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**TWENTY LESSONS IN MATTHEW**  
**The Gospel Of The Kingdom Of Heaven**

**By William M. Smith**

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### INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND LESSONS** -- At the time these lessons were written, William M. Smith was serving as Superintendent of Union Bible Seminary, Westfield, Indiana. HDM now has in possession the following sets of 20 Lessons for Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Revelation. As we received them, these lessons were on loose-leaf sheets, printed on one side, and bound in folders. They could be used as either Sunday School or Bible Study lessons.

**ABOUT THE DIVIDER BETWEEN THE CHAPTER NUMBER AND VERSE** -- The divider between the chapter and verse is not consistent, sometimes being a period and at other times being a colon. I have left them as they were. Also, there was **NO PERIOD AFTER THE NUMBERED ASSIGNMENTS** at the end of the lessons, and I have also left that as it was. --  
DVM

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## 01 -- THE GENEALOGY AND BIRTH OF THE KING -- Matthew 1:1-2:23

**EACH** of the Four Gospels was written with a definite object in view, and evidently each of them was designed to appeal to a different class of people. Matthew is adapted to the Jews; Mark to the Romans; Luke to the Greeks; while John is addressed more especially to persons converted from all these classes.

The Gospel According to Matthew records the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies, with which the Jews were familiar. It is appropriately placed at the beginning of the New Testament, and the list of Old Testament names in the first chapter links the two parts of the Bible together. That Jesus is the Son of David and of Abraham is stated in the first verse, for to these two Old Testament men were special promises made concerning their seed. See Gen. 22.17 and II Sam. 7.12,13, and compare Gal. 3.15. Observe also that the first Messianic prophecy of the Bible is noted as in process of fulfillment (Gen. 3:15). The virgin birth manifests the fact that Jesus was in a unique way the Seed of the woman.

The Key Phrase of the Gospel of Matthew is "Kingdom of heaven," which occurs 33 times and is not found anywhere else in the Bible. For this reason we may call this Gospel "The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven." The phrase "Kingdom of God," which also occurs in the other Gospels, is not exactly equivalent. The words "King" and "Kingdom" also occur frequently in this Gospel.

The Genealogy, though apparently only a dry list of names, is nevertheless very interesting when carefully studied. Comparison with the genealogy in Luke 3.23-38 shows several differences. Matthew traces Christ's human ancestry forward only from Abraham, while Luke

traces it backward from Christ to Adam, The only names common to both lists are those from Abraham to David, and the names Salathiel and Zorobabel. The purpose of Matthew is to show that Christ was the heir to David's throne, so he follows Solomon's kingly line. But Solomon's line runs out with Jehoiachin (also called Coniah and Jechonias). See Jer. 22.24-30, where God commands that this king be written childless. But Luke, following the ancestral line back to Adam, traces the genealogy through another son of David named Nathan to Salathiel and Zorobabel. While all the difficulties in harmonizing these genealogies cannot here be explained, it appears that, when Solomon's line ran out in Jechonias, the kingly line of inheritance was shifted to the descendants of David through Nathan, who appears to have been Mary's ancestor. In this connection it may be noted that David was given an unconditional promise from God that his kingdom would be established for ever (II Sam. 7.12) while Solomon had a conditional promise (I Kings 9.4, 5), the conditions of which he broke. Thus the differences in these genealogies reveal how God has kept His promise to David, and at the same time carried out His conditions given to Solomon. Not a drop of Solomon's blood was in Jesus' veins, but, as His mother was a descendant of David through Nathan, Jesus was a blood descendant of David.

Four Names are Omitted from Matthew's genealogy, as comparison with the Old Testament history will show. The different spelling of these names is because in the Old Testament they are translated from Hebrew and in the New Testament from the Greek forms. The Revised Version spells them alike in O. T. and N. T. and will help to identify them. Between Joram and Ozias (Uzziah) the omitted names are Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah. A possible reason for this is that they were the three generations that resulted from the marriage of Joram with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. She tried to destroy every descendant of David (II Kings 11.1-3). in accordance with Exodus 20.5 God visited her iniquity upon her third generation. Another omitted name is that of Jehoiakim. He was the king that burned a portion of the Bible (Jeremiah 36:20-25). He took from the words of God, and God took his name out of the book. See Rev. 22.19.

Four Women's Names are included in Matthew's genealogy which is an unusual thing. The Old Testament history of all of these women is more or less marred. Tamar practiced harlotry in order to become a mother. (Gen. 38th chapter.) Rachab is called a harlot. (Joshua 2.1). Ruth, while of excellent character, belonged to a race that were prohibited from being identified with Israel to the tenth generation. (Deut. 23.3). Bathsheba practiced adultery with David. (II Sam. 11.1-5). The Bible is not a history of the splendid characters of the past, but a history of grace whereby the worst characters can be made clean.

The Wise Men must be distinguished from the shepherds whose visit is related by Luke. The shepherds found Jesus in a manger, but the wise men found Him in a house, evidently some time after His birth. They did not worship Mary, but the Child Jesus.

Three Old Testament Prophecies are noted as fulfilled in chapter two: Matt. 2.5, 6; 2.15; and 2.23. Look up these prophecies in the Old Testament.

The Chief Priests and Scribes were not higher critics. They were acquainted with the Scriptures and believed them. But, sad to observe, though they knew where Jesus should be born, they did not have enough interest in what the wise men said to go six miles to investigate.

Satan's Devices to hinder God's plans are manifest all through the past. The putting of Israelitish boy babies in the river by Pharaoh was evidently Satan's plan to get rid of Moses, the writer of the first five books of the Bible. Athaliah tried to exterminate the royal line. Haman undertook to exterminate the Jewish race. Now Herod tries to murder Jesus when a Babe. But all these came to their death, while the plans of God move on.

