 Corinthians 12:1-8).

8. John supplies most of the detailed information concerning this feeding of 5,000. Chapter 6 in John’s gospel not only supplies a detailed conversation with Phillip and Andrew, preceding the feeding, but also a tremendous discourse on the “Bread of LIFE” subsequent to the feeding (John 6:15-71).

9. John also records that not only was the multitude completely satisfied in the amount that they had to eat from this feeding, but that the remains were greater than the original amount (John 6:13). The feeding is said, by the Holy Spirit, to be a “miracle” (John 6:14).

The word “evening” occurs in both 14:15 and 14:23. The Jews had two evenings. The first was from the ninth to the twelfth hour (between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.). The second was a period of thirty to forty minutes after sunset or from sunset until three stars were visible. In 14:15 the reference is evidently to the first evening. It was late afternoon and soon all the markets would be closed. The disciples had their eyes on the clock, but the Lord had His eyes on the crowd. "Give them something to eat," He said in effect. But that was the problem. The disciples had nothing to give by this time of the day.

“Send the multitude away” “Galilee must have been a place where it was very difficult to be alone. Galilee was a small country, only 50 miles from north to south and 25 miles from east to west, and Josephus tells us that in his time within that small area there were 204 towns and villages, none with a population of less than 15,000 people. In such a thickly populated area it was not easy to get away from people for any length of time. But it was quiet on the other side of the lake, and at its widest the lake was only 8 miles wide (William Barclay, *Matthew in the Daily Study Bible").

14:16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

How were 12 men supposed to feed 5,000 men, not counting the women and children? There could have been over 20,000 people involved. We never think of solutions to problems like this simply because we are not spiritual enough to do so.

14:17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

It was a boy who had this as given in John 6:9. This meager provision came from an even weaker source, a boy!

“Can God provide a table in the wilderness?” Psalm 78:19.

14:18 He said, Bring them hither to me.

Whatever we bring to the Lord for His service and use He will accept and multiply it beyond our comprehension.
14:19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

There is always order and design in the workings of God. Having the people sit in groups (by hundreds and fifties, as in Mark 6:40) would make it easier and faster for the disciples to distribute the provisions.

The Lord acknowledged the provision of the food by the Father and the multiplication of that food.

14:20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

This is a miracle that some men find it hard to believe, but it is recorded by all four Gospels and the only one told by all four. Matthew notes the miracle here but makes no attempt to try to explain it, for how could he?

All ate and were filled, and the food continued until it was no longer needed. This reminds us of the multiplication of the oil in 2 Kings 4:1-7. The multiplication of the oil ceased when there were no more vessels to hold it. Here, the food ceased when all were filled and satisfied. And there were leftovers but the fragments were gathered up so that none were wasted.

14:21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

“Prophetically, the scene is indicative of the feeding of the remnant of Israel in the Great Tribulation, who also will be fed miraculously from Heaven (Rev. 12:1–15, Micah 7:14–15, Jer. 50:19–20, Ezek. 20:35, Lam. 5:9). It is also significant that this miraculous producing of bread in the wilderness is the first temptation Satan offers Jesus (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

90. Walking on the Water 14:22-33

14:22 ¶ And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

“Straightway” is one of Mark’s favorite terms. Matthew uses it here to describe the business-like approach Jesus used to continue unto His next ministry stop.

Matthew did not tell us why the Lord was so insistent now on sending the multitudes away. John told us it was because Jesus "perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king." They were convinced by the miracle that they had just seen that Jesus was "that prophet that should come into the world," the Prophet foretold by Moses (John 6:14-15; Deuteronomy 18:15). They realized that a greater than Moses was among them. Moses had fed
their fathers with manna in the wilderness, but before their own eyes Jesus had miraculously fed five or six thousand people with a little lad's lunch.

The miracle appealed to the multitude's materialistic concept of the Messiah. In John's Gospel the Lord's sermon on the true Bread of Life follows soon after this miracle; in that sermon He made it clear that He thoroughly rejected any kingship that depended on materialism (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew)."

14:23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

You can't pray in a crowd. You send them away, then you pray.

14:24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

These sudden storms were common on the Sea of Galilee.

Luke omits the incident that follows, but it is found in John 6:16-21 and Mark 6:45-51.

14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

Toward the breaking of the day, between 3-6 AM.

Some writers (like William Barclay in his Daily Study Bible) try to explain it all away by suggesting that Jesus was only walking along the beach and not on the water, an impossible theory unless Matthew's account is legendary.

14:26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

14:28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

Quite the response from Peter. If that really was Jesus, then He should have no trouble to make it possible for Peter to walk on the water the same way Jesus did. This would verify that this was Jesus and not some “spirit” as a ghost or a phantom could do no such miracle as Peter proposed.

14:29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.
Peter had “little faith” but was accomplishing a great miracle here. You can criticize Peter all you want but no one else got out of the boat! Peter had an initial success but ultimately failed. It is better to try and fail than to never have tried at all and then criticize those who at least made the effort.

14:30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

When Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the storm around him, the he began to sink. This is also the shortest recorded prayer in the Bible, but it got results as it was prayed in fervency.

14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Always a searching question of rebuke. Peter had enough faith to get out of the boat but not enough to keep that faith in the midst of the storms. “You were doing just fine, so what caused you to doubt and lose your faith?”

14:32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

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

Another confirming sign of His deity. Jesus accepted this worship, and no one was rebuked for offering it.

91. Ministry in Gennesaret 14:34-36

14:34 ¶ And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

14:35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

The Lord still had the reputation as a healer and as a miracle-worker.

14:36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

There were no misfires or blaming any lack of healings on the supposed “lack of faith” on the part of the afflicted.
92. The Traditions of the Elders  15:1-9

15:1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

This was another attack against Christ’s authority. “Who do you think you are to oppose and criticize the time-honored traditions of the elders?” The religious leaders were more concerned about the tradition than with the Scripture. The Jews were always careful to extensively “wash up” before a meal, something that the disciples were neglecting to do. It was almost like scrubbing up for surgery.

“Edersheim in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* outlines the most elaborate of these washings. Water jars were kept ready to be used before a meal. The minimum amount of water to be used was a quarter of a log, which is defined as enough to fill one and a half egg-shells. The water was first poured on both hands, held with the fingers pointed upwards, and must run up the arm as far as the wrist. It must drop off from the wrist, for the water was now itself unclean, having touched the unclean hands, and, if it ran down the fingers again, it would again render them unclean. The process was repeated with the hands held in the opposite direction, with the fingers pointing down; and then finally each hand was cleansed by being rubbed with the fist of the other. A really strict Jew would do all this, not only before a meal, but also between each of the courses (William Barclay, “Matthew” in *The Daily Study Bible”).

Such elaborate washings were never directly commanded in the Old Testament, but they are still a good common-sense approach to health and hygiene.

Notice they complained about the disciples. If they can’t find a reason to attack the Lord, they will then go after the disciples.

These religious leaders had clean hands but dirty hearts. They put all the emphasis on the external and little emphasis on the internal.

15:3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

A “commandment” is always greater than a “tradition”. It is not wrong to follow a tradition, but it wrong to set up a tradition as an authority.

“Your tradition”. God wanted nothing to do with it. The Lord must have been quite irritated by such a petty complaint and it took divine patience to answer as politely as He did.

15:4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

Quoting the Fifth Commandment.
15:5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

“God said this in Scripture but ye say…” showing the contrast. The religious leaders were putting what they said through their traditions on an equal plane as inspired Scripture.

The idea is that a son may not want to be responsible for taking care of his parents in their old age as it would cost too much. He would take the money he intended to spend on his parents, take it to the temple and “dedicate” it to God. This would not make it possible to spend that money on his parents since it had been “dedicated” to God. It was a gift, or “corban”. After the death of his parents, the man would then do back to the temple and retrieve his money, after making a nice little donation to the “temple fund”. This was an attitude which violated the spirit of the Fifth Commandment, but it was allowed by just such a non-Biblical tradition that the Lord was condemning here.

“gift” is “Corban” of Mark 7:11.

15:6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

This was ironic. The very ones who were supposed to be the guardians of the Scripture and who were supposed to be teaching it were the ones who were doing the most harm to it.

15:7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

Quoted from Isaiah 29:13.

15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

“teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” This is the sin of most churches and denominations. When worship is based on human traditions, that worship is vain, empty and accomplishes nothing.

93. The Source of Defilement 15:10-20

15:10 ¶ And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

They were listening but were they really paying close attention? Words can go in one ear and out the other if we are not paying close attention.
15:11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

Defilement does not come without, or from failure to observe man-made traditions, but from the darkened and sinful heart of man. This “defilement” was the Jewish ceremonial defilement associated with the ceremonial law.

15:12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

“Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?”

1. So what? Some people live to be offended. The Lord cared nothing for their feelings. The greater the hypocrite, the more easily one is offended. If you preach the truth, someone will always be offended.

2. The disciples seemed shocked that the Lord would go out of His way to offend such a powerful and respected group of religious leaders. He seemed to be adding more contention to an already strained relation He had with them, but the Lord was taking no heed to it.

15:13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

Also see Matthew 23:13,15.

15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Ephraim was also “let alone” in Hosea 4:17. We have better things to do than to waste our time shooting at jaybirds.

Only a fool would follow a blind man and only a fool of a blind man who presume to be able to lead anyone anywhere.

15:15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

It wasn’t a parable but a straight-out declaration of the truth that should have been obvious to all.

15:16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

15:17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

Food does not touch the spirit: it passes through the body, but it does not enter the affections, or the understanding. Therefore, it does not defile a man. That which is eaten is material.
substance and does not come into contact with the moral sense. If someone at an “unclean” food, it would not defile him. It goes in through the mouth, through the digestive tract and out through the normal process of elimination but it never touches or affects the spirit.

15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

Externals do not defile the man but rather that which proceeds from the heart. Defilement is an internal thing that comes from within man.

15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

Surely not a comprehensive list but what a list! The Lord catalogues the following sins that proceed from a defiled heart:
1. Evil thoughts
2. Murders, they all start in the heart
3. Adulteries also start in the heart before manifesting themselves in the flesh (Matthew 5:27,28)
4. Fornications, as with adultery above
5. Thefts, born of a covetous heart
6. False witness, where we bear hate toward other men
7. Blasphemies, this is hate directed toward God
8. This list is what should concern us, not if we have dirty hands at the dinner table!

15:20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

“It is God telling the Pharisee what is going on in his heart, which he will eventually perform. Notice carefully: “evil thoughts” (Matt. 12:25, 24:48, 22:15), “murders” (John 12:10—They were going to murder Lazarus!), “adulteries” (John 8:1–8—Where was the man involved in the adultery? How did they catch the woman without the man? [Lev. 20:10]), “fornications” (the only one in the list not mentioned later), “thefts” (see 21:38), “false witness” (26:60), and “blasphemies” (Matt. 27:41). That is, the religious leaders are guilty on six out of seven counts in the indictment. (In the account in Mark 7:17–23, they are guilty on eleven out of thirteen.) While avoiding entering into Gentile buildings, “lest they should be defiled” (John 18:28), the long-robed “fathers” stain their hands with the blood of a sinless Man and debauch their souls with “handwashing traditions” (15:2). [The attitude has few precedents on earth, unless one remembers that there are twentieth-century Americans who consider it a sin to sing hymns in a Bible-believing church, while at the same time they can prayerfully dump cigarette ashes on their bingo cards!] (Peter Ruckman, The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

94. The Healing of the Canaanite’s Daughter 15:21-28

15:21 ¶ Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.
15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

This was a woman no Jew would have had any dealings with, as seen in the reaction of the disciples in 15:23. She was a Gentile of the worst sort, a member of a cursed and dying race. Could someone like her find grace?

Her great need was that which taught her to pray. Tribulation and desperation can make saints of even the worst of us.

She referred to Jesus as both “Son of David” and “Lord”, putting her light-years ahead of the Jewish leaders. As a Gentile, she had no claim to use the title “Son of David” but she did in her desperation and in her acknowledgement that Jesus was the Son of David.

15:23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

“Us”? The disciples were ignoring her. She was trying to get the Lord’s attention, not theirs.

“Send her away” No Christian should ever utter that phrase if confronted with any sinner who wants to be saved! Shall we only minister to the rich and accepted and ignore those who have just as great a need of salvation? The Lord came to seek and save that which was lost, no matter what kind of people they were. The deeper the sinner, the greater attention they received from the Lord.

15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Faith must always be tested to try its genuineness and that is exactly what the Lord is doing here.

15:25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

She was bleating like a sheep and the Lord told her to stop her bleating, as He was sent unto the lost sheep of Israel. She didn’t want to argue theology. She had a desperate need- HELP ME! You can’t pray a much better prayer than “Lord, help me!” Luke 11:5-8 and 18:1-8 certainly apply here- keep knocking until someone opens the door.

1. This Gentile dog was just insulted and turned down in an urgent prayer request, and she worshipped Him! Dogs will still lick the hand that hits them in their love, devotion and loyalty.
2. To call anyone a “dog” was just about the worst insult you can give. Modern racial expressions are even worse. “Dogs” here is the diminutive word for dogs (kunaria) which is used not the street dogs, but the little household pets, very different from the pariah dogs who roamed the streets and probed in the refuse heaps.
3. Her “worship” probably involved flinging herself at the Lord’s feet and staying there until she got the answer she needed.
15:26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.

15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.

The Lord called her a dog and she agreed. In our natural state, we were no better than this woman. To argue our morality or breeding or education to God is of no avail. We are DOGS until we are saved and transformed by the gospel.

“Ye-ee-s.”

“Well, then, Your children didn’t finish their spinach, and they left meat on the drumsticks, and it’s going to the garbage and get wasted, isn’t it?”

“Well, huh, yes.”

“All right, in that case, how about putting some of it right down here where us dogs can get it!”

And she has Him...She stooped to conquer and was not ashamed to stoop clean under the table and wait till the family got through with the meal! That kind of faith will get results every time (Peter Ruckman, The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

The Lord loves great faith, and grants to it whatever it appears.

Applications to prayer.
1. We are turned down to see if we are in earnest.
2. We are turned down to show us how helpless we are in the face of emergencies.
3. We are turned down until we get the selfish element out of our prayers.
4. A refusal is not always a permanent thing.
5. Continuing in prayer strengthens our faith.

95. Jesus Heals Multitudes 15:29-31

15:29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

15:30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them:

15:31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.
A. 15:30 There was simply no getting away from the crowds, even if the Lord tried to retire to a more remote location.

96. Feeding of Four Thousand  15:32-39

15:32 ¶ Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

Also as in Mark 8:1-9. History repeats itself as we see a similar miracle as we saw in Matthew 14. Have the disciples learned anything? Will they put in a better performance this time?

What Jesus has done once he can and will do again and again, should the need arise.

Some think that the feeding of the five thousand and the feeding of the four thousand are different versions of the same incident; but that is not so. The date is different; the first took place in the spring, the second in the summer. The people and the place are different. The feeding of the four thousand took place in Decapolis. Decapolis literally means ten cities, and the Decapolis was a loose federation of ten free Greek cities. On this occasion there would be many Gentiles present, perhaps more Gentiles than Jews.

15:33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

This is a repeat of John 6:1-14.

No indication that the disciples had made any real spiritual progress here. How many times do they need to see and be told before they, and us, begin to understand?

Notice that they do not ask again: “What are they among so many?” (John 6:9). They have learned one lesson, at least temporarily.

15:34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

15:35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

15:36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

Always give thanks for your provision, no matter how small or meager it might be.

15:37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.
15:38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children. This could have been between 12,000-15,000 people.

15:39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

Comparison Between the Feeding of the Five Thousand in Matthew 14 and the Feeding of the Four Thousand in Matthew 15:

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<td>The Lord had compassion on the multitude</td>
<td>The Lord had compassion on the multitude</td>
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Matthew Chapter 16

97. The Signs of the Times 16:1-4

16:1 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

This is a repeat of Matthew 12:38-40. They have rejected every sign the Lord has given them up to this point and were condemned by the Lord for their attitude back in Matthew 12, but here they are again.

16:2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

16:2,3 Biblical weather forecasting. “Red sky in morning, sailors take warning. Red sky at night, sailor’s delight”.

16:3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

You had your signs and you rejected everyone. Only one more sign will be given, the sign of the resurrection, and you will reject that sign as well.

98. The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees 16:5-12

16:5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

16:6 ¶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Leaven is a type of false doctrine, as in Matthew 13:33; 16:12; Luke 12:1 and Galatians 5:9.

The Lord uses a natural and very human example of simply forgetting to take bread on a journey and uses it as an opportunity to impart a spiritual lesson. This is a talent we all need to cultivate.

16:7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.

As usual, the disciples are thinking carnally while the Lord is speaking spiritually.
16:8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

16:9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

16:10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

The disciples still had not learned the lessons from the two recent miraculous feedings of the multitudes.

16:11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

16:12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Leaven is a type of false doctrine, as in Matthew 13:33; 16:12; Luke 12:1 and Galatians 5:9.

99. Peter’s Great Confession 16:12-20

16:13 ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Even today, everyone has an opinion of who Christ is. But most of these opinions are wrong.

16:14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

“Jeremiah”. Tradition said Jeremiah hid the ark of the covenant before the Babylonian invasion. Before the return of the Messiah, Jeremiah would return with the Ark.

16:15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

One of the greatest questions ever asked. It demands a great answer and your soul depends on you giving the right answer! Everyone will be asked this question eventually and everyone must give an answer, if not on earth, then at the Great White Throne judgment. Personal, individual confession of Christ is the important issue here.

16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.
Peter gives the correct answer, based on the Lord’s approval of it.

16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

“Bar-jona”, Son of Jona(h), who was Peter’s father.

16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Peter- petros, a small rock.  Rock- petra, a large mass of rock.  Peter cannot be the rock of the Roman Catholic church since it grammatically impossible.  Besides, with such an inconsistent person as Peter was, who would want him for a foundation when you can build on Christ instead?  Besides, in 16:23, Jesus calls Peter “Satan”!  Would Christ build His church on Satan?  Or on a small stone?  Or on a weak and vacillating man?

Peter was never any sort of Roman Catholic pope because:
1. He was married (Matthew 8:14).
2. He erred and had to be corrected by Paul in Galatians 2 and by the Lord Himself in Acts 10:15 and 11:9.
3. He taught that every Christian was a priest in 1 Peter 2:5.9.
4. He never said anything about any sort of a “mass” or worshipping Mary or any of the “saints”.
5. He never baptized any infant by pouring water on them.
6. He taught that salvation was by grace without works or water baptism in Acts 15:11 and 1 Peter 1:18-23.
7. He never let any man bow down to him (see Acts 10:25,26).

A simple concordance study will identify who this “rock” is:
1. 1 Corinthians 10:4 “that Rock was Christ”
2. 2 Samuel 22:2/Psalm 18:2 “the LORD is my rock”
3. Psalm 21:3 “For thou art my rock”
4. Psalm 42:9 “God my rock”

It is clear that the “rock” never refers to Peter but always to God and Christ.

Here is the first mention of the Church, but this is not the start of the Church.  That will not take place until Acts 2 although the formation documents of the Church would be drawn up here and in Matthew 18:17.
1. The Lord is looking at the Church in prospect here and in Matthew 18.

“gates of hell”
1. Hell has literal gates.
2. The Church can survive all the attacks of the world, the flesh and the devil but she can be harmed and damaged by the misconduct of her friends and members through carnality.
16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Peter is not given the keys to heaven, but to the kingdom of heaven. Peter has nothing to do with anyone going to heaven. He is given the keys to open up the way of salvation to both Jew and Gentile as he does in Acts 2 and 10.

16:20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Another temporary and situational injunction against evangelism. Sometimes, and in some situations, it is God’s will NOT to evangelize and witness.

100. Jesus’ Rebuke of Satan 16:21-23

16:21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Christ gives another prophecy of His resurrection.

16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

How many times do we rebuke the Lord when He shows us His will and things which must come to pass? And on what authority did Peter assume he had to rebuke the Lord on anything? No doubt he assumed that Jesus was prophesying His death as if He would not be able to avoid it. Peter didn’t understand that Jesus MUST die and that the Lord was not trying to avoid anything nor was He being fatalistic about it. Peter might have thought that Jesus was willing or able to avoid His death, not understanding the prophecies that indicated that Jesus MUST die.

16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

C. 16:23 Peter referred to as Satan as Satan was speaking through Peter here. Some foundation for the Roman church! Satan was influencing Peter’s attitude and provoked him to make this rebuke of the Lord.

1. Sometimes Satan may use our closest friends and associates to try to turn us away from God’s will, and they may not even be aware that they are being used in this manner.

101. Qualifications for Discipleship 16:24-26

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16:24 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Requirements for discipleship:
1. “If and man”. Discipleship is voluntary and cannot be forced on them.
2. “Come after me” Discipleship is coming after God and following Him.
3. Deny yourself. Give up your life, your ambitions, your plans, and turn them all over to the will of God.
   a. “Self-denial, and patient suffering, are hard lessons, which will never be learned if we consult with flesh and blood (Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, page 1289).”
4. Take up the cross, with all of its difficulties, problems, sufferings and persecutions.
   a. Can you be like Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:9-13; 2 Corinthians 4:8-12 and 2 Timothy 2:3?
   b. You cannot follow Christ without a cross on your back. He always leads toward the cross, never towards money, fame and influence.
5. Follow Christ, wherever He leads and in whatever He would have you to do.
   a. You cannot follow Christ and man at the same time.
   b. You cannot follow Christ and theological systems at the same time.
   c. If you follow Christ in duty on earth, you’ll also follow Him to glory.

16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

A man loses his own soul by sin and carnality. It is not taken from him, he gives it up by living a life in the flesh.

16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

How much is a soul worth? One soul cannot be purchased with all the riches of the world, but it can be purchased with the blood of Christ. And how would your soul be benefitted if you did gain the entire world but still died lost? The riches, fame and power of the world means nothing at the judgment. Adolf Hitler, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan and others like them nearly got the world. Would you want to trade places with them now? The riches of ten thousand worlds will not deliver you from a moment in a single hell.

Why would you want the world anyway? What good would it do you in eternity? If you had the world, where would you keep it? You can’t have everything because you have nowhere to put it. And with increased riches come increased sorrow. Usually, a poor laboring man sleeps better than any billionaire.

102. Promise of Rewards 16:27

16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.
This may apply to the judgment of the nations in 25:31-46. Personally, this takes place at the Bema Seat for Christians and at the Great White Judgment for the unsaved.

103. Seeing the Coming of the Kingdom 16:28

16:28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

At Pentecost in Acts 2? Or is there a preview of this in Matthew 17? This is a difficult verse.
Matthew Chapter 17

104. The Transfiguration 17:1-9

17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

Peter, James and John, the Lord’s inner circle. Although the Lord had rebuked Satan through Peter in 16:23, He still takes Peter with Him on this trip up the mountain.

There are traditional locations for this mountain, but we do not know for certain. It must have been somewhat isolated to ensure privacy for the transfiguration. John Gill and John Trapp, in his commentary, citing Josephus and Jerome, suggest Mount Tabor. Peter Ruckman suggests Mount Hermon.

Luke adds that the reason they went up the mountain was to pray (Luke 9:28). But this prayer meeting turned into something else!

17:2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

This allowed His divine glory to shine before the disciples.

1. “He was transfigured, metamorphothe—he was metamorphosed. The profane poets amused and abused the world with idle extravagant stories of metamorphoses, especially the metamorphoses of their gods, such as were disparaging and diminishing to them, equally false and ridiculous; to these some think Peter has an eye, when, being about to mention this transfiguration of Christ, he saith, We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made it known unto you, 2 Pet. i. 16. Christ was both God and man; but, in the days of his flesh, he took on him the form of a servant—morphen doulou, Phil. ii. 7. He drew a veil over the glory of his godhead; but now, in his transfiguration, he put by that veil, appeared en morphe theou—in the form of God (Phil. ii. 6), and gave his disciples a glimpse of his glory, which could not but change his form (Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible).”

2. The face is the most public part of the body, that which we see first and most. His clothing was also affected. Once you get saved, your face will have the countenance of God upon it and your wardrobe will also reflect the glory of God in your life.

17:3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

The Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) are united in their testimony of Christ and both point to Him.

17:4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

Good old Peter. He didn’t know what to say but he had to say something. As a natural born leader, he was always the first one to speak up, even at times when he should have been quiet.
And notice that when he sees the Lord, he immediately wants to go into a building program! Typical Baptist! He wanted to settle in right there for a while and commune with Moses and Elijah, but the vision was only for a short time before it was time to get back to work.

“It is good for us to be here!” Indeed it was but don’t get into a “we four and no more” mentality in wanting to hog all the blessings and not wanting to share them or in letting others in on these blessings. But Peter wanted to be there with Jesus, Moses and Elijah and he desired their company above any earthly company. But what need would Moses or Elijah have of tabernacles, as the physical elements of the world would have no effect on them in their heavenly bodies? And why didn’t Peter suggest building tabernacles for himself, James and John? They would need them more than Moses, Elijah or the transfigured Christ.

Peter recognized Moses and Elijah without an introduction. This heavenly body (not yet a glorified body) must carry with it some degree of recognition. And since the resurrection had not yet occurred, these are not glorified bodies, but they must be some form of intermediate heavenly body. Elijah, who went to heaven without dying, must have been translated into this form from his earthly body after his translation to heaven.

1. The two witnesses of Revelation 13, as they both appear here in shadow and type. Enoch cannot be considered. The main reason that Enoch is usually suggested was that he was raptured and did not die in Genesis and since it is appointed onto man once to die (Hebrews 9:27), Moses cannot be one of the witnesses as he died in Deuteronomy 34. So it has to be Enoch and Elijah. But Hebrews 9:27 is not saying a man cannot die twice physically as it happened every time someone was raised from the dead. Lazarus died in John 11. He was raised. Do you think he is still alive? What about Dorcas? She died twice. Just because Moses died in Deuteronomy 34 does not mean he cannot come back again in Revelation 13 to join Elijah as one of the Two Witnesses.

2. It’s amazing to see how many people think Moses did not die in Deuteronomy 34, despite the clear testimony that he did in Deuteronomy 34:5-7 and even in Jude 9. Why would Satan and Michael be contending for the body of Moses if Moses were still alive? Peter Ruckman is one of those commentators who think Moses either did not truly die in Deuteronomy 34 or that he was raised from the dead in Deuteronomy 34. He lays these out in his commentary on Revelation.

   a. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus are all on a mountain (Exod. 24:18; 1 Kings 19:8; Matt. 4:8).
   b. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus are all fasting 40 days and nights (Exod. 24:18; Luke 4:2; 1 Kings 19:8).
   c. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus all stand in the “presence of the LORD” (Exod. 33:21; 1 Kings 17:1; Acts 2:25, 33–35; Heb. 8:1, 12:1–3).
   d. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus were all sent to Israel (Exod. 2–4; 1 Kings 17–18; Luke 4; Matt. 10:1–8).
   e. Elijah, Moses, and Jesus all crossed water miraculously (Exod. 14–15; Matt. 14; 2 Kings 2).
   f. Elijah and Moses ended their lives where Jesus was baptized (Deut. 34; 2 Kings 2; John 1:28), east of Jordan, at the crossing.
   g. Elijah was caught up living, but will die again (2 Kings 2; Rev. 11).
   h. Moses was caught up after death, but will die again (Deut. 34; Rev. 11).
   i. Moses, Elijah, and Jesus all personally selected a minister to take their place (Deut. 3:24–28; 2 Kings 2; Rom. 15:8–9; Acts 9:15–16).
   j. All three destroy enemies by fire, which comes at their spoken command (Num. 16:31–35; 2 Kings 1; Mal. 4; Rev. 11, 19).
k. All three have power over the natural elements (Exod. 5–10; 1 Kings 17:1; James 5:17; Rev. 11:3–6; Matt. 14:31–33). (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

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

Peter got no acknowledgement of his proposition in 17:4.

The voice of the Father, giving witness to the Son. Also see 2 Peter 1:17.

“Hear ye Him”

1. Not any pope, preacher, politician, philosopher…There is only one person to listen to as there is only one God and one Son of God and only one way and one truth (John 14:6). Christ is even greater than Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the Prophets). The Father does not say to hear the Law or the Prophets. They both are part of the plan of God both testify of Christ, but Christ has more authority than them both.

1. You may have dealings with Moses and Elijah, but when it is all said and done, you will have your ultimate dealings with Jesus Only. The Law and the Prophets are part of the plan of God but at the end of it all is Jesus only.

17:6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

17:7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

17:8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

17:9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

You have to come down off the mount sometime and get back to work. We can’t live on mountaintop experiences. They are nice periods, but they do not help you to grow spiritually as the crops are grown in the valley, not on the mountain tops. In 17:14-21 and Mark 9:14ff, we are told of a multitude at the foot of the mountain, with the possessed child, the powerless disciples and the carping scribes. You may have a mountain top experience in church on Sunday, but then you have to go back to work on Monday!

Matthew mentions the resurrection twice in this chapter, in verses 9 and 23. No response is given in 17:9 but the disciples were very sorry in 17:23 about this prophecy.

105. Elijah and John the Baptist 17:10-13

17:10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?
They were correct in this teaching, as per Malachi 4:5. It is interesting that nothing is ever said about Moses having to first come before the Kingdom, although he does return in Revelation 11.

17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

In preparation for the millennium.

17:12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

“But I say unto you..." was the Lord’s way of saying “the scribes are correct but not entirely as they are missing an important truth about Elijah...”

“whatever they listed...” whatever they wanted or desired.

John would have been Elijah if Israel had accepted his ministry and message- see Matthew 11:14.

1. This involves the “Second Offer of the Kingdom” and the events of what could have taken place anytime between Acts 2-7. The Second Offer of the Kingdom (Millennium) is made in Acts 3:19-21. If the nation would repent and accept Christ, the Father would send them Jesus Christ in 3:20.

2. A good summary of the Second Offer, by J. Sidlow Baxter in Explore the Book: “Such plain speaking cannot be misunderstood. Had there been a national repentance and acceptance of Jesus as indeed Israel's Messiah-Saviour-King, the return of our Lord in public glory would have happened without further postponement. In other words, the second coming of Christ was contingent upon Israel’s reaction to the new message through the apostles. Very clearly, then, we can see why, when the disciples asked, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6), He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.” To have known the day and hour in advance would have been to know Israel’s reaction before ever the renewed offer of the kingdom was made. Truly, in the words of James: “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18); and it is in the light of His perfect foreknowledge that He preadapts and prearranges and predetermines. Thus, while He never leaves His ultimate purposes at the mercy of human uncertainty, in the outworking of things to the predetermined end He recognizes the free-will of man all through, and prearranges according to His foreknowledge of what man will do. Thus it is that events are allowed in the main to take their natural course, while at the same time God foreknows and overrules all to the fulfilment of His ultimate purpose. Thus, in all genuineness, the renewed offer of the Messianic kingdom was made to the Jews, as recorded in the Acts; and the return of Christ was for the time being contingent upon their reaction. This has a bearing upon the Epistles. In those to the Thessalonians the second coming of Christ is represented as though it might have burst into sudden occurrence in the imminent future. In some of the other Pauline epistles there is a noticeable shift of emphasis: the wondrous hope still gleams ahead, but there is not the same impression of impending fulfilment. This has been a problem to thoughtful readers; but once again, when we see the Acts as distinctively the renewed offer of the kingdom to Israel the problem evaporates. The period covered by the Acts,
we repeat, was a suspense-period. So long as the kingdom was being re-offered to the nation the return of the Lord could have happened without any delay upon the fulfillment of the conditions. The offer was real; the promise was true; the crucified but ascended Son of Man was indeed “standing at the right hand of God,” ready to descend again in kingdom blessing. Would Israel respond, repent, receive? That was the suspense-point. Now it is in those epistles which were written during this suspense-period of the Acts, when there was still hope of Israel’s repentance, that we find the seeming imminence of the Lord’s return. Of those epistles, the earliest were 1 and 2 Thessalonians (written A.D. 53). 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, were written four or five years later, when Jewish antipathy was becoming more firmly crystallized, but when to assemblies of believers all over the Roman world the hope of Christ’s return was still that which filled the immediate horizon (hence such words as Romans 13:11,12; 1 Corinthians 7:26,29, 15:52,58, 16:22; 2 Corinthians 4:14). When we turn over to Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, however, there is a noticeable new emphasis. The grand prospect of the Lord’s return is still there, and still as bright: but there is not just the same sense of impendence. A great new conception swings into commanding prominence, taking the precedence for the time being, and claiming the soul’s wonder—that is, the CHURCH as the mystic body and bride and temple of the eternal Son. These epistles were not written until A.D. 64 (or possibly even later), i.e. after the culminating pronouncement of Acts 28:28. We do not say that there is a hard-and-fast division between these two groups of epistles. The hope of the Lord’s return is found in both; but there is modification as the later developments recorded in the Acts clarify the situation. Similarly, the Church is found in both; but there is profounder conception of it as the wonderful Divine “mystery” is more fully revealed. We do not say there is a rigid demarcation between the two groups; yet the difference of emphasis is distinctly there; and the explanation is found in a true understanding of the Acts as the further offer of the kingdom to Israel. Another point on which it is well to be precise is that the two Thessalonian epistles, although they certainly give the impression that the Lord’s return was expected in the very near future, do not anywhere actually state that it was thus impending. With that more-than-human genius which everywhere characterizes the Scriptures a fine point of balance is maintained, so that while the sense of expectancy is stressed and even encouraged, there is no actual commitment as to the “day” or the “hour.” In this connection it is important to distinguish between what Paul thought and what Paul taught. Maybe Paul himself thought that the Lord’s return was close at hand; but he never actually wrote so. We do not claim inspiration and infallibility for all that the apostles thought; but we do claim it for all that they taught. Thus, these two Second Advent letters to the Thessalonians preserve a kind of sensitive poise between an encouraged expectancy on the one hand and a careful indefiniteness as to time on the other. Does this seem unfair to those early believers? Actually, it was the very opposite. Looking at things from the human side, our Lord’s return might have happened then; for as we have seen, it was a contingent prospect. Looking at things from the Divine side (which the now-completed Scriptures permit us to do) there could have been no renewed offer of the kingdom without this contingent promise. Certainly, the further Jewish refusal lay in the foreknowledge of God, but so did His larger purpose through the Church and the eventual return of Christ after the calling in of the Church’s elect members. In keeping with this, the great hope was set before those early believers so that they might have—along with all who have followed them—this sanctifying intelligence concerning the eventual consummation.”