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## 02 -- THE FORERUNNER OF THE KING -- Matthew 3:1-17

JOHN the Baptist comes on the scene in Matthew's Gospel without any account of his childhood or ancestry. He reminds one in this particular, as in many others, of his prototype, Elijah. See II Kings 17.1. His coming was foretold in the 40th chapter of Isaiah, as the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

John's Congregation was composed of all classes of Jews from the haughty Pharisee and skeptical Sadducee to the despised publican. At a time when the regular priests were performing their duties in a perfunctory manner, for the most part, in the gorgeous temple, recently rebuilt by Herod, and worshippers went through the forms of their spiritless religion, this stalwart preacher, without a temple or a sacrifice drew people by the thousands into the wilderness along the Jordan river.

John's Food and Clothing were very commonplace. Palestine was described as the land of milk and honey, and John was able still to find some "wild honey," and this, with locusts, a grasshopper-like insect, formed his rations. Locusts are listed as clean in Leviticus 11.22. The inspired writer crowds into a single verse all the details of John's food and clothing.

John's Message was the secret of his power to draw the crowds that flocked to hear him. His demand to repent alone would hardly account for the interest of the public in his ministry. But when he preached "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," he struck a note that awakened in every Jewish breast a long-delayed hope. It had been about 400 years since an inspired prophet had spoken, and now John, who may be classed as the last of the Old Testament prophets, breaks the silence with this striking message.

According to the Prophecies of the Old Testament there remained only about ten years to the time when the kingdom foretold therein would be due. About 480 years of the 490 of Daniel's seventy weeks of years had now expired, and while the rank and file of the Jews little understood the times, the message of John stirred slumbering hopes of a golden age foreseen by the prophets. It is easy to criticize the Jews for their supposition that the kingdom of which John spoke was a material kingdom, but if we will put ourselves back where they were, before the New Testament was written and before the mystery "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men" (Eph. 3.3-5), was revealed, might not we have understood the message of John much as they did? Even the disciples of Jesus were obsessed with this view. Even after the resurrection, just before Christ's ascension, they asked Him, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1.6). That material kingdom, pictured by Daniel as a stone striking the image that symbolized earthly Gentile kingdoms, and interpreted to mean that "the God of heaven shall set up

a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed," while delayed by the Jews' rejection of their King, will eventually come to pass, but not until John's message of repentance is heeded. See Daniel chapter two.

John's Baptism with water was symbolical of repentance. When some of the Pharisees and Sadducees sought to be baptized he demanded amendment of conduct as a pre-requisite. The baptism in water was not entirely new, for Gentiles, on becoming identified with the Jews, were washed, but the application was new when applied to Jews, and doubtless was intended to show them that they were as unclean as the Gentiles.

Another Baptism was to supersede this water baptism of John's, as he himself announced. This other baptism is the one Jesus Himself bestows -- the baptism with the Holy Ghost. One great purpose of John's baptism was the identification of Jesus as the Messiah, as noted in John 1.31-34, and after that was accomplished John's baptism and ministry declined and eventually ceased. It is evident John knew Jesus before this, and believed Him to be superior to himself, but he did not have the witness before that identified Him as the Messiah.

Jesus was Baptized by John, not only in order to identify Him and initiate Him into His ministry, but was also for another purpose, He told John it was to "fulfil all righteousness." Jesus submitted Himself to this ordinance of baptism, as He had to circumcision and other ordinances, not because He needed any of these things for Himself, for He was all righteous, but as substitute for those who accept Him as their Saviour. The baptism of an individual with water has no power to save him. It is but a symbol of an inward work that has already taken place in the heart of the individual, and serves as a public confession. Just what is the scriptural method of water baptism has never been settled universally in the church. Different churches use various modes all the way from sprinkling and pouring to immersion. Immersing face downward, immersing three times, once for each Person of the Trinity, and in running water. There is no definite instruction in the Bible on the subject of how to baptize with water as there is for the administering of Old Testament ordinances. For instance read the directions for the Passover lamb. (Exodus 12.3-11). There could be no difference of opinion as to how that ordinance was to be observed.

Since we cannot be positive as to the proper method of water baptism, no one need be concerned as to the method by which he was baptized. We may be sure Jesus was baptized after the correct method. According to Col. 2.11, 12 believers are circumcised in the circumcision of Christ and buried with Him in His baptism. He as our substitute saw to it that these ordinances were properly attended to in His own person.

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### 03 -- THE TEMPTATION OF THE KING -- Matthew 4:1-25

JESUS, the Last Adam, like the first Adam, was required to endure a test of loyalty, The first Adam was tempted on a single issue, but the second Adam was tempted in a variety of ways. Note the contrast of conditions: Adam was tempted in the midst of the garden of Eden; Jesus was tempted in a wilderness. Adam failed in a paradise; Jesus was victorious in a wilderness.

The Nature of the Temptations should be noted. None of them were on a low plane. The serpent told Eve that eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would be good for her. In like manner these temptations presented to Jesus by Satan were apparently for His advantage, The first would appease His hunger; the second would impress people with His mission; and the third would give Him control of the world. How often Satan still deludes people into doing evil that good may come! If the end is good, people seem to think the means does not matter. Not so with Jesus.

The First Temptation had two points of appeal. One of these was to satisfy hunger after forty days of fasting. But there was another more subtle temptation. "If Thou be the Son of God" was calculated to instill doubt into the mind as to whether He really was God's Son, To be sure when John had baptized Him there had come a voice from heaven declaring that He was "My beloved Son," but the present situation was getting serious. Satan could easily insinuate, "If you were the Son of God why this forty days with nothing to eat?" The temptation was fully as much to try to get Him to doubt His Sonship as to satisfy His hunger, and induce Him to try by a sign in the physical world to prove that, He was the Son of God.

The Strategy of Satan was to induce Jesus to violate "the rules of the game" if we may put it that way. This was not a conflict between Jesus as God, and Satan; but between Jesus as man, and Satan. If Jesus had resorted to His power as God in the conflict, man could not have been credited with the victory. Observe that Jesus, in His defense, did not refer Satan to the testimony of God at the time of His baptism, but resorted to the Scriptures: "Man shall not live by bread alone," was His reply, taking His place as a man and resisting with a weapon available to every man without arguing the case.

The Second Temptation included the same attempt to try to induce Jesus to resort to His power as God, but added another element. The prophet Malachi (3.1) had prophesied that the Lord would suddenly come to the temple. This would therefore be an excellent place to inaugurate His ministry, by leaping from the pinnacle of the temple into the midst of the assembled throng on some feast day. Then, too, as Jesus had taken His stand on the Scriptures, Satan would give force to his temptation by backing it up with Scripture -- one of the devices of the enemy even to this day. Comparison of Satan's quotation and Psalm 91.11, 12 shows that he did not give an exact quotation. But Jesus did not combat him on that issue; He simply said "It is written again," showing how dangerous it is to take a single isolated verse of the Bible and try to put into it all the truth on any given subject. Compare II Pet. 1.20: "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation," which we understand to mean that no portion of the Bible should be taken alone to prove a doctrine, but the general sense of all Scripture. See also II Peter 3.16.

The Third Temptation is Satan's master appeal. Here he offered the largest prize he has to give, But the condition would have broken the first of the Ten Commandments. How desirous of worship Satan must be to offer all his possessions for it! He desires to sit in the temple of God and show that he is God. See Isa. 14: 12-14; Ezek. 28.13-15; II Thess. 2.3.9. In resisting this temptation Jesus for the first time addresses the tempter as Satan. It is to be remembered that Satan did not appear to Jesus, but brought suggestions to Him just as he does to us today. These suggestions may not at first appear to be to wrong doing, but by holding to the Scripture and doing

the Scriptural way we may keep from Satan's snares until eventually he will show himself by pushing the temptation across some well-known and plain commandment.

The Three Scriptures that Jesus used in His conflict with the adversary were all taken from the book of Deuteronomy, the book that the critics contend has the least evidence of authenticity of any of the books of the Pentateuch. But Jesus put His sanction on the book by these quotations, and Satan discovered that the sword of the Spirit was powerful to defeat him.

Ministering Angels waited on Jesus after the completion of the temptation, but Satan's temptations were suspended only for a season (Luke 4.13). Note the temptation on the cross: "If Thou be Christ," (Luke 23:39).

An interval of fifteen months lies between the 11th and 12th verses of this chapter. The history of this period as given in John's Gospel, pertains to Jesus' early ministry in Judea, and does not pertain to the purpose of Matthew's Gospel. See John 1.19 to 4.42.

The Imprisonment of John was the occasion for Jesus to close His early ministry in Judea and go into Galilee. His message at first was identical with that of John the Baptist -- "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The Four Disciples whose call is noted in vs. 18-22 had previously been with Jesus. (See John 1.40-42). They are now called to continual service with Him.

The Many Miracles that Jesus did, as recorded in the last few verses of this chapter, are a sample of Millennial conditions. Jesus had not yet been rejected by the Jews, and was proceeding with His mission as though about to set up the kingdom.

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#### 04 -- THE PLATFORM OF THE KING -- Matthew 5:1-48

CHAPTERS 5, 6 and 7 of Matthew should be studied together. They constitute what is commonly called "The Sermon on the Mount." We are heading it in these lessons "The Platform of the King," After the manner a candidate for office announces what is called his platform, setting forth what he intends to do if elected to office, so Jesus sets forth in these chapters the regulations to govern His kingdom that He is to set up. We may expect that these conditions will prevail in the Millennium universally, For the present age the Sermon describes what characterizes the nature and conduct of Christians.

The Sermon May be Divided into three parts: the Introduction, verses 1 to 20 of the first chapter; the Ten Laws of the Kingdom, chapter 1.21 to 7.12; and the Closing exhortation, chapter 7.13 to 29. Chapter five includes the Introduction and five of the Ten Laws.

The Introduction first sets forth the character of the citizens of the Kingdom (vs. 3-12). These verses are generally called the Beatitudes. The Be-attitudes, if we may spell the word that way, describe the attitudes of the people of God ideally. They do not tell how to be saved; neither

does the Sermon anywhere do so; but they tell how saved people may be expected to behave themselves. There are eight beatitudes. Seven of them describe the character of the people of the Kingdom, and the eighth sets forth the attitude of the world toward them. As some one has said here are seven jewels and one whetstone to polish them, The seven set forth what God's grace is calculated to do in His people, and the seventh what the sinful world may bring on them from without. But the opposition of the world is a recommendation rather than the contrary. The world treated the prophets that way, and always has and always will oppose God's people.

Secondly, the Introduction tells the effect on the world of the people of God. (vs. 13-16). They are likened to salt and light. Salt is a preservative. God's people have a preserving effect on the world which would long ago have rotted with moral corruption if it had not been for Christians. They are also the light of the world, and they shine in the world's darkness. (Phil. 2.15).

Thirdly, the relation of the platform of the King to the laws of the Old Testament is stated, (vs. 17-20), and it is declared that there is no antagonism: that the new revelation fulfills the old requirement.

The Ten Laws of the Kingdom may be called "The Laws of successful Christian Living." They begin with verse 21. The five in the remainder of this chapter are clearly distinguished, each one beginning with the phrase "Ye have heard." Some shallow thinkers believe that Jesus is here correcting the Old Testament. But this is an erroneous view. He was correcting, not the Ten Commandments and other O. T. precepts but the popular interpretation of them current among the Jews at that time. He does not say, as He did when contending with Satan, "it is written," but "ye have heard that it was said of them of old time," traditional interpretations instead of the Bible itself.

The First Law, (vs. 21-26), relates to anger. "Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." Note the addition to the commandment. The positiveness of the commandment is modified. It is only dangerous to kill. The penalty was capital punishment, not just danger of the judgment. Jesus declares that to be angry with one's brother brings danger of the judgment, and hell fire is the penalty when hatred is in the heart, even if it does not culminate in murder.