3. Summary:

a. All the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Millennial Kingdom (hundreds of verses- too many to list here)
b. Christ offered the Kingdom to Israel and was rejected
c. The Kingdom is offered again here in Acts 3
d. It will be offered again by Stephen in Acts 7
e. Israel rejects both offers. Christ sits back down at Stephen’s death. He arose because He would have returned if the nation had repented at Stephen’s message.
f. God now withdraws the offer and the gospel goes to the Samaritans in Acts 8.
g. The apostle to the Gentiles is saved in Acts 9.
i. The first mission to the Gentiles starts in Acts 13.
k. Acts 28:28 wraps up the current state of the “kingdom offer” and the status of Israel up until the rapture and tribulation period.
l. Since the Kingdom did not come in Acts, it was delayed until a yet-future date. In the tribulation, Moses and Elijah will return in Revelation to take up their ministry of being the Two Witnesses, only to both be martyred in Revelation 11:7-10, only to be raised and raptured in Revelation 11:11,12.

17:13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. If Israel had accepted his message and would have repented on a national level, the kingdom could have started in the gospels. But since Israel did not accept his message, John does, the Lord goes to the cross, the Church Age comes, ended by the rapture and Elijah must return in Revelation 11.

106. The Healing of the Lunatic Son 17:14-21

17:14 ¶ And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

17:15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

Suicidal tendencies and other self-destructive actions usually suggest devilish activity. This can also manifest itself in tattooing, body piercings, gender-confusion, etc.

“lunatic” It was thought that the moon caused these physical and mental issues. This could have been some form of epilepsy. The word is used only in Matthew 4:24 and here.

17:16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

Because of a lack of faith (17:20). Although the Lord had given the disciples power over devils (Matthew 10:1), they failed here.

17:17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.
This was directed more at the faithless crowd than it was to the powerless disciples. There was some real frustration and disappointment in His voice as He gave this reply.

**17:18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.**

Only Jesus can rebuke devils and Satan. We are never told that we ought to do it.

1. The Charismatic false teachers are forever talking about their supposed authority to “rebuke the devil” but he laughs at them.
2. This “devil” is not Satan but a devil, a fallen spirit.

**17:19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?**

**17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.**

You could move the mountain but what if a poor widow lived on that mountain? “This mountain” may be the same Mount of Transfiguration that the Lord had just descended from.

To “remove a mountain” was a Jewish metaphor referring to removing a great difficulty. The Lord is saying “If you have faith, then you will not be frustrated or defeated by even the most difficult of circumstances”.

“grain of mustard seed” The mustard seed is very small, yet it can yield a large bush or tree. Likewise, small faith can also produce great results if put to a proper use.

**17:21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.**

Some cases require more spiritual work than do others. It also means that not all healings would be instantaneous, as prayer and fasting takes time. Some healings might be stretched out over a period of several months. Jesus, as God, did not choose to use an extended process to cure this child as we may have had to do if we had attempted this.

**107. Prophecy of Christ’s Arrest and Resurrection 17:22,23**

**17:22 ¶ And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men:**

**17:23 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.**

They did not understand this prophecy of His death and they certainly did not want to hear about it or to even consider the possibility. They certainly did not understand the references to
His resurrection, even up until the days after His death. They did not like the idea that the Gentiles would murder their Master or that the Lord would even allow such a thing to take place.

108. The Question About Tribute 17:24-27

17:24 ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

Even Jesus had to pay His taxes, even if they were going to support a corrupt temple worship or an ungodly Roman Empire. Tax evasion and tax protests have no Scriptural support. Paul makes this clear in Romans 13:6 that we are to pay tribute to whom it is due. The Lord also furthered this teaching in Luke 20:24. He was asked by the religious leaders if it was lawful to pay tribute to Caesar. If He answered “yes” then Jesus would have been accused of supporting Rome and of being unpatriotic. If He answered “no” then they had Him as a rebel against Rome. But He answered that since Caesar’s image was on the coin, it was his coin and all we were doing when paying our taxes was rendering to Caesar the things that belonged to him anyway.

17:25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

When Israel’s religious leaders try to kill Christ, one of the first charges is “We found this fellow...forbidding to give tribute to Caesar” (Luke 23:1,2), even after He had talked with them about it and settled the question publicly (Luke 20:21-26).

“Jesus prevented him” or “Jesus asked Peter this before Peter could further respond”. Jesus wanted to draw Peter’s answer out more and expand on it. Sons of royalty were exempt from the temple tribute, but Christ paid it anyway to avoid an offense and to avoid creating an issue.

1. The word “prevent” occurs seven times in the AV. The form “preventist” is found once and the form “prevented” appears nine times. “Prevent” is manifestly not an archaic word but it is used in the AV in an archaic sense. The word is from the Latin “praeventus”, from “praeveniire”, “to come before”. Thus, the original meaning of “prevent” was to come or go before, anticipate, meet beforehand, obviate, or precede (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 269)."

17:26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

17:27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

We pay taxes, so we won’t offend and to maintain a good public testimony. And Jesus paid taxes to a heathen and ungodly government, so we must as well. This points out the great truth of the Pauline epistles. It is that the Christian has liberty to do anything since he is not under the law, but for the sake of the weaker brother or the unsaved man, he purposely refrains from conduct that would offend the unsaved.
1. Don’t you wish we could all pay our taxes like this? Christ was so poor that He didn’t have even this rather meager amount of money on Him and had to resort to this miracle to provide the payment.

2. No one respects tax rebels, especially those who cite religious reasons. Every so often, you meet some nut-case like this. I remember in the 1980s, while living in northeastern Maryland, there was a loon who decided that it was unconstitutional for him to take out a state-issued driver’s license and that he did not have tag and register his car in Maryland. He made his own license-plate and put it on his car. He had “Free Republic of Maryland” or something on his plates. One day, he was pulled over by the State Police for obvious reasons and was fined. I don’t remember if he was jailed. He was a laughing stock, which would have been worse if he had been a religious laughing stock.
Matthew Chapter 18

Matthew 18 deals with conduct in the Kingdom:
1. Become like little children (18:2-4)
2. Do not set up offenses and do not become a cause of offense (18:5-9)
3. Do not despise any believer, including the “little” ones (18:10-14)
4. Be willing to listen to others and the church if we need to have our conduct corrected (18:15-20)
5. We should be willing to forgive without limit (18:21-35)

109. The Greatest in the Kingdom 18:1-6

18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

A millennial question, since it deals with the kingdom of heaven. This would be a natural question for a Jew to ask. This is a dispensational question and it does not relate to the church age.

18:2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

The most humble and unassuming type of person you could find. The child was called and quickly and willing came to Christ to be used as this object lesson. Christ must have been a very charming and pleasant person as children do not go to unpleasant persons.

1. Become like a little child- one who is humble, meek, not self-assuming or self-important. The kingdom will have no place for the proud, arrogant and self-important.
2. This is the answer to the disciple’s question in 18:1. Who is greatest in the Kingdom? He who is least, who humbles himself, who has a child-like attitude. On earth, men strive through effort and discipline to achieve greatness in their vocation, but that is not the attitude of the Kingdom.
3. Child-like humility is the first requisite for learning the Bible. God shows nothing to proud and arrogant “students” who are too smart or too educated to be taught or to receive any revelation directly from the Holy Spirit.

Converted from your life of sin and unto God. Reform your lives and get it aligned with God. “The apostles were converted in one sense, but even they needed a further conversion. They needed to be converted from self-seeking to humbleness and content. A little child has no ambitious dreams; he is satisfied with little things; he trusts; he aims not at greatness; he yields to command. There is no entering into the kingdom of heaven but by descending from fancied greatness to real lowliness of mind, and becoming as little children (Charles Spurgeon, Matthew: Gospel of the Kingdom).”

“Our Lord’s contempt for “brainy wisdom” is clearly shown in the passage. As someone has so aptly commented: “At the time He made these remarks, He was talking to a crowd that had enough brains to fill a good-sized garbage can.” We might also learn not to despise the “small things” from the lesson (Zech. 4:10). It was a child who showed the Prussian General Blucher a short cut to Waterloo with reinforcements, while old Napoleon was mopping up the British Army. It was a child, also, who told Governor Curtin (of Pennsylvania) of Lee’s intended maneuver to go north of Hagerstown, Maryland, and approach Gettysburg. The boy overheard
two Confederate generals talking nearly a week before the Southern armies marched north, parallel to the Emmitsburg Road. It is a child that secures Naaman’s healing (2 Kings 5), and it is a child that eludes the wrath of Herod, stumps the intellectuals of the first century, and sets the dating of all dates in history from His birth (Luke 2:26, 27) (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

A lack of conversion, or unwillingness to be converted, will keep a man out of the Kingdom.

“Converting grace makes us like little children, not foolish as children (1 Cor. xiv. 20), nor fickle (Eph. iv. 14), nor playful (ch. xi. 16); but, as children, we must desire the sincere milk of the word (1 Pet. ii. 2); as children, we must be careful for nothing, but leave it to our heavenly Father to care for us (ch. vi. 31); we must, as children, be harmless and inoffensive, and void of malice (1 Cor. xiv. 20), governable, and under command (Gal. iv. 2); and (which is here chiefly intended) we must be humble as little children, who do not take state upon them, nor stand upon the punctilios of honour; the child of a gentleman will play with the child of a beggar (Rom. xii. 16), the child in rags, if it have the breast, is well enough pleased, and envies not the gaiety of the child in silk; little children have no great aims at great places, or projects to raise themselves in the world; they exercise not themselves in things too high for them; and we should in like manner behave, and quiet ourselves, Ps. cxxxi. 1, 2. As children are little in body and low in stature, so we must be little and low in spirit, and in our thoughts of ourselves. This is a temper which leads to other good dispositions; the age of childhood is the learning age (Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible).”

18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 4 is an obvious reference to the attitude and heart condition of the genuine convert in any dispensation. It is the natural outcome of a true conversion experience. This is stated in the Psalms for an Old Testament saint (Psalm 131), in the Gospels for a Jewish saint (Luke 10:21), and in the New Testament for a Christian (Romans 12:16, 1 Peter 2:1-3).

The Kingdom is exactly the opposite from any other age: the humble are exalted, the weak are strong, those who are the least esteemed are esteemed greatly.

“When had David the kingdom given him in possession, but when he was as a weaned child? When was Mephibosheth advanced to David’s table, but when he made himself a dog, and therefore fit only to lie under the table, yea, a dead dog, and therefore fit only for the ditch? He that is in the low pits and caves of the earth, sees the stars in the firmament; when they who are on the tops of the mountains discern them not. He that is most humble seeth most of heaven, and shall have most of it: for the lower the ebb, the higher the tide, and the lower the foundation of virtue is laid, the higher shall the roof of glory be overlaid (John Trapp, Commentary on the Bible).”

18:5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.
It takes a humble man to receive Christ and to be saved.

18:6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Christ was never afraid to offend a religious hypocrite, but He was concerned about offending the “little ones”. To offend a young and tender believer (and a new believer) to discourage him from following Christ is to invite a severe condemnation from God. This can also refer to doing something stupid in front of an unsaved man who might have otherwise had gotten saved except for his being offended by something you said or done as a Christian. Paul warned not to offend the brethren (Romans 14:21-23; 1 Corinthians 8:11-13).

See Revelation 18:21 to see an example of something that greatly offended, Mystery Babylon, being thrown into the sea and drowning like this kind of a millstone.

“drowned” “The Jew feared the sea; for him Heaven was a place where there would be no more sea (Rev.21:1). The man who taught another to sin would be better to be drowned far out in the most lonely of all waste places. Moreover, the very picture of drowning had its terror for the Jew. Drowning was sometimes a Roman punishment, but never Jewish. To the Jew it was the symbol of utter destruction. When the Rabbis taught that heathen and Gentile objects were to be utterly destroyed, they said that they must be “cast into the salt sea.” Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews 14. 15. 10) has a terrible account of a Galilean revolt in which the Galileans took the supporters of Herod and drowned them in the depths of the Sea of Galilee. The very phrase would paint to the Jew a picture of utter destruction (William Barclay, Daily Study Bible: Matthew).”

110. Offences 18:7-9

18:7 ¶ Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Offenses are inevitable and will come to all men, saved or lost. You can’t help being offended but you can make sure that you are not the source or the cause of any offenses. Offenses can come by three different routes: by God’s permission, Satan’s malice, and man’s wickedness.

Offences:
1. Those who cause offences are to be marked and shunned - Romans 16:17.
2. Paul had a conscience void of offence - Acts 24:16
3. It is evil to deliberately cause offence - Romans 14:20
4. Give no offence that would cause damage to the ministry - 2 Corinthians 6:3
5. There is the offence of the cross in Galatians 5:11

18:8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.
18:9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

The Lord repeats a passage from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:29,30). Remove occasions or instruments that could cause offense to others from your life, no matter how precious that thing might be to you. I don’t think the Lord is talking about physically maiming yourself but if that is what it takes to keep you out of hell in avoiding whatever sin that will destroy your soul, then the Lord said it would be worth it. Any price is worth it and we should be willing to suffer any loss in order to avoid hell ourselves and to insure that we are not the instruments in causing others to go to hell. To summarize, the Lord is saying “Whatever is keeping you from being converted and believing on me, you’d do better without.”

D. 18:8,9 It is very clear that the Lord clearly believed in and taught a literal, fiery hell.

111. Despise Not One of These Little Ones 18:10

18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

This is usually given as a “proof text” for Guardian Angels, at least for children? Hebrews 1:14 says that angels do minister to saints.

It is human nature to look down upon those whom we think are “not up to our level”, either socially, economically, educationally or spiritually. But that attitude is foreign to the thinking of the Kingdom, as we should always be looking to esteem our brother more highly than we esteem ourselves (Philippians 2:3).

112. To Seek and Save That Which Was Lost 18:11-14

18:11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

This is not an evangelistic parable since no unsaved man is called a sheep. It deals with wayward and apostate being reclaimed. The man (any man) who refuses to believe the Bible literally and wanders away from the truth and into false doctrine becomes enmeshed every time in apostate theological system, spiritual perversion and false plan of salvation.

The first time Christ came, He did not come to be king but for salvation of the lost through His work on the cross. His kingship is in view at His second coming in Revelation 19.

18:12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

18:13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

The Lord cares for and seeks the individual. Christianity is a religion of the individual.
18:14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

This is anti-limited atonement. God wanted them all saved. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to salvation. The Calvinistic teaching is that God sovereignly elects some to be saved and passes others by for salvation, but the Biblical teaching is clearly opposed to that teaching. But it is clear that God desires no man to perish but that all come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

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113. Resolving Church Problems  18:15-18

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

This deals with internal disputes within a local congregation since “brethren” are involved. When this happens, the procedure to follow is:

1. Go to the brother alone and try to work things out.
2. If that doesn’t work, try again with two or three witnesses. This will demonstrate, with witnesses, that you tried to resolve the situation, but the offending brother refused. There need to be at least two separate attempts made at resolution.
3. If the brother still refuses to deal with the disagreement, he is to be brought before the local church and they are to judge the situation. See 1 Corinthians 6 for elaboration on judgment within the local congregation.
4. Once a judgment has been rendered, if the offending party refuses to abide by the decision, he is to be turned out of the local congregation via “church discipline”.

Offences and disagreements between brethren do happen and are sometimes not our faults. Even if the other person is to blame, we should take the initiative and go to him to try to reconcile the matter, and not to wait for him to make the first move, because he probably will not take that first step.

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18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

The “two witnesses” principle.

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18:17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

This is second mention of the Church, with the first mentioned in Matthew 16:18. The Lord is looking prophetically beyond Pentecost. Neither this or Matthew 16 are the start of the New Testament Church. That will not take place until Acts 2 although the formation documents of the Church would be drawn up here and in Matthew 18:17. The Lord is looking at the church in prospect here and in Matthew 18.

As in any earthly organization, such as a business, the formation documents and by-laws are first drawn up but that does not “create” the corporation. Once drawn up, the formation
document of that prospective corporation is sent to a governmental agency, usually a Division of Corporations of a certain state for review, approval and recording. The agency will then assign an identifier to the new corporation and return some sort of confirmation copy. Then the corporation becomes “active”. The Lord is drawing up the formation documents of the Church in Matthew 16 and 18 but the Church does not come into actual existence until the Holy Spirit gives His “approval” and acceptance in Acts 2.

“let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” The Amish do this literally with an offending and unrepentant member with the “ban”, which involves a totally cutting off of the offender from and contact with the community, including family. This is designed to try to get the offender to repent and to be restored.

18:18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Local churches have this authority over its members and associated issues. Also see Matthew 16:19. It is not just given to Peter, as seen by the “ye” pronouns- it is plural.

The Church has more power on earth and even in the heavenlies than it might realize, but how little to we realize it and employ that authority!

114. The Power of Two or Three  18:19,20

18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

A principal of prayer and for getting answers to prayer.

18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

A good prayer meeting night verse. Whenever we count our attendance at a church service, we need to add one more, as Christ Himself is also present in our services, although we do not see Him.

What is a local church?
1. A local and visible manifestation of the Body of Christ
2. It is ordained by God and part of His program for this dispensation
   a. Not seen by the Old Testament prophets
   b. Was a “mystery”- Ephesians 3:3; 5:32
3. It was purchased with the blood of Christ as He died for it- Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25
4. It is a “called out assembly” from the Greek word “ekklesia”
   a. Called out from the world- separation
5. Its head is Christ- Colossians 1:18
6. Its foundation is Christ- Ephesians 2:20
7. It is built by Christ- Matthew 16:18
8. Overseen by pastors- 1 Peter 5:1-3
10. Has a membership  
12. Not bound to a church building  
   a. Early churches met in houses- Romans 16:5  
   b. They meet in all kinds of buildings, but the church is the people, not the building  
13. Size is unimportant. As long as there are two people involved, that qualifies as a local church  
14. Has a statement of faith, a public declaration of faith and belief  
15. Mission  
   a. To edify the saints- Ephesians 4:15,16  
   b. To evangelize the lost- Matthew 28:19,20  
      i. Soulwinning  
      ii. Discipleship  
   c. To witness for Christ as ambassadors- 2 Corinthians 5:20  

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115. Forgiving the Brethren  18:21-19:2

18:21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

The rabbis would have said three times. Peter thought seven times was really “going the extra mile”.

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18:22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

This is not a matter of multiplication but rather we must continually forgive a brother no matter how many times he sins against us, in the same manner that the Father forgives us when we continually sin the same sin against Him.

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18:23 ¶ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

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18:24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

Ten thousand talents is equal to billions of dollars. One had to wonder how this man got into such a level of debt! But that is our situation before God. We probably have millions to billions of sins on our account and that represents an astronomical spiritual debt before God. And the debt must be paid.

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18:25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.
The servant would be sold into slavery or some other form of indentured servitude to pay the debt. We used to have “debtors’ prisons” in this county in colonial days, where a creditor could have you arrested and imprisoned if you could not pay off a debt.

18:26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

The plea of the sinner at salvation, where all we can do is plead for mercy and forgiveness. There is no way we can pay any of our debt since all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) and you can’t pay any debt with a filthy rag.

18:27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

The Lord forgives any who comes to Him with this heart and bringing this kind of plea.

18:28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

A few pence - a few cents. This would be like pocket change, a trifling amount.

18:29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

This is the exact same plea as in 18:26 but without the same results.

18:30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

This servant must have been a very proud and arrogant man. He had his fellow thrown into a debtor’s prison. This was a very illogical act. If the man is sitting in prison, how is he supposed to be able to work to earn the money to pay off the debt?

18:31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

18:32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

18:33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?
18:34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

Is this a form of double jeopardy? The Lord had already forgiven the debt but now he has the servant delivered to pay the debt. It may involve the sins committed after his forgiveness, which still could have been significant since we do not know the exact time interval between verses 27 and 28.

This verse is usually given as a proof-text by Rome as a basis for their teaching for purgatory.

Spiritually, the “tormentors” would be his punishment and punishers in hell.

18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

If God could forgive you of your infinite debts, can’t you forgive your brethren whose debt to you amounts to pocket change?
Matthew Chapter 19

115. Forgiving the Brethren 18:21-19:2 continued

19:1 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan;

19:2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

116. Teaching on Divorce 19:3-9

19:3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

It was the nature of the Pharisees to always be bringing up these petty questions, to distract and attempt to entrap Christ. And questions regarding divorce and remarriage will often do it!

“tempting him” shows that this question was not asked in a good spirit but rather was designed to attempt to make Christ say something they could use against Him later. They weren’t really interested in what God said about divorce. The Pharisees were using an issue that was controversial (as it is today) to try to get Christ to either contradict Himself or contradict Moses.

For “every cause”? No, not for every or any cause. There are a few causes where it is allowed. Can a man divorce his wife for any silly, shallow reason? If she burns the eggs at breakfast, can you divorce her?

19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

The Lord gives His support for the Genesis account of creation and of Adam and Eve.

19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

“Twain one flesh”.
1. A marriage then is not the ceremony. That just makes it legal.
2. A marriage is flesh joining flesh, when the act of intercourse occurs. That is what makes fornication and adultery so bad- the guilty party is ALREADY married but then marries another when the act of intercourse takes place. The guilty party is now married to someone else although no divorce has taken place with their spouse.
3. If two unmarried people engage in fornication, they are married in the eyes of God even if no ceremony has taken place.

19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.
But we wonder how many marriages were put together by God.

God never supported divorce as He hates it (Malachi 2:16).

19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

See Deuteronomy 24:1-3. The “writing of divorcement” is “biblion apostasiou” in the Greek-translated literally as an “apostate Bible”. When a professing believer “divorces” the Lord through acts of apostasy, God will give him an “apostate Bible.” If this apostate is an English speaker, God will send him a spirit of deception and that man will leave off the Authorized Version and start taking up with perverted English versions.

19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Fornication and adultery as a justification for divorce.

1. The rejected “wife” of Deuteronomy 24:1 is given the privilege of going and becoming the wife of another man while the previous husband is still living.
2. Where divorce is allowed:
   b. Desertion.
      i. If the partner abandons the victim on account of the gospel, then that victim is not under bondage (1 Corinthians 7:15).
      ii. This only applies if the Christian has an unbelieving spouse who leaves on account of the gospel.
      iii. If the unbelieving spouse sues for divorce, citing religious reasons, the Christian is to fight the divorce. But that is difficult in some states where the court would grant such a divorce. In that case, the Christian has done everything he has tried to do to salvage the marriage, but the unbelieving spouse refused and was granted a divorce. Why should a believer be condemned to a life of perpetual singleness in that case?
     iv. We assume that this situation came about because both parties were unsaved when they were marriage, but one got saved afterwards but the other did not. But if a Christian married an unbeliever is violation of Scripture (2 Corinthians 6:14) and suffers this kind of situation, I would not support his/her right to remarry as they should have never married that unbeliever in the first place.
    v. If both parties are Christian, they are to remain married and/or be reconciled. Remarriage is not allowed in that case.
    vi. The Christian spouse is not to initiate any separation or divorce from their unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:14). If the unbeliever departs, then let them (1 Corinthians 7:15).
   c. Infidelity
i. If there is adultery in the marriage, as in 1 Corinthians 6:16. The example is Hosea and Gomer.
ii. Matthew 19:9 allows for remarriage.
iii. Fornication becomes grounds for divorce and remarriage, although the remarriage is cautioned against in 1 Corinthians 7:27,28.
iv. The only remarriage that is considered illegitimate is where the grounds of divorce are illegitimate.

3. It should be noticed that we never would recommend divorce to anyone since God makes it clear that He hates it. We may recommend a period of separation to revive a troubled marriage, but we would never recommend something that God hates.

117. Should a Man Marry? 19:10-12

19:10 ¶ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

19:11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

19:12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

There may be some cases where it is best for a man not to marry. Paul deals with this is 1 Corinthians 7:28

1. Paul makes it clear that this is his own opinion as he had no direct word from the Lord- 1 Corinthians 7:25
2. Paul spoke of the “present distress” in 1 Corinthians 7:26. This would not apply to “normal situations”.
3. To remain single is better- 1 Corinthians 7:27
   a. Paul was not anti-marriage. He is saying that in some situations, it is better to remain unmarried
   b. Domestic problems often come with marriage- 1 Corinthians 7:28
   c. A married man must concern himself about pleasing his wife but a single person only has to concern himself with pleasing the Lord- 1 Corinthians 7:32,33
      i. Same with women- 1 Corinthians 7:34
   d. 19:12 Some ministries are better to be done by single persons, such as missionary work in dangerous places where it would not be prudent to take a family
      i. A single person can also give full time service to the Lord without having to split their time with domestic duties. He has liberty to marry but a wife and a family will “bog him down”. He (or she!) chooses to remain single so he can dedicate all his time and money to the ministry.
   e. 19:11 Not all men have the gift to remain single.
4. It is not a sin to marry- 1 Corinthians 7:28,36
118. Jesus and the Children  19:13-15

19:13 ¶ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

Jesus must have had a very attractive personality as children will not go to unpleasant people.

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19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

This verse has absolutely nothing to do with infant baptism. The fact that pedo-baptists use this passage to justify the non-biblical doctrine of infant Baptist only shows that these men have no real scriptural support for their position.

Do not be a hindrance to anyone coming to Christ, even the weakest or the most broken person. The broken, humble, meek person are the ones Christ welcomes, either for salvation or sanctification.

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19:15 And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

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19:16 ¶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

It is human nature to always want to “do something” to earn or gain God’s favor and salvation. To simple “receive” the free gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10) is contrary to human nature. This man had a good desire, but it was obvious that he was not yet saved. A desire to be saved does not equal salvation but it is a good first step. This man had heard the Lord preach and he was interested, and he makes the correct first step. This was a great answer and we wish sinners would ask this of us more often! It looks like this man is ready to be saved, but the Lord saw something in his heart that no man would have been able to discern.

All the gospels tell us that this man was rich. Matthew says that he was young (Matthew 19:20) and Luke says that he was a ruler (Luke 18:18).

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19:17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

If Christ is God then He is good, otherwise He is not God. Only God is good. If Jesus is God, then He is good. If He is not good, then He is not God. To say Jesus is “good” without acknowledging Him to be God is not sufficient and is inaccurate.

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19:18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,
These are the “horizontal” commandments, dealing with our relationship with other people. The 5th through 9th commandments are given, showing they are still binding and have not been taken away. This man was “horizontally” perfect with man but was not “vertically” perfect with God. The Lord does not cite the 10th commandment about covetousness because He knew that was this man’s master sin, which the Lord hits him with in 19:21.

19:19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

19:20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

He might have, but he certainly couldn’t make such a claim with regards to the “vertical commandments”, dealing with his relationship with God. There was no doubt that he was a moral man, but morality is not salvation. Morality is human holiness and that is not sufficient for salvation.

1. His works-based religion left him unfulfilled and unsatisfied.
2. “What lack I yet?” “Well, you lack a payment for sins. You lack a sense of guilt. You lack a knowledge of the laws you have broken. You lack assurance of salvation, and you lack peace of heart and mind. Isn’t that enough? He didn’t lack morals, money, zeal, interest, health, or common sense. Yet in Mark 10:21, our Lord says, “ONE THING thou lackest.” (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believers Commentary on Matthew).

19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

He was unwilling to part with the dearest thing to his heart for God - his money. This is not a “plan of salvation” as it is not required to make oneself poor in order to be saved as a rich man can be saved the same way a poor man can. But of you wanted to be perfect, it would require being willing to give up the one thing that is the most precious to you, as Paul did in Philippians 3:7,8.

1. Covetousness was his master sin that kept him from heaven.

He asked what he had to do and he was told but was not willing to follow through. Multitudes are like this. They may want to be saved but only on their terms and if it is not too expensive. The Lord seemed to try to drive him away, instead of taking him as he was, with his materialism and idolatry. The Lord certainly did not make it easy for this man. I am convinced that in our zeal to see people saved, we often short-cut and truncate the gospel to remove any obstacles that would prevent the prospect from getting saved.

1. You can be saved without being perfect, but you can’t be perfect without being saved. You can be saved and not be a disciple, but you will be living a half-Christian life, at best.

19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.
He was a slave to things, and they were his god. He was unwilling to change his god to worship and follow the true God, and it would cost him his own soul. The Lord asked him if he was willing to part with the dearest earthly possession he had (his wealth) and he was not. He thought Jesus had asked too much of him. Many sinners, when confronted with a genuine presentation of the gospel, may think we are also asking too much of them. Salvation should be quick and easy, with the requirement only to “believe” and nothing else.

120. Who Can Be Saved? 19:23-26

19:23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

This is not due to some supposed defect in the gospel in dealing with rich men, but it rather speaks to the heart of the rich man. A rich man has more cares of this world than does a poor man and the rich man has more “stuff” and “things” that he is beholden to. Materially speaking, he may have to give up more of this world’s goods than would a poor man.

Riches and materialism obscure faith and spirituality. If the man has all that he needs, what does he have to claim in prayer by faith? Riches hinder humility. Men are quick to find out that it is “power,” and why should a powerful man be humble?

19:24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

I know all about the “camel kneeling down to enter a gate” or “the camel must be unloaded” interpretations and they may be correct, but I would not dismiss the literal figure- a huge camel trying to thread the eye of a needle, which is physically impossible. Saving any man, including a rich man, is humanly impossible. Also see Luke 18:25,

19:25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

The disciples were “floored” by the Lord’s words. They realized that all men are rich in something and understood the difficulties involved with the terms of discipleship that the Lord laid down.

19:26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Since it is God who is the direct agent in salvation, it is possible. Only God can change the heart of any man, rich or poor, and make him ready and willing to accept the gospel. Our personality and soulwinning techniques cannot do this.

121. Rewards of Discipleship 19:27-30
19:27 ¶ Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

No doubt they had forsaken much, but is there truly a man who forsook all? Maybe Paul, as he laid out in Philippians 3.

“A man is not a Christian if his first concern is pay. Peter asked: "What do we get out of it?" The Christian works for the joy of serving God and his fellow-men. That is why the first will be last and the last will be first. Many a man in this world, who has earned great rewards, will have a very low place in the Kingdom because rewards were his sole thought. Many a man, who, as the world counts it, is a poor man, will be great in the Kingdom, because he never thought in terms of reward but worked for the thrill of working and for the joy of serving. It is the paradox of the Christian life that he who aims at reward loses it, and he who forgets reward finds it (William Barclay, “Matthew” in The Daily Study Bible).”

19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The Millennium is called the “regeneration” as the earth will be “born again” and all things will be made new. This shows that there will be millennial rewards for faithful service in this life. A faithful life and faithful service in this life will bring rewards in the next. For the Christian, these rewards will be determined at the bema seat judgment, which takes place after the rapture (Revelation 4:1-3).

The 12 apostles would judge the 12 tribes of Israel after the tribulation. Will this take place at the Judgment of the Nations in Matthew 25 or somewhere else?

19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

19:30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

This is completely the opposite of how the world thinks. The world is about “survival of the fittest” and that the strong rule over the weak. But in the Kingdom, we will operate under God’s rules and they are the opposite of man’s.
Matthew Chapter 20

122. The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard 20:1-16

20:1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

The “kingdom of heaven” indicates this is a parable with a doctrinal application to the Kingdom, although we can always make spiritual applications to the modern age.

This parable is a very strong justification for free-market economics:

1. The householder negotiated directly with his employees - no unions or labor departments.
2. The pay scale was “whatever was right”, agreed to by the worker. No minimum wage or government interference. 20:4
3. The workers were paid daily - not withholdings.

“These men were hired labourers; they were the lowest class of workers, and life for them was always desperately precarious. Slaves and servants were regarded as being at least to some extent attached to the family; they were within the group; their fortunes would vary with the fortunes of the family, but they would never be in any imminent danger of starvation in normal times. It was very different with the hired day-labourers. They were not attached to any group; they were entirely at the mercy of chance employment; they were always living on the semi-starvation line. As we have seen, the pay was 4 pence a day; and, if they were unemployed for one day, the children would go hungry at home, for no man ever saved much out of 4 pence a day. With them, to be unemployed for a day was disaster (William Barclay, Daily Study Bible).”

This is still done today. Day laborers will go to the local hardware center very early in the morning, hoping to be hired for the day by some contractor.

The Jewish day began at 6 AM so these first men were hired at sunrise.

20:2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

A penny is the daily wage for a working man.

Notice the Master called men to labor in the morning, the third hour, the sixth, ninth and at the eleventh hour. Consider these hours the stages of a man’s life God calls men in their youth, some in early adulthood, some during middle age and some in their elder years, yet the basis for the rewards are the same. A man who served God from the days of his youth is rewarded on the same basis as a man who started serving God when he was 65 years old.

1. I heard of a man who was saved when he was 60. He went to and graduated from Bible college, and then went to Puerto Rico as a missionary when he was 65 years old. God gave him a 20-year ministry as a missionary.
2. This also applies to eras in church history. Some lived and served in the apostolic age. Other ministered during the Dark Ages and into the Reformation or into the Philadelphia Period. Some will get into their ministry in the days just before the Rapture and into the Tribulation. The same principle applies.

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20:3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

20:4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

20:5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

20:6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

20:7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

20:8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

Workers got paid daily. No withholding of wages like today. Payday is coming for the laborers and that will be at the bema seat for Christians and the other judgments for the Jew.

20:9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

20:10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

20:11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

20:12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

Their complaint had a point, but the master had agreed with them at a certain rate and he was going to hold them to it and he was going to keep his bargain. We will receive the same rewards, regardless of when we started working or how long we worked, regardless of what generation we live in and worked. Those who ministered in days of revival will be “rewarded” on the same basis as those who were martyred, although the specific rewards will vary from person to person.