The Second Law, (vs. 27-32) pertains to purity. The law said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," dealing with the act, but Jesus goes to the root of the sin in the heart. He who looks on a woman with the purpose of lusting after her is already an adulterer at heart. Anything that tends to awaken unclean desires must be avoided.

The Third Law, (vs. 33-37) is concerning speaking the truth. The "swearing" here does not refer to profanity exclusively, but by many is considered as a prohibition of judicial swearing -- the taking of an oath in court. People who object have the privilege in this country of being "affirmed" in stead of sworn under such circumstances. The emphasizing of what one says by unnecessary emphatic utterances disposes the hearer to doubt the truth of what is said.



The Fourth Law, (vs. 38-42) is about retaliation. The Old Testament law that says "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." was not intended to give license for an injured individual to avenge himself on his adversary, but is direction for The judges in administering punishment after proper judicial investigation. The admonition to not resist evil, does not mean evil in the sense of sin, but evil as physical harm threatened by the world, as the examples mentioned show. The law allowed a man his "cloak", though his "coat" could be taken away by process of law. There was no compulsion to make a man go the second mile. Here we see another principle involved above the letter of the law, These attitudes are so unworldly that they would attract attention and cause the persecutor to realize that the Christian was different.

The Fifth Law, (vs. 43-48) Is the law of love. There is no such statement in the Old Testament as that one shall hate his enemy, but the contrary. See Lev. 19.18; Exodus 23.4, 5. This is an example of how the scribes in New Testament times had perverted and added to the law, Verse 45 does not tell how to become the children of God, but admonishes the Christian to behave as God's child. The perfection spoken of in v. 48 is not perfection of the heart, which is an experience resulting from sanctification, but pertains to perfection in conduct, to which end the Christian should ever strive.

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#### 05 -- THE PLATFORM OF THE KING -- (Continued) -- Matthew 6:1-34

THE Sixth Law. (vs. 1-17) is concerning religious duties.

The first verse sums these duties up in one word, translated "alms." But the word in the original is dikalosunen which is a comprehensive word, better translated in the Revised Version "righteousnesses." Another version has "religious duties." These religious duties are dealt with under three heads:

I. Almsgiving. The word "alms" in verse 2 is not the same word as in vs. 1. Here it is eleemosunen and has to do with doing good to people who are in need. Therefore this instruction has nothing to do with taking up an offering in the church, or giving for the support of your church work in general. These need not be in secret, though it is well that they be not ostentatious.

A prominent word in this section is "reward," which occurs six times. Three times it refers to rewards that are sought by men from men; and three times it refers to rewards from God. In the former case it is stated, "They have their reward," or as one has interpreted it, "They have their payment in full." In the latter case it is stated, "Thy Father Who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." It appears that the thought that God will reward the person who does his religious duties as unto Him is not one that is foreign to a pious life. See in this connection Psalm 44.1-3.

II. Prayer. Private prayers are not to be prayed in public. This instruction about prayer is not intended to prohibit or discourage public praying on proper occasions. We have the occasions of Jesus praying publicly at the grave of Lazarus and on other occasions. See Matt. 14.19; 15.36; John 11.41, 42; 12.28. In the Old Testament we have the example of Solomon's long prayer at the

dedication of the temple. See I Kings 8.22-53 and II Chron. 6.12-42. There are also other examples.

The Lord's Prayer, as it is called (vs. 9-13) is a model of concise and comprehensive prayer. It is addressed in solemnity to "Our Father," and is not appropriate for a person not a child of God by the new birth to pray. The exalted position of God needs to be considered: that He is in heaven and we on earth (Eccl. 5.2). His holiness is also to be considered, and His name held sacred. We should be careful not to repeat too frequently, even in prayer, the name of Deity. "Thy kingdom come" may have individual application, but reaches out to the kingdom of the Millennium and then on into the new heaven and new earth, a time when God's will shall be done "on earth as it is in heaven."

Temporal needs are not overlooked in this model prayer, The daily bread of each of God's children is a matter of concern to Him, and the petition that is universal in its scope is side by side with the prayer for our little daily needs.

Debts for which we here pray for forgiveness is rendered in Luke "sins." (Luke 11.4). This must refer to sins of believers, as the prayer is one for believers; but it can hardly mean deliberate sins, for believers can hardly be Thought of as deliberately sinning. It must refer to sins of ignorance.

Temptation here must be compared with James 1.13 where it plainly says God does not tempt any one. The meaning is to not put us to the test beyond what we are able to bear.

III. Fasting. This is another religious act that, to be acceptable with God, must be in secret as far as possible.

The Seventh Law pertains to the use of treasure. There is no law against accumulating treasure in a legitimate manner. The admonition has to do with the use of it -- where we lay it up. It is unsafe to lay it up on earth, for thieves may steal it, and moth and rust may corrupt. Three possibilities are mentioned.

1. If we serve God alone: (a) we shall not lay up for ourselves treasures on earth; (b) we shall lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven; (c) Our whole body shall be full of light; (d) we shall not be anxious.

2. If we serve mammon: (a) we shall lay up our treasures on earth; (b) we shall not lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven; (c) our eye will be evil, and our whole body full of darkness; (d) we shall have no guarantee that our temporal needs shall be supplied.

3. If we try to serve God and mammon: (a) there will be no room for God while we serve mammon; (b) our lives will be full of anxiety.

Take no thought is more exactly rendered in the Revised Version "be not anxious." There is no prohibition in Scripture of taking reasonable thought for the morrow. The sluggard is advised to go to the ant as an example of reasonable forethought. See Proverbs 6.6-8. The great object of our

forethought, however, should be the future destiny in the next world. What people eat, drink, and wear occupies most of the time of the worldling. God would not have us wholly occupied with these temporal things. Two examples of God's care for His people are given:

1. The fowls of the air. As a child I remember my father going to the granary and throwing out to the chickens corn and wheat. Surely as long as he had grain for the hens he had grain to grind for food for the children. In like manner, as long as God has food for the fowls He is not going to neglect His children who are so much more to Him than birds.

2. The lilies of the field. They blossom and fade in a day or two. If He has clothing for them He surely has wherewith to clothe His people.

The Conclusion of the instruction about treasures is: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." This is the true philosophy of how to live.

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#### 06 -- THE PLATFORM OF THE KING -- (Continued) -- Matthew 7:1-29

THE Eighth Law pertains to judging and discriminating. It is easy to put wrong constructions on what we see other people do. Therefore we should be careful how we judge them. This does not apply to outbreaking sins that involve the breaking of the ten commandments; but to things of a lesser nature. An illustration is found in Romans 14.2, 3: "One believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him." The whole of the same chapter may be profitably read in this connection. Here are some of the reasons why we should not set up ourselves as judges of others in matters of this kind: we may be mistaken; the other man may be acting up to the light he has; grace makes us differ one from another; the consequences to ourselves. If we judge others, we may expect the same judgment by other people: "with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."

Reasonable discrimination is allowable: otherwise how may we discern the persons designated in this connection as "dogs" and "swine"? There are people to whom it is not wise to display your "pearls" of rich experience, or your holy experiences in the Lord. They would only ridicule you and make a joke of your sacred things.

The Ninth Law pertains to prayer in a different way than that we have had in the law concerning prayer in the previous lesson. That prayer pertained more to worship, and this more to petition. There is a progression here. Asking is the positive degree; seeking the comparative degree, and knocking the superlative degree of undertaking to get things from God in prayer. The purpose of God is to give to him that asks, to enable him that seeks to find, and to open the door of success to him who knocks. Here is room for deep heart searching as to why so many prayers are unanswered. God here likens Himself to a kind and considerate father, who gives to his son what he knows will be good for him. Prayer to God is not like dropping a coin in a slot machine to get

what is advertised on it, for the machine has no discrimination, But in prayer we are dealing with God as Father, Who considers our real need.

The Tenth Law is the familiar so-called "Golden Rule." Too often this law is turned around and applied to the other fellow: "He ought to do to me as he would like to have me do to him." That is his responsibility; yours is to do to him as you would have him do to you. The purpose of the Law and the Prophets is to instill in the reader this principle. If all men did this way there need be no law courts to settle difficulties.

The Conclusion of the Sermon consists of admonitions, emphasized by various illustrations.

The Two Gates and two ways are entered by two different kinds of people and lead to two different destinations. If you are guiding your life by the adage, "They all do it," the evidence is clear that you are on the broad way that leads to destruction.

False Prophets there will be. They will come in sheep's clothing, outwardly good works, but they will have the wolf nature on the inside; that is, they will not have had their nature changed from sin to grace. Good trees bring forth good fruit. Notice. It is by Their fruits that they are to be known, not by their works, nor by their words, nor, we may say, by their blossoms. Most, if not all the false teaching abroad today has been taught before, and history shows the results of such teaching. Therefore when any one comes with these new doctrines, that are only the old errors in new dress, reject them on the ground that they have always borne evil fruit.

Wonder Workers are not all good men or true prophets. Notice, it says many shall think they are entitled to a place in heaven on the basis of great preaching and great miracles, and yet will be disappointed. It takes more than these things to inherit heaven. In fact salvation is not by works at all, but by faith. The best preacher in the world, the greatest philanthropist, the most famous missionary, are not saved thereby, but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Who died in our stead.

The Climax of the Sermon should be carefully understood. As we have said, the Sermon does not reveal how to be saved, but how the saved will live. The consummation of a saved life is likened to a building. A sidelight on this part of the Sermon can be found in I Corinthians 3.10-15. Here is the Rock, which is Christ. Salvation puts a person on the Rock, and then he build. thereon, but he is cautioned what he builds. Building material is likened to gold, silver, and precious stones; and wood, hay, and stubble. The former three will stand the fire that is to try every man's work. The last three will be burned. The former are works that will last into eternity; the latter are works that serve a purpose in this life only.

In the Sermon it is not the building material that is emphasized, but the foundation, The first concern is to be sure one is on the foundation, Jesus Christ; and then care must be given to the building material. We do not consider wood, hay, and stubble as representing sins; for the builder who is on the Rock is saved in spite of his works being burned up -- saved "yet so as by fire." In order to be saved a person must be without sin, because washed by the blood of Jesus received by faith. Salvation is received in an instant. Building is a lifetime job, Next to the loss of one's soul

will be the seeing of one's life work going down in ruin. Works that stand the fire will bring the builder a reward, but the reward is not salvation, for salvation is God's free gift.

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## 07 -- MIRACLES OF THE KING -- Matthew 8:1-9:38

MANY Miracles are recorded in the two chapters that are reviewed in this lesson. There are ten specific miracles mentioned in these chapters and two accounts of groups of miracles. Jesus, having in the Sermon on the Mount set forth the moral laws of His kingdom, now demonstrates His power in the physical realm. While the laws set forth in the Sermon have a limited application in this dispensation, they will be universally in force in the Millennium. In like manner Christ's miracles are a sample of what will be universal in the Millennium. Miracles in the physical realm are especially appropriate with God's earthly people, the Jews; for the earth, the material realm. Is their specific province.

The Leper, it is to be observed, "worshipped Him," while of others it is said, "great multitudes followed Him," No mention is made of others in that crowd receiving any benefit except this one who worshipped Him. We may well wonder what the priest thought of this cleansed leper. There were full instructions in the book of Leviticus, the priest's handbook, telling how to deal with this sort of a case. This leper, after his cleansing, was to present himself to the priest with the proper gift as a testimony.

A Roman Centurion was the next to manifest faith in Jesus' miracle-working power. He knew enough of Jewish restrictions to know that if Jesus entered into his house He would need to go through a ceremonial cleansing before the Jews would consider Him clean. Therefore he suggested the plan by which he believed his servant could be healed. Just as he himself had authority to send servants here and there, he assumed that Jesus could deal with things at a distance without personally going there. His faith brought from Jesus a commendation, and a suggestion that the Jews would reject Him and that Gentiles would receive Him.