“Here also is the generosity of God. These men did not all do the same work; but they did receive the same pay. There are two great lessons here. The first is, as it has been said, “All service ranks the same with God.” It is not the amount of service given, but the love in which it is
given which matters. A man out of his plenty may give us a gift of a hundred pounds, and in truth we are grateful; a child may give us a birthday or Christmas gift which cost only a few pence but which was laboriously and lovingly saved up for--and that gift, with little value of its own, touches our heart far more. God does not look on the amount of our service. So long as it is all we have to give, all service ranks the same with God (William Barclay, “Matthew” in The Daily Study Bible).”

“heat of the day” as they labored through periods of persecution, martyrdom, imprisonments, liberalism, modernism, apostasy, indifference and outright hostility.

It makes no difference when you showed up for work. The question is did you work and are you on the job?

20:13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

20:14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

20:15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

20:15 is a clear declaration of the sovereignty of God. Everything belongs to Him so He may do with it as He will. And He is good. Everything He does is right and proper.

20:16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

J. 20:16 is a definite warning to the Jews. They knew that they were the chosen people. As a result, they looked down on the Gentiles. This attitude threatened to be carried forward into the Church. If the Gentiles were to be allowed into the fellowship of the Church, they must come in as inferiors. But God made it clear that they would come in as equals, with the full privileges and responsibilities that the Jewish believers enjoyed.

123. The Lord Prophesies of His Death Again 20:17-19

20:17 ¶ And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

“apart in the way” = privately. The following crowds did not hear this.

The prophecy

1. The Son of man will be betrayed unto the chief priests and the scribes at Jerusalem
   a. The Lord was fully aware of what the future held and of His impending death yet He made no effort to avoid it.
2. They shall condemn Him to death
3. He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles who will mock, scourge and crucify Him
20:18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

20:19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.

124. The Ambition of James and John 20:20-28

20:20 ¶ Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

20:21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

20:22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

While the Lord is talking about suffering and dying, the mother of James and John talk about reigning.

Maybe she thought that if the Lord was going to die shortly, she had better get her request for her sons in as soon as she could.

This was pure ambition on the part of their mother, for what mother doesn’t want to see her sons “make good”, especially if she can share in the rewards?

1. In Mark.10:35-45 it is James and John who come to Jesus with this request. It may be they didn’t get anywhere with that initial request, so their mother then came in after them and made the same request. She probably motivated her sons to make this request.

2. “my sons” showing she didn’t care about the other disciples.

The “cup” is the cup of suffering. The cup may not involve physical suffering and martyrdom. It may involve the dull routine of life, with all of its daily struggle, its heart-breaks and its disappointments and its tears. The cup may be drunk in one great moment; his cup may be drunk throughout a lifetime of Christian living.

The “baptism” of 20:22 is obviously not water baptism but a baptism of suffering.

“We are able”. That is the flesh talking but they would have a chance to prove their willingness as James would be martyred and John would suffer greatly. Sounds a lot like Peter claiming that he would never deny Christ even if the rest of the disciples would in Matthew 26:33.
20:23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

20:23 shows that who gets to sit in the “left and right hand” seats is probably already determined by the Father and James and John (no anyone else) can put in a claim to them.

20:24 And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

“moved with indignation” Can you blame them? The others wanted those chief seats for themselves! They were acting like Gentiles in 20:25. They were also acting like Roman Catholic popes and other ecclesiastical leaders!

20:25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

20:26-28 is the opposite philosophy from the world. Men expect to be served but the way to greatness is to be a servant.

This attitude among Christians must be avoided at all costs. How sickening it is to see preachers jockeying for position in the ecclesiastic hierarchy, trying to make a name for themselves, trying to get themselves invited to preach in the Big Time Conferences and to try to get someone to give them an honorary doctorate. This ecclesiastical social climbing sickens God and brings reproach on the cause of Christ and serves as a major motivation to compromise and apostatize. Unsaved Gentiles naturally acted like this, but Christians were not to do so.

20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

The Lord did not come the first time to have people kiss His ring or big toe, to have someone give Him an honorary doctorate or to be otherwise ministered unto. His first coming was to serve, minister and to die to provide salvation.

“ransom”. A “ransom” is a price paid to free someone from bondage. The Lord pays this price on the cross with His own blood to ransom us from the power and penalty of our sins.

Verses on the “ransom”

1. No man can give a ransom for his brother
Pilgrim Way Commentary on Matthew

a. Psalm 49:7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:
   i. How can he since he also needs a ransom for himself?
b. Proverbs 21:18 The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright.
c. The “ransomed of the Lord” prophetically (referring to redeemed Israel by context)
   i. Isaiah 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
   ii. Isaiah 51:10 Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?
   iii. Jeremiah 31:11 For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.
d. Ransomed from the grave
   i. Hosea 13:14 I will ransom them from the 8 power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.
e. Christ gave His life as a ransom
   i. Matthew 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Also Mark 10:45).
      a. This ransom is given for “many”- Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45.
      b. Christ was a ransom for “all” in 1 Timothy 2:6.
         i. No contradictions, as the Matthew/Mark reference shows the result of the ransom (for those who believe) but 1 Timothy shows the extent of the ransom potentially (for “all” although not all will believe and accept the payment for their sins).
   2. Ransom for what? Our sins, to pay for our sins and to deliver us from the penalty and the domination of sin, and to restore us to full fellowship with the Father through the work of Christ on the cross.

“ransom for many”. “Many” not all, as not all will receive the salvation that is in Christ.
1. Christ died for all but that does not mean that all will be saved. Simply because something is made available to all does not mean all will accept it. Many will reject it.
2. All men may be saved potentially but only those who respond in faith will be saved practically and literally.

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125. The Healing of the Two Blind Men  20:29-34

20:29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

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20:30 ¶ And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.

These two blind men recognized His messiahship and lordship.
They “heard” although they were blind. They were blind but not deaf.

20:31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.

“hold your peace”. When a sinner comes under genuine conviction and makes a genuine attempt to find Christ, he immediately runs into the opposition of “the crowd” and is taken to be a fanatic who has lost his mind. “Religion” has made him crazy!

20:32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

“What will ye that I shall do unto you?” The blank check question! What do you want or need from Christ? Ask in prayer according to the will of God and in faith!

20:33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

“Lord, that our eyes may be opened”. They were asked what they wanted/need and they said so specifically. No beating around the bush with them!

20:34 So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

Answered prayer and healing because of divine compassion. This was an immediate healing, unlike some other healings that were done in stages or that were accomplished gradually.

“and they followed him” as any new convert should do.
MATTHEW CHAPTER 21

126. The Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem 21:1-11

This section records the entry into Jerusalem and the offer of the Kingdom to Israel by Christ. Starting in this chapter, the private discussions turn into public disputes.

Near the time of the Passover, the highest of the Jewish feasts. The law was that every adult male Jew who lived within twenty miles of Jerusalem must come to the Passover; but not only the Jews of Palestine, Jews from every corner of the world made their way to the greatest of their national festivals. Jesus came at a time when the city was surging with people keyed up with religious expectations.

21:1 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

Bethphage- House of (unripe) Figs

21:2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

Matthew mentions both an ass and a colt. It was remarkable that Jesus was able to control a presumably unbroken animal moving through an excited crowd with an unfamiliar burden on its back.

21:3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

21:4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

21:5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.


21:6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

21:7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.

“ass” In western lands the ass is a despised beast; but in the east the ass could be a noble animal. Often a king came riding upon an ass, but when he did, it was the sign that he came in peace. The horse was the mount of war; the ass was the mount of peace. So when Jesus claimed to be king, he claimed to be the king of peace. He showed that he came, not to destroy,
but to love; not to condemn, but to help; not in the might of arms, but in the strength of love
(William Barclay, “Matthew” in *The Daily Study Bible*).

21:8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down
branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

“multitude” At this time of the year enormous crowds came to Jerusalem for the Passover.
News spread swiftly among the crowds that Jesus was coming, that He had commandeered the
use of an ass’s colt, and that He was about to march in triumph into Jerusalem. Expectation was
fanned to a fever pitch and a great multitude went forth to meet Him.

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

Hosanna - “save now”.
1. Everyone understood the Kingdom symbolism involved here and the Messianic claim
that Jesus was making. And He never rebukes the multitude, nor does He deny that He
is the Messiah and King of Israel. He accepts the praise (21:16).
2. Psalm 118:29 may have been shouted out here.
3. The Hebrew version of the British “God save the king!”
4. Naturally, the Pharisees and Sadducees opposed this.

21:10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is
this?

“Who is this?” You had better get the right answer to that question!
1. Possible answers:
   a. “He is the son of Joseph the carpenter”.
   b. “He is the son of Joseph.”
   c. “He is ‘A’ son of God”.
   d. “He’s a god” saw the Jehovah Witnesses and other Arians.
   e. “He is a Great Teacher” says every liberal and modernist.
   f. “He is some sort of Social Justice Warrior” say the race-merchants and
      communists.
   g. “This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee” is a good answer from the
crowd in 21:11, but He is much more than that. He is God, the Second Person of
the Godhead, King and Messiah of Israel!

21:11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

127. The Second Cleansing of the Temple 21:12-16

21:12 ¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and
bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of
them that sold doves,
Not just the temple but it is called the “Temple of God”. Also called “my house” in 21:13.

As in John 2, one Man was able to do this all by Himself. Jesus could easily have been overpowered but was not for two reasons:

1. Omnipotence was at work
2. What Jesus was doing was popular with the people, who were also sick and tired of this commercialism

“moneychangers” “The half-shekel had to be paid on the 15th of the month Adar, by every Israelite (even the poorest). In every city, collectors sat to receive it. On the 25th day (18 or 19 days before the Passover) they began to sit in the temple; and then they distrained if not paid. Change was given at a profit for the moneychangers (Ethelbert Bullinger, Companion Bible).”

21:13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

“My house shall be called a house of prayer” Quoted from Isaiah 56:7.

The first cleansing was in John 2:13-17. It needed cleansing then, but it did not stay that way as the old commercial sins crept back in.

1. The “buying and selling” of animals for sacrifice is allowed under the Levitical law. Instead of dragging an ox for a hundred miles for a sacrifice, you could just buy one when you got to Jerusalem. The “moneychangers” indicate that these merchants in the temple are making a little “profit” on the side by transferring Gentile money into Jewish money, for many Jewish proselytes are present to make an offering also.

   a. “The equivalent of this is the “cigarette exchange” for Yen in the back alleys of Tokyo, and it amounts to thievery in the final analysis, for Jesus calls the business “a den of thieves.” A transfer or conversion of a Dollar into a Mark or a Ruble or a Yen or a Peso, can involve a lot of things (as any GI knows) (Peter Ruckman, The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

2. On the twenty-fifth day of the month Adar (eighteen or nineteen days before Passover), tax officers set up business in that court to collect the annual half-shekel temple tax. Coins bearing a heathen inscription or a heathen monarch's image could not be paid into the temple treasury, so money-changers also set up business to convert foreign money or other coins into half-shekels—at a price. Every Israelite who had not already paid the tax in his hometown had to pay the collector in the temple, so business was brisk. The money-changers profited from converting secular money into sacred money and perhaps from arranging loans for the poor.

   a. Most places that exchange one kind of currency for another (like the Duty Free Shops at airports or on national borders) will usually charge a fee for their service, but it was out of control here.

   b. “The selling of doves was worse. For most visits to the Temple some kind of offering was essential. Doves, for instance, were necessary when a woman came for purification after childbirth, or when a leper came to have his cure attested and certified (Lev.12:8; Lev.14:22; Lev.15:14; Lev.15:29). It was easy enough to buy animals for sacrifice outside the Temple; but any animal offered in sacrifice must be without blemish. There were official inspectors of the animals, and it was to all intents and purposes certain that they would reject an animal
bought outside and would direct the worshipper to the Temple stalls and booths (William Barclay, “Matthew” in The Daily Study Bible)."

“my house”. Christ calls it “my Father’s house” in John 2:16. With His entry into Jerusalem and the offer of the Kingdom, Christ is now claiming the Temple for Himself.

21:13,14 shows the true use of the temple. It is a house of prayer, not evangelism or commercialism.

21:14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

21:15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,

“sore displeased” They were upset since Christ was again interfering the money-changing in the Temple, which the religious leaders were profiting from.

21:16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

“have ye never read?”
1. Christ is accusing the religious leaders of ignorance of the Scriptures they were supposed to be familiar with. Psalm 8:2 is the verse referenced and Christ applies it to Himself.
2. God won’t show anything to an arrogant, over-stuffed religious blowhard but He will show wonders to anyone with a meek, humble, teachable spirit.

128. The Cursing of the Fig Tree 21:17-22

21:17 ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

There were really two entrances by the Lord into Jerusalem during these days. The first was what we refer to as the “Triumphal Entry”. At the end of the day, the Lord retired back to Bethany, where He was staying. He then returned to Jerusalem on the next day, to much less fanfare.

21:18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

21:19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

There was no fruit on the fig tree although the Lord expected there to be some fruit, even if the tree was out of season. But there was nothing.
1. The Lord expected some spiritual fruit from Israel, even at this stage but there was none. If there were leaves, there should have been some fruit. There was a **profession** of fruit and a **promise** of fruit but there was no **production** of fruit.
   a. The Lord may have expected/hoped some leftover figs from last year might be on that tree.

2. Were the roots also withered away?
3. Fig leaves (with no fruit) are a type of self-righteousness, as seen in Genesis 3.
4. “Fig trees were considered so valuable that a person who cut one down, even if it yielded meager crops, was thought to be deserving of death at the hand of God. Normally a fig tree was prolific. In a suitable location a tree bore three crops a year and ripe figs hung on it for ten months of the year. It was barren for two months (April and May) before the first crop ripened. The first crop ripened toward the end of June; the second crop ripened in August; the third crop, often small and of little commercial value, ripened in September and hung all winter on the tree. Although it was considered a crime among the Jews to destroy a fruit-bearing fig tree, there was no such protection for a barren tree. Not only did a barren tree yield no fruit; it also occupied valuable space that could have been given to a good tree. Moreover, its roots depleted the soil of nutrients. (John Phillips, *Exploring Matthew*)."

5. The withering away happened immediately.
6. “The idea that Jesus cursed a helpless fig tree for no fault of its own has bothered some people. However, Jesus also cast demons out of people and into pigs that drowned in the sea (8:28-34). This really demonstrates Jesus’ compassion for people as distinct from the animal and vegetable forms of life. Humankind was God's special creation, and Jesus' recognition of this superior form of life shows that He did not regard all life as equally valuable. In the destruction of the swine Jesus warned people of Satan’s destructive power. In the cursing of the fig tree He warned them of God’s judgment for unbelief. (Thomas Constable, *Constable’s Study Notes on Matthew*).”

Involves the curse and Israel is “cut down” in A.D. 70 for failure to produce fruit and for rejecting the Kingdom and then the Gospel. But even then, the root is left in the ground and the judgment is not total or final, as seen in God turning to Israel again in the Tribulation and His restoring the nation in the Millennium.

**21:20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!**

The curse worked quickly. God may threaten judgment for a long period, but when the hammer falls, it falls quickly. It would be “only” 40 years until the curse on Israel would be fulfilled with the events of 70 A.D. When that judgment came, it came rather quickly although it had been threatened for 40 years prior.

**21:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.**

The issue with “moving mountains” relates to praying “big” prayers that require “big” answers. But one must always remember that God will not move a mountain if some poor widow lives on that mountain. Our prayers are considered by God in the light as how they will affect other people.
21:22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

21:21,22 is a good prayer promise.

“Believing, ye shall receive.” There are two kinds of “believing” in the Scripture (Romans 6:17; Acts 8:13), and one of them is not effectual.

This promise is conditioned by His will (1 John 5:14-16). The rule is liberal, gracious, and awesome in potential, but it is qualified by just and reasonable limitations expounded elsewhere in the Scriptures (James 4:2-3; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Luke 22:42).

129. The Question of Authority 21:23-27

21:23 ¶ And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

It always comes back to the question of authority.

1. What authority did they have to question His authority?
2. Christ had obviously established His authority over the past three years of His ministry with His signs and miracles, which the religious leaders either rejected or ignored.

21:24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Seemed fair and easy enough, but the Lord turns the tables on them and exposes them for the hypocrites that they are.

1. If John’s baptism was from men (if he baptized on his own authority and volition) then it had no special power or authority. He could then be safely ignored.
   a. But the people considered John to be a prophet and the leaders could not safely attack him without earning the wrath of the people.
2. If God authorized John’s baptism, then why didn’t the religious leaders accept it?

21:25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

21:26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

21:27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

“we cannot tell” really means “We can’t answer because he will make fools out of ourselves no matter how we answer for we fear the people and we can’t jeopardize our cushy positions.”
The Lord did give the source of His authority as the leaders would have rejected it anyway.

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130. The Parable of the Vineyard  21:28-32

21:28 ¶ But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

21:29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

21:30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

21:31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

Spiritual kingdom. This is not a reference to the Millennial kingdom, or the Kingdom of Heaven.

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21:32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

Summarizing:

1. A kingdom is coming to Israel in Palestine.
2. This kingdom is to be ruled by the “Son of David.”
3. This Son of David shows up in Matthew 21 as rightful ruler.
4. He is rejected by the leaders on the grounds that His teaching and conduct conflicts with their Talmudic traditions, which they have invented themselves, to retain power themselves.
5. To show their disapproval, they refuse to acknowledge the authority of John and refuse to admit that his baptism is from “heaven.”
6. They further refuse Christ’s authority on the grounds that they want to run Palestine themselves (Matt. 21:38) and continue to be religious bigshots in the eyes of the common people.
7. Every verse in Matthew 21 points this out and brings it rapidly to a head. (Peter Ruckman, The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

The leaders should have responded but didn’t. The harlots and publicans were not expected to repent yet they did.
131. Another Parable of the Vineyard 21:33-46

21:33 ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

The characters in this parable:
1. Householder- God the Father
2. Vineyard- nation of Israel
4. Servants- prophets? They would be killed, persecuted or mocked and ignored by Israel.
5. Son- Christ, who was killed
   a. 21:37 Israel would not “reverence” the Son and would instead crucify Him.
6. Miserable destruction- AD 70 and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple

“planted a vineyard” The Lord did the same thing in Isaiah 5:1-7, with similar results.

21:34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

21:35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

21:36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

21:37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

21:38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

“this is the heir” They knew him when they saw him! There is no ignorance on their part, just hatred and rejection of the heir.

21:39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

“cast him out of the vineyard” Crucified Him “without the gate” as in Hebrews 13:1,2.

21:40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

This is a clear reference to the Second Coming and the judgments that will accompany it.
21:41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

“miserably” accurately describes what the Romans did to Jerusalem, as recounted in any history book.

They condemned themselves and wrote out their own judgment.

“other husbandmen”
1. Gentiles? The Church?
2. 21:43 refers to the Kingdom of God, so this involves the spiritual aspects of the kingdom. The literal and political kingdom of Heaven is not taken away from Israel.

21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

“Did ye never read in the scriptures…” This is quoted from Isaiah 28:13-16, Psalm 118:22 and 1 Peter 2:1-11.

“The stone which the builders rejected”
1. The Stone is Christ, rejected by the nation.
2. Christ is the Headstone, the most important stone that keeps the entire building together. To reject that stone is foolish as it will ensure the structure will collapse, just as Israel did in 70 A.D.
3. The rejection of Christ by His own is also mentioned in John 1:11,12.

21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

If this verse were isolated, it could teach that God was finished with Israel and that the Church has replaced Israel, but it cannot possibly teach that since Christ Himself said that He is not finished with Israel. He said they would not see Him TILL they repent (Matthew 23:39).
1. Christ always described a literal physical kingdom on earth. He said “They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:29).
2. Christ gave the parable in Luke 19:11-27 specifically to teach that the kingdom of God would not come at that time but would come after the king would go into a far country and then return (Lu. 19:12). After he returns, he will reward his servants and judge his enemies. This describes the church age followed by the establishment of an earthly kingdom, exactly as we see throughout Scripture.
3. Jesus says that the Kingdom of God shall be taken away from the nation of Israel, NOT the Kingdom of Heaven. Some of the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom would be taken away from Israel during the Church Age as they continue in their blindness, but the Lord never said anything about the Kingdom of Heaven (the literal and political Kingdom which is instituted after Revelation 19) would ever be taken away from Israel.
21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Either be broken now or be ground to powder by Christ at the Second Coming.
   2. This speaks of the severity of the judgments at the Second Coming.

21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

21:46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.
Matthew Chapter 22

132. The Parable of the Wedding Feast 22:1-14

22:1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

22:2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

“kingdom of heaven”
1. A parable dealing with the Millennium and the Kingdom
2. The King is the Father
3. The Son is Christ
4. We must always be careful to realize there is not a doctrinal application to the Church Age as we are dealing with the “kingdom of heaven” but we can always make a spiritual application.

“marriage”
1. Marriage supper of the Lamb? Probably not as many who were bidden did not come.
   a. These who refused the invitation were the Jews who rejected the offer of the kingdom.
2. Those who turned down the invitation is probably unbelieving Israel.
   a. 22:5 They actually made light of the invitation and mocked it.
   b. 22:6 They also murdered some of the servants as they were giving out the invitations

22:3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

22:4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

22:5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

Notice the excuses. Fallen man always has an excuse as to why he cannot accept or respond to the gospel or the call of God.

22:6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

22:7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

The King’s Response- He sent forth his armies and burned up their city
22:8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

These other guests are the Gentiles who responded to the invitation that Israel rejected.
1. The Jews were invited but rejected the invitation. They were deemed to be unworthy.
2. The invitation now goes universal, to the Gentiles.

22:9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

22:10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

22:11 ¶ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

22:13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This man was not properly clothed as he was missing the wedding garment that was passed out to all of the guests and that they were expected to wear.
1. He could offer no reason or excuse as to why he did not have a robe.
   a. How did he get into the wedding in the first place? He slipped in somehow but only the King noticed him. He was an uninvited guest.
      i. He did not despise the invitation for he did come, unlike the Jews.
   b. He may have thought his robe was as good as the one the king was handing out.
   c. What was an unsaved man doing at this supper? This shows it cannot be a reference to the Marriage of the Lamb as there will be no unsaved men there.
      i. You won’t have to compel anyone to come in and no one will reject the invitation!

2. His judgment, carried out by the servants (angels?)
   a. He was bound hand and foot
   b. He was taken away
   c. He was cast into outer darkness
   d. There was weeping and gnashing of teeth

3. “We may sum up the evidence by saying that the lost “guest” of Matthew 22:11–14 is either a Tribulation “invitee” who did NOT endure to the end (see comparison in 25:8,
25:30) or that it is Satan himself who will put in an appearance in Heaven after the Rapture and during the festivities of the marriage of the Lamb. Notice that the doom of the uninvited man without the wedding garment is: “bound hand and foot!” This will synchronize with Revelation 20:1–3, which occurs at the end of the Tribulation (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*).

4. This man is also a perfect type of a sinner clothed in the filthy rags of his self-righteousness (Isaiah 64:6) who thought he could get into the “wedding feast” without an invitation or based on his own self-righteousness or morality.

   a. The command for him to be cast into outer darkness is the last thing the self-righteousness man expects to hear. He imagines that God will welcome with open arms such a man, religious, upstanding and moral man as him, but he is greatly surprised when he is found out. When confronted with the unpaid debt of his own sins and his lack of true righteousness and the filthiness of his own robe of human righteousness, he is left speechless.

“A man goes down the street and says, “We’re having a wedding feast at the Statler (or Hilton) Hotel, and you are invited. The meal is free and will consist of baked beans, green beans, butter beans, sweet peas, English peas, black eyed peas, turnip greens, collards, rutabagas, ‘chittlens,’ candied yams, snap beans, crowder peas, field peas, steak, beef, chicken, turkey, rice, potatoes, pork, chicken pilau, chicken gumbo, chili, chicken and dumplin’s, chop suey, chow mein, tamales, enchiladas, tacos, fried potatoes, boiled potatoes, spinach, eggplant, okra, iced tea, milk, buttermilk, corn on the cob, coffee, lemonade, kool aid, apple cider, honey, pickles, German chocolate cake, ice cream, lemon meringue pie, pecan pie, cookies, and homemade biscuits and bread! Present will be Jayne Mansfield, Hedy Lamar, Artie Shaw, Elvis Presley, Fidel Castro, Walter Reuther, Jimmie Hoffa, Richard Widmark, Burt Lancaster, Elizabeth Taylor, Perry Como, Bing Crosby, Red Skelton, Matt Dillon, Walt Disney, Roy Acuff, President Kennedy, Roy Rogers, Winston Churchill, and Zsa Zsa Gabor. Do you want to come?” Well, 98 percent of Americans—Christian, Catholic, Jew, or Atheist—would break their fool necks trying to get in, especially if it were free. But what happens? A gospel messenger steps up and says, “There is going to be a marriage in the skies. God has arranged a wedding for His Son. The food will be twelve manner of fruits from the tree of life, bread, honey, and broiled snapper (Luke 24:42, 14:15). Present will be Billy Sunday, Fanny Crosby, General Booth, Moses, David, Paul, Whitefield, Torrey, Wesley, Bob Jones, Sam Jones, Joshua, Jeremiah, Frances Havergal, Livingstone, Bunyan, Fox, Isaiah, Peter, James, John, Talmage, Beecher, Huss, Wycliff, Phillip, Thomas, Matthew, Luther, and all the good and just men of every age, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. It’s absolutely FREE. It will last forever. Who wants to come?” And 98 percent of Americans—Protestant, Catholic, or Jew—would break their fool necks trying to get out of the sound of the voice of the messenger so they could keep on living like they wanted to live! In 1959, George Gallup conducted one of the most unique polls ever taken in the United States. The question was, “Who in all history would you enjoy most having into your home for a meal?” Jesus Christ rated eleventh on the list. Do you know the ten that “beat Him out”? Well, No. 10 was Teddy Roosevelt. No. 9 was the old cigar smoking Episcopalian who wrote a history of England and then said to Billy Graham in astonishment, “Do you mean to tell me that God has an interest in the history of men?” (Winston Churchill) No. 8 was Mrs. Eisenhower. No. 7 was Douglas MacArthur. No. 6 was the old Pro-Communist integrationist, Mrs. Roosevelt. No. 5 was the old cussing, cocktail drinking Baptist, Harry S. Truman. No. 4 was the humanitarian deist, George Washington. No. 3 was “Ike” who captured the town of Little Rock in 1958 and overthrew a population of unarmed civilians without a casualty. No. 2 was FDR, the first advocate of Socialism in the White House, and the No. 1 spot (God bless you!), so help me, was the old bartending politician from Kentucky whose letters to his generals sound like Hitler’s correspondence—“ Honest Abe Lincoln of Illinois!” (You see, he
was not honest, for he was from Kentucky—not Illinois.) Thus, it is seen that the contemporary American is a gullible lackey, who polishes the boots of Time and Life magazines, and is literally “carried away” with the standard Associated Press estimate of “great people.” None of the people in the list (12, Hoover; 13, Nixon) ever professed to believe in the word of God as authoritative. None of them professed the new birth publicly. None of them ever led a soul to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and none of them ever said anything or did anything to spread the gospel. These are the “great people of the world.” But of course, when a man gets to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his own living Saviour, then the heroes of this world become mighty “common place.” (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew)."

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22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

The call to salvation is universal but only a few respond to it.

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133. Giving Tribute to Caesar 22:15-22

22:15 ¶ Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

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22:16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

The “butter-up” before the knife comes out.

1. The questions of these religious leaders are never asked in a good heart with a good reason. It is not information they are after but trying to tangle-up the Lord in His talk. But it always backfired.

“Herodians”

1. The Herodians, were a political party among the Jews who supported the dynasty of Herod. A Herod occupied the throne of Israel and the Herodians had come to terms with the fact that an Edomite sat on the throne of David as Rome’s puppet king. They had also come to terms with Roman occupation of their country.
2. In matters of religion the Herodians leaned more toward the Sadducees than the Pharisees.
3. Normally there was little love lost between the Pharisees and the Herodians, but opposition to Christ gave them a common cause.

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22:17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?

The question is a perfect and cunning set-up:

1. Christ answers “give” and the Jews can accuse Him of being unpatriotic. The Pharisees would accuse Him here.
2. Christ answers “don’t give” and they have Him preaching rebellion against Rome. The Herodians would have reported Jesus for promoting a tax rebellion.
3. It is the modern version of “Have you stopped beating your wife?” No matter how you
answer, you lose.

22:18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?

Of course, He saw right through the question and understood their motives and it exasperated Him.

Luke 20:20 gives the motive for the question.

22:19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

The "penny" was a Roman coin with the image of Caesar on it, something that offended the Jew as it had an image and the image of a foreign conqueror.

1. 2:20 Whose image was on it? Caesar’s. The coin belonged to him.
2. In that case, render back to Caesar what belonged to Caesar but render to God what belongs to God.
3. It was a day’s wages for a working man.

22:20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

22:21 They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.

Jesus says to pay your taxes, even to a bloodthirsty and cruel Gentile empire! See Matthew 17:27.

22:22 When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

134. “In the Resurrection...” 22:23-33

22:23 ¶ The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

Seeing that the Herodians and the Pharisees “struck out”, the Sadducees decided to give it a try in trapping Jesus.

22:24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

This is a mess of a situation. It is likely that the Sadducees just made-up this situation as it is so improbable.

1. A man married a wife but died before he had any children. Levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10) required the dead man’s brothers to marry his widow and raise
up children for him. But this dead man had seven brothers who all married the widow but who died without having any children. Then the woman died. Now in the resurrection, whose wife is she going to be as they all were married to her.

2. They were attempting to demonstrate how silly the doctrine of a physical resurrection was by hatching up such an outlandish scenario. Since they had no answer for this sort of situation, they reasoned there was no answer, so there must be no resurrection.

**22:25** Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:

22:26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

22:27 And last of all the woman died also.

22:28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

“In the resurrection”

1. What a pack of hypocrites! The Sadducees denied any bodily resurrection, yet here they are asking the Lord about it!
   a. Liberals and cultists are guilt of the same error.
   b. The Pharisees did confess the resurrection and Paul, an ex-Pharisee, used that division to “split the opposition” against him in Acts 23:6-8.

2. They also denied angels and spirits (Acts 23:8). They were complete materialists.

22:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

The Lord’s response: “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures…”

2. Despite their position, their ignorance of Biblical doctrine was astonishing.
3. In the resurrection, there is no marriage. That is an earthly institution that is not practiced in heaven.
4. The Mormons mistakenly teach that a married couple remains married after death and for eternity, but the Bible teaches no such thing.

22:30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

The saints are like the angels, as angels do not marry.

1. All angels are male, so they could not marry other angels unless they were homosexuals. Then they would be guilty of sin and would then be cast out.
2. One reason for marriage is for the birth of children and for the creation of families, something angels do not do.
3. Simply because they do not marry does not mean they are sexless. Since when do you need to be married to have sex? Whether they can have sexual relations with human women is an open question, depending on how you interpret Genesis 6 and the “Sons of God” taking the daughters of men.

22:31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

Why wonder so much about dead husbands and wives? God is a God of the living, not of the dead.

22:32 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.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, though dead for millennia, were still considered to be alive by the Lord. The Sadducees would have also denied any idea of life after death.


22:33 And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.

Not just with the content of His doctrine but also with the authority by which He delivered it.

135. The Great Commandment 22:34-40

22:34 ¶ But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

These two groups did not like each other and were rivals, but they were united in their attempt to stop the Lord and to publicly embarrass Him.

22:35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

This “lawyer” was one who specialized in the study of the law of Moses.

22:36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Again, this question is not asked in a good heart. The lawyer is trying to force Christ to pit one commandment against the others, so the charge could be laid that Christ thought some of the commandments were not as important as the others.

“There was plenty of room in the lawyer’s question for wrangling. The rabbis had divided the law into 248 affirmative and 365 negative commands. Some of these commands were spoken of as light and others as heavy. There were 613 altogether (the number of letters in the Decalogue).
No matter which command the Lord picked, it would be possible to challenge Him. The rabbis were great at splitting hairs, and they made all kinds of subtle refinements to the law. They would argue for years over a simple statement like "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk." How would this Teacher weigh in against all the ponderous opinions propounded in the rabbinic schools? (John Philipps, Exploring The Gospel of Matthew, pages 428-429).

22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

The Lord responded with a commandment not mentioned in Exodus 20. He instead goes to Deuteronomy 6:5.

22:38 This is the first and great commandment.

Not first numerically but first in importance.

22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

The second great commandment is based on Leviticus 19:18. We love ourselves so we are to love our neighbor with that same kind of love.

22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

It can be summarized as:

1. Greatest commandment- Love God
   a. A Godward command- vertical

2. Second Greatest Commandment- love your neighbor
   a. A man-ward command- horizontal
   b. You cannot love your neighbor properly unless you first love God properly.

Mark adds “And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question” (Mark 12:32–34).

Jesus never mentioned “keeping the Sabbath” (Fourth Commandment) as being either the first or second Great Commandment. This goes contrary to the teachings of the Seventh-Day Adventists and other Sabbath-keeping groups who place this as the most important commandment in God’s eyes.

136. Whose Son is Christ? 22:31-46

22:41 ¶ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,
The Lord turns the tables. He may have gotten exasperated with being asked so many questions that had a bad motive that He decides that it is time that He asks some questions to the religious leaders.


What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?"

1. The obvious answer is that He is the Son of David.
2. How then does David call his son “Lord?”
   a. In the Jewish mind, it was difficult to conceive a son being greater than his father.
   b. They had no answer for this.

The question in 22:42 ranks right up there with the question of Matthew 16:13-15. The idea is the same- "Who is Jesus"?

   a. If He is only any of these listed above, then He is not God, the Bible is a lie, there is no salvation, and when you die, you cease to exist forever.

22:43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

22:44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

The “right hand” is always the position of power and authority.