Peter's Wife's Mother was sick on the sabbath day, as we find from Mark 1.21-31. They found her sick when they returned from the synagogue. Her healing was instantaneous and complete, so that she at once rose up and prepared a meal for Jesus and those who accompanied Him. After sunset, when the Jewish sabbath ended, people who had heard of the presence of Jesus, brought their sick in large numbers, and He healed them.

Two Aspirants volunteered to become followers of Jesus at this time. One saw only the pleasant aide of following Jesus, and, when told of the hardships connected with it, apparently shrank away and we hear no more of him. The other had something he wanted to do before following Jesus, and evidently had his way about it, for we have no record of his following Jesus.

A Storm on the Sea of Galilee gave occasion for the next miracle. Jesus had given command to cross to the other side, and the disciples had started in accordance with His instructions, They were terrified by the storm, which must have been a very severe one, for they were accustomed to the uncertainty of the weather on Galilee. They despair of their lives and

awaken Him from His sleep. He rebukes the elements and questions them as to why they were fearful with Him on board. Perhaps Jesus seems asleep to us in times of stress and storm, but, if in His will, we need not fear disaster.

The Demon-possessed Men were awaiting His arrival on the other side of the sea. They knew Him. Undoubtedly the account of His defeat of the devil in His temptation had been related in the region of wicked spirits, and they were fearful of what He would do to them. They know torment is eventually their lot, but they begged not to be sent to hell before the time. If the keepers of those swine were Jews, they were engaged in a business that was against the Jewish law, and therefore had no complaint they could legitimately make because of the loss of their property.

One Sick of Palsy was brought to Him on His return to the west side of the lake, He made the occasion of his healing an opportunity to teach that He had power on earth to forgive sins, which the scribes believed was blasphemy. Jesus manifested, not only His power to heal and forgive, but His omniscience in answering a question they were asking "within themselves."

Matthew, in verses 9-13 relates the circumstances of his own call to discipleship and the feast he made for Jesus and His other disciples. This occasioned more criticism on the part of the Pharisees.

Old Garments should not be patched with new (unshrunk) cloth, for, when washed, the new cloth will shrink and tear the hole larger. New wine must not be put in old wine-skins for there would be no expansion to allow for the fermentation. This should not be interpreted to mean that the Old Testament is to be discarded, but the Jews had added many traditional interpretations that were incomparable with the Gospel.

A Ruler, probably a ruler of a synagogue, implores Jesus to heal his sick daughter, On His way to respond, a woman touches His garment with faith to be healed, and receives her desire. But Jesus would not let her go without a testimony, which all should give when receiving benefits from the Lord. After dealing with this case Jesus went on to the ruler's house, where hired mourners were already lamenting the death. Their sorrow was only feigned, for they laughed when Jesus said that her death was a sleep. He put out these hypocritical mourners and raised the girl from the dead.

Two Blind Men receive their sight, a Dumb Man is made to speak, and a multitude of others were healed.

The Call for Laborers closes this lesson. How much the world today needs this Shepherd and devoted laborers to help in His harvest! Well may we pray that the Lord will send forth laborers.

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PRAYING For Laborers was enjoined on the disciples at the close of the previous chapter. Here we see laborers being chosen and sent forth. Who is better qualified to be a laborer for the Lord than he who has light enough to pray for them? The twelve had been disciples (vs. 1), but at this time they are appointed as apostles (vs. 2). A disciple is a learner; an apostle is a sent one. Peter is named first in all the lists of apostles and Judas Iscariot last.

A Limited Ministry Is given to the twelve at this time, and this commission should not be considered as applicable to those who now go as missionaries. They are commanded not to go to either Gentiles or Samaritans, but to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The message they are to preach is the same as that preached by John the Baptist, and earlier by Jesus Himself (see ch. 3.2 and ch. 4.17). Jesus was still proceeding with His ministry as though the kingdom would be set up during His earthly ministry. The mystery of the church coming between His first coming and second was not yet revealed. He is giving the Jews an opportunity to repent and receive the kingdom if they will.

A Limited Equipment is also assigned them. They are going among their own people where hospitality is the custom. They need not burden themselves with heavy equipment. If a missionary now going to a foreign land should undertake to go with the limited equipment of these apostles he would find himself seriously handicapped. These apostles were to get their support from the people to whom they ministered. Theirs was an itinerary, not a church establishing campaign. They were to go rapidly from place to place with the message of the good news that the kingdom was at hand, and call people to repentance that the kingdom might be established in righteousness. On no other basis could the kingdom of heaven be set up on earth.

Special Powers were granted to them for their ministry. They were to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." These gifts are not universally bestowed on Christ's ambassadors now. While some of these miracles accompany the work of the church, one should not consider himself an inefficient servant of Christ because he cannot do these miracles. We need to distinguish between the Gospel of the Kingdom which they were sent to preach, and the Gospel of Grace that we are now commissioned to preach.

The commission given at this time applied to others as well as to this first twelve and to this first trip. A study of verses 16-22 indicates a condition characteristic of the end of the age, after the church has been completed and taken out of the world. The church not being considered, the commission is given just as though there were to be no church, and these verses leap across the church age to the period just preceding or during the tribulation. Note the similarity of 5.22 to Matt. 24.13, which we know is in the end-time of the age. All of the things referred to in these verses did not happen to this first twelve, nor did they do all that was included in the commission, so far as any record is given. There will yet be in the end of the age conditions similar to those mentioned here that will apply to those commissioned to preach, after the church has gone, "this Gospel of the Kingdom." (see Matt. 24.14).

What We Shall Fear -- It is well, however, not to pigeonhole Scripture in such a way that it cannot apply to more than one period or one condition. Undoubtedly the instruction in verses 28-42 has some application to all the people of God. We should fear nothing more than God. While Satan may be the agent that deludes people into doing things that land them in hell, God alone has the

authority to put anyone there. Furthermore I do not recall that the Bible admonishes people to fear the devil, though we are to resist him. (James 4:7).

What We Shall Love -- The language of verses 34-39 may seem strong. Just as we are to fear nothing more than God, so we are to love no one more than God. The harmony of this kind of fear and this kind of love in one's soul makes an ideal servant of God. How many there are who have learned to their sorrow that their chief foes are those most closely related to them. Especially do Jews who become Christians experience this opposition. Then, too, it is a real cross to take the narrow way when those of our own household whose love we highly regard, make light of our convictions. We like to please those we humanly love, and it is a real cross to take a course that interferes with the best enjoyment of this relationship. But we are admonished to take up our cross, and, if we do not do so, we are not worthy of Him Who so loved us that He died for us.

The Paradox of Life -- What a paradox it is that we find by losing, and lose by finding! The worldling considers the Christian who goes out to a foreign land to spend his life among the heathen as losing his life. He could have remained at home and been admired by his people, and, even if he felt called to preach, he might have had a respectable congregation to preach to and been admired as a great man in his denomination and community. But to go out to heathendom and perhaps die an early death is to the worldling losing one's life indeed.

But the man who will save his life, by seeking this world's good, and accumulating about him the things that make life comfortable, is losing his life, for he is laying plans that will not carry across into the next world.

As we treat the Lord here, so will He treat us when we come to the other world. If we deny Him here, He will deny us there. If we confess Him here before men, He will confess us before the Father and the holy angels. Will not that be glorious!

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## 09 -- OPPOSITION TO THE KING -- Matthew 11:1-12:50

A QUESTION from John the Baptist introduces this section. Shut up in prison, perhaps he wondered why Jesus was not doing more in the way of setting up the Kingdom, which he had prophesied was at hand. Jesus' answer, we have reason to believe, relieved his mind. John belonged to the Old Testament order of prophets, and was the greatest of them. The statement of Jesus that "if ye will receive it, this is Elias," is explained by a comparison of the following texts: Mal. 4:5; John 1.21; Matt. 17.11; Mark 9.13 and Luke 1.17.

The Jews Rejected both John the Baptist and Jesus, and apparently for opposite reasons. John was too much of a recluse, and Jesus was too social. Jesus illustrates this by a simile of children playing: "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." If it was proposed that they play dance, the peevish children said they did not want to; if they proposed play funeral, they also said they did not want to. After all it was the truth that both John and Jesus preached that the Jews would not accept, and their manners were merely used as an excuse.



The Call to Repent is being rejected by the nation of the Jews, and it is to be noticed that in verses 20-24 Jesus is dealing with cities, and condemning them because they have not repented. The call to repent has narrowed down from the nation to the cities, and eventually in the closing verses of this chapter it is narrowed down to a call to the individual. There is evidently a judgment coming for nations, cities, and individuals. Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum as well as Tyre, Sidon and Sodom will come up at some future judgment. Capernaum was exalted to heaven from the fact that Jesus, Who was from heaven, made that city His headquarters during much of His ministry.

The Wise and Prudent might have been desirable as witnesses for Jesus, but it pleased the Father to hide these things from that class and to reveal them to "babes." When we are disappointed in interesting the wise and prudent in our enterprises for God, we may well thank Him that He has revealed things to the common people. To be able to say under all circumstances, as did Jesus, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight," is a place of rest.

The Call to individuals has superseded the call to nations and cities, so far as this age is concerned. The call is to those who "labor and are heavy laden." There is no heavier load than sin. Jesus calls the individual sinner to Himself and will, as he repents, roll the burden from his back. He will thus enter into rest. But there is a second rest, and the redeemed soul is called to take the yoke of Christ upon himself voluntarily. It is either a case of Satan's yoke or Christ's yoke. Since Christ has so graciously taken off the yoke of Satan from us, how gladly ought we to take His yoke upon us, especially since we are assured the yoke is easy and the burden is light!

Critical Pharisees, not being able to find fault with Jesus, criticize His disciples for plucking a few heads of wheat as they pass through the fields on the sabbath day, rubbing the grain out with their hands and eating it. Jesus justifies them, while it appears He did not Himself do as they did, by referring to the conduct of David.

More Fault-finding Is aroused by the good deed Jesus did in healing the withered hand of an unfortunate man in the synagogue. Jesus showed them that they cared more for sheep than for a man. Jesus told the man to do the impossible, but with the command came the strength to do as commanded. When we are commanded of the Lord to do the impossible, we may be sure He will make possible what to us is impossible.

The Gentiles are favorably mentioned in chap. 12.18, 21, suggesting that Jesus, rejected of the Jews, will turn to the Gentiles in this age. His method, too, will change. Verse 20 may be variously interpreted. Some think it means He will deal gently with the least symptom of grace manifest on the part of even the weakest. On the other hand we are disposed to think it means that in this church age He will not break the bruised reed, or scepter, of human government; and will not stop the progress of sin in the world by drastic action, He is letting these things take their course while He is offering salvation freely, without compulsion, to whosoever will accept it. Eventually He will send forth "judgment unto victory."

The Charge of Beelzebub appears to be the point where Jesus broke with the Jews and no longer preaches the Kingdom as at hand. Nationally they had committed the unforgiveable sin. In

response to the demand for a sign, Jesus gives the sign of His death and resurrection. The Ninevites by their repentance and the Queen of Sheba by her faith put the Jews to shame, for they rejected a greater than either Solomon or Jonas.

The Unclean Spirit in the Jewish nation seems to have been temporarily put out as a result of the preaching of John the Baptist, but afterward the state of the nation was worse than ever before.