The Lord quotes Psalm 110:1ff.
   1. That passage is quoted six times in the New Testament
      a. Matthew 22:44
      b. Mark 12:36
      c. Luke 20:42
      e. Hebrews 1:13 and 10:12,13

22:45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

In the Jewish mind, the son can never be greater than the Father. If the Messiah was to be a son of David, how could David call his son “Lord”, which would make the Messiah greater than the Father? The Jews had a difficult time accepting that but it was obviously true.

22:46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.
Jesus had no trouble answering their questions, but He stumped them with one simple question.
Matthew Chapter 23

Matthew 23 is the most damning piece of “hate literature” in Scripture, where the Lord holds nothing back in His exposure and condemnation of religious hypocrisy. These false religious teachers make religion a burden instead of a delight.


23:1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

23:2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat:

The Scribes and Pharisees are the primary targets in this chapter, but you know the Lord had the Sadducees in mind as well.

1. Notice the titles the Lord applied to these false teachers:
   a. Hypocrites- 23:13,14,15,23,25,27,29
   b. Children of hell- 23:15
   c. Blind and blind guides- 23:16,17,19,24,26
   d. Fools- 23:17,19
   e. Whitened sepulchers 23:27
   f. Serpents- 23:33
   g. Generation of vipers- 23:33

“Pharisees”

1. “The Pharisees then were two things. First, they were dedicated legalists; religion to them was the observance of every detail of the Law. But second--and this is never to be forgotten--they were men in desperate earnest about their religion, for no one would have accepted the impossibly demanding task of living a life like that unless he had been in the most deadly earnest. They could, therefore, develop at one and the same time all the faults of legalism and all the virtues of complete self-dedication. A Pharisee might either be a desiccated or arrogant legalist, or a man of burning devotion to God. To say this is not to pass a particularly Christian verdict on the Pharisees, for the Jews themselves passed that very verdict.

2. The Talmud distinguishes seven different kinds of Pharisee.
   a. There was the Shoulder Pharisee. He was meticulous in his observance of the Law; but he wore his good deeds upon his shoulder. He was out for a reputation for purity and goodness. True, he obeyed the Law, but he did so in order to be seen of men.
   b. There was the Wait-a-little Pharisee. He was the Pharisee who could always produce an entirely valid excuse for putting off a good deed. He professed the creed of the strictest Pharisees, but he could always find an excuse for allowing practice to lag behind. He spoke, but he did not do.
   c. There was the Bruised or Bleeding Pharisee. The Talmud speaks of the plague of self-afflicting Pharisees. These Pharisees received their name for this reason. Women had a very low status in Palestine. No really strict orthodox teacher would be seen talking to a woman in public, even if that woman was his own wife or sister. These Pharisees went even further; they would not even allow themselves to look at a woman on the street. In order to avoid doing so they would shut their eyes, and so bump into walls and buildings and obstructions.
They thus bruised and wounded themselves, and their wounds and bruises gained them a special reputation for exceeding piety.

d. There was the Pharisee who was variously described as the Pestle and Mortar Pharisee, or the Humpbacked Pharisee, or the Tumbling Pharisee. Such men walked in such ostentatious humility that they were bent like a pestle in a mortar or like a hunch-back. They were so humble that they would not even lift their feet from the ground and so tripped over every obstruction they met. Their humility was a self-advertising ostentation.

e. There was the Ever-reckoning or Compounding Pharisee. This kind of Pharisee was for ever reckoning up his good deeds; he was for ever striking a balance sheet between himself and God, and he believed that every good deed he did put God a little further in his debt. To him religion was always to be reckoned in terms of a profit and loss account.

f. There was the Timid or Fearing Pharisee. He was always in dread of divine punishment. He was, therefore, always cleansing the outside of the cup and the platter, so that he might seem to be good. He saw religion in terms of judgment and life in terms of a terror-stricken evasion of this judgment.

g. Finally, there was the God-fearing Pharisee; he was the Pharisee who really and truly loved God and who found his delight in obedience to the Law of God, however difficult that it might be. (William Barclay, “Matthew” in the Daily Study Bible).”

“Moses’ seat” They claimed to speak on Moses’ behalf, with the authority of Moses, as the successors of Moses. This is similar to popes and Roman Catholic “bishops” who claim to sit in Peter’s seat and to speak on behalf of Peter.

23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

“Do as I say, not as I do” should never be a motto for any religious “leader!” Our “walk” should always match our “talk”. If it does not, we are guilty of hypocrisy in saying one thing and instructing others to live one way while we live in a totally different manner.

They tell the people that “Moses instructs you to do this or live in this manner” which the Lord acknowledges was true. They were accurate enough in their exposition of the law. But if it was good enough for the people, why wasn’t it good enough for the priests, who were not following their own teachings and interpretations of Moses?

23:4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

“Bind heavy burdens.”

1. The reference will fit the self-righteous legalists of Matthew 11:28.
2. These “burdens” are the multitude of religious laws and traditions that the leaders heaped on their followers until it became impossible to keep track of them all.
   a. The American government does this. There are so many federal laws on the books that it is impossible to count them or to keep track of them. This makes everyone a felon “by default” since you are bound to break a law, even un ignorance, if there are so many of them.
3. So here comes a pious Jew who hears of all 613 precepts (supposedly) of the Law of Moses and tries his best to keep them. After a few days of good intentions, he gives up in despair. He goes to his priest, expresses his desire to obey every jot and tittle of the Law but confesses he cannot. “What should I do?” he asks his priest. The priest can offer him no help or encouragement, leaving this poor man to flounder in his hopelessness. It’s “every man for himself.”

4. They were taskmasters, not burden-bearers and not sympathetic helpers.

4. The make religion a burden instead of a delight. There was no way the average Jew could have kept track of all these laws. The Roman Catholic Church is similar, with their innumerable “feast days”. Is this Year A, B or C in the missal? What color vestment is the priest wearing today? Keeping track of the mass and the other religious activities in the average Roman Catholic Church almost required a doctorate in Canon Law.

“According to the scribes an ordinary sabbath-day’s journey was limited to two thousand cubits (about one thousand yards); however, on Friday a man could place enough food for two meals at the boundary of that distance, thus theoretically extending his house that far so that on Saturday he could continue walking for another two thousand cubits. On the sabbath a tailor was not permitted to go out with his needle; neither was ascribe permitted to go out with his pen. No ingredients could be added to a solution unless they would be completely dissolved before the sabbath. Wool was not to be dyed unless the whole process could be completed before the sabbath. Rabbis argued over how much guilt a person would incur if in blowing out a candle on the sabbath its flame happened to light another one. One rabbi forbade a man to throw hot water over himself on the sabbath in case the floor were to be cleaned as a result. A person could not drag a chair on the sabbath since he might create a rut in the ground. A woman was not permitted to look in a mirror on the sabbath because she might see a gray hair and pull it out, which would be work. Likewise a person could not put in false teeth on the sabbath. It was considered work to tie a knot, undo a knot, sew two stitches, sow two seeds, pluck a blade of grass, or pick a piece of fruit on the sabbath. To write two letters of the alphabet or to change one into another on the sabbath was sinful, but to write one big letter in the space of two smaller ones was not. To climb a tree or clap hands was to break the sabbath. The rabbis endlessly debated such issues. According to Edersheim, twenty-four chapters of the Babylonian Talmud (156 double pages of folio) are devoted to the sabbath laws. He wrote, “Matters are seriously discussed as of vital religious importance, which one would scarcely imagine a sane intellect would seriously entertain.” Far from accepting the Lord’s rebuke, the scribes and rabbis went on adding intolerable burdens for centuries (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew).”

23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

“Make broad their phylacteries.”

1. The phylactery was a leather box, cube-shaped, closed with an attached flap, and bound to the person’s wrist by a leather band. Verses of Scripture were enclosed in the boxes.

2. To wear one was supposed to demonstrate how pious you were. The bigger and more visible the phylactery, the more spiritual you were supposed to be.

“The rabbis wore tephillin or prayer-fillets, small leather cases with four strips of parchment on which were written the words of Ex 13:1-10, 11-16; Deut 6:4-9; Deut 11:13-21. They took literally the words about “a sign unto thy hand,” “a memorial between thine eyes,” and “frontlets.” “That for the head was to consist of a box with four compartments, each containing a
slip of parchment inscribed with one of the four passages. Each of these strips was to be tied up with a well-washed hair from a calf's tail; lest, if tied with wool or thread, any fungoid growth should ever pollute them. The phylactery of the arm was to contain a single slip, with the same four passages written in four columns of seven lines each. The black leather straps by which they were fastened were wound seven times round the arm and three times round the hand. They were reverenced by the rabbis as highly as the scriptures, and, like them, might be rescued from the flames on a sabbath. They profanely imagined that God wore the tephillin" (Vincent). It is small wonder that Jesus ridiculed such minute concern for pretentious externalism and literalism. These tephillin "are still worn at the present day on the forehead and left arm by Jews at the daily Morning Prayer" (Mcneile). "The size of the phylacteries indexed the measure of zeal, and the wearing of large ones was apt to take the place of obedience" (Bruce). Hence they made them "broad." The superstitious would wear them as mere charms to ward off evil (A. T. Robertson, *Word Studies in the New Testament")."

23:6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

“A. Luke 24:8-11 makes it clear that when we are bidden, we are to take the lowest seats available and we are to let our host exalt us instead of exalting ourselves.

1. Also see Matthew 23:12

B. These leaders would scramble for the uppermost seats that were the most prominent seats so gain positions of prestige and authority in these sorts of events. They were always looking to exalt and promote themselves. In the synagogues, the back seats were occupied by the children and the most unimportant people; the further forward the seat, the greater the honor. The most honored seats of all were the seats of the elders, which faced the congregation. If a man was seated there, everyone would see that he was present and he could conduct himself throughout the service with a pose of piety which the congregation could not fail to notice.

1. I have seen videos of countless “Independent Fundamental Baptist” neo-fundamentalist churches where the pastor will sit on the platform and face the congregation, even if someone else is preaching. He doesn’t sit with the rest of the congregation as he is too holy and important for that. He must sit “on high” before the people where he can demonstrate his piety. It also serves as a constant reminder to the congregation that he is the “man of God” and must be recognized as such.

23:7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi”

A. They sought public recognition of the fact that they were supposed “men of God”

B. “Rabbi rabbi”

1. They loved to be called “Reverend” and “Doctor”. They would insist on being called these titles.

a. Even today, men who have fake doctorates (called “honorary doctorates”) flaunt them the most. Men with earned doctorates “(who did the work and paid the tuition) might tend to be more likely not to put as much stock in being called “Doctor”.
b. Being a “doctor” (whether it is genuine or honorary) is a meaningless title since it says nothing about the spirituality of that person. You can be a total spiritual reprobate and still be a “doctor”.

c. “Doctor” is an academic title, not a spiritual one. Having an earned doctorate simply means that you completed a course of study, nothing more.

2. “Rabbi” comes as “Rab” (Bachelor of Arts), “Rabbi” (Master of Arts) and “Rabbak” (Doctor of Philosophy).

3. This would include being called “Reverend” for that is associated with God (Psalm 111:9).

C. Verses 8 and 10 make it clear that we are not to be seeking after such titles.

D. The being called “father” in 23:9 refers to another spiritual title, to refer to some spiritual leader who was older.

1. We naturally apply this to the Church of Rome that calls its priests “father”.

2. This does not prohibit calling your earthly father “father”. This misunderstanding is why many preachers, especially southern preachers, refer to their earthly fathers as “daddy” or to their parents as their “mother and daddy.” This is not what the Lord is referring to here.

a. The word “father” appears 970 times in the Bible, and in most of those uses it refers to a human father. The word “father” to refer to human fathers is also used after the gospels 25 times.

E. Three religious titles are forbidden to any Christian- Rabbi, Master, and Father.

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23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

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23:9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

This forbids calling a Roman Catholic priest “Father”.

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23:10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

“Master”

A. We have no right to set ourselves up as masters, as the final authority on matters of faith and morals. We have no right to direct the conduct of another person’s life, to intrude ourselves between him and Christ. We are not the Holy Spirit and we must not intrude upon His authority in the life of another believer. Paul expands on this in Romans 14.

B. The Lord was publicly “cutting down” men who reveled in such titles and the respect it commanded. Now He was removing their veil of religious hypocrisy in the temple court, exposing them for who and what they really were. No doubt the religious leaders were getting very uncomfortable in being publicly called out on their “home court” like this. They must have realized that the longer they allowed the Lord to continue preaching sermons like this, the more damage He would do to their standing and power. He may have even been looking a specific Pharisees and priests as He dealt with some of these sins, publicly accusing individual leaders of being guilty of them.

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23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

This verse makes it clear that those in positions of spiritual leadership are not to flaunt any authority they may have but are rather to adopt the attitude of a humble servant.

A. See Luke 22:27, where Christ said He was among them as one that serveth.
B. Peter referred to himself as merely an "elder" in 1 Peter 5:1. He said that the elders in the local congregations were not to "lord it over" God's "heritage" in 1 Peter 5:4.

1. Peter would have made a lousy "pope" as Peter was not haughty or arrogant enough to fill that position.

23:12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

Also see Proverbs 25:7 and Luke 14:11.

23:13 ¶ But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men and hindered others from entering in

1. "Kingdom of Heaven", the millennial kingdom.
2. They were excluding themselves by their sin and since misery loves company, they tried to prevent anyone else from entering in as well.
3. A genuine minister seeks to open the door of salvation to all while the hypocrite makes salvation as difficult as possible.

23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Eight "woes" pronounced against the Pharisees:

1. They shut up the Kingdom of God- 23:13
2. They devour widow's houses- 23:14
3. They make converts into children of hell- 23:15
4. They make the gold of the temple to be more important than the temple- 23:16-22
5. They major on minors- 23:23,24
6. Outward legalism- 23:25
7. Hypocrisy- 23:27
8. Claiming to be better than their fathers were- 23:29

They devoured widow's houses

1. Like the modern televangelist who bleed their viewers dry in promising them "blessing" if they would send them a generous "seed faith offering" to "keep this vital, last days ministry on the air so that we can continue to win souls".
2. Their motive is money, not the salvation of souls.
3. Roman Catholic priests were famous for this. If a woman had her husband or child die, the local priest would soon show up and offer to say "high masses" for the soul of her lost loved one to get them out of purgatory sooner, for the right price.
They “for a pretence” make long prayer
1. “pretence” is “the act of pretending, a false display; affectation, a claim, especially a false one, to a right, title, or distinction, make-believe or feigning, a false claim or allegation; pretext” (www.thefreedictionary.com)
2. Their prayers are phony, designed to impress you with their piety or to get after your money.
3. Prayers are not to be measured by their length but by their depth. The same can be said about sermons.
4. For the sins in 23:14, they would receive the “greater damnation”, showing there are degrees of punishment and condemnation in hell.

23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Their “evangelism”
1. They would literally travel to the ends of the earth to make one proselyte, but through their coldness and apostasy, would make that person twofold more a child of hell than they were before.
   a. You have to admire their zeal but condemn their heart.
   b. “The Jews had two classifications of proselytes: (1) those who were circumcised and were called "proselytes of righteousness"; and (2) those who were not yet circumcised and were called "proselytes of the gate." (The root of the word proselyte means "to come over.") (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew).”
   c. They Jews were supposed to be a missionary people and a witness to the whole world, but what is the point of evangelizing if you are only going to win them to a dead, decayed religion?
2. How is this done? You get a sinner to “pray a prayer” but they are not really saved. They think they are and were told that they were but they really are not. A true soulwinner tries to witness to them later as they can tell they are not really saved but the “convert” will insist up and down that he is “saved” because someone told him he was. It will be impossible to truly win that person to Christ because of the damage done by the false “soulwinner”:
   a. You will see this with someone who was told they were “saved” when they were five years old in Sunday School, but they really were not. They live a carnal life, but you cannot deal with them because they were assured by someone that they were “saved” although they cannot remember it.
3. The sin of the Pharisees was that they were not really seeking to lead men to God, they were seeking to lead them to Pharisaism. One of the gravest dangers which any soulwinner is that he should try to convert people to a sect rather than to Christ, and that he should be more concerned in bringing people to a Church than to Jesus Christ.

23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

They were hypocrites with the money. False teachers usually have issues with money as they tend to care more for the gold than the souls under their charge.
If you swore by the temple (something you shouldn’t do anyway) you were not obligated by that oath, but if you swore by the gold in the temple, you were debtor.

a. The religious leaders valued the things in the temple more than they valued the God of the temple.

i. Same with the altar (23:18,19) and even swearing by heaven (23:22).

b. The idea is that it was alright to say, “By the temple, I swear to thee that I will do such-and-such and so-and-so, if...etc.” It was wrong to say, “I swear to you by the gold in the temple that I will carry out my promise to such-and-such....”

c. They were materialists, placing more emphasis on the material than on the spiritual.

i. They were also covetous, which goes right along with their materialism.

“The science of evasion had been brought to a high degree. It is most probable that in this passage Jesus is presenting a caricature of Jewish legalistic methods. He is saying, "You have brought evasion to such a fine art that it is possible to regard an oath by the Temple as not binding, while an oath by the gold of the Temple is binding; and an oath by the altar as not binding, while an oath by the gift on the altar is binding." This is rather to be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of Jewish methods than as a literal description. The idea behind the passage is just this. The whole idea of treating oaths in this way, the whole conception of a kind of technique of evasion, is born of a fundamental deceitfulness. The truly religious man will never make a promise with the deliberate intention of evading it; he will never, as he makes it, provide himself with a series of escape routes, which he may use if he finds his promise hard to keep (William Barclay, “Matthew” in the *Daily Study Bible*).”

23:17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

23:18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

23:19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

23:20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

23:21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

23:22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.
23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

They were guilty of “majoring on the minors”. They were famous for missing the forest for the trees. Everything was out of proportion with them. They would micro-manage your life by harping on relatively minor and obscure points of the law while missing the greater, overall teaching of the law. They would “develop” the minor points of the law while “devaluing” the major points of the law.

They tithed, but for legalistic reasons and to be seen and praised of men.

23:24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

They were “blind guides”

a. They missed the clear and plain interpretations and applications of Scripture.
b. They had no idea where they were going but felt competent to try to lead other spiritually.
c. “The minute rabbinic rules required that even the smallest products of the soil, like mint and anise and cumin, had to be tithed. In practice the Mosaic law of tithing extended to corn, wine, oil, and the firstborn of herds and flocks (Deuteronomy 14:23), but the Pharisees seized on Leviticus 27:30 and rigorously applied the law of tithing to everything (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew).”

They “strain at gnats and swallow camels”

a. “The statement is highly suggestive of the moral motives of Dean Weigle and the Yale and Harvard Divinity schools. No reader of the ASV or RSV ever failed to notice how carefully they corrected nonessential words so as to be able to brag that they had produced a “better translation.” Yet at the same time, they deliberately corrected, mutilated, added, and omitted words that would change Christian doctrine to Liberal theology. They swallow the camel, worrying about the gnat. They correct “suffer” and “wot” and “let” and then stamp on the Deity of Christ in Luke 2:33; 1 Timothy 3:16; and several other dozen passages. (Time forbids a list of the camels, by names, that the Liberal has swallowed in presenting his gnat-sized production, the RSV. A few are here: Acts 13:35; 17:26; Matthew 26:29; Daniel 3:25; Numbers 21:14; Matthew 1:25; Psalms 53:1; Song of Solomon 2:1; Genesis 4:8; Acts 2:29; Hebrews 7:21; 1 Corinthians 14:1; Matthew 22:42; John 7:53–8:10; Luke 23:42; Hebrews 1:5, etc.) (Peter Ruckman, The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”
b. Both gnats and camels were ceremonially unclean. The Pharisees would tolerate one type of uncleanness but not another type. They were very inconsistent in their evaluation of what was clean and what was unclean.

23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

They would clean the outside of the cup while failing to clean the inside.

1. They placed all the emphasis on the externals of religion but nothing on the internals, such as a walk with God and heart purity. As long as you kept all their
teachings, that was good enough. Your heart might be reprobate but if you were fulfilling your religious duties, that is all they cared about.

a. The Catholic Church is like this. Come to mass, give some money, do the sacraments and you are okay, even if you were reprobate. How did Catholics like Ted Kennedy manage to avoid excommunication? Kennedy drowned a campaign worker in his car and supported abortion through his whole political career. Yet he was always considered to be a “good Catholic” as he did most of the religious works his priests told him to do. He was “clean” on the outside yet on the inside, he was filthy. But his church never cared about his heart, just that he did his duty and gave money.

b. Independent, Fundamental Baptists do this. Get saved, get baptized, “go soulwinning”, tithe, be busy around the church and support “the Man of God” 100% and you are okay. Never mind what is going on in the heart. These preachers preach sermons geared to the “outside” of their hearers but do not preach sermons aimed and the heart. This is usually because these preachers have no walk with God and no heart with God as they gauge their relationship with God on their external activity and their “results”. Spiritual preaching (such as spending much time in the Song of Solomon) is unknown in such churches, which explains why these churches have so many weak Christians despite their attendance.

23:26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.

“Whited sepulchers” or white-washed tombs.

1. They look very good on the outside but if you look within, you will see horrible foulness and corruption.
   a. It is like digging up a grave. It may have a very impressive headstone and the grass may be well-maintained. Start digging and you will come across a $10,000 casket. But you don’t want to look inside that casket! No matter how lovely you make the outside look and how much you perfume the tomb, it still covers a rotting corpse.
   b. Many preachers, especially “public” preachers and television preachers look to be outwardly righteous, but it is all a show. Otherwise, how could they get people to send them money?

pilgrims might accidentally come into contact with one of them and be rendered unclean. So, as a man journeyed the roads of Palestine on a spring day, these tombs would glint white, and almost lovely, in the sunshine; but within they were full of bones and bodies whose touch would defile. That, said Jesus, was a precise picture of what the Pharisees were. Their outward actions were the actions of intensely religious men; their inward hearts were foul and putrid with sin. It can still happen. As Shakespeare had it, a man may smile and smile and be a villain (William Barclay, “Matthew” in *The Daily Study Bible*)."

23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

Their persecutions

1. They praised the prophets although if they had been alive in their days, they would have participated in their deaths.
2. Today, many so-called “Independent Fundamental Baptists” praise men like Spurgeon or Sunday or Moody, yet if they had lived in their days, they would have opposed them.
   a. John R. Rice is an example. Many hyper-evangelicals and these self-styled fundamentalists praise him to the hilt. Yet, Rice supported modern Bible versions, opposed “storehouse tithing” and left the possibility open that Pope John Paul I was saved. These positions are all anathema to the modern neo-fundamentalist, and they would have opposed these teachings if they had been alive in the 1970s and were reading the *Sword of the Lord*. Yet they praise him today.
   b. John Wesley has been lauded by modern Methodists who have disgraced his name, defiled his ministry, blasphemed his legacy. If Wesley were to come into the average United Methodist Church today, he would die of a heart attack before he got past the third ashtray. He preached separation, holiness, and the new birth.
   c. Charles Spurgeon is hailed by Baptists as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, Baptist pastor that ever lived. However, the Baptists of his day excommunicated him during the Downgrade Controversy in one of the worst church splits England ever saw. Plus, he was savagely opposed during his early years in London by the High Calvinists as not being Calvinistic enough.

23:30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

23:31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

They were thinking they were better than their fathers when they were really worse.

23:32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.
“Notice the vehement, sarcastic, “Go on and do wrong then, who cares?” in verse 32. This is nothing new in Scripture. You will find God the Father (in Amos 4:4) sarcastically commanding the religious leaders to “Come to Bethel and transgress!” Liberal theologians from Marcion to Brunner have overlooked the fact that the God of the universe is sarcastic, especially when He is examining their anti-scriptural “doctrines of men” (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

“how can ye escape the damnation of hell?”

1. Living the way they did only showed they were not saved, so they could not escape hell.
2. The Lord did not say there was no escape, but it would require repentance and an acceptance of His message and ministry.

23:34 ¶ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

The Lord’s Rejected Ministry to Israel

1. The Lord never gave up on Israel as He continually sent prophet after prophet to them over the centuries, to expose the sins of the nation and to call the people to repentance. The success rate of these ministries was always very low.
   a. Notice the “I send” in 23:34. It was obvious that God sent these prophets, but Jesus says that He sent them, asserting His claim to be God.
   b. Not all scribes were heretics. Ezra was a very good scribe as was Baruch, Jeremiah’s secretary.
2. The reception of these prophets by Israel is given in 23:34. Notice the future tense. These were crimes committed by Israel against the prophets, wise men and scribes historically, but these are listed as future tense, which means Israel will continue to reject these ministries. Will this continue into the tribulation? Will Israel reject the ministry of the 144,000 in Revelation 7? We know that a great number of Gentiles will be saved under their ministry but what will be the reaction of the tribulation Jews to their ministry?
   a. They were killed (23:37) and will be killed (23:34).
   b. They will be crucified
      i. Jews will crucify their own prophets? Besides their crucifixion of the Lord, there is no Biblical record of this ever happening. We have no record of Israel practicing crucifixion in her history, but will they take up that mode of execution in the tribulation?
      ii. Jesus will be crucified but only because the Jews could not execute anyone on their own. If they could have killed Jesus, it would have been by stoning.
   c. They will be scourged in the synagogues.
      i. Like Paul.
   d. They will be persecuted from city to city.
   e. They were stoned (past tense) in 23:37.
23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

The list of martyrs runs from Abel to Zechariah, literally from A to Z in our English language.

1. Two possibilities on who this “Zechariah” is:
   a. The reference to Zechariah’s death in 2 Chronicles 24. Second Chronicles, not Malachi, is the last book of the Hebrew Bible, so the Lord is working from the beginning of the Old Testament in Abel in Genesis to the end of it in 2 Chronicles through Zechariah.
   b. “The most probable view is that the martyr of Matthew 23:35 was Zechariah, the son of the godly priest Jehoiada. Jehoiada was the man who hid baby Joash from Athaliah’s murderous hate and eventually put the young prince on the throne of David. It was not at all uncommon for a man to have two names, so it is likely that Zechariah’s father Jehoiada had two names, one of them being Barachias. Joash repaid Jehoiada’s kindness by murdering his son after Zechariah denounced the king for his lapse into idolatry. As Zechariah was dying he said, “The Lord look upon it [his martyrdom], and require it” (2 Chronicles 24:22). Thus his blood cried from the ground for vengeance just as Abel’s did.
   According to a Jewish legend recorded by Edersheim, the blood of Zechariah did not dry up, but continued to bubble on the pavement for two and a half centuries until the Babylonians came and avenged it. Zechariah was killed in the open space in the court of the priests, between the holy place of the temple and the great brazen altar of sacrifice. The fact that one of God’s servants was murdered on such a sacred spot aggravated the crime. Since the Jews placed the book of Chronicles at the end of their Canon, in the Jewish Bible Abel was the first martyr and Zechariah was the last; the order of the books thus added weight to the Lord’s words (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew).”
      i. His father was Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 24:20) but it possible that he had a grandfather named Berachiah, although that is not mentioned in this account.
   c. The Zechariah who wrote the Book of Zechariah, as his father was Berechiah (Zechariah 1:1).
      i. This is still not a “slam dunk” as there is no record of this Zechariah being killed.
      ii. Bullinger, in the Companion Bible, takes this view.

2. Thus, both of these men are possible although both have their issues, but I would tend to go with the first option, the Zechariah mentioned in 2 Chronicles. We know he was killed in the temple (2 Chronicles 24:21) and we do not know how the later Zechariah was killed. But the later Zechariah had the right father, as mentioned by the Lord.

23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

“this generation”. Which generation? Two possibilities:

1. The current one of the Lord’s day.
2. The future generation that would be guilty of the activities mentioned in 23:35, which would still be yet future and would probably be in the tribulation.
23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

The Lord’s lament over Jerusalem
1. The Lord called them and urged them to repent through the prophets, wise men and scribes that He sent them, but they would not.
2. Free will is seen here. They were not forced to repent or accept the Lord’s message. They could have but they did not.
3. This goes contrary to the Calvinistic teaching of irresistible grace. God call but they did resist that call, the ministry of the prophets and all the positive workings of God on their behalf.
   a. Also see John 5:40.
4. The “chicks” is a reference to Psalm 36:7.

23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

This desolation would take place in AD 70 at the destruction of Jerusalem, but there will be future tribulation desolation of Israel, such as at the Abomination of Desolation in the midpoint of the tribulation.

1. “Your house” not “my house”. The Lord had already abandoned the temple at this point.
2. “The siege of Jerusalem was one of the most terrible in history. The Romans first systematically subdued Galilee in a series of fierce battles, at times massacring all the inhabitants of a city, especially if it had put up a particularly stubborn defense. Meanwhile in Jerusalem, instead of preparing for the coming siege by uniting under a common leader, various factions savagely fought one another.

“One faction was led by the fierce John of Gischala, another by the more moderate Ananus, the eldest of the chief priests. John of Gischala was welcomed to the ranks of the Zealots, who were led by Eleazar and had been driven into the temple by the more law-abiding citizens. John suggested to the Zealots that they make common cause with the Idumeans, men of Arab stock who had been pillaging the countryside. John and his confederates infiltrated the Idumeans into Jerusalem, where they added to the internal strife. Terrible scenes of carnage and atrocity took place. The Idumeans then abandoned the Zealots and departed. First, however, they opened the prison doors and released thousands of inmates. The prisoners fled to join the ranks of Simon the son of Gioras, the head of another band of lawless ruffians who were settled at Masada.

The state of anarchy was known to the Roman general Vespasian. He simply bided his time, allowing the Jews to weaken themselves with all this internal strife. At length, however, the vast Roman army moved through Samaria, advanced toward Jerusalem, and camped in the valley of Thorns, about three miles from Jerusalem. From the neighboring heights they could see the towers and walls of the city.

“Then the order came to march, and with its impressive might the army of Vespasian overcame all resistance and camped before the wall of the doomed city. The battle swayed back and forth, but relentlessly and inevitably the Romans took one section of Jerusalem after another amid scenes of both courage and carnage.

“Famine stalked the stricken streets and the ruffian soldiers defending the city were merciless in their hunt for food. They seized people they suspected of concealing food and tortured them, demanding they disclose secrets they often did not have regarding food stores.
Natural affection and generous sentiment vanished before the plague of hunger. People ate offal and filth and some even became cannibals and devoured their own children. A measure of wheat was worth its weight in gold.

“When Titus took charge of the campaign, he added new horrors. He crucified Jewish prisoners, as many as five hundred at a time. The prisoners were brought in nightly and the soldiers fastened the victims to the crosses in all sorts of ludicrous positions. Soon the places chosen for the crucifixions were covered with crosses, and the Romans ran out of wood. The Zealots pointed to the terrible sight to check any desire on the part of the hapless population to desert.

“Meanwhile in the city treacheries went on. The high priest Matthias was slain on the charge of holding correspondence with the Romans, but not until his three sons were massacred before his eyes. People started to desert. The Arabian and Syrian allies of the Romans seized a large party of deserters and cut them open alive, looking for gold and jewels they were suspected of swallowing.

“At length the Romans took the tower of Antonia. The temple cloisters became the scene of more carnage and fires. On the tenth of August (the date Solomon’s temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar) Titus, who wanted to preserve Herod’s magnificent temple, issued orders that the fires around it be extinguished. But in the heat of battle one enraged legionary climbed on the shoulders of a comrade and threw a lighted torch through the small gilded door into the porch. Soon the whole building was in flames.

“When the siege was all over, the Romans had 97,000 captives on their hands. The number of those who had been slain or who had died of famine has been estimated at 1,300,000. The tallest and strongest-looking of the captives were selected to grace Titus’s triumphal return to Rome. A vast number, including the old and the sick, were put to death. Thousands were dispatched to the mines in various parts of the empire or distributed among the provinces for the amusement of the populace in the arenas.

“Thus Jerusalem fell. Foreseeing the event in all its horror, Jesus said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (23:38). How desolate only time would tell. After the Bar Kokhba rebellion (A.D. 132-135) the Romans were thoroughly fed up with Judea; they banished all Jews from the land, posted the country out of bounds to them, changed its name to Palestine in honor of their old foes the Philistines, and changed the name of Jerusalem to Aelia Capitolina. (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew)."

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23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

At the Second Coming, all Israel will be saved (Zechariah 12:10-12; Romans 11:26). In that day, but not before, every Jew who survives the tribulation period shall be saved and shall believe. This is why it is so important for the Jew in the tribulation to “endure to the end” (Matthew 24:13) of the tribulation. If they die before the Second Coming, chances are not good that they will die saved. They may reject the Antichrist and his mark, but they may not have accepted the Lord at that point of the tribulation.
Matthew Chapter 24

Matthew 24 is one of the most important prophetic chapters in the Bible, but it is also one of the most dangerous if it is not properly understood in a dispensational context. Many theological errors will be developed from an inability to distinguish between the Church in Israel. This chapter is devoted to Israel, not the Church. Most of what happens in this chapter is going to happen after the rapture and during the tribulation, when the Church is gone. The Church is not in view in this chapter, but Israel is. Remember, Matthew is the gospel written to the Jew. Therefore, most of the doctrinal application of this book will be to Israel. The problem comes with those who did not distinguish between Israel and the Church, who attempt to apply the verses that deal with Israel to the Church. This leads to all manner of problems. For example, in Matthew 24:13, the Lord says he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved. Many people will try to apply that to a Christian and teach that one must endure in the faith without apostatizing or falling away whatsoever, otherwise that person loses their salvation. That teaching attacks the doctrine of the security of the believer. However, if it is properly understood in a dispensational context that it deals with the nation of Israel, one will see that verse 13 is not dealing with a Christian at all. Rather, it is dealing with a Jew in the tribulation who must maintain his faith to the end and not compromise with the Antichrist during the tribulation in order to be saved. This is why we say that doctrinally, the book of Matthew is one of the most dangerous books in the Bible.

Notice the similarities between Revelation 6, Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21:

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Matthew, Mark and Luke are giving prophesy regarding these tribulation events of which events at the fall of Jerusalem were a type and foreshadowing.

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138. The Tribulation 24:1-14

24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

When they came out of the temple, which was probably right after the Lord finished up his scathing denunciation of the religious hypocrites in chapter 23, for some reason, the disciples wanted to show the Lord the temple and the buildings and brag about them. It was not as if the Lord had never seen the temple as He had been there many times during His earthly ministry. As God, He had witnessed its construction from the very beginning. But the disciples wanted to show him the temple, perhaps to boast on it for some reason. The Jews took great pride in their temple. But the Lord was very careful to tell them in verse 2 that the day was coming (and would come in 40 years) that there would not be one stone left upon another. Simply because it was the temple (and the “house of God”) did not mean that it was above or beyond the judgment of
God. In 2 Samuel 7, David expressed his desire to build a house for the Lord as he may have been embarrassed that the true God lived in a tent while all the false gods around Israel had great temples. God made it clear that He was perfectly content with the tabernacle. He never ordered or commanded a temple to be built. Unlike all the other religions around Israel, God was perfectly content in living in tent. He did allow David to prepare and for Solomon to build the temple, but even after the temple was built, God was not above judging it. He did that with the Babylonians around 586 B.C. He would do that in 165 B.C. with the Syrians. He would allow it to be destroyed in A.D. 70 AD by the Romans. In the tribulation, it will be contaminated by the Antichrist in the Abomination of Desolation. He never judged the tabernacle in the same way that he judged the temple. We do not know the ultimate fate of the tabernacle.

God never puts much stock or emphasis on buildings, whether it is a temple or even church buildings. Local congregation do need a place to meet (the early church met in houses). But do not put the emphasis on the external structure. The important thing is the people that gather in the building. Do not put a lot of time and money into the building, thinking that just because it's a church house that God would never judge the building. Church buildings burn down or get destroyed by tornados all the time. After the rapture, every church building you leave behind is going to be taken over by the antichrist.

In Mark 13:1 it is “Master, see what manner...,” and Mark says that this question is asked by “one of his disciples.” There is only one man who habitually calls Christ “Master” but never “Lord” and this is Judas (Matthew 26:22,25,49; John 13:13). Judas is interested in the money gone into the building of the temple (Hosea 8:14). This is because money is involved in the work, and he (being treasurer) holds the money bag (John 12:6) and he was a covetous thief.

24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

It seems unlikely that this would take place for several reasons:
1. The blocks were 65x8x10 feet in size.
2. The Romans helped build, or at least helped to finance the construction of Herod’s temple.
3. The Roman General Titus was rather mild-mannered and would not be the sort of man to order such a thing to be done.

Yet this all did take place, exactly as the Lord prophesied. They Roman soldiers even plowed up the ground around the temple, looking for gold that might have been buried.

24:3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

24:3-28 This is a listing of events leading up to the end of the world.

24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

24:4,5,11,23,24,26 Deception
There is going to be a lot of deception by religious teachers, false religions in these last days. It was bad in the Lord’s day and during the time of the Book of Acts. It is bad now. It will intensify in the tribulation. There will be more error than truth in the world in these days. We see this today with a lot of people who probably are born again but they are deceived into the Charismatic Movement, various Pentecostal movements other theological errors and it will only get worse.

24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

These errors will be very bold and they will get even bolder the closer we get to the end of the age. It is not just a doctrinal error that these false teachers are promoting, but they’re actually claiming to be Christ. They’re actually claiming to be God. They're actually claiming that what they are saying and doing is ordained or commanded by God then they shall deceive many. It seems that the bolder and more outrageous the deception, the more attractive it is to those who have “itching ears”.

24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

There will be an increase in international tensions despite the presence of the United Nations and every apostate religious leader praying for “peace.”

24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Famines and disease are the usual aftermath of wars.

Nothing but an increase in bad news! There will also be an increasing number of earthquakes in areas that usually don’t experience earthquakes.

24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

If you think things are bad now, just wait- they will get worse!

24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

An increase in religious persecution.

1. Includes martyrdom.
2. The scope of this persecution will be international.
3. Friends and even family members will betray each other due to fear of persecution and death.
4. The 20th century was the bloodiest century in the annals of persecution of Christians and the 21st century will be even worse.
24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Family members and the best of friends will betray each other, mainly in an attempt to save their own skin and to avoid being persecuted themselves. Plus hatred for their friends and family members over the fact that they are believers will also be a major motivation.

The word “many” is found applied to six kinds of people in the remaining verses:
1. MANY shall be offended.
2. MANY shall betray one another.
3. MANY shall hate one another.
4. “MANY false prophets shall rise.”
5. MANY shall be deceived by them.
6. MANY shall lose their love for each other.

24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Many shall be deceived. The error will be so artistic and strong and attractive that it will be hard to resist. Only a few will have the spirituality and spiritual discernment to be able to see through and reject the errors.

“Hitler, Khrushchev, and Mussolini never fooled any Christian. The only way you can fool a Christian is to profess to be one, and then act “churchy” enough so that you can pass off as one…They not only say, “I am Christ,” some of them say “I AM GOD.” “Daddy Grace” of South Carolina used to have a peanut concession at his baptisms, where he baptized with a fire-hose and hollered, “By grace are you saved! Das me!” “Father Divine,” a minstrel show version of “Father O’Toole,” claimed to be a god to his followers. Unfortunately, they had to put him to bed with a shovel one day. Mary Baker Eddy did not profess to be Jesus Christ, but she claimed the title of “The Comforter” (which Mohammed also claimed!), and this is the Holy Spirit who anointed (Christos, Gk.) the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 3. Bishop Johnson didn’t go quite so far, but merely professed apostolic succession to Acts 2 and established a “oneness-holiness” set-up where those who sold property sent the proceeds to headquarters; i.e., HIM. “And shall deceive MANY.” (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

“Many false prophets...deceive many...many shall follow their pernicious ways” (2 Peter 2:1,2).

With the advent of the internet, false teachers and teachings can spread with lightning speed.

For a good example of the current contemporary apostasy, just tune in to any Christian television network, such as TBN.

24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Abortion is a perfect example of this. What normal woman could even think of murdering her unborn child?
But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

1. This is one of the most mis-applied verses in the Bible, maybe only Acts 2:38 is the source of more false teaching.
2. This verse is not teaching that failing to "hold on and pray through" is the unpardonable sin in this age or that a truly saved person can lose his salvation today.
3. What is the context of this passage? Jews in the tribulation. This is not a Church Age verse aimed at Christians. In the tribulation, the Jew cannot at any time believe the lies of the Antichrist or The Lie that the Antichrist is their Messiah or that he is God. If he does, and takes the mark of the beast, he will be lost. He must maintain his resistance to the Antichrist and survive to the end of the tribulation. If he makes it to the end of the tribulation, holding to his faith in God and sees the Lord coming in he Second Coming, he will be saved.
4. There is no eternal security in the tribulation period. Salvation can be lost due to apostasy or by taking the Mark of the Beast.
5. Matthew 24:13 cannot be used to deny the New Testament doctrine of the security of the believer. That teaching would contradict too many other verses, especially in the Church Epistles authored by Paul.
6. The "unpardonable sin" in the Tribulation Period is taking the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16,17). If a man rejects Christ in the Tribulation, he will then follow the Antichrist, take the mark, and damn his soul to the Lake of Fire with no hope of forgiveness or salvation. The Tribulation Jew/saint must resist the persecutions, death, propaganda and peer-pressure exerted on him throughout the Tribulation and resist taking the mark.
7. Verses supporting the truth that a truly saved person cannot be lost in this age:
   a. John 6:37 - All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
   b. John 5:24 - Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
   c. John 6:37 - All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
   d. John 10:27-29 - My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand.
   e. Romans 8:38,39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
   f. 2 Corinthians 1:22 - Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.
g. Philippians 1:6 - Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:

h. 1 John 5:13 - These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

i. Jude 24 - Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

8. Those who would try to use Matthew 24:123 to attack the doctrine of the security of the believer must reconcile that verse with these nine passages above.

“the end” here is the same “end” as in Hebrews 3:6,14.

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139. The Gospel of the Kingdom 24:14

24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

“This gospel” is not the gospel of the grace of God that we preach today but is the gospel of the Kingdom, preached by John the Baptist, Jesus and the early church in Acts 2-7. It will be preached again in the tribulation. This is a dispensational kingdom that deals with the establishment of a literal, physical and visible Millennial kingdom. It is primarily directed at Israel.

“preached in all the world” When Matthew wrote this, that whole world may have only included the Roman Empire. In our day of fast travel and instantaneous communication, the Gospel can be spread over the entire literal world in a matter of minutes. The development of this technology will allow fast spread of the truth in the tribulation. If error can be spread quickly, so can the truth.

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140. The Abomination of Desolation 24:15-20

24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

“The abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet” is found in Daniel 8:31 and 11:31.

“The abomination that maketh desolate” in Daniel 11:31 marks the taking away of a literal sacrifice, which is being made in a literal temple in the tribulation.

1. This takes place at the mid-point of the tribulation period.
2. This means that a literal temple must be rebuilt, probably around the time of the rapture or shortly after it. It will be rebuilt at Jerusalem. See Revelation 11:1-4.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-6 states that when the Man of Sin comes that he will sit down in the “temple of God, shewing himself that he is God”.

1. The Antichrist will profess to be God in the flesh (2 Thessalonians 2).
2. He will install himself as the object of worship as God and as Israel’s true Messiah.
3. He will demand sacrifice to replace the authorized sacrifices of the Jews.
After the Antichrist goes into the rebuilt Jerusalem temple and declares himself to be God, Israel will reject him where before, they thought him to be their Messiah. After this rejection, the Antichrist will turn on Israel to destroy them. Part of this involves defiling the temple to the point where the sacrifices will become impossible due to the pollution that he brings into it.

“whoso readeth, let him understand” This prophetic event is so important that it is VITAL that any Jew reading this who is in the tribulation MUST be able to identify this event and know what to do as a result of it.

24:16 Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains:

24:16-20 When the abomination of desolation takes place, what are the Jews who are living in Israel to do? Flee into the mountains. Many think a Jewish remnant may flee to the city of Petra, which is a fortress carved into the mountains that afford a great degree of defense.

24:17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

24:18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

Get to a place of safety as soon as soon as possible and don’t return to your home to get supplies. It would be a good idea to have a “bug-out” bag always at the ready.

24:19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

24:20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Travelling will be difficult in this day.

1. It will be even more difficult for pregnant women or families with young children.

2. “But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day”
   a. The winter is the rainy season in Israel, which can make travel more difficult, not to mention cold and snow in some areas.
   b. Travelling on the Sabbath is difficult. An observant Jew would not travel very far on the Sabbath. Even if he could, may transportation facilities are shut down on the Sabbath in Israel.

141. The Great Tribulation  24:21-28

24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
Alluding to Daniel 12:1, the Lord said, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." The first part of the tribulation, from the rapture to the abomination of desolation, will be bad enough. The second part, from the abomination of desolation to the second coming will be unimaginably worse.

24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

"Except those days should be shortened" (much of this comes from my Pilgrim Way Commentary on Revelation, pages 139-140):

1. Compare with Revelation 8:12. The "shortening" could refer to an increase in earth's rotation rate due to the impacts, shortening the length of a day by 1/3 days would be only 16 hours long. This would wreak havoc with our biological clocks and would do psychological damage due to disturbance of sleep patterns. If this is what is being described, it could be the result of a shift in the axial tilt of the earth due to such impacts. Currently, the earth is tilted at 23 degrees. Some scientists believe that before the Flood, the earth's axis may have been perpendicular to its orbit, resulting in worldwide warm weather. If we are being told of such an axial tilt, earth's axis may be tilted to as much as 40 or 50 degrees, resulting in severe changes in weather and length of daylight. This may have happened before. The planet Uranus is tilted 98 degrees. It is literally rolling on its side with its poles facing the sun. Something must have impacted Uranus to knock it onto its side. The same could happen to earth and many scientists are afraid that we are due for a major asteroid collision in the near future. Christ talked about "those days being shortened" in Matthew 24:22. See also Amos 8:9 where the Lord said He would cause the sun to go down at noon and that He would darken the earth on a clear day.

2. Earth may have undergone a similar orbital and rotational change as early as about 700 B.C. Patton, Hatch and Steinbauer remind us that in ancient times, the year was 360 days long. But now it is 365.25 days. We cannot dismiss this as an error on the part of the ancient astronomers for they were very precise in such measurements. So where did these extra 5.25 days come from? They propose that Mars engaged in a close fly-by of Earth in 701 BC, passing to within 70,000 miles of Earth. Mars at this time had a very eccentric orbit and would make such close-encounters every 54 or 108 years. This pass (recorded by Isaiah and Hezekiah in prophetic language) was the closest yet and altered Earth's orbit, as well as Mars'. Mars was flung into a new orbit that prevented any more close passes. This would answer the question as to why our year is longer than the ancient year. And if it happened once, it could happen again.

3. Remember, the second and third trumpets describe a possible asteroid and comet strike on the earth. This one-two punch would be very sufficient to do this sort of damage on the earth. Catastrophism is a Bible fact. Consider the Flood and a possible pre-Adamic battle in the heavens at the Fall of Lucifer. We see signs of this in our own solar system. Where did the asteroid belt come from? Why is Uranus tilted on its side with its poles facing the sun? Why does Venus rotate backward, with a day as long as its year? There seemed to be water on Mars once. What happened to it? Why is the orbit of Pluto so eccentric? Sometimes it is closer to the sun than Neptune. And look at some of the satellites of the planets. Consider Triton, the largest moon of Neptune. Why does it orbit Neptune backwards? Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune all have ring systems, indicting collisions or break-ups of other planetary bodies that wandered too close to their gravity wells. Heathen geologists believe in uniformitarianism, that things happen gradually on the earth over billions of years (see 2 Peter 3:4). But the Bible clearly teaches a series of catastrophes that cause major changes on the earth in a very short
period of time. One of the best books on this subject is The Long Day of Joshua and Six Other Catastrophes by Donald Patten, Loren Steinbauer and Ronald Hatch (1973) which is one of the best examinations on Biblical catastrophism.

4. The great tribulation is going to be so severe and so catastrophic that if it ran the whole 42 months, or more, all life on earth would be destroyed. The great tribulation will be just short of 42 months (considering 24-hour days) or it could be the whole 42 months of days that are shortened (say, 20-hour days rather than 24-hour days, as suggested above).

24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

Another warning against being deceived.

1. There will be a multiplication of false Christs and false messiahs.
   a. They will be able to do signs and wonders that will add to the deception.
2. The elect will not be deceived.
   a. In the Church Age, leading up to the rapture, this would include true Christians.
   b. In the tribulation, it would include both the Gentile and Jewish remnant.

24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

24:25 Behold, I have told you before.

There are no excuses for anyone being ignorance of this! The Lord told us! You may read it and disbelieve it and reject it but you are still responsible for these truths.

24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.

24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

The great tribulation will build to a climax of the Second Coming of Revelation 19. When it comes, it will come quickly.

“Cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west.” This direction is the direction of seven things in the word of God.

1. It is the direction of the restoration of Israel under Nehemiah.
2. It is the direction of the calling out of Abraham from Mesopotamia.
3. It is the direction of Jacob’s restoration from Laban (Genesis 28-34).
4. It is the direction of the High Priest’s entrance to the Tabernacle.
5. It is the direction of Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the foal of the ass (Matthew 19-21).
6. It is the direction the gospel was commanded to be preached (Acts 16).
7. Being the direction of the Sun’s movement, it is the direction from which the “sun of righteousness” returns (Malachi 4:1-4).
8. History moves east to west. The gospel goes east to west. Revivals move east to west. Discoveries move east to west. Wars progress from east to west.

24:28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

“For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”
2. The “carcasses” are the carcasses of 200,000,000 horses and riders who came from the East in a United Nations army to help the Antichrist wipe out Jerusalem at the Battle of Armageddon (Ezekiel 38,39; Revelation 19:15-20).
   a. Who are the eagles? Saints? Raptured saints? Surviving saints who made it all the way through the tribulation?

142. The Second Coming 24:29-31

24:29 ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

The events of 24:29-31 clearly refer to the events in the tribulation, leading up to the Second Coming in Revelation 19.

24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

“sign of the Son of man” Uncertain what this is, but it must be some sort of sign, probably in the heavens, that will announce the Second Coming.

24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

“sound of a trumpet” This must be a rapture of the surviving saints at the end of the tribulation, as a trumpet is mention at the rapture of the church in 1 Corinthians 15:52, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 4:1.

“his elect” Not the Church and not to be understood in a Calvinistic context. It must refer to any believing Jews and Gentiles who survive to the time of the Second Coming.

143. The Parable of the Fig Tree 24:32-35

24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:
“fig tree” The fig tree is the tree of self-righteousness. It is the only tree that God ever cursed (Matthew 21:19–20). It stands for religious, dead-orthodox Israel without any spiritual fruit. The parable speaks of the revival of national Israel in the tribulation.

24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

When national Israel is back in the land and is beginning to flourish, know that you are very close to the Second Coming.

1. The branch is “yet tender”. Israel, as a modern nation, only goes back to 1948, so at the time of this writing (2019), it is only 71 years old, which is very young for a nation.
2. When “summer is nigh”, we know the tree is in bloom with fruit, and the harvest is not very far away.

24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass…”

1. Which generation? Post-millennialists insist is that generation is the one which saw the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But since the Second Coming did not take place in A.D. 70, it cannot refer to that generation. It must be the generation that leads up to the tribulation and the generation that goes into and through the tribulation.
2. We have another problem in that we are not sure how long a generation is. Forty years? Seventy years (Psalm 90:1,2)? One hundred years (Genesis 15:13)? We simply do not know, which makes date setting futile.

24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

1. All of these prophecies will be fulfilled to the letter.
2. The Bible is eternal, even if the heavens and the earth are not (2 Peter 3:5-7).
3. Either through attacks or neglect by God’s people, the Scriptures will endure forever and must be fulfilled.

144. The Days of Noah 24:36-41

24:36 ¶ But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

1. There it is. Despite all of the date-setters over the centuries, no man knows the day or the hour of the Second Coming. By extension, no man knows the day or the hour of the rapture either. There have been multiple attempts to try to guess the date of the Second Coming and every last one has ended in failure. Yet that does not discourage the next person from trying their hand at it.
2. We can know the “signs of the times” (Matthew 16:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:1) and recognize the events leading up to both rapture and advent but we simply are not able to pinpoint either event to the actual day. We have no excuse for not knowing were we are on God’s prophetic timetable.

24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

“days of Noah”

1. Described in Genesis 4-6.
2. There will be a return to the types and degrees of sin that were so severe that it prompted God to wipe out the human race. Genesis 4-6 does not go into much detail as to the specific types of sins, leaving it (mercifully) to our imaginations. They were so bad and hideous that the Holy Spirit did not see much use in going into any great detail, but we can pretty much figure out what was going on by looking at the sins of our generation. And it is even worse today than it was in Noah’s day, as man has had 4,000 more years of practice!

24:38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

24:41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

24:40,41 The great separation at the rapture. People will be going about their daily tasks, unaware of the rapid events that will transpire with little or no warning.

145. Watch and Be Ready. 24:42-52

24:42 ¶ Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

No one can pin down the exact date of either the rapture or the second coming. We know that the second coming would follow 7 years after the rapture, but we still would not still be able to know what the exact day or the hour is. So stop trying! You’ll only make a fool of yourself in so doing.

1. They have been so many attempts to guess the date of either the rapture or second coming and every single one has failed and every future attempt by some false prophet to guess the date will also end in failure.
2. Almost every cult has tried this, including the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons. The Seventh Day Adventist cult started with the Great Disappointment of 1843/1844 and a
Baptist preacher named William Miller who guessed wrong after studying Daniel’s prophecies.

24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

If you knew a thief was active in your neighborhood, what would you do? Prepare and watch.

We have been warned that the rapture is coming, followed by the second coming seven years (or so) later. What will you do and how will you respond?

24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Instead of wasting time trying to guess the date of the rapture and/or second coming, just live in such a way that you will be ready when the time comes. Be ready!

24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

A faithful servant is one who is alert and aware, who knows the signs of the times and know how to respond.

One of those favorite “preacher illustrations” has either John Wesley or Martin Luther, having been asked what they would do if they knew that the Lord was coming on the next day, responding “I would go out and work in my garden”. That means that they would still go about whatever their regular duties and obligations were. We are not to sell all of our good, put on white sheets and go sit on a hill, waiting for the Lord to come. We are to continue to work, labor and live. We plan and work as if the Lord is not coming in our lifetime but we live as if we knew He was coming tomorrow.

24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

Faithfulness and watchfulness bring rewards.

24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

There will be professing servants/believers who will not take these warnings seriously. They are of the same attitude that Peter describes in 2 Peter 3:3,4. Thev have heard these doctrines of the rapture and second coming for years and since it still had not happened, they think it never will. So they live as if the Lord will never come and that they will never have to be judged. They will continue in their sin and their carnality with no restraint or fear of judgment.
24:49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It would hard to apply this to the Christian. The man is obviously a believer of some type, but he was unfaithful and wasn’t watching. He got caught by surprised when the master returned. He got “cast out” for his unfaithfulness with the hypocrites. Is this hell? The language seems to indicate more of a lack of rewards than punishment in hell.

Attempts at Date Setting, from https://www.raptureready.com/2016/07/19/rapture-date-setters-keep-failing/

Other people throughout history have read the same words of Jesus and have come up with different interpretations of what He intended. They’ve somehow managed to get around all restrictions against precise date setting. On a number of occasions, by doing so, they created pure havoc. The following is a list of some past failed attempts at date settings and some dates yet to come. (And this is not an exhaustive list!-jc)

AD 53
Even before all the books of the Bible were written, there was talk that Christ’s return had already taken place. The Thessalonians panicked on Paul when they heard a rumor that the day of the Lord was at hand, and they had missed the rapture.

500
A Roman priest living in the second century predicted Christ would return in 500 AD, based on the dimensions of Noah’s ark.

1000
This year goes down as one of the most heightened periods of hysteria over the return of Christ. All members of society seemed affected by the prediction that Jesus was coming back at the start of the new millennium. None of the events required by the Bible were transpiring at that time; the magic of the number 1000 was the sole reason for the expectation. During concluding months of 999 AD, everyone was on his best behavior; worldly goods were sold and given to the poor; swarms of pilgrims headed east to meet the Lord at Jerusalem; buildings went unrepaired; crops were left unplanted; and criminals were set free from jails. When the year 999 AD turned into 1000 AD, nothing happened.

1033
This year was cited as the beginning of the millennium because it marked 1,000 years since Christ’s crucifixion.
1186
The “Letter of Toledo” warned everyone to hide in the caves and mountains. The world was reportedly to be destroyed with only a few spared.

1420
The Taborites of Czechoslovakia predicted every city would be annihilated by fire. Only five mountain strongholds would be saved.

1524-1526
Muntzer, a leader of German peasants, announced that the return of Christ was near. After Muntzer and his men destroyed the high and mighty, the Lord would supposedly return. This belief led to an uneven battle against government troops. He was strategically outnumbered. Muntzer claimed to have had a vision from God in which the Lord promised that He would catch the cannonballs of the enemy in the sleeves of His cloak. The prediction within the vision turned out to be false when Muntzer and his followers were mowed down by cannon fire.

1534
A repeat of the Muntzer affair occurred a few years later. This time, Jan Matthys took over the city of Munster. The city was to be the only one spared from destruction. The inhabitants of Munster, chased out by Matthys and his men, regrouped and lay siege to the city. Within a year, everyone in the city was dead.

1650-1660
The Fifth Monarchy Men looked for Jesus to establish a theocracy. They took up arms and tried to seize England by force. The movement died when the British monarchy was restored in 1660.

1666
For the citizens of London, 1666 was not a banner year. A bubonic plague outbreak killed 100,000 and the Great Fire of London struck the same year. The world seemed at an end to most Londoners. The fact that the year ended with the Beast’s number—666—didn’t help matters.

1809
Mary Bateman, who specialized in fortune telling, had a magic chicken that laid eggs with end-time messages on them. One message said that Christ was coming. The uproar she created ended when an unannounced visitor caught her forcing an egg into the hen’s oviduct. Mary later was hanged for poisoning a wealthy client. History does not record whether the offended chicken attended the hanging.

1814
Spiritualist Joanna Southcott made the startling claim that she, by virgin birth, would produce the second Jesus Christ. Her abdomen began to swell and so did the crowds of people around her. The time for the birth came and passed; she died soon after. An autopsy revealed she had experienced a false pregnancy.

1836
John Wesley wrote that “the time, times and half a time” of Revelation 12:14 were 1058-1836, “when Christ should come” (A. M. Morris, The Prophecies Unveiled, p. 361).

1843-1844
William Miller was the founder of an end-times movement that was so prominent it received its own name, Millerism. From his studies of the Bible, Miller determined that the second coming
would happen sometime between 1843-1844. A spectacular meteor shower in 1833 gave the movement a good push forward. The buildup of anticipation continued until March 21, 1844, when Miller’s one-year timetable ran out. Some followers set another date—Oct 22, 1844. This too failed, collapsing the movement. One follower described the days after the failed predictions: “The world made merry over the old Prophet’s predicament. The taunts and jeers of the ‘scoffers’ were well-nigh unbearable.”

(1. The ending years after the Second Great Awakening were full of millennial expectations. There were so many power revivals and “pseudo-revivals” that many preachers expected the millennium to begin so. Charles Finney echoed this idea when he said that if the Church only “did her duty” in promoting his style of revivals, the millennium would come in shortly. He was not the only one to believe that-jc.)

1859
Rev. Thomas Parker, a Massachusetts minister, looked for the millennium to start about 1859.

1881
Someone called Mother Shipton had, 400 years earlier, claimed that the world would end in 1881. A controversy hangs over the Shipton writings as to whether or not publishers doctored the text. If the date was wrong, should it matter anyway?

1910
The revisit of Halley’s comet was, for many, an indication of the Lord’s second coming. The earth actually passed through the gaseous tail of the comet. One enterprising man sold comet pills to people for protection against the effects of the toxic gases.

1914
Charles Russell, after being exposed to the teachings of William Miller, founded his own organization that evolved into the Jehovah’s Witnesses. In 1914, Russell predicted the return of Jesus Christ.

1. Joseph Smith, founder of the Morons, or Latter Day Saints, also made a series of predictions in the mid-19th century-jc.

1918
In 1918, new math didn’t help the Witnesses from striking out again.

1925
The Witnesses had no better luck in 1925. They already possessed the title of “Most Wrong Predictions.” They would expand upon it in the years to come.

1941
Once again, Jehovah’s Witnesses believed that Armageddon was due. Before the end of 1941, the end of all things was predicted.

1967
When the city of Jerusalem was reclaimed by the Jews in 1967, prophecy watchers declared that the “Time of the Gentiles” had come to an end.

1970
The True Light Church of Christ made its claim to fame by incorrectly forecasting the return of Jesus. A number of church members had quit their livelihoods ahead of the promised advent.
1973
A comet that turned out to be a visual disappointment nonetheless compelled one preacher to announce that it would be a sign of the Lord’s return.

1975
The Jehovah’s Witnesses were back at it in 1975. The failure of the forecast did not affect the growth of the movement. The Watchtower magazine, a major Witness periodical, has over 13 million subscribers.

1977
We all remember the killer bee scare of the late 1970’s. One prophecy prognosticator linked the bees to Revelation 9:3-12.

1981
One author boldly declared that the rapture would occur before December 31, 1981, based on Christian prophecy, astronomy, and a dash of ecological fatalism. He pegged the date to Jesus’ promised return to earth a generation after Israel’s rebirth. He also made references to the “Jupiter Effect,” a planetary alignment occurring every 179 years that supposedly could lead to earthquakes and nuclear plant meltdowns.

1982
It was all going to end in 1982, when the planets lined up and created magnetic forces that would bring Armageddon to the earth.

1982
A group called the Tara Centers placed full-page advertisements in many major newspapers for the weekend of April 24-25, 1982, announcing: “The Christ is Now Here!” They predicted that He was to make himself known “within the next two months.” After the date passed, they said that the delay was only because the “consciousness of the human race was not quite right…” Boy, all these years and we’re still not ready.

1984
The Jehovah’s Witnesses made sure, in 1984, that no one else would be able to top their record of most wrong doomsday predictions. The Witnesses’ record currently holds at nine. The years are: 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1984. Lately, the JWs are claiming they’re out of the prediction business, but it’s hard to teach an old dog new tricks. They’ll be back.

1987
The Harmonic Convergence was planned for August 16-17, 1987, and several New Age events were also to occur at that time. The second coming of the serpent god of peace and the Hopi dance awakening were two examples.

1988
The book, 88 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1988, came out only a few months before the event was to take place. What little time the book had, it used effectively. By the time the predicted dates, September 11-13, rolled around, whole churches were caught up in the excitement the book generated. I personally had friends who were measuring themselves for wings. In the dorm where we lived, my friends were also openly confronting all of the unsaved. It became my job to defuse situations. In one case, an accosted sinner was contemplating dispensary action against my now-distant friends. Finally, the days of destiny dawned and then
set. No Jesus. The environment was not the same as Miller’s 1844 failure. To my surprise, the taunting by the unsaved was very brief. I took it that people have very little understanding of the Bible, so they had nothing to taunt my friends with. I made one other interesting observation. Although the time for the rapture had been predicted to fall within a three-day window, September 11-13, my friends gave up hope on the morning of the 12th. I pointed out that they still had two days left, but they had been spooked, nonetheless.

1989
After the passing of the deadline in 88 Reasons, the author, Edgar Whisenant, came out with a new book called 89 Reasons Why the Rapture is in 1989. This book sold only a fraction of the number of copies his prior release had sold.

1. (The old joke was the 89th reason was because Christ did not return in 1988.-jc)

1991
A group in Australia predicted Jesus would return through the Sydney Harbor at 9 a.m., March 31, 1991.

1991
Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan proclaimed the Gulf War would be “the War of Armageddon … the final War.”

1991
Menachem Schneerson, a Russian-born rabbi, called for the Messiah to come by September 9, 1991, the start of the Jewish New Year.

1. Schneerson had quite the following among some orthodox Jews, especially in New York City. A pirate radio station even came on the air broadcasting his teachings and I was able to hear it here in Delaware. Some of his followers even believed that Schneerson was the Messiah and are still awaiting his return.-jc

1992
A Korean group called Mission for the Coming Days had the Korea Church an uproar in the fall of 1992. They foresaw October 28, 1992 as the date for the rapture. Numerology was the basis for the date. Several camera shots that left ghostly images on pictures were thought to be a supernatural confirmation of the date.

1993
If the year 2000 is the end of the 6,000-year cycle, then the rapture must take place in 1993, because you would need seven years of the tribulation. This was the thinking of a number of prophecy writers.

1994
In the book, 1994: The Year of Destiny, F. M. Riley foretold of God’s plan to rapture His people. The name of his ministry is “The Last Call,” and he operates out of Missouri.

1994
Pastor John Hinkle of Christ Church in Los Angeles caused quite a stir when he announced he had received a vision from God that warned of apocalyptic event on June 9, 1994. Hinkle, quoting God, said, “On Thursday June the 9th, I will rip the evil out of this world.” At the time, I knew Hinkle’s vision didn’t match up with Scripture. From a proper reading of Bible prophecy, the only thing that God could possibly rip from the earth would be the Christian Church, and I don’t think God would refer to the Church as “evil.” Some people tried to interpret Hinkle’s
unscriptural vision to mean that God would the rip evil out of our hearts when He raptured us. Well, the date came and went with no heart surgery or rapture.

1. I was listening to the Trinity Broadcasting Network on the night that Hinkle made this prophecy and it caused a sensation in the Charismatic media. Hinkle was on every Christian program and talk show. I made a note of the date (Hinkle made his prediction about 6 months before his date of June 9, 1994). When the date came, I remember there was a good-sized earthquake somewhere, but that was it.-jc

1994
Harold Camping, in his book Are You Ready?, predicted the Lord would return in September 1994. The book was full of numerology that added up to 1994 as the date of Christ’s return.

1994
After promising they would not make anymore end time predictions, the Jehovah’s Witnesses fell off the wagon and proclaimed 1994 as the conclusion of an 80-year generation; the year 1914 was the starting point.

1996
This year had a special month, according to one author who foresaw September as the time for our Lord’s return. The Church Age will last 2,000 years from the time of Christ’s birth in 4 BC.

1996
California psychic Sheldon Nidle predicted the end would come with the convergence of 16 million space ships and a host of angels upon the earth on December 17, 1996. Nidle explained the passing of the date by claiming the angels placed us in a holographic projection to preserve us and give us a second chance.

1997
I received several e-mail messages that pointed to this as the year when Jesus would return for His church. Two of the more widely known time frames were Monte Judah’s prediction that the tribulation would begin in February/March and another prediction based on numerology and the Psalms that targeted May 14 as the date of the rapture.

1997
When Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat signed their peace pact on the White House lawn on September 13, 1993, some saw the events as the beginning of tribulation. With the signing of the peace agreement, Daniel’s 1,260-day countdown was underway. By adding 1,260 days to September 1993, you arrive at February 24, 1997.

1997
Stan Johnson of the Prophecy Club saw a “90 percent” chance that the tribulation would start September 12, 1997. He based his conclusion on several end-time signs: that would be Jesus’ 2,000th birthday and it would also be the Day of Atonement, although it wouldn’t be what is currently the Jewish Day of Atonement. Further supporting evidence came from Romanian pastor Dumitru Duduman. In several heavenly visions, Dumitru claimed to have seen the Book of Life. In one of his earlier visions, there were several pages yet to be completed. In his last vision, he noticed the Book of Life only had one page left. Doing some rough calculating, Johnson and friends figured the latest time frame for the completion of the book would have to be September 1997.

1998
Numerology: Because 666 times three equals 1998, some people point to this year as being prophetically significant. Someone called me long distance just so he could pass on to me this earth-shattering news.

1998
A Taiwanese cult operating out of Garland, Texas predicted Christ would return on March 31 of 1998. The group's leader, Heng-ming Chen, announced God would return and then invite the cult members aboard a UFO. The group abandoned their prediction when a precursor event failed to take place. The cult's leader had said that God would appear on every channel 18 of every TV in the world. Maybe God realized at the last minute, the Playboy Network was channel 18 on several cable systems, and He didn't want to have Christians watching a porn channel.

1998
On April 30, 1998, Israel was to turn 50 and many believed this birthday would mark the beginning of the tribulation. The reasoning behind this date has to do with God's age requirement for the priesthood, which is between 30-50.

1998
1998 Marilyn Agee, in her book, *The End of the Age*, had her sights set on May 31, 1998. This date was to conclude the 6,000-year cycle from the time of Adam. Agee looked for the rapture to take place on Pentecost, which is also known as “the Feast of Weeks.” Another indicator of this date was the fact that the Holy Spirit did not descend upon the apostles until 50 days after Christ's resurrection. Israel was born in 1948; add the 50 days as years and you come up with. After her May 31 rapture date failed, Agee, unable to face up to her error, continued her date setting by using various Scripture references to point to June 7, 14, 21 and about 10 other dates.

1999
Well, you can't call Marilyn Agee a quitter. After bombing out badly several time in 1998, Marilyn set a new date for the rapture: May 21 or 22 of this year.

1999
TV newscaster-turned-psychic Charles Criswell King had said in 1968 that the world as we know it would cease to exist on August 18, 1999.

1999
Philip Berg, a rabbi at the Kabbalah Learning Center in New York, proclaimed that the end might arrive on September 11, 1999, when "a ball of fire will descend . . . destroying almost all of mankind, all vegetation, all forms of life."

2000
Numerology: If you divide 2,000 by 3, you will get the devil's number: 666.6666666666667.

2000
The names of the people and organizations that called for the return of Christ at the turn of the century is too long to be listed here. I would say that if there were a day on which Christ could not return, it must have been January 1, 2000. To come at an unknown time means to come at an unknown time. I think January 2, 2000 would have been a more likely day for Him to call His Church home—right after the big letdown.
On May 5, 2000, all of the planets were supposed to have been in alignment. This was said to cause the earth to suffer earthquakes, volcanic eruption, and various other nasty stuff. A similar alignment occurred in 1982 and nothing happened. People failed to realize that the other nine planets only exert a very tiny gravitational pull on the earth. If you were to add up the gravitational force from the rest of the planets, the total would only amount to a fraction of the tug the moon has on the earth.

2000
According to Michael Rood, the end times have a prophetically complicated connection to Israel’s spring barley harvest. The Day of the Lord began on May 5, 2000. Rood’s fall feast calendar called for the Russian Gog-Magog invasion of Israel to take place at sundown on October 28, 2000.

2000-2001
Dr. Dale Sumbureru looked for March 22, 1997 to be “the date when all the dramatic events leading through the tribulation to the return of Christ should begin” The actual date of Christ’s return could be somewhere between July 2000 and March 2001. Dr. Sumbureru is more general about the timing of Christ’s second coming than most writers. He states, “The day the Lord returns is currently unknown because He said [Jesus] these days are cut short and it is not yet clear by how much and in what manner they are cut short. If the above assumptions are not correct, my margin of error would be in weeks, or perhaps months.”

2002
Priests from Cuba’s Afro-Caribbean Yoruba religion predicted a dramatic year of tragedy and crisis for the world in 2002, ranging from coups and war to disease and flooding.

2004
This date for Jesus’ return is based upon psalmology, numerology, the biblical 360 days per year, Jewish holidays, and “biblical astronomy.” To figure out this date, you’ll need a calculator, a slide rule, and plenty of scratch paper.

2011-2018
For the past several decades, Jack Van Impe has hinted at nearly every year as being the time for the rapture. Normally, he has only gone out one or two years from the current calendar year. However, Jack’s latest projection for the rapture goes out several years. His new math uses 51 years as the length of a generation. If you add 51 years to 1967, the year Israel recaptured Jerusalem, you get 2018. Once you subtract the seven-year tribulation period, you arrive at 2011.

2011
Harold Camping prediction that May 21, 2011 would be the date of the rapture. After this prediction proved inaccurate, he claimed that a non-visible “spiritual judgement” had taken place, and that the physical rapture would occur on October 21, 2011. The new rapture prediction also proved inaccurate.

2012
New Age writers cite Mayan and Aztec calendars that predict the end of the age on December 21, 2012.

2060
Sir Isaac Newton, Britain’s greatest scientist, spent 50 years and wrote 4,500 pages trying to predict when the end of the world was coming. The most definitive date he set for the apocalypse, which he scribbled on a scrap of paper, was 2060.

An untold number of people have tried to predict the Lord’s return by using elaborate timetables. Most date setters do not realize that mankind has not kept an unwavering record of time. Anyone wanting to chart, for example, 100 BC to 2000 AD, would have to contend with the fact that 46 BC was 445 days long, there was no year 0 BC, and in 1582 we switched from Julian to Gregorian years. Because most prognosticators are not aware of all of these errors, their math is immediately off by several years.
Matthew Chapter 25

The burden of the final verses of chapter 24 about being ready for the Lord’s coming is furthered by this parable of the virgins.

146. The Parable of the Ten Virgins 25:1-13

25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins is doctrinally applied to the Tribulation, not to the Church Age.

The “kingdom of heaven” shows this is a millennial/kingdom parable.

1. There are going to be many theological problems in trying to apply this parable to Christians in the Church Age
   a. It deals with the “kingdom of heaven” which culminates in the Jewish Millennial kingdom.
   b. In the rapture, the Bridegroom comes to meet us in the clouds. In 25:1, the virgins go out to meet the Bridegroom.
   c. There can still be a Gentile element in the parable as we have ten virgins, and “ten” is the Gentile number.
   d. Oil is usually a type of the Holy Spirit. How then can He be “bought” in 25:9?
      i. Is there an element of works in the tribulation? Works salvation is a church-age heresy but it may be a tribulation church, to some degree.
   e. If this deals with the rapture, then we have a partial, or a split rapture, assuming the foolish virgins were saved. But 25:12 gives the indication that they may not have been saved.
      i. 25:3 may indicate that the foolish virgins were not saved as they had no oil.

25:2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

The Church is made up of two kinds of people:

1. The wise and ready, who are actively watching for the coming of Christ.
2. The unwise and unready, who are sleeping when they should be awake and preparing.
3. 1 John 3:3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.
   a. This is the “blessed hope” of Titus 2:13. Not “I sure HOPE I’m saved and that I’ll make it to heaven.” The hope both John and Paul are talking about is the hope of the second coming and our receiving our glorified bodies. We are still hoping for it because, while it is a settled thing in our hearts, it has not yet happened.
   b. This is what the doctrine and hope of the Second Coming is designed to do for us. Since we shall soon see Him and stand before Him in the bema judgment, we want to make sure that we are always ready to do so. We want to make sure that all sin is confessed and that we are living pure and holy lives at all times since we do not know when we may be whisked out either in death or the rapture, to stand
before Christ at the bema judgment to give an account of our lives and ministries since our salvation. A man with a proper understanding and acceptance of the Second Coming will be striving to live a pure life at all times.

25:3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

What is the point of taking a lamp if it has no oil? It is useless.

25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

They all had lamps but only five had oil. They all had the equipment needed to meet the Bridegroom but only five of them had made the spiritual preparation to do so. You can be orthodox, belong to a good Bible-preaching church, hold to the Authorized Version of the Bible, and still be spiritually unprepared to meet the Bridegroom.

25:5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

"they slumbered and slept"

1. "let us not sleep, as the rest do, but let us watch and be sober." (1 Thessalonians 5:6.)
2. Despite the continual preaching, teachings and warnings regarding the doctrines of the Second Coming, there are always going to be those who ignore it or who are lazy about it. They will be asleep when they should have been awake and they should have been watching instead of eating and drinking and beating the servants.

25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

"And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

1. "The day appointed for the marriage, about five o'clock in the evening, the bridegroom comes to the house of the bride, where the priest, pronounces for the first time the nuptial benediction. He then brings her to his own house, gives her some refreshment, and afterwards the assembly of her relatives and friends reconduct her to her father's house. When she arrives, the priest repeats the nuptial benediction, which is generally done about Midnight; immediately after, the bride, accompanied with a part of her attending troop, (the rest having returned to their own homes), is reconducted to the house of her husband, where she generally arrives about three o'clock in the morning. Nothing can be more brilliant than these nuptial solemnities in India. Sometimes the assembly consists of not less than two thousand persons, all richly dressed in gold and silver tissue; the friends and relatives of the bride, richly dressed in gold and silver tissue; the friends and relatives of the bride, encompassed with their domestics, are all mounted on horses richly harnessed. The goods, wardrobe, and even the bed of the bride, are carried in triumph. The husband, richly mounted and magnificently dressed, is accompanied by his friends and relatives, the friends of the bride following him in covered carriages. At intervals, during the procession, guns and rockets are fired, and the spectacle is rendered grand beyond description, by a prodigious number of Lighted
Torch, and by the Sound of a multitude of musical instruments." (Adam Clarke, 
*Commentary on the Bible*).

2. They all knew the Bridegroom was coming, but they did not the exact time.

25:7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

“trimmed their lamps” Trimming the lamps would involve removing the charred portion of their wick. This helps the flame burn purer and brighter. While spiritual reform and change are needed, God’s saints discerned that the life must have the oil in order to burn for Christ. The trimming of the wick without the oil is of no benefit. Repentance without godly sorrow had no power; only through the godly sorrow was repentance granted by God.

“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps”

1. This was a season of an awakening and revival to come to God’s true people, bringing a preparation and readiness of the life for His coming. We believe one of the burdens for revival is the preparation of the soul and life for the coming of the Lord. Though Neo-Christianity speaks of an “Awakening” at this time, it is evident that the world, as well as the institutional Church, is getting worse. But God has promised an End-time awakening to come to His true people.

2. This will bring to the forefront the need of oil to the end, the need of communion (Revelation 3:20), and the need of a fullness of God’s Spirit in anointing for the life.

3. God first must send an awakening to the heart and then a revival. An awakening is when God opens the heart to the things of the Lord and the needs of the inward life with God.

   a. Even the wise virgins at times sleep and need to come to an awakening. There is the need to arise from the sleep of apathy, indifference, neutrality with God, etc.

4. Once the awakening comes, God must bring revival to the soul and life.

   a. Passions and desires have waned or grown cold as apathy has set in. These matters need to be revived or stirred up.
   
   b. There may be things we used to do spiritually that we no longer do actively; such things were necessary and were most proper in our earlier walk with God.
   
   c. The cares of life caused such precious things to wane, and eventually we became cold to them.
   
   d. We tend to believe that certain responsible things in our lives can cover up for what is spiritually lacking. Revival brings a desire either to bring into the life that which is lacking or to restore that which has grown desolate. (H. T. Spence, Revival In The Home Summer Study Series, 2016)

25:8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

“Give us of your oil” “How did you come to victory over sin?” “How did you come to know communion with God?” “Why is your love for Him so deep and earnest?” These questions should be asked by those who are seeking for a closer walk with God, heart purity and communion with God. It seemed that the righteous daily life and walk of individuals with Christ could almost supply another’s spiritual lack; thus, some Christians believed they could ask for such oil from deeper-living Christians. Just being around mature Christians seemed to some to be a store of grace from which they could draw.
“our lamps have gone out”

1. Fearful words! One duty of the priests was to make sure the fire on the altar of burnt offering was to “never go out” (Leviticus 6:12,13). Once the altar is lit, it is our responsibility to keep the fire lit - it must never go out. God kindles the fire - it is the duty of the priests to maintain it. What happens when the fire goes out? There is no indication in Scripture that God re-lights it
   a. How is the fire on the altar maintained?
      i. Not by false methods and human means as seen in 10:1,2
         a. God will not accept it
         b. God will judge it
      ii. By God appointed means
         a. Sacrifice - continually to feed the flame!
         b. Confession of sin
         c. Putting on the wood, hay and stubble (1 Corinthians 3:12)
         d. Adding of oil (the Holy Spirit)
         e. Meditation, prayer, Bible reading (Psalm 39:3)

2. They lamps were lit once, now they had no oil. It had been exhausted and not refilled. They neglected to refill the lamps. They did not keep a watch on their spirits and their relation to the Holy Spirit. Through neglect and carnality, they “lost” the filling when they needed it most. They had no oil, no light and no way to get back to a state of preparation in so short a time.
   a. When the rapture comes, there will be no time to run to an altar or a church and “get right”.

25:9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

Is there a limited supply of the Holy Spirit available in these kinds of situations?
   1. Who sells the Holy Spirit?
   2. How can the Holy Spirit be purchased?

25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

25:10 should always be out burden, that we would be spiritually wise and prepared to meet the Bridegroom, even if He comes at an unexpected time.

25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

25:12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.
See comments under 24:42-51.

Summary of the Parable

1. They “took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.”
2. In the first generation of the Church, God’s people were anticipating the Second Coming almost immediately.
   a. Paul said, “Then we which are alive and remain” (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Paul was looking for the return of the Lord for his own in the rapture.
3. The Bridegroom (Christ) did not come immediately: “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept” (25:5).
   a. This is a commentary on Church history in the light of the return of Christ.
   b. Church history indicates that men are given to slumbering and sleeping.
4. In 25:6, we read “And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.”
   a. This initial cry came in history in the early-to-mid 19th century when the truths of the Second Coming came to the forefront in the preaching of God’s men.
   b. The books of Daniel and Revelation were opened by the Holy Spirit with insight for the End Time. This burden has continued to the present hour.

‘Matthew 25:5 depicts a subsequent period of Church History: "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." This long period of spiritual lethargy included the Dark Ages and the Reformation, leading up to the Revivalists of the 1700s and 1800s. Although Bible doctrine dominated the time of the Reformation, it was only later that "spirituality" flowed from the doctrine of Scripture and became a burden among God’s people. Matthew 25:6-7 may depict a return to a consciousness of Christ's imminent return: And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. Of all the periods of Church History, the greatest revival era was the Philadelphia Age from about 1750 to 1900. Although "doctrine" was the great burden of the Reformation and post-Reformation among the Puritans, the burden for the Christian life and spirituality did not come to importance until this time. From Reformation doctrine flowed Philadelphia revivalism and spirituality; then in the mid-nineteenth century, from revivalism and spirituality flowed a renewed burden and expectancy for Christ's second coming. This time was the beginning of the latter-rain outpouring of the Spirit. We are now at the end of this latter-rain outpouring. Probably more Christians would have been ready for Christ's coming at the beginning of the Philadelphia Church Age than in this Laodicean Church Age. The End Time will be the hardest period to find "true" Christians; it is the midnight of history. Because of the present increase of the apostasy within the Institutional Church, fewer individuals are truly in touch with God than even one hundred years ago. The public Christianity of our times is a false Christianity; it proclaims another Gospel of another kind. Christ is outside the Church knocking, endeavoring to find individuals within who will open the door for Him at this suppertime of history. Thus, for God's remnant this midnight hour is the period of the awakening. But what Neo-Christianity is calling an awakening the Bible calls an apostasy. The time of awakening comes when a voice is heard, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (25:6). This is what has brought the burden of revival among the remnant in the past 200 years; it is the clear consciousness of the second coming of Christ. Now that the call has come, the crucial key for the remnant concerns how much oil is needed for the preparation. The parable of Matthew 25 indicates that they all were virgins, they all slept, they all awakened, they all had lamps, and they all had wicks which they trimmed. The only difference between being wise and being foolish was having or lacking the additional oil (H.T. Spence, “Why Sleep Ye?” in Straightway, volume 34 number 2, March 2006)."
“Now, beginning at the beginning, and carefully and reverently sorting the facts, assessing them in the belief that the Bible is far superior to any commentary written on it, let us notice:

1. Those involved are virgins (plural), not “a virgin.”
2. They go to marry no one; they go to MEET Someone.
3. They go to meet Someone who is already married (Luke 12:36).
4. All had oil to start with, and some lost it (vss. 4, 7–8).
5. If oil is a type of the HOLY SPIRIT, works are involved in obtaining a fresh supply of the Holy Spirit (vss. 8–9).
   a. can’t be a church-age application as how can you buy the Holy Spirit? (jc)
6. In 2 Kings 4:7 (where a transaction similar to this one takes place), the entire setting is JEWISH.
7. There is no “twinkling of an eye” or “in a moment” or anything else involved in the passage.
8. It is the “Son of man” coming as a married bridegroom (vs. 13), NOT “the Son of God” coming for His bride! Things different are not equal. (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

“Let us lay out the Scriptural definitions of the words found in the Scripture, using the Scripture’s interpretation of itself.

1. “Virgins” (plural) are found in the Tribulation, not the Church Age (Rev. 14:1–6).
2. “The VIRGIN bride” of Christ (2 Cor. 11:1–3) is never called “virgins” anywhere, and is always denominated one chaste virgin, in distinction from “virgins” (Song of Sol. 6:8–9, Psa. 45:13–14).
3. The “virgins” of the Tribulation follow the bride (Psa. 45:13–14), and they follow here at the end of the Tribulation (Matt. 24:29–31, Psa. 50:3–5).
4. There IS an element of WORKS connected with their salvation. (This is dispensational, not applicable to the church age- jc)
5. Some of the “virgins” can lose it and DO. Consequently, Hebrews 9:28 is fair warning that there will be a split-rapture at the end of the Tribulation.
6. Since Old Testament times return (law and all!) when the Body of Christ leaves (see comments under Matt. 24:45–51), there is an element of WORKS connected with salvation (Rom. 10:5), and David fully realized that these works were connected with losing the Holy Spirit! (Psa. 51:11). (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

147. The Parable of the Talents 25:14-30

25:14 ¶ For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

Another kingdom parable, with the doctrinal application to the Jews in the Tribulation. Doctrinally, this parable deals with a Tribulation worker who does not “endure unto the end” (Matthew 24:13, 25:30).

This is to be set in contrast with the Parable of the Pounds in Luke 19:11-27. Both parables are similar, but they are not the same.

1. The Parable of the Talents deals with the Kingdom of Heaven; the Parable of the Pounds deals with the Kingdom of God.
2. In the Parable of the Talents, there are three servants; in the Parable of the Pounds, there are ten servants, showing you that the Parable of the Pounds deals with Gentiles.
3. Talents are a Jewish weight; pounds are a Gentile weight.
4. In the Parable of the Talents, each servant gets different amounts to invest; in the
Parable of the Pounds, each servant gets the same amount.
5. In the Parable of the Talents, the unprofitable servant goes to outer darkness; in the
Parable of the Pounds, he does not

The nobleman in the parable goes away “into a far country” (25:12) and receives a kingdom and
returns as King (25:15).
1. The “nobleman” is Christ.
2. The “far country” is a reference to Heaven. When Christ ascended to heaven in Acts 1,
   He went into a “far country” with a promise to return at a unspecified time.
3. The “ten servants” and the “ten pounds” mark the parable in Luke 19 as a Church
   Age parable that takes place during the times of the Gentiles.
4. The servants are not given each “according to his several ability” as in the Parable of
   the Talents here. Each servant is given an equal amount: one pound each.
   a. Why the difference? In Luke, we all receive an equal “pound” or opportunity.
      They all get 10 pounds. The Matthew, the servants do not receive equal
      “talents”. They are distributed as 5, 2 or 1 talent.

25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every
man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Everyone got something, some ministry, some opportunity. Not everyone gets the same gifts or
opportunities but everyone gets something and the Lord expects everyone to do something with
what they are given. It is part of the sovereignty of God about who gets what and how much,
why he gives more to some and less to others.

It would appear the Lord gave His gifts and ministries before His ascension in Acts 1.

25:16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made
them other five talents.

25:17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

25:18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s
money.

This is what the Lord couldn’t tolerate- inactivity. The other two servants were busy. This
servant did nothing out of fear but it resulted in laziness.

25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

The Lord has been gone about 1990 years (and counting) but He will return! There is always a
reckoning and a settling of accounts.
25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

The Lord wants SOME return on what He has invested in us. Even a small return will be rewarded. He commended both servants although the second servant did not produce as much of a return as did the first servant but the second servant received a commendation as well.

25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

Fear of what? Losing the talent? The Lord was willing to accept that risk but He was totally unwilling to accept no return at all. If all He got back was what He gave the servant, He then could have just kept that talent to Himself for all the good it did Him. The Lord simply cannot tolerate this kind of unfaithfulness.

25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Complete condemnation! Lord, protect us from this when we stand at the Bema judgment!

25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

“usury” Interest on a loan. See Deuteronomy 23:19, 20 and Psalm 15:5. Jews were forbidden to take it from Hebrews but were allowed to charge it to foreigners.
25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

“Use it or lose it”. The Lord will take away gifts and ministries if they are unused and unappreciated.

25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

This will probably take place at some judgment but which one? Probably not the Bema as that is a judgment for the Church and this is a Kingdom parable.

25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What is this? Hell? Or some sort of judgment and exclusion that does not involve hell?


25:31 ¶ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

This judgment is not the Bema Seat nor the Great White Throne Judgment. Those judgments involve the judgment of individuals. This judgment deals with the nations.

1. Also see Joel 3:2,12 for a judgment of the nations after the tribulation.
2. Books are present at both the Bema and at the Great White Throne. No books are mentioned here.

The timing of this judgment is not specifically given but it must take place after the tribulation and before the millennium. It deals with the status of the nations that go into the millennium.

1. It is after the second coming, as in 25:31.

The basis is how these nations treated Israel, probably during the tribulation period.

1. The “goat nations” refused to aid Israel in her times of deepest trial- 25:41-45
   a. They are on the “left hand”
   b. Their sins are sins of omission. They are condemned for things they did not do.
2. The “sheep nations” did give aid and comfort to Israel- 25:34-40
   b. They are on the “right hand”

Psalm 9 is a commentary on the Judgment of the Nations in 25:31-46.

25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:
No resurrection is mentioned here so it is neither the Bema Judgment nor is it the Great White Throne.

Are whole nations judged or individuals from those nations? It is hard to believe that every single Syrian or Egyptian would wind up in hell because of the nation he lived in. It is usually the government of that nation that sets the tone of how that nation deals with Israel. You might be a Moslem or live in an anti-Semitic nation, but you can still get in on the blessing if you treat the Jew well as an individual.

25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

This is where we get our political identifications of “The Left” and “The Right”. “The Right” generally includes conservatives and “The Left” usually identifies progressives, socialists, communists and liberals (but not classical liberals).

25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

They inherit a kingdom, not salvation.

25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Their judgment, as the goats, was based on their works. This is not the Bema judgment of Christians.

25:37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

As with the goats, they were unaware of the works that the Lord is referencing. Many of them did it without realizing it and the goats neglected these works without realizing it.

25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.
If you do it in the Lord’s name, you might as well be doing it to the Lord personally.

25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Clear reference to hell fire.

25:42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

25:43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

25:44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

This is clearly hell and the lake of fire as this punishment is referred to as “everlasting”. Can an entire nation be sent off into “everlasting punishment?”
Matthew Chapter 26

149. The Plot Against Christ 26:1-5

26:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

26:2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

The Lord again prophesies of His impending crucifixion, two days hence.

26:3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

26:4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.

26:5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

There was a clear conspiracy of the religious leaders to arrest Christ, but only under certain circumstances, when it would be “safe” to do so.

1. The Lord was popular enough that to arrest Him in broad daylight in public would have incited a riot.

   a. The one thing the Romans would not stand was civil disorder. Let there be any rioting and certainly Caiaphas would lose his position. At the Passover, the atmosphere in Jerusalem was always explosive with political and religious dissent.

2. While Jesus was prophesying, his enemies were plotting.

150. The Anointing of Christ 26:6-13

26:6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

Simon was probably a leper the Lord had healed.

26:7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

“A woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment.”

1. In John 12:3, the “ointment” it is named as “a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly.”

2. Where Matthew and Mark say: “poured it on his head” and “she brake the box, and poured it on his head” (Mark 14:3), John records, “Mary...anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of
the ointment” (John 12:3). The incident is almost identical to the one found in Luke 7:39-50. However, here the man addressed as “Simon” is a Pharisee, not a leper (Luke 7:39).

a. The passage in Luke 7 occurs at least two years before the crucifixion, but it shows that the anointing of the head and feet of a guest was not an uncommon thing.

The woman, probably Mary, enters with a pound of spikenard in an alabaster box. She breaks the box, pouring the perfume on the head and feet of Jesus as He sat at meat. The odor fills the dining room.

1. This was an act of great respect.
2. Jesus criticized Simon in Luke 7:46 because he did anoint the Lord’s head with oil when He was a guest in his house.
3. “When had Mary purchased the spikenard? How long had she saved up for it? Had she originally bought it with her own wedding day in mind? Had she deliberately withheld it from Lazarus at the time his body was anointed for burial? All we know is that Mary had invested a large sum in this ointment and that she poured it out as an act of worship for the Lord she loved (John Phillips, Exploring Matthew).”

“The flask was of alabaster, a carbonate of lime or sulphate of lime, white or yellow stone, named alabaster from the town in Egypt where it was chiefly found. It was used for a phial employed for precious ointments in ancient writers, inscriptions and papyri just as we speak of a glass for the vessel made of glass. It had a cylindrical form at the top, as a rule, like a closed rosebud (Pliny). Matthew does not say what the ointment (murou) was, only saying that it was "exceeding precious" (barutimou), of weighty value, selling at a great price. Here only in the N.T. "An alabaster of nard (murou) was a present for a king" (Bruce). It was one of five presents sent by Cambyses to the King of Ethiopia (Herodotus, iii. 20) (A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament).”

26:8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

No doubt it was Judas who started this complaining. It is the thief who always claims to be so concerned about the money and “the poor”. Judas speaks up and the other disciples chime in, showing that even at this stage, Judas still had a considerable amount of influence among the disciples.

1. Judas is not worried about the poor. He is worried about any money going anywhere except into his pocket. Judas’ piety is only “bag deep.”
2. Judas was all about the outward works, to be seen of men. To men like him, spiritual works and devotions were worthless. Many are like this today, especially in the Independent Baptist movement. They place much emphasis on “soulwinning”, “door-knocking”, “bus routes” and “church building” but not as much on prayer, communion, meditation and devotion. Listen to the sermons preached in their conferences and “pastor’s schools” and you will see nothing but works. To them, works sanctify since they have no spirituality to fall back on.
3. They made their criticism sound spiritual by making mention of “the poor” but that is often just an excuse for these kinds of men to spend that money on themselves or on their pet projects. See any politician for an example.
4. We wonder how the woman responded when she heard this criticism for this act of devotion. You hear it from the carnal ones in the church all the time. In the Song of
Solomon, the Shulamite is always being criticized by the Daughters of Jerusalem (until chapter 6) for her love to Solomon. There will always be someone handy to criticize you if you decide to cast all to the wind and devote yourself totally to Jesus.

5. What finally motivated Judas to betray the Lord? The setting is the anointing of Jesus in Bethany. The trigger was the rebuke that Jesus gave Judas. Being stung by the Lord’s rebuke and becoming increasingly disenchanted because Jesus’ messianic and royal prospects seemed to be dimming, Judas decided to cut his losses and try to prophet as much as he could now, as it seemed he would not be able to profit in any future royal administration.

26:9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

26:10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

The Lord defends the woman and her action.
2. “Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this” - Mark 14:6.
3. “She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying” - Mark 14:8.

26:11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

“ye have the poor always with you”
1. The shows the failure of all Socialistic “anti-poverty” programs and “wars on poverty”. No economic system can truly solve the problem of poverty for in some instances, it is a product of human nature or events that cannot be controlled.
2. Serving Christ is more important that serving “the poor”. Only God can solve the problem of “the poor” and He will in the millennium, but man is powerless to do anything about it.
3. “Our Lord always cared for the poor; he was himself poor, he was the poor people’s Preacher, he fed the hungry poor, and healed the sick poor. He would always have his people show their love to him by caring for the poor; but he had reached the one occasion in his life when it was seemly that something should be done specially for himself, and this woman, by the intuition of love, did that very thing (Charles Spurgeon, Commentary on Matthew).”
4. “The disciples were anxious to help the poor; but the Rabbis themselves said, “God allows the poor to be with us always, that the opportunities for doing good may never fail (William Barclay, “Matthew” in The Daily Study Bible).”
5. Genuine acts of devotion will immediately attract the criticism of spiritual hypocrites.

“but me ye have not always” And the Lord would be leaving in a few days, so acts of devotion like this must be made now. We must always work when we can and as we have opportunity since these open doors eventually shut.

Some practical applications:
1. Jesus always accepts worship as proper always and never refuses it. He tolerates
and approves of the belief that He is God (Matthew 14:33, John 20:28).
2. Proper worship of Christ, by a believer, will cost something.
3. The death of Christ is the most important thing, not His birth. He is born to die for the
sins of mankind.
4. Real devotion to Christ cannot be hid, and it will fill all the house if it is truly there
(Proverbs 27:16, 1 Corinthians 8:3).

**26:12** For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

**26:13** Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole
world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

And it is a memorial! It was recorded in the eternal word of God and we are still taking about it
after 2,000 years! Mary’s love and devotion are recorded forever in Scripture. She did a small
thing in anointing Jesus, but her heart was large as was her love and devotion and the Lord
commended and memorialized her for it. You don’t have to do great things to be commended
by God, just small things done faithfully.
1. The world memorializes many of its own, for “great” deeds, whether for good or ill.
   Hollywood stars get a star on the “Walk of Fame”. Just about everything has a Hall of
   Fame. Singers get Grammys and actors get Oscars. Some people get bridges,
   highways and buildings named after them, even whole cities and states (for Washington
   and Lincoln).
2. The church commemorates many types of Christians:
   a. Preachers
   b. Teachers
   c. Missionaries
   d. Martyrs
   e. Writers (both book and hymns)
   f. I wish we would memorialize “ordinary” people more than we do, but what the
      church on earth omits, God will make up for it in heaven.
3. Look at the people God memorializes in Scripture as reminders and examples:
   a. For good (not comprehensive)
      i. Noah
      ii. Enoch
      iii. Abraham
      iv. Joseph
      v. Moses
      vi. David
      vii. Daniel
      viii. The prophets
      ix. Paul
      x. Timothy
      xi. Everyone in Hebrews 11
   b. For bad:
      i. Cain
      ii. Pharaoh
      iii. Saul
      iv. Belshazzar
151. The Conspiracy of Judas 26:14-16

26:14 ¶ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

26:15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

What motivated Judas to do this? We are not told directly but it had to be some form of disillusionment or disappointment when it became apparent that Jesus was not going to have Himself installed as king. That meant he wouldn't get any glory or money for being a disciple and an early follower of Jesus. Everyone has a theory but we may never know his true motivations.

“what will ye give ME…?” It was always all about Judas and how he could profit from being a disciple.

The thirty pieces of silver was prophesied in Zechariah 11:12.

The members of the Sanhedrin must have been delighted. Here was an end to their difficulties in taking Jesus without causing a riot. But they did not regard Judas as an equal co-conspirator. They kept him at arm's length and treated him as a common informer. They had no respect for Judas. He was a useful idiot to them. They would give as little as they thought he would take.

26:16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

The Lord knew all this, of course, but He did not alter His plans at all.

152. Preparation for the Last Supper 26:17-25

26:17 ¶ Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

This passage established the church age ordinance of the Lord's Supper. It started with a regular observance of the Passover and the Lord then added to it an expanded it.

26:18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

Jesus had it all arranged through His omniscience.
26:19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

26:20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

“sat” is defined in Amos 6:4 as reclining on a couch.

1. “There is no need to brag about what a great artist Da Vinci was. Da Vinci couldn’t read a Bible in eighth-grade Italian. He painted all the disciples sitting bolt upright, like Italian politicians (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

2. They were actually in a reclining position.

26:21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Jesus clearly identified that one of those disciples would betray Him. It was no surprise to the Lord what Judas did. When Judas heard this, you can imagine him sweating bullets, thinking that Jesus was going to call him out right there.

26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

“Is it I?”

1. Every disciple considered the possibility that he might be the betrayer. Even bold and self-confident Peter asked the question. A good man knows what is in his heart and is painfully aware that he has within him the potential of the greatest of sins and spiritual failures. Beware the man who thinks himself too hold or too spiritually advanced to even consider him asking such a question.

2. No one even considered the possibility that Judas could have been the betrayer. Judas seems to have been respected enough among the disciples that no one suspected him. Judas had put on a very good show and had fooled everyone into thinking he was a righteous man. After all, no one is going to trust Judas with the money bag if they thought he was a thief!

3. The negative expects the answer “No” and was natural for all save Judas. But he had to bluff it out by the same form of question.

4. In 26:25 Judas also asks the question, to which Jesus indicates that Judas is the betrayer. And still no one suspected Judas!

26:23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

The Lord does not name the betrayer but He does say that He will identify him by that man dipping his bread in the sop with Him.

1. John 13:26 says that the betrayer would be the one to whom Jesus would give the sop to and He gave it to Judas. And even after that, no one suspected Judas!

2. No eating utensils were used so everyone ate with their hands.

3. The “dish” was a platter with the broth of nuts and raisins and figs into which the bread was dipped before eating.
26:24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

“good for that man if he had not been born” This is Judas’ legacy. His name is forever linked with betrayal and he is usually placed in the same category as Hitler when it comes to evil. His punishment was also more severe and unique than the average devil or sinner in hell. Peter says he “went to his own place” in Acts 1:25 and to consider that is truly frightening. A place worse than hell and the lake of fire!

26:25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Judas Iscariot- a background study
1. His surname was “Iscariot” (man of Karioth).
2. All we know of his family is that his father’s name was Simon (John 6:71).
3. Judas’ Titles
   b. Son of Perdition- John 17:12
   c. A devil- John 6:70
   d. A thief- John 12:6
4. He was a friend of Jesus (Psalm 41:9) and the Lord referred to him as “friend” in Matthew 26:50.
5. He was possessed by Satan- Luke 22:3.
6. Motivations for betraying Jesus
   a. Judas did it after becoming convinced that Jesus was going to die and not reign as King (Mark 14:3-11). This dashed Judas’ hopes for political power and influence in a future kingdom ruled by Christ.
   b. Judas did it for money (Matthew 26:14-16). His expectation of financial wealth no longer existed, so he bargained for what he could receive from the religious leaders (30 pieces of silver).
   c. Judas may have thought, “What’s the use of continuing to follow Jesus when the whole world is turning against Him and the governmental authorities may swallow me up with Him?”
7. His death
   a. Judas’ Death
      i. Seeing that Christ was condemned to death, Judas was remorseful, admitted he betrayed innocent blood, threw the 30 pieces of silver the leaders paid him into the temple, then hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-5).
      ii. Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). Acts 1:18 reveals that his bowels all gushed out as a result of how he hanged himself. This is very graphic. It is terrible enough to commit suicide, but to take a fall, have your body burst open, and your inner parts gush out, is horrendous.
      iii. He “went to his own place” in Acts 1:25.
         a. This is terrifying. Hell and the bottomless pit are bad enough, but Judas went to a place even worse, that was especially prepared for him.
8. Judas a type of the Antichrist- John 17:12 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3.
   a. He hangs, as Haman and Absolam
b. He is very close to Christ. No one suspected his true nature until it was too late.
c. Is called the Son of Perdition and a devil (John 6:70,71)
d. He goes to his own place at death (2 Sam 18:18; Acts 1:25)
e. Is a Moabite (his name Iscariot means "A man of Kerioth", which is in Moab) (Jeremiah 48:2,10,15,24,41)

9. Ten Facts About Judas And Ahithophel (Dake Study Bible)
a. They were friends of masters (Psalm 55:12).
b. Both betrayed and reproached their former friends.
c. Both were lovers of their masters.
d. Both magnified themselves against their best friends.
e. Both betrayed the trust placed in them.
f. Both were equals in trust (Psalm 55:13).
g. Both were guides or counselors.
h. Both were acquaintances known by their masters.
i. Both had sweet fellowship with their masters (Psa 55:14).
j. Both worshiped with their masters.

THE ANTICHRIST WILL BE JUDAS REINCARNATED By Arthur W. Pink

This article first published in Studies in the Scriptures- a monthly magazine edited by A. W. Pink. In 1923, a book appeared composed of various similar essays from the above mentioned magazine. This book was entitled, "The Antichrist" by Mr. Pink. The book is currently published by Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501.

1. In Psalm 55 much is said of the Antichrist in his relation to Israel. Among other things we read there, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords" (v. 21). The occasion for this sad plaint is given in the previous verse- "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant". The reference is to Antichrist breaking his seven-year Covenant with the Jews (see Dan. 9:27; 11:21-24). Now if the entire Psalm be read through with these things in mind, it will be seen that it sets forth the sorrows of Israel and the sighings of the godly remnant during the End-time. But the remarkable thing is that when we come to vv. 11-14 we find that which has a double application and fulfillment- "wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her street. For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it w

2. "And your covenant with Death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it" (Isa. 28:18) The "Covenant" referred to is that seven-year one which is mentioned in Dan. 9:27. But here the one with whom this Covenant is made is termed "Death" and "Hell!!". This is a title of the Antichrist, as "the Resurrection and the Life" is of the true Christ. Nor is this verse in Isa. 28 the only one where the Son of Perdition is so denominated. In Rev. 6 a fourfold picture
of him is given; the antithesis of the fourfold portrayal of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. Here he is seen as the rider on differently colored horses, which bring before us four stages in his awful career, and when we come to the last of them the Holy Spirit exposes his true identity by telling us, "and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him" (Rev. 6:8). Now "Hell" or "hades" is the place which receives the souls of the dead, and the fact that this awful name is here applied to Antichrist intimates that he has come from there.

3. Above, we referred to Matt. 12:41-43 to prove that Antichrist will be a super-human being, a fallen and unclean "spirit": we turn to it again in order to show that this coming Incarnation of Satan has previously been upon earth. The history of this "Unclean Spirit" is divided into three stages. First, as having dwelt in "a man"; second, as having gone out of a man, and walking through dry places, seeking rest and finding none this has reference to his present condition during the interval between his two appearances on earth. Third, he says, "I will return to my house". This Unclean Spirit, then, who has already been here, who is now away in a place where rest is not to be found, is to come back again!

4. In John 17:12 we have a word which, more plainly still, shows that the Antichrist will be Judas reincarnated, for here he is termed by Christ "The Son of Perdition". But first let us consider the teaching of Scripture concerning Judas Iscariot. Who is he? He was a "man" (Matt. 26:24). But was he more than a man? Let Scripture make answer. In John 6:70 we read, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?" It is hardly necessary to say that in the Greek there are two different words for "Devil" and "demon". There are many demons, but only one Devil. Further, in no other passage is the word "devil" applied to anyone but to Satan himself. Judas then was the Devil incarnate, just as the Lord Jesus was God incarnate. Christ Himself said so, and we dare not doubt His word.

As we have seen, in John 17:12 Christ termed Judas "the Son of Perdition", and 2 Thess. 2:3 we find that the Antichrist is similarly designated- "That Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition". These are the only two places in all the Bible where his name occurs, and the fact that Judas was termed by Christ not a "son of perdition", but "the Son of Perdition", and the fact that the Man of Sin is so named prove that they are one and the same person. What other conclusion can a simple and unprejudiced reader of the Bible come to?

5. In Rev. 11:7 we have the first reference to "the Beast" in the Apocalypse: "The Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit". Here the Antichrist is seen issuing forth from the Abyss. What is the Abyss? It is the abode of lost spirits, the place of their incarceration and torment; see Rev. 20:1-3, and Luke 8:31, "deep" is "abyss" and cf. Matt. 9:28. The question naturally arises, How did he get there? and when was he sent there? We answer. When Judas Iscariot died! The Antichrist will be Judas Iscariot reincarnated. In proof of this we appeal to Acts 1:25 where we are told, "that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place". Of no one else in all the Bible is it said that at death he went "to his own place". Put these two scriptures together: Judas went "to his own place", the Beast ascends out of the Abyss.

6. In Rev. 17:8 we read, "The Beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit, and go into perdition". This verse is generally understood to refer to the revived Roman Empire, and while allowing that such an application is warrantable, yet we are persuaded it is a mistake to limit it to this. In the Apocalypse, the Roman Empire and its final satanic Head are very closely connected, so much so, that at times it is difficult to distinguish between them. But in Rev. 17 they are distinguishable. In v. 8 we are told that the Beast "shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit, and that he shall go into perdition". In v. 11 we are told, "And the Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seventh, and goeth into perdition". Now nearly all expositors are agreed that the Beast of v. 11- the "eighth" (head, and form of government of the Roman Empire- is the Antichrist himself; then why not admit the same of v. 8? In both, the designation is the same- "the Beast"; and in both, we are told he "goeth into perdition."
We take it, then, that what is predicated of "the Beast" in 17:8 is true of both the Roman Empire and its last head, the Antichrist: of the former, in the sense that it is infernal in its character. Viewing it now as a declaration of the Antichrist, what does it tell us about him? Four things. First, he "was". Second, he "is not". Third, he shall "ascend out of the Bottomless Pit". Fourth, he shall "go into perdition". The various time-marks here concern the Beast in his relation to the earth. First, he "was", i.e. on the earth. Second, he "is not", i.e. now on the earth (cf. Gen. 5:24, "Enoch was not for God took him"; that is, "was not" any longer on the earth). Third, he shall "ascend out of the Bottomless Pit," where he now is, which agrees with 11:7. Fourth, he shall "go into perdition". We learn then from this scripture that at the time the Apocalypse was written the Beast "was not" then on the earth, but that he had been on it formerly. Further, we learn that in John's day the Beast was then in the Bottomless Pit but should yet ascend out of it. Here then is further evidence that the Antichrist who is yet to appear has been on earth before.

7. "And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20). This gives the last, word concerning the Antichrist. It makes known the terrible fate which awaits him. He, together with his ally, will be cast alive into the Lake of Fire. This is very striking, and confirms what has been said above, namely, that the Antichrist will be one who has already appeared on earth, and has been in "the Abyss" during, the interval which precedes his return to the earth. And how remarkably Rev. 19:20 corroborates this. The Antichrist will not be cast, eventually into the Abyss, as Satan will be at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:1-3), but into the Lake of Fire which is the final abode of the damned. Why is it that he shall not be cast into the Abyss at the return of Christ? It must be because he has already been there. Hence, the judgment meted out to him is final and irrevocable, as will be that of the Devil a thousand years later, see Rev. 20:10.

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153. The Last Supper 26:26-29

26:26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

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26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

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26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

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26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

A. The Christian ordinance of the Lord's Table is introduced here as an outgrowth of the Passover.

1. Its purposes are:
   a. To commemorate the death of Christ: "This do in remembrance of me."
   b. To be a badge of the Christian profession.
c. To indicate and to promote the communion of believers with Christ.
d. To represent the mutual communion of believers with each other.

2. This is an ordinance, not a sacrament. There are no Sacraments in a New Testament church. A “sacrament” is defined as “a religious ceremony or ritual regarded as imparting divine grace, such as baptism, the Eucharist and (in the Roman Catholic and many Orthodox Churches) penance and the anointing of the sick.” Neither the Lord’s Table nor water baptism impart any “divine grace”.

B. 26:26 First element- unleavened bread

1. Represents the human body of Christ in His sufferings.
   a. To make bread, the wheat must be grown, then cut down, ground, kneaded and baked. These steps all speak of the human sufferings of Christ.

   a. He was born in Bethlehem, which means “The House of Bread”.

3. The bread is unleavened. Since Christ was sinless on earth and since leaven is usually seen as a type of sin, there could be no leaven in that bread if it was to represent Christ.
   a. Leaven is fermented dough and the Jews identified fermentation with putrefaction and corruption; so leaven stood for all that was rotten and corrupt, and as a sign of purification, cleansed away.

4. The bread is simply bread. It is not turned into the flesh of Christ by some Roman Catholic priest in his hocus-pocus in the mass. The Christian is told that he is to be no longer occupied with the human Christ of the flesh (2 Corinthians 5:16). Furthermore, a man who takes the Romanist “eucharist” not knowing this truth (or supposing the bread to be Jesus Christ’s earthly corpse) is eating and drinking “damnation to himself” (1 Corinthians 11:29) as he is not discerning the Lord’s body.

C. 26:27-29 Second element- wine

1. It is wine/fruit of the grape. The only difference is that this was unfermented and non-alcoholic.
   a. Alcoholic wine would destroy the type if this was to represent the blood of Christ. There is no “breakdown” or process of decay in the blood of Christ, unlike in normal human blood, which is contaminated with sin.
   b. Fermentation is defined as “the chemical breakdown of a substance by bacteria, yeasts, or other microorganisms, typically involving effervescence and the giving off of heat.” It involves a process of corruption, when the fruit is left to itself for a period of time under certain circumstances. The chemicals in the fruit will begin to break down and produce alcohol.
   c. With all the verses warning against drinking alcoholic verses, it would be highly illogical for fermented wine to be used here. This also goes for Jesus changing the water into wine in John 2.

2. 26:27 They all drank of the cup. In the Roman Catholic mass, only the priest drinks of the cup and it is denied to the “laity”. There is no theological justification for this (or any element of the mass).

D. 26:28 “blood”

1. No covenant could be made without shedding of blood (Exodus 24:8. Hebrews 9:20); and no remission of sins without it (Leviticus 17:11).

E. 26:29 The Lord only observed one communion service with the disciples, but He looks forward to the day that He will observe it again with them in the kingdom.

F. It is obvious that the bread and the wine are types of the body and blood of Christ, not the real thing. We cannot literally eat the human flesh of Christ (that would be cannibalism) drink His literal blood (the Bible is always strong about drinking or “eating” blood).
1. The eating or drinking of blood is forbidden, before the law (Genesis 9:1–5), under the law (Leviticus 17:10-12), and in the New Testament (Acts 15:20, 29).

2. The drinking of fermented liquor (called “old wine”) was forbidden to the Jew in the Old Testament, and he was cautioned against even looking at it (Proverbs 20:1; 23:31). The only time that strong drink was permitted was in Deuteronomy 14:26, where once every three years, the Old Testament Jew, in Palestine, was allowed a celebration at Jerusalem. (This returns in the Millennium in Isaiah 62:1-9).

3. The basic rule of Biblical interpretation is “A passage is always literal unless it is absolutely impossible to take it in the literal sense.” It is impossible theologically and in terms of reason to take the Roman Catholic mass seriously as it violates every law involved.

G. 26:29 No covenant could be established without the shedding of blood. For the New Covenant/Testament to be established, Christ would shed His own blood.

154. Prophecies of Failure 26:30-35

26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

They probably sang the Hallel, consisting of Psalm 113-118. In our church, we always since the Doxology on Old Hundredth after we observe the Lord’s Supper.

26:31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

“for it is written” Quoted from Zechariah 13:7.

The warnings that the disciples would flee after Christ was smitten fell on deaf ears. None of the disciples took the warning or the prophecy seriously. Or at least they did not apply it to themselves. They reacted as Peter reacted. They put more confidence in their flesh than they did in the Lord’s own words.

1. Peter is the most vocal in his denial that he would ever forsake Jesus. But his fall would be the hardest and his repentance and restoration the toughest.
   a. His confidence was full of self. There is no doubt that he was sincere, as were the other disciples, but they were trusting in the flesh rather than praying and relying on the power of God to sustain them in the difficult hours ahead.
   b. 26:33 Peter seemed to have some contempt for the other disciples and their faithfulness when he said “though all men forsake thee…”

26:32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

This is a clear promise of His resurrection.

26:33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.
Peter meant well and he was honest and sincere when he said this, but the Lord knew him better than he knew himself. The same applies to the rest of the disciples.

26:34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

26:35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

155. Christ in Gethsemane 26:36-47

26:36 ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

“Gethsemane”

A. The “olive press”. Here, Jesus will be spiritually “squeezed” through agonizing prayer as no man ever has been.  
B. Compare Luke 22:44 “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” That is called “prayer” and involved the agony of the Lord’s soul. He prayed so earnestly that the sweat was falling off Him as though He was bleeding.  
1. This is no “saying or reading of prayers” or bowing your head over the dinner table. This is no “Hail Mary” or a rote recitation of the “Lord’s Prayer” muttered on a Sunday morning in some Romanist “church”. This is the “holy of holies” or prayer that we can only observe but not enter in to.  
2. “This, dear reader, is where the psychiatrist enters, making notes and mumbling something about the poor fellow being “psychotic” or a “manic depressive” type. There he is, stretched out on the floor. He has not shaved today. He hasn’t eaten. His face is down; the fingernails grip the floor boards. The tongue-in groove is wet with tears. The man’s nose is stuffed with mucus from crying, so he cannot pray distinctly; and between moans and sobs, an occasional word comes through—“Lord, if there is any way it can be done...?” “Lord, is there no other way...?” “Lord, for Christ’s sake, have mercy on me and hear me!” “Lord, why can it not be answered...?”...Here in Gethsemane, the blood, sweat, and tears roll; here, one verse in the book of Job is of greater comfort than a thousand masses, missals, meetings, and mother-confessors. Jesus is praying (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”  
3. An outline of this kind of prayer would be:  
   a. It was a solitary prayer.  
      i. There are some circumstances where no one can help you and no one can pray with you- you are going to have to go into Gethsemane alone!  
   b. It was a submissive prayer.  
      i. “not my will, but thine, be done.”  
      ii. The Lord gave Himself totally over to the will of the Father.
iii. Prayer does not change the Father’s will as it changes our will concerning the will of God. It helps us to understand it and accept it.

c. The prayer is a Scriptural prayer.
   i. It was addressed to the Father alone.
   ii. At no point in Scripture do we ever see Jesus or anyone else praying to anyone other than the Father. No one ever rattled off a single “hail Mary” in the New Testament.

26:37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

26:38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

26:38,39,42 What was this “cup” that made Jesus so sorrowful? It wasn’t the physical suffering that He would suffer in His passion and on the cross. He was silent through all his sufferings. But when the Father turned His face from Christ in Matthew 27:45,46, THEN Christ cries out. It was at that point when Jesus became Sin Incarnate as He bore the sin of the world in His own body that the Father turned His face as He cannot view sin, even if it is in the person of His own Son. It was the prospect of broken fellowship and communion (for the first and only time in all of eternity) that Jesus had trouble bearing. He needed divine help to endure that. He could endure the physical sufferings of the cross, but it was the prospect of the break of fellowship and communion with the Father that shook Jesus’ soul. Broken fellowship doesn’t bother us much as we live most of our lives out of fellowship and communion with God, but that was simply unbearable for Christ.

26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

The Lord surrenders Himself totally, absolutely and unconditionally to the will of the Father. Redemption can be achieved in no other way.

26:40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

“What, could ye not watch with me one hour?”
   1. How hard it is to pray for an hour or to spend an hour in the presence of God! We can go “knock on doors” for an hour or preach for an hour or do almost anything else for an hour, but our old nature rebels so much at the prospect of prayer and communion that we find it difficult to do it for any length of time.
   2. Peter desperately needed to pray during this time in the light of the Lord’s warning of his upcoming failure. Peter had much confidence in his flesh, and he may not have seen the need to spiritually prepare and fortify himself for the difficulties ahead.
   3. Sleep is the great enemy of prayer. If you suffer from insomnia, just try praying and you will be asleep in no time.
26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

1. This is the way it usually is with us. We have nothing but the best of intentions and our spirit is willing to do just about anything for God but our old nature fights and rebels as much as it can. Peter was sincere when he declared that he would never deny the Lord but his flesh had other ideas and would eventually gain the mastery in that hour.
   a. It wasn’t just Peter. All of the disciples suffered from this spiritual drowsiness.
2. This is where Romans 7 comes in. To summarize that chapter, Paul wanted to do right but was frustrated that he could not because of the old nature that resided in him. He wanted to do good but wound up sinning. He wanted to serve God but failed. We all should have a similar testimony of our desire to do right but suffering interference from our old, sinful nature.

26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

26:43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

26:44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

26:45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

26:46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

156. The Arrest of Christ 26:47-56

26:47 ¶ And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

Such a company to arrest one man! But Judas understood that this was no mere man and that the entire Roman army wouldn’t be able to arrest Jesus if He decided to fight back.

26:48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.
26:49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

This is the infamous “Judas kiss”.

This “kiss” is an intensive form in the Greek, showing that this was a very passionate kiss, not just a peck on the cheek, as if Judas did not want his signal to be missed or misunderstood who he was kissing and why.

26:50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

“Friend…” This may have just been polite talk from the Lord in addressing Judas, but still...! Calling the man who is going to betray you “Friend”?

26:51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear.

This is Peter, in his vain attempt to defend the Lord by force. At this point, he is not ever going to deny the Lord. He is ready to go down swinging to defend Him.

26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

The Lord told Peter to put the sword away. Now was not the time for that. And He certainly did not need Peter’s help. The Lord could have called twelve legions of angels (about 72,000) for His defense if He needed. But if He used His deity to escape this situation, how would any of the Scriptures concerning His death by fulfilled? How could our salvation be purchased?

26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

“as against a thief”

1. The Lord was treated as a common criminal from this point on, with an execution to match. After all, they would later crucify Him between two thieves.
2. He also exposes their cowardice in how they are arresting Him. The Jews could have arrested Him at any time but they feared the people. So Judas’ band has to operate in KGB/Gestapo fashion and arrest people in the middle of the night, with no witnesses.
a. The trials of Jesus operate in the same manner - at night in private, where none of Jesus’ supporters can come to defend Him and where the common people cannot see their wicked religious leaders in action.

26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

About this time, the Lord manifests His deity, as John relates in John 18:4-9: “—“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.”

1. This is what Judas was concerned about, but the Lord only demonstrated His power by the use of the term for deity “I AM”. We were introduced to this back in Exodus 3:14 at the burning bush. But the Lord goes no further with this and submits to Judas and his band of men.

“Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. “But Peter and John are both following, even if they are doing so from a safe distance.

157. The Trial of Jesus 26:57-68

26:57 ¶ And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

The “trial” must be read in the light of the procedures laid out in Deuteronomy that are supposed to govern the trial of an offender.

1. In Deuteronomy 19:17, not only are priests to be present, but judges are to preside at official trials; that is, the religious leaders are not capable of giving a fair decision without consulting the civil leaders.
2. It is the judge who is supposed to make the inquisition, not the priests.
3. This examination is first to hear of the charges against the accused, then to enquire diligently, then make certain (Deuteronomy 17:4) before proceeding.
4. Two or three witnesses are necessary (Deuteronomy 17:6), and if their witness is found to be false, they are to receive the sentence that was passed out to the man on trial (Deuteronomy 19:18-21).
5. None of these regulations were followed, thus rendering the trial invalid and illegal.

“Caiaphas”

1. He was the high priest in the reign of Tiberius Caesar and during the time of the Lord’s public ministry. He held the office during the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, but soon after his removal from that office was deposed by the Proconsul Vitellius (A.D. 36), and succeeded by Jonathan, son of Ananas. His wife was the daughter of Annas, who had formerly been high priest, and who still possessed great influence and control in religious matters. Caiaphas belonged the Sadducees.
2. The office of the high priest had degenerated to a mere political office, full of the usual political intrigue. The spirituality of the man was not a qualification to hold the office.

26:58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest’s palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Peter is still following and is still in the area of where Jesus is. Give him credit for that. Matthew does not mention that any other disciple was, not even John. Mathew must have had some rebuke for himself as he wrote this, as he wasn’t following either!

26:59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

“Now the whole scene is out of hand. No charges are being brought, and none are being preferred, and no one is trying to prove them. What they have done is, they have arrested an innocent Man without a warrant, have hailed Him to a private Gestapo meeting (without due process of the law), and in order to kill the Man, they are going to make Him talk about His religious beliefs so they can hang Him on a prejudice (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

They had to seek for false witnesses as they had no legal charge they could use against Jesus, so they had to manufacture charges against Him in order to put Him to death. This was their result of over 3 years of constantly watching Him and recording everything He said and did in public- nothing! This religious Gestapo had a file on Jesus that would have resembled a thousand-page book and they STILL couldn’t come up with a legitimate charge against Him!

26:60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

They need to find two false witnesses who were able to tell the same lie in order to condemn Jesus to death.

26:61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

This was false! Jesus told them to destroy the temple of His body and he would build it up in 3 days. He never said that He would destroy it, only that He would raise it up in 3 days. But they twisted His words to make it sound like He was referring to Herod’s temple.

26:62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

26:63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.
“adjure” - “hold on to your oath”. Jesus was silent up to this point but when He was “adjured by God” by the High Priest, He felt compelled to say something.

26:64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

26:65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

26:66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

26:67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

They were slugging the Lord with their fists as well as slapping Him with their palms.

“Now come the blows. Some spit on Him, some slap His face, some pluck out His beard. “Oh, so you’re the Son of God, eh? Then surely you must know everything! WHO HIT YOU? Blind man’s bluff!”

SMACK! SMACK! SMACK!

They have tied a towel around His face so He cannot see (Mark 14:65), and then they paste Him with their palms and fists until the effect is as described in Isaiah 52:14 and 50:6. Jesus, sitting patiently under the abuse, could have called out the name, rank, and serial number of every man in the outfit, but He “reviled not again” (1 Pet. 2:21–23), nor answered (Isa. 53:7).

This is the hour when the “Prince of this World” vents his hatred and wrath on the rightful heir to the throne (John 14:30). (Since the main subject of the Bible is a Kingdom, and that Kingdom has two claimants [Luke 4:6], it is remarkably fitting that at this juncture, the usurper should “pour it on” and try to the limit of his strength to get his Rival to quit.) There is more here than a room full of shouting, cursing, venomous Pharisees “taking it out” on a Prophet named Jesus. There in the early morning light, amidst the slappings, buffetings, blows, and spittle, a soul sits enthroned in the Sinless Son of God and faces another soul in the spirit realm and says to him: “He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? LET HIM COME NEAR TO ME!!” (Isa. 50:8—note the context!)

Here is an open challenge to “the prince of the power of the air,” the ruler of spiritual darkness, to come into close quarters and “try Jesus for size!” “Let him come near!” To those who have read Jude 9 and 1 Peter 5:8 (and believed them), the challenge is blood curdling. Jesus is stepping “into the ring” with the most powerful being in the universe, outside the Godhead. He is challenging the heavy weight for the title, and this heavy weight has never lost a battle until this time. Ten billion championship bouts—ten billion K.O.’s in the first round. Count them!

Adam, hiding.
Eve, lying.
Noah, drunk.
Joseph, lying.
Jacob, swindling.
David, adultery.
Moses, murder.
Daniel, idolatry.
Paul, resisting God’s will.
Peter, cursing.
Lot, backslidden.
Isaac, lying.
Abraham, lying.
Jeremiah, not trusting.
Job, complaining.
COUNT THEM!
That old veteran of ancient days, his majesty “the Devil,” never had any trouble K.O. ing the greatest, best, wisest, and holiest men who ever lived. And now a Man sits before him, blindfolded with spit and blood running down His face, and says: “Who is mine adversary? let him come near!” In he comes, both fists flailing, and brass knuckles on both hands (Job 40:18). Heaven, earth, and hell look on as the greatest conflict that ever took place in human history begins (Col. 2:15) (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

26:68 Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?
“thou Christ:”, spat out in mockery and contempt.

158. The Failure of Peter 26:69-75

26:69 ¶ Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

Peter is still in the area, although withdrawn. We can keep giving him credit for that.

In 26:69-73, three people come up to Peter and recognize him as being a disciple of Jesus. For fear of also being arrested, Peter denied all three accusations, and the denials got stronger as they went on. By 26:74, Peter is swearing all sorts of oaths in a public denial that he even knew Jesus.

The first of the “accusers” was a young lady and a maid. Peter was willing to go toe-to-toe with armed guards in the Garden but who questions by a “damsel” and a “maid” turned Peter into a coward.

26:70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

26:71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.
26:72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

26:72.74 “oath”, “curse”, “swear”

1. The “oath” was a legal declaration, like testifying to something under oath in the threat of perjury.
   a. The Greek word (Strong’s 3727 horkos) indicates a fence or an enclosure, something that restrains someone.
   b. This is something you would do in a court of law.
2. The “curse” is the opposite of “to bless” and carries the idea of “invoke or call down a destruction upon someone or something”.
   a. Something like “May God strike me dead if I’m lying!”
   b. The Greek word (Strong’s 2653 katanathematizo) is a very strong word (it has the “kata-” prefix, which is an intensifier), giving the full force of Peter’s curses.
3. To “swear” is to deny or affirm something by an oath.

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26:73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

Peter had a Galilean accent and that gave him away as a follower of Jesus. His accent betrayed the fact that he was from Galilee.

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26:74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Peter was not using profanity but was calling down curses upon himself if he was lying.

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26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

While Peter is cursing, swearing and lying, somewhere off in the distance, a rooster crows. That stops Peter dead in his tracks. All the color drains out of his face. He hastily excuses himself and goes out and weeps bitterly, in full realization that he fulfilled the prophecy that the Lord told of him— he DID deny the Lord three times.

1. Peter’s “wept bitterly” reminds us of David after Nathan draws back the curtain on his sin with Bathsheba. At the point, Peter very well could have written Psalm 51 if David hadn’t.
2. This is a sign of Peter’s true repentance. He must have thought “That’s it. I’m finished. It’s over. I failed just like the Lord said I would, and I’ll never preach again.” He was convinced his ministry was over and there was no future for him. What preacher out there hasn’t felt the same thing on the heels of a major failure of sin in his life?
Matthew Chapter 27

159. Christ Delivered To Pilate  27:1,2

27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

27:2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

A. It was a long night and now at the crack of dawn, they take Jesus to Pilate for the legal condemnation and death sentence.

160. The End of Judas  27:3-10

27:3 ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Once Judas saw what was going on and the likely end, he “repented”.
1. He did say “I have sinned” in 27:4, much like Pharaoh did in Exodus during the plagues. But this is a repentance born out of desperation and a fear of consequences, not based on a true confession of sin and guilt. It is like the adulterer who “repents” of his sin after he is caught and is facing judgment.
2. We are still not entirely sure of Judas’ motivations or the reason for his remorse here. Maybe he thought or hoped that Jesus would not allow Himself to be condemned. Once it was clear that He would be condemned and that He would not use His power to save Himself, Judas realized that He made the greatest mistake of all time (humanly speaking).
   a. Judas made a mistake.
   b. Judas made a HUGH mistake.
3. Judas and Peter give a great illustration the two kinds of repentance. These are defined in 2 Corinthians 7:10. One is called “godly sorrow. The other type is “the sorrow of the world.” Peter illustrates the first type. His sorrow is of a godly sort. Judas illustrates the second type. His repentance is an earthly, human thing. Peter’s is a grief stricken heart for being wrong. Judas’ is a despair for messing up a plan. The source of Peter’s repentance is a look from Jesus Christ. The source of Judas’ repentance is himself (27:3).
   a. Both Peter and Judas were sorrowful, both wanted to do right; both made restitution. But the place of repentance was wrong; while Peter confessed to his Lord, Judas confessed to the priest.
   b. The results of Peter’s repentance and Judas’ repentance show an obviously different result. Peter reaps a broken spirit, a contrite heart, and a humbleness of mind (John 21:15). Judas reaps a suicide by hanging and a bottomless pit for his home.
4. There is a repentance that comes too late and thus, is meaningless and powerless. When Judas said “I have sinned”, he was doing nothing but telling the truth and

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confessing what everyone already knew. But his die was cast and no amount of any sort of repentance was going to do any good for Judas now.

27:4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

The Lord's innocence was declared by 6 people (none of them being His friends):

1. Judas- Matthew 27:4
   a. Judas knew he had betrayed “innocent blood”. Christ was sinless and Judas knew it. Judas knew he betrayed an innocent man.
2. Pilate- Matthew 27:24
3. Pilate’s wife- Matthew 27:19

Judas got absolutely no sympathy from the priests. “What is that to us? see thou to that.” They got what they needed from him and now they had no further use for Judas. Never expect any sympathy from religious hypocrites!

27:5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

“And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple.” The money is immediately picked up and transferred to a deed for the potter's field in the valley of Gehenna (Jeremiah 18:1-10; 19:1,2). This is HOT money, blood money, because of Deuteronomy 23:18.

“went and hanged himself” Acts 1:18-20 gives additional material and tells what happened after the earthquake of Matthew 27:50–54. While Jesus is also hanging, the earthquake strikes. Over goes the tree on which Judas' body is hanging, and down it goes with its burden onto the rocks below. Judas lands on a jagged rock formation, and the body bursts asunder and the intestines and stomach slush out on the ground in “the field of blood.” It is a graphic and gory scene. A fitting end for the traitor.

27:6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

27:7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

27:8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;
27:10 And gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me.

“These words are not written in Jeremiah, but are written in Zechariah 11. However, Zechariah 7:7 is a plain warning to remember not only what Jeremiah wrote, but what he said. Jeremiah 18:1–8 and 19:2–3 connect the potter and his field with the valley of Hinnom (Gehenna), running around the east side of Jerusalem to the south end, where the city dump was located. A similar confusion among Bible rejecting scholars is found in Jude 14. Here the citation is spoken from Zechariah 14:5 and Deuteronomy 33, and scholars have to go thrashing around in the Dead Sea Scrolls to find a “Book of Enoch” (so they can prove that “Tobit,” “Judith,” and “Bel and the Dragon” belong in the Bible also!). Nowhere in the Bible is there any reference to any of these or to any “Book of Enoch.” All are the childish fancies of fickle brats. The citation is quoted from an oral speech, not a written one (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

161. Christ Before Pilate  27:11-14

27:11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

Pilate and the Cross  Matthew 27:11-25  1 Corinthians 2:14 (a sermon outline)

A. The natural, worldly man confronting Christ and the Cross
   1. A politician, whose main burden was
      a. Keeping the peace
      b. Keeping his job
   2. Confronted unexpectedly with Jesus
      a. Most men are at one time in their life and how few are prepared!
   3. Skeptical at the Jews’ claim about Jesus
      a. He knew who he was dealing with
      b. He was impressed by Jesus
   4. Sought to have Jesus released
      a. Saw no cause of death in Him

B. Pilate knew the hypocrisy of the Jews, that they had delivered Him due to envy- Matthew 27:18
   1. But Jesus witnessed a good confession- 1 Timothy 6:13

C. Ultimately, gave in for political expediency-
   1. John 19:12,13  And from thenceforth Pilate sough to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend:
   2. You cannot be a friend of Caesar and a friend of the cross

D. How did Pilate see the cross?
   1. He did not understand its significance because he was a natural man- 1 Corinthians 2:14, the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God
   2. He probably saw it as nothing more than a tool of execution
   3. In this context, it was a way to keep political peace. In order to keep the Jews happy,

E. Pilate sent Jesus to the cross
   1. Political appeasement
   2. Spiritual appeasement
3. No indication that he ever really came to understand the deeper significance of the cross

F. Like any other natural man, Pilate tried to avoid the cross- “What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?” - Matthew 27:22

1. He sent Him to Herod but Herod sent Him back to Pilate- Luke 23:9-12
2. He tried to have the Jews deal with Him but they wanted Christ killed and only Rome had that authority
3. He tried to put up Barabbas, thinking the Jews would certainly choose Jesus over a murderer. That didn’t work
   a. The whipping of Jesus associated with this didn’t satisfy the Jews, either
4. In other words, Pilate could rid himself of this confrontation with Christ. He must decide one way or the other. He decides for the world and against Christ
   a. He is a man caught between two loyalties, two masters, two options, trying to satisfy both. But he finds what billions of others have found- you cannot serve God and mammon, you cannot please God and man, who can’t have the world and the cross. You must choose ONE. Pilate choose and he choose poorly.
   b. He counted the cost and decided it was too costly to take the cross

“Art thou the King of the Jews? “

1. That was the charge, probably brought about to show Pilate that Jesus was planning sedition. Pilate would have no concern about any charge of blasphemy so the priests have to create a charge that Rome would be interested in- treason and rebellion (per Luke 23:2).
   a. If the Jews had brought a charge of blasphemy to Pilate, he would have reacted as Gallio did in Acts 18:12-16. Pilate cared nothing for Jewish religious law as he didn’t understand it and had no authority in that area. So the Jews are going to have to bring charges that Pilate will pay attention to- sedition.
   b. The charges laid out in Luke 23:2 were:
      i. “Perverting the nation.” Yet He healed the nation everywhere He went.
      ii. “Forbidding to give tribute.” Another lie, for He paid His taxes (Matthew 17:24-27).
      iii. “He stirreth up the people.”
2. In John 18:29,30, John records “Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.” The Jews were expecting, or hoping, that Pilate would rubber-stamp their demand to execute Jesus and may have been offended when Pilate refused to roll over and do their bidding. He was determined to search this matter out for himself.
3. Jesus certainly did not look like a king as he stood before Pilate. What kind of a king is this? If Jesus is “King of the Jews” then the Jews are in pretty rough shape! What kind of a “king” allows himself to be treated like this? Has he no followers or army to defend him?

“And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.”

1. “You said it”. The Lord does not deny it.
2. Jesus is actually going to talk with Pilate. He spoke only when forced to in His trial and He would have nothing to say to Herod in Luke 23:8-12. But Christ would talk to Pilate. He also would not respond to the accusations of the Jews who were also in Pilate’s judgment hall (27:12). He would dignify their false accusations with any sort of a response.
3. Jesus denies that charge of sedition against Rome by telling Pilate while He is a king, His kingdom is not of this world in John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence".

27:12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

27:13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

27:14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

Pilate was impressed by the fact that Christ would not answer the very serious charges that were being leveled against Him. He must have known that they would lead to His crucifixion, yet He made no defense! Even a man’s pride will compel him to defend himself, but not Jesus!

162. Christ or Barabbas? 27:15-26

27:15 Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

This was a gesture of good will displayed to the Jews during their Passover season.

27:16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

"Barabbas"- "Son of the father".

27:17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

Barabbas was a murderer and an agitator with no redeeming qualities about him. Pilate brought Barabbas out and stood him next to Jesus, thinking the Jews would certainly choose Jesus, Who had harmed no one, over this murderer. But how wrong he was! Pilate was trying to find a way to release Jesus. Since it was a custom to release a prisoner during the Passover season, Pilate brings out the worst criminal he currently had in custody, Barabbas. He was total scum, a low-life, a very bad person. But standing Barabbas and Jesus together, the contrast couldn’t have been stronger. Surely the Jews would want nothing to do with Barabbas and they would come to their senses and want Jesus released. This may have been what Pilate was thinking and hoping, but he totally misread the mob.

27:18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.
Pilate was no fool. He knew exactly why Jesus had been delivered up and it wasn’t because He was a true criminal or any real threat to public safety.

27:19 ¶ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

“bema seat”. This is the same idea as the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is a place where legal judgments and rulings are made.

Pilate’s wife was an unexpected witness to the innocence of Christ, and she wanted to try to prevent her husband from making a terrible mistake. Romans put a lot of stock in omens, signs and dreams.

27:20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

27:21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

27:22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

Pilate was surprised at the level of hatred and animosity being displayed toward Jesus. Jesus stood there, calm and dignified. He did not look like He was any sort of threat and He was not the kind of man to be a troublemaker. So why were the Jews so upset with Him? What evil had He done? If the Jews could have pointed to one specific crime that Jesus had committed, he would have gladly signed the papers authorizing Jesus’ crucifixion. But the Jews could provide nothing. All Pilate was getting was people screaming at the top of their lungs, frothing at the mouth, demanding His execution. Pilate may have feared that if he released Jesus, he would have a full-scale riot on his hands.

27:24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.

This was a common practice to demonstrate that Pilate believed Jesus was innocent and it went against his better judgment to condemn Christ, but he was going to do it anyway. Of course, this would not exonerate Pilate.
27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

"His blood be on us, and on our children"
1. And there it is. This was the reason why the Jews have suffered as they have for the past 2000 years. They brought their judgment upon themselves in their rejection of their King and His kingdom.
2. "In 135, Hadrian had 580,000 Jews killed. In 1020, Canute banished all Jews from England. In 1006, a holy war was started in Europe to kill all Jews not submitting to Roman Catholic baptism (called "Christian" in the school books). In 1272, Edward I confiscated all Jewish property and exiled 16,500 from England. "His blood be on us, and on our children!" They were banished from Prague and Constantinople in 1560–1600. Dominicans ran them out of Spain in the Inquisition (1492). In Alsace, Rhineland, Franconia, Bavaria, and Austria, in 1684, they were killed. In 1919 when England reneged on the Balfour Declaration (siding with the Pope's Arabian Ally, the Grand Mufti), they were left without a country, packed, starving, and dying on ships that no port would receive but Singapore. In Ukrainia, in 1942–43, 5,700,000 were butchered or disappeared. Dr. Bela Fabian, President of the Hungarian Independent Democratic Party, said 5,000,000 were gassed and cremated at the murder factory in Auschwitz (Silesia). This was done by dropping Cyclon B (crystallized prussic acid) into chambers where naked people were jammed in so tight, they couldn't fall down. (Ilse Koch, wife of the Commander of Buchenwald, had prisoners with "interesting" tattoo marks killed so their skins could be used for lampshades.) Rudolph Hess said you could tell when the people in the chambers were dead because they stopped screaming (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer's Commentary on Matthew)."
3. Obviously, the blood of Christ is not ordinary blood if rejecting it like this causes 2,000 years of suffering and ministry to Israel!

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27:26 ¶ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

"scourged" "The Roman scourge was a terrible instrument made of thongs loaded at the tips with pieces of bone or metal. In a scourging the victim was stripped and tied to a low post in such a position that the skin of his back was stretched tight. At the first blow, blood began to flow. As the flogging proceeded, the skin on his back was torn to ribbons. Sometimes vital organs were exposed and lacerated. Often the victim died (John Philipps, Exploring Matthew)."

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163. The Mocking of Christ 27:27-33

27:27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

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27:28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

"stripped" in order to increase the shame and public humiliation. Soldiers are very good at being cruel and violently mocking prisoners.

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27:29 ¶ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

The “crown of thorns” was made up of very long and very sharp needle-like thorns that pierced into the skull. The crown of thorns is a “stephanos” crown, which is a victor’s crown, not a King’s crown which is a “diadem”. The soldiers unwittingly crown this King with the proper crown.

Kings wore scarlet or purple robes. Compare Genesis 22:13, where that ram had a crown of thorns!

27:30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

The “king” now has a robe and a crown. He needs a scepter. A reed is stuck in His hand. This is the flimsiest scepter possible.

27:31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

27:32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

After the beating, Jesus was physically tired and unable to drag His cross up to the place where He was to be crucified, so the soldiers drafted (in the navy, it would be called “impressment”) the first passer-by they could find to help Jesus carry His cross.

27:33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

“Golgotha”, is “Calvary” in Latin. The rock probably had the shape of a human skull, hence the name.

“crucifixion” A Persian form of capital punishment that was never used by the Jews. The Romans used crucifixion as punishment for serious crimes such as insurrection and murder. The Romans used a short beam fastened to a long upright one, on which was placed a piece of wood for the feet to rest on. Nails were driven through the hands and feet (Psalm 22:16). The torture was dreadful, and the thirst, great; but in some cases, the victim could take up to three days to die.

Truman Davis, M.D., provides the following description of a crucifixion from the viewpoint of a medical doctor: “The cross is placed on the ground and the exhausted man is quickly thrown backwards with his shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flex and movement. The cross is then lifted into place. The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees flexed. The victim is now
Pilgrim Way Commentary on Matthew

crucified. As he slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain—the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As he pushes himself upward to avoid his stretching torment, he places the full weight on the nail through his feet. Again he feels the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the bones of the feet. As the arms fatigue, cramps sweep through the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push himself upward to breathe. Air can be drawn into the lungs but not exhaled. He fights to raise in order to get even one small breath. Finally carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically he is able to push himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen. Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rendering cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from his lacerated back as he moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins: a deep, crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. It is now almost over—the loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level—the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues—the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. He can feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues. … Finally, he can allow his body to die (cited in David Cloud, Believer's Bible Dictionary, pages 68-69).

Christ is crucified “without the gate” of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:11-13).

164. The Crucifixion of Jesus 27:34-38

27:34 ¶ They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

Jesus cried for water (John 19:28) and got vinegar instead. He tasted it but would not drink it (Mark 15:23, also see Proverbs 31:4). This vinegar was a stupefying agent designed to dull the senses and grant some relief to the victim, but Jesus needed to keep all of His faculties about Him during these hours. Jesus also cried for water to fulfill Psalm 69:21

27:35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

The only instance of gambling in the Bible is not given in a good connotation.
1. What little Christ owned was also targeted for sport by the world.
3. The clothing of the condemned became the property of the soldiers in these situations.

27:36 And sitting down they watched him there;

Christ provided good entertainment for the crowd gathered there.
1. The world would give Christ no amount of dignity or respect in these hours. Even condemned men have some rights and have some dignity reserved to them in their
death. But the world would give Christ none of it. They sought to humiliate Him at every turn and at every opportunity.

2. Even the centurion would watch Christ during these hours and he was so impressed that he gave his testimony of the deity of Christ.

27:37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

The crimes of the accused were usually nailed on the cross, to increase the sense of shame of the criminal.

1. It is written in three languages—Hebrew (Old Testament), Greek (New Testament), and then Pilate’s own language—“Latin”. This way, the Jew, the Roman and the Greek could see what was going on.
   a. Matthew records the Hebrew text: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
   b. Mark gives the Latin text (15:26): THE KING OF THE JEWS.

2. The Jews did not appreciate the title (John 19:21) and demanded that Pilate change it to “He said I am the King of the Jews”. The Jews did not appreciate their mock-king being crucified for that still made them look bad. But Pilate finally shows some backbone and refuses to back down. “What I have written, I have written” (John 19:22).

27:38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

Jesus was condemned as a criminal and was crucified between two thieves. What great company for a King! Look at how honorable His entourage is!

“Ethelbert Bullinger has proposed that there are FIVE crosses present, not three. The proposition is not as wild as it sounds. He first of all points out that two malefactors and two thieves are present. Although a thief is a malefactor, a malefactor is not necessarily a thief. Bullinger says that the criminals mentioned in Matthew and Mark are not brought to Golgotha until AFTER the garments are divided (Mark 15:27; Matt. 27:38). Further, in John 19:32–33, the soldiers go by two men before they get to Jesus, so there must be five, for Jesus is said to be crucified “in the midst” (see Luke 23:33; Mark 15:27; John 19:18)! If He is between them, then there is a malefactor and a thief on His right and a malefactor and a thief on His left. That isn’t all—it is abundantly clear in the Bible that “5” is the number of DEATH (not grace!): Genesis 5:5; Acts 5:5; Romans 5; three men killed below the fifth rib, Adam opened here for Eve, David’s five stones, Benjamin’s five-fold provision for his mother’s death, and five open wounds in Christ (one in each hand, one in each foot, and one in His side). If that were not enough, there are five pieces of clothing divided at His death (see John 19:23–24). One is made especially so that there CANNOT be six pieces (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

Jesus was “numbered with the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12).

165. Christ on the Cross 27:39-49
27:39 ¶ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

What was worse - the physical pain of crucifixion or the mockery?

27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

This misunderstanding continued. Jesus was never referring to the physical temple but rather to the resurrection of His physical body in John 2:19. The language He used could have been misinterpreted but then again, Jesus may have been pointing to His body when He said it. Naturally, He could have rebuilt the temple in 3 minutes if He had desired!

27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

27:42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

Yes, He did save others but He did not see to save Himself!

1. “If you’re so good at getting people out of trouble, let’s see you get yourself out of this one!”
2. “They mocked him as a Savior: “He saved others; himself he cannot save.” They mocked him as a King: “If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and, we will believe him.” They mocked him as a believer: “He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.” They mocked him as the Son of God: “For he said, I am the Son of God.” (Charles Spurgeon, The Gospel of the Kingdom).

27:43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

Of all the taunts, this one came straight from the mind of Satan, taking us back to Matthew 4 and “If thou be the Son of God…”

“if he will have him”

1. What a slap. The accusation is that God abandoned Jesus and wants nothing more to do with Him. The Father would abandon the Son when Christ became sin incarnate in 27:45ff, but for different reasons than they thought.

27:44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Matthew records how the thieves also attacked Christ but Matthew does not record the repentance and salvation of one of them.

27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.
“sixth hour” Noon. This was last three hours, until the ninth hour in 27:46. This lasted from noon to three p.m. on our clock.

God turned the lights out here as He was about to smite His Son when He became Sin Incarnate and He was going to do that under the cover of a supernatural darkness, hidden from the views of sinful man. He was not going to give these people the satisfaction of seeing His Son suffering the way He did during these last three hours.

1. This was a supernatural darkness that cannot be explained by any natural means. Liberals suggest something like a solar eclipse but this doesn’t work because 1) no eclipse is recorded anywhere on earth during this time and 2) no total solar eclipse lasts for 3 hours. The maximum they can last is about 3 minutes. In vain do unbelievers try to explain a supernatural event. In so doing, they are usually forced to conjure up a greater miracle than the actual miracle they try to explain away.

2. Isaiah 53:1-12 is now being fulfilled behind a curtain of super-natural darkness.
   a. Isaiah 53:2 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him.
   b. Isaiah 53:3 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
   c. Isaiah 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
   d. Isaiah 53:5 But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
   e. Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
   f. Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.
   g. Isaiah 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.
   h. Isaiah 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither [was any] deceit in his mouth.
   i. Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put [him] to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see [his] seed, he shall prolong [his] days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
   j. Isaiah 53:12 Therefore will I divide him [a portion] with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Up until this point, the Lord had suffered silently. He had not cried out like this, even during the height of His physical suffering. But why now? Why here? What prompted this outburst? At this
point, Christ had now become Sin Incarnate and the Father could not fellowship with His Son in this state. The Father was too holy to gaze upon sin, even if it was in the person of His own beloved Son. So the Father turned away from His Son and for the first time in all eternity, fellowship was broken between the Father and the Son. This is what Jesus couldn't handle. He could deal with the pain and the humiliation but not the break in fellowship. That made everything else unbearable. We do not understand this as we spend most of our lives out of communion and fellowship with God. But when fellowship was broken even for a moment, Jesus could bear it. The Father had abandoned Him at this point and that is caused the outburst.

1. Look at Song 3 and 5 and see how the Shulamite reacted when her fellowship and communion with Solomon was broken. In Song 3, Solomon withdrew. In Song 5, the Shulamite broke fellowship because of her laziness. Both times, she panicked once she realized she was out of communion with Solomon. This is a good sign of spirituality. The nominal Christian would not react in such a manner if they realized they were out of communion.

2. This is what Jesus was concerned about regarding the “cup” as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

3. Jesus is now abandoned by the Father. He is the loneliest man in creation now. He is abandoned by the Father, by man, even by Satan. Christ is now Sin Incarnate. This is a picture of a sinner in the lake of fire who will also be abandoned and forgotten and he suffers for an eternity…alone. That man will cry but none will hear him or respond.

27:47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.

“this man calleth for Elias”
1. “Eli, Eli” may have sounded like “Elias”.
2. The crowd mocked this in 27:49.

27:48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a spunge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

This was an intoxicating drink designed to put the victim in a bit of a stupor. The victim would be sort of drugged which would help lessen the pain of crucifixion. This would be sort of a mercy. But Jesus must keep all of His faculties during these hours and so He refused the vinegar.

This was the second time the vinegar was offered. Ethelbert Bullinger gives three drinks: Mark 15:23, refused without tasting; Matthew 27:34, tasted and refused; and John 19:29 received.

27:49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

“The elements are all there. It is a lamb slain and roasted (Exod. 12:1–12). It is roasted without water (Exod. 12:7–8). It is burned (Exod. 12:9). It is a Lamb as a substitute (Exod. 13:13). It is a Lamb suffering for someone else (Isa. 53:6, 12; John 1:29; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24). It is a propitiation (payment to satisfy), it is an expiation (to clean from sin), it is redemptive (to buy back something lost), and it is effective in that those who trust in it receive immediate, absolute
assurance of eternal life, as a present and permanent possession (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*).

166. The Death of Jesus 27:50-56

27:50 ¶ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Once all the prophecies had been fulfilled, there was no need for Jesus to suffer one minute longer. Many victims could spend two or three days on the cross, but there was no need for Jesus to suffer any longer than He had to. Somewhere between verses 49 and 50, salvation is accomplished and the atonement has been made. Thus he cry here is “It is finished!”

“yielded up the ghost” Another way of saying He dismissed His spirit. We cannot do that as we cannot choose the hour of our death or escape any physical suffering like this, but Jesus, as God, could.

27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

This exposed the Holy of Holies, showing that through the death of Christ, the barrier that separated the Holy of Holies from mankind is now removed. We now have free and equal access to the very presence of God and we now have full communion with God

1. It was torn from top to bottom. God tore the veil. If man had torn it, it would have been torn from bottom to top,
2. It was no mean feat to tear this veil as it was very thick and heavy.
3. “Hebrews 6:19 and 9:23–25 shed great light on the truth of the “veil.” Hebrews 10:20 defines the “veil” as a type of “his flesh,” so there can be no doubt about the interpretation. The veil is rent, the door is open, the way is clear, and we have access to the “throne of grace” to find mercy and to obtain “grace to help in time of need.” The rending of the veil symbolized an entirely new order of things, and although this new order is not thoroughly realized by Peter until Acts 10 (and by Paul until Acts 13, and by James until Acts 15), it begins right here. Rrrripppp!! goes the veil; no more priesthood of Levites, no more tithes to the storehouse, no more lambs burnt on the altar, no more incense burned in the temple, no more holy oil and burning lamps, no more long robed “fathers,” no more “holy of holies,” and no more temple (Acts 7:47–50; Mal. 3:10–12; 2 Cor. 3; 2 Tim. 1:9–10; Gal. 2–3; Heb. 10:8–12)! The New Testament is in effect with Matthew 27:51 (Heb 9:16–17) (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew*).

27:52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

The bodies slept, not their souls. Soul-sleep in unscriptural.

27:53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

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A pre-resurrection resurrection. Only Matthew mentions this and does not follow up on it. It must have been something to see these dead people suddenly appear in Jerusalem!

1. Nothing is said about what happen to these people after this. Did they live the rest of their lifespan and then die again? Or were they taken to heaven after the resurrection of Christ as a first fruits of His resurrection?

2. Not every dead body rose here, only some. Why were some raised and not others?
   a. Applying the text of Matthew 27, the only possible place these resurrected people can be put is the “feast of the first fruits” (1 Corinthians 15:23), as not all the Old Testament saints come up—only “many bodies” (27:52–53). This would be the equivalent of saying that the “first fruits” represent only the first part of a crop to be harvested later (Leviticus 23:10,11).

3. The first resurrection comes in three parts:
   c. Tribulation saints (Matthew 24; Revelation 11), typified by the Feast of Tabernacles (Deuteronomy 16:16; 1 Corinthians 15:21-23).

27:54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

All this got the attention of this battle-hardened veteran! It impressed him enough to declare “This was the Son of God!” A heathen confessed while the priests did not.

27:55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

27:56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.

There are four Marys at the cross:
1. Mary Magdalene.
2. Mary, the mother of James and Joses.
3. Mary, the mother of James and John.
4. Mary, the mother of Jesus.

167. The Burial of Jesus 27:57-61

27:57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple:

Joseph did believe and was a disciple. He may have been one of the “secret disciples” of John 12:42; 19:38.
27:58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

Joseph was unable to do anything for the Lord in His dying hours but he was able to do something in His death—provide an honorable resting place for the Lord’s body.

1. Joseph gave his grave for Jesus to use. Grave/tombs like this were rather expensive and Joseph made quite a financial sacrifice to give Jesus his grave.

2. The fact that Pilate allowed Joseph to bury Jesus’ body shows that the governor did not think Jesus was guilty of treason.

27:59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

One Joseph would wrap Him in swaddling clothes while another Joseph would wrap Him in grave clothes.

27:60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

The tomb was a cave with a large stone (shaped something like a millstone that rolled in a track) that sealed the tomb when closed.

It was a "new tomb", unused. Jesus would go from a virgin womb to a virgin tomb.

There was some haste involved as the Sabbath was fast approaching. It was their intent to return after the Sabbath to complete the task of preparing the Lord’s body for burial.

27:61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.


27:62 ¶ Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

This was a high Sabbath, not a weekly Sabbath. Passover was a Sabbath day, regardless of what day of the week it fell, so there were two Sabbaths in this week. This is why Good Friday just won’t fly. I hold to either a Wednesday or a Thursday crucifixion, in order to get three literal days and nights for Jesus to be in the tomb. Since there were two Sabbaths in this week, you don’t need the crucifixion to take place on Friday afternoon. The Sanhedrin members could meet with Pilate if they did not have to travel more than a Sabbath day’s journey and if they did not have to enter his residence (John 18:28).

27:63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.
The priests and Pharisees knew that the Lord had prophesied of His resurrection. They didn’t believe Him, but just in case…! They go to Pilate and share their fears that the disciples might try to steal His body and pass that off as a resurrection.

1. What they didn’t understand was that the disciples were in no condition to attempt anything like that. They were defeated and discouraged. They struggled with the resurrection as well and there is no indication that any of them had even considered this.
   a. Peter, the unofficial “leader” of the disciples was too busy stewing in his own juices over his denials of the Lord to even suggest such a thing.

2. “They little thought what they were doing. They little thought that unwittingly they were providing the most complete evidence of the truth of Christ’s coming resurrection. They were actually making it impossible to prove that there was any deception or imposition. Their seal, their guard, their precautions, were all to become witnesses, in a few hours, that Christ had risen. They might as well have tried to stop the tides of the sea, or to prevent the sun rising, as to prevent Jesus coming forth from the tomb. They were taken in their own craftiness. (1 Cor. 3:19.) Their own devices became instruments to show forth God’s glory. The history of the Church of Christ is full of examples of a similar kind. The very things that have seemed most unfavorable to God’s people, have often turned out to be for their good. What harm did the “persecution which arose about Stephen” do to the Church of Christ? Those who were scattered went everywhere, preaching the word. (Acts 8:4.) What harm did imprisonment do Paul? It gave him time to write many of those Epistles, which are now read all over the world. What real harm did the persecution of bloody Mary do to the cause of the English Reformation? The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church. What harm does persecution do the people of God at this very day? It only drives them nearer to Christ. It only makes them cling more closely to the throne of grace, the Bible, and prayer. (J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*).”

27:64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

27:65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

Pilate grants their request but does not release any of his soldiers to guard the tomb. He allows the Jewish leaders to post their own guards around the tomb. Pilate isn’t going to waste any of his soldiers to guard a tomb.

“Make it as sure as ye can”. Is there is tone of doubt in Pilate’s voice? If Jesus had prophesied of His resurrection, Pilate may have thought that the Jews wouldn’t be able to do anything to stop it!

“watch” consisting of 4 soldiers.

27:66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Soldiers are assigned a seal is placed on the stone, and now, they wait.
The following picture describes the ways of reckoning the time of the crucifixion, in Appendix 165 of the *Companion Bible*.
Matthew Chapter 28.

169. The Resurrection 28:1-8

28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

The greatest event in the history of the world is described in these verses, the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. On this historical fact, Christianity rises or falls. If it could be disproven or if the body of Jesus could be located somewhere on the earth, the whole structure of Christianity would immediately collapse.

1. The world has been trying to disprove this for 2,000 years and has yet to succeed. In fact, honest men who did not believe the resurrection and who undertook an honest study of the matter have been converted as a result of their realization through their study that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a historical fact after all.
   a. It is a fundamental of the faith. If a man denies the resurrection of Christ, he is to be marked and avoided and there can be no fellowship with him.

2. "I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible. (Charles Colson, of Watergate fame)."

3. Frank Morison wrote a book titled Who Moved the Stone? which is a classic apologetic on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Morison, whose real name was Albert Henry Ross, was a skeptical British journalist when he began his research, but it convinced him of the historicity of the resurrection, and he became a Christian. This book presents a careful study of the last seven days of Jesus’ pre-crucifixion ministry.

4. Notice the “infallible proofs” (Acts 1:2,3) of a literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ:
   1. The body was missing.
   2. Those most anxious to recover the body never recovered it (Matthew 28:15).
   3. The resurrected body was seen by more than 500 witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:5-8).
   4. If the body was stolen, whoever stole it had the power to hypnotize Roman soldiers long enough to steal it (Matthew 28:4). How else do you explain sneaking past 4 Roman guards, rolling a huge stone away (which would have made a lot of noise) and then sneaking the body past them?
   5. If the body was stolen, the stupid thieves wasted precious time unwinding the body and folding up the grave clothes in a neat little pile (John 20:5, 7).
   6. If the body was stolen, the Roman government and the Jewish Sanhedrin could not find it in forty years, even though the integrity of both was at stake!
   7. If the body arose only spiritually (as the Jehovah Witnesses claim), it could still eat and drink (Luke 24:42). It had “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39) and testified of its own resurrection for forty days after it arose.

Jesus was in the tomb for about 72 hours as we take the three days and three nights as literally as we can.
The resurrection could have taken place any time from sundown on Saturday (the end of the Sabbath) to when the tomb was discovered on Sunday morning. Christ could have rose from the tomb on Saturday night! The tomb was only discovered to be empty on Sunday morning.

1. “Easter sunrise services” is a tradition that should probably be stopped. The tomb was only discovered to be empty at sunrise. Christ had risen before sunrise.

The women came to finish the preparation of the Jesus' body for His final burial, as they did not have time in the hours after His death.

**28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.**

A second earthquake.

1. “When he died, the earth that received him, shook for fear; now that he arose, the earth that resigned him, leaped for joy in his exaltation (Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible)*.”
2. There were earthquakes associated with the death of Christ, just as there will be earthquakes associated with His second coming (Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:12, 8:5, 11:13,19, 16:18.

The angel sat on the stone, as if in contempt of it, to show the folly that it could have kept Christ in the tomb. The angel also cared nothing for the seal on the tomb that forbid anyone to tamper with it.

**28:3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:**

**28:4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.**

Are “the keepers” the “watch” assigned to guard the tomb in 27:65,66? They fainted at the actual resurrection. They were the actual eyewitnesses and the sight overwhelmed them.

**28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.**

“fear not” People usually feared when they saw an angel. Examples are:


**28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.**
Come see for yourself! Don’t take our word for it (John 1:39,46) The Lord never is upset with a reasoned faith, with seekers approaching the claims of the Bible with a rational, reasoned faith.

“He is not here: for he is risen.” Go to the tombs of the world’s great religious leaders, and you will find that they all have one thing more in common than “belief in a supreme being,” “faith in their fellow man,” or “spiritual insight into the inner man”; yes, they have one great communal ground far more “vulgate” than these—they are all dead and maggot-eaten!...Name them: Buddha, dead. Lao-tze, stone cold dead in the market. Mohammed, deader than a mackerel. Confucius kicked the bucket. Zoroaster, colder than a dead Eskimo. Pope Pius XII, so corrupt now you wouldn’t want to look at him. And if all the dust that was left of them were blown into your face on a windy day, you wouldn’t bother to wipe your eyes. Go to the tomb outside Jerusalem, and you will find an empty tomb. The body is gone. It was never recovered. You never found it, and the blind and stupid writers, historians, poets, and anthropologists of this world never found it, and you never will until you’re dead and gone. Then you will discover, too late, that the “great example” and “great teacher” and “master” was your Creator. “He is not here: for he is risen.” (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).

28:7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

“Tell his disciples”
1. The angels would not or could not go and tell the disciples of the resurrect, so they commissioned the women with that task.
2. Not the Sanhedrin or the Pharisees or the scribes or Pilate, but the disciples first! The religious leaders wouldn’t have believed it anyway and would have done their best to squash the news and to persecute anyone who spread it or believed it.

28:8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

They ran. News like this must be delivered and proclaimed with all possible haste!
170. The Post-Resurrection Appearance of Jesus  28:9,10

28:9 ¶ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

There were numerous post-resurrection appearances by Christ, in multiple places to multiple people, so there was no way to say that anyone was imagining it.

The order of post-resurrection appearances:
1. Matthew 28:1-8
3. John 20:1-10
4. 1 Corinthians 15:5
5. Mark 16:7
7. John 20:11-18
8. Mark 16:9,12
10. John 20:19-25
11. Mark 16:14
12. John 21
13. 1 Corinthians 15:5-8

They worshipped the risen Christ. He accepted worship before and after His resurrection. Jesus always accepted worship, never refused it and never rebuked anyone for worshipping Him.

They “held Him by the feet”. Since Jesus refused to let Mary touch these same feet not two hours earlier, we are left with the conclusion that He ascended and descended in that time and may have already made His application of His blood on the heavenly mercy seat during that period. Also see Hebrews 8:1-6; 7:14; 9:7-14, 23-25.

28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

There was no need to fear about anything associated with the resurrection.

Galilee is mentioned here and in 28:7. That was Jesus’ favorite area and was the base of His earthly ministry. Mark 16:7 adds “Go...tell his disciples and Peter...” Peter is singled out as he had an especially hard fall with his three denials. The Lord makes a special effort to restore Peter and assure him that his failure was forgiven and that he still had a ministry ahead of him.

171. The Plot By The Jews 28:11-15

28:11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

28:12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

28:13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

This was illogical for several reasons:

1. If the guards were asleep, how do they know why stole the body?
2. Were all the guards asleep at the same time?
3. Could the disciples actually go through all the work of rolling away a huge stone and stealing the body without waking even one of the guards?
4. Since the penalty for sleeping on duty was death, which soldier would openly admit to it?
5. They forget the disciples were too dispirited to try to pull a stunt like this.
6. The body was never found.

28:14 And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

28:15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.
172. Another Post-Resurrection Appearance of Jesus 28:16-18

28:16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

28:17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

“some doubted” Not only Thomas (John 20:25), but there will always be doubters, even when confronted by “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). These “doubters like to call themselves “skeptics” or “agnostics” as they believe that there is never enough evidence to commit themselves to accept a certain thing as true. Thomas was like that at first, but when he saw the resurrected Lord, all doubts and skepticism vanished. But many times, this is just an attempt to excuse unbelief.

28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” For two reasons:
1. Jesus is God. He never ceased being God.
2. By His successful work on the cross.
3. This “power” is not given to any church or denomination, but to Christ alone.
   a. “On earth, this power is delegated. The first delegation, as usual, is to the one Jesus addressed in Simon Peter when He first mentioned the church (Matt. 16:16–18); the name of this one is the original, first and foremost, ecclesiastical authority of all time: SATAN (see Matt. 16:23). In their haste to get temporal power, the Roman cardinals and bishops have forgotten that Romans 13:1–4 includes the devil himself, first and foremost (see Matt. 4:9). The fifth and sixth century Roman bishops made the disastrous mistake of thinking that since Augustine was right in his millennial teaching, that the “kingdom had come,” and therefore, it was all right to use the Bible to claim temporal power and authority and rulership over the earth system itself, controlled by Satan (1 John 2:15, 5:19). What God intended to be a group of “faithful” Christians (Matt. 13:31) turned into a buzzard’s roost for “the faithful” (Matt. 13:32); meaning those enslaved, religious perverts subject to a Satanic dictatorial usurper, who was never FAITHFUL or Scriptural in the true sense a day in his life (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

173. The Last Commission of Christ 28:19,20

28:19 ¶ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Outline for the so-called “Great Commission”:
1. Go
2. Teach. This would be evangelism, teaching them the gospel.
3. Baptize
   a. Water baptism, by immersion, upon a profession of faith.
4. Make disciples. This is teaching the converts in Bible doctrine and helping them along in their sanctification.

The question about the Commission is really “Is it for the Church or was it limited to the disciples in the Book of Acts?” In some quarters, to even hint at such a question is considered to be the highest blasphemy. You might as well deny the Trinity while you are at it! But it is a legitimate question.

1. The early church in Acts did fulfill it. After Acts 28, was this still in effect?
2. It is not the same Commission as Mark 16:15-18. Compare:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matthew 28</th>
<th>Mark 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go ye into all the world</td>
<td>Go ye into all the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preach the gospel to every creature</td>
<td>Preach the gospel to every creature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit</td>
<td>He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach them to observe all things I have commanded you</td>
<td>And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues, They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. No one can find a clear statement of Trinitarian baptism anywhere in Acts.
4. “The end” (Matthew 28:20) is nearly always found referring, not to the end of the Church Age, but to the end of the Tribulation; see Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 3:6, 14.

“Doctrinally speaking, the commission has a direct application to Jewish evangelism of the nature of Jonah’s and Paul’s, which will take place in the Tribulation, at the end of the age. (Compare Matt. 10; John 1; Acts 9; and Rev. 7, 11.) The commission spoken is correct for this age and would remain unaltered until Acts 7. (Matthew, Acts, and Hebrews! That’s where they bust their necks!) After Acts 7, the commission is altered by a gospel of salvation by grace, through faith in a blood atonement (Acts 8, the eunuch), for the Gentiles (Acts 10), and is explained as a free gospel of grace—plus NOTHING—in order to be justified (Acts 11, 15). It winds up as a gospel which Paul calls “my gospel” (Rom 2:16; 1 Cor. 15:1–6), and it includes also the mystery of the revelation of the Body of Christ—the True Church (Peter Ruckman, Bible Believer’s Commentary on Matthew).”

Regardless if this is a commission for the modern Church or if it was just for the early Church, we should still be involved in evangelism, missions and discipleship.

Another issue is, if the “Great Commission” is for today, was it given to individual Christians or to the Church as a body? I really don’t see the point of dwelling on this because it really isn’t that important. Individual Christians make up local churches, which makes up the Body of Christ, so the question is ultimately a moot one.

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28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

“end of the world” This is the end of the age, or the end of this world system.
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