Human Relationships are superseded at the end of the 12 chapter. The purpose of the visit of Jesus' mother and brethren was evidently to try to get Him away to go borne with them, for, as indicated by Mark 3.21, His friends Thought "He is beside Himself." Thus opposition was gathering from all sides. On this occasion He declares the relationship between Himself and His disciples to be more intimate than that of human relationships, This is a relationship extended even today to "whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven."

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## 10 -- MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM -- Matthew 13:1-58

A CHANGE in Method is evident in this chapter. We noticed in the last lesson how the call to repent narrowed down from the nation to cities, and finally to individuals. Before this, in the ministry of John, of Jesus, and of the disciples the key note of the preaching has been that the Kingdom is at hand, That is what constitutes what is called "The Gospel of the Kingdom," meaning the good news that the Kingdom is at hand.

The Seven Parables of this chapter set forth the "Mysteries of the Kingdom." The Jews are rejecting the call to repentance, and, without repentance, there can be no setting up of the Kingdom. The Kingdom in its earthly form is therefore postponed, and the method of God's dealing with the human race is symbolized in these parables. The age of Law is closing, and the age of Grace is about to be inaugurated. The difference in God's dealings in these two ages must be carefully observed if we are to understand the Bible, especially its history and prophecy.

In the Age of Law the civil and religious authorities were combined, or, as we would say, the State and Church were united. Under these conditions false religion became a civil offense. An advocate of a false religion was subject to the death penalty, as was also a private individual who attempted to entice members of his family or friends to accept a false religion. (See the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy). Failure to enforce this law and the consequent introduction and tolerance of false religions led to the downfall of the Israelitish people. (Read II Chronicles 36.14-17). At the end of the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, the civil power was turned over to the Gentile nations. This is why Jesus did not consent to the execution of the woman taken in adultery. (See John 8.1-11). While He warned her against continuing in sin, He did not condemn her to death. For this reason also He instructed the Jews to render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's. This is also why the Jews took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor for him to administer the death penalty, for it was not lawful for them to administer it, though, according to their decision, He was a blasphemer and guilty of death. (Compare John 18.31 and Matt. 26.63-66).

In the Age of Grace, beginning when the Church was started, civil and religious affairs are separated. A prophet or worshipper of a false religion is not a criminal in the eyes of the civil law. No government has God's sanction in punishing heretics in this age unless they are guilty of some civil crime in connection with their activities. When Jesus said, in connection with the parable of the wheat and tares, "Let both grow together until the harvest," He seemed to the disciples to be reversing the instruction of Moses. Failure to observe this instruction has led to such terrible results as the inquisition, the burning of reformers in England, the killing of supposed witches in New England, and even the hanging of Quakers in Boston in colonial days. The church is authorized to discipline its members, but the extreme penalty they can lawfully and scripturally administer is disownment. This condition obtains only in this age of grace. With the setting up of the Millennium, Church and State, as we call them, will again be united under the wise administration of Jesus Christ.

This Chapter predicts in the seven parables the course of things in this age, beginning with the seed-sowing of the first parable and ending with the dragnet.

The Parable of the Sower -- Jesus Himself is the great first Sower of seed, followed by the Apostles. They sow the seed everywhere, neglecting no one. Most of the seed seems wasted, but some comes to harvest,

The Parable of Wheat and Tares shows a condition after the days of the Apostles, when the heresies arose. Tares are not ordinary weeds, but in its early stages imitating wheat. False religions are tares.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed foretells the abnormal growth of the Church, The birds here are symbolical of the same thing as the birds in the first parable.

The Parable of the Leaven -- Jesus gave no explanation of this parable. Leaven was a well-known symbol of evil. The three measures of meal are symbolical of good doctrine of which the doctrine of the Trinity is the center. Leaven is a symbol of false doctrine. (Matt. 16.11).

The Parable of the Treasure -- This may point historically to the re-discovery of the Bible in the days of the Reformation, and the consequent restoration of the doctrine of justification by faith. In another way the "man" is Jesus, Who relinquished all His wealth of heaven to buy this world because of the treasure in it.

The Parable of the Pearl -- After the restoration of the doctrine of justification came the restoration of the doctrine of sanctification in the days of George Fox and John Wesley and later Holiness movements. In another way it is another picture of Jesus selling out all heavenly wealth to purchase treasure here.

These Two Parables seem much alike. Some believe the treasure in the field is the Jews who lived in circumscribed limits like a field; and that the pearl is the Church, drawn from the water, as pearls are, the sea being a Bible symbol of people in general. (Rev. 17.15).

The Parable of the Net is a picture of the end of the age. The Church now is gathering of every kind, many times regardless of conversion, but there will be a time of separation, as in the case of the wheat and tares.

The End of the World is better translated "The end of the age." The original word is alon, generally translated "age." The word in Greek that means the physical world is kosmos, and the word referring to the Roman or civilized world is oikoumene. All these words are translated in our Bible by the word "world."

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## 11 -- THE KING FEEDS THE MULTITUDES -- Matthew 14:1-15:39

MANY Miracles are mentioned in these two chapters, the principal ones being two occasions of feeding multitudes -- the five thousand and the four thousand.

John the Baptist closes his career as described in the first few verses of chapter 14. He rebuked Herod, a son of the Herod who tried to kill Jesus, for taking his brother's wife away from him and marrying her. Herod admired John in a way. In Mark 6.20 it says of him: "when he heard him, (John) he did many things, and heard him gladly." Though a king, Herod was a timid man. He put John in prison because he feared his wife, he beheaded John because he feared the opinion of those who were feasting with him, and afterward he feared John had risen from the dead. His is an example of where an oath might have been better broken than kept. It was a case of break his oath or break one of the ten commandments, and he chose the latter, for John's death was a murder. But as to John we read in Acts 13.25 "John fulfilled his course."

Jesus Sought Retirement when He heard of the death of John, but the multitude found out the place and thronged Him. He taught them and eventually fed them to the number of 5,000 besides women and children. John 6.15 states that on this occasion the People wanted to take Him by force and make Him their king. But He sent them away, and also sent the disciples away in a boat while He went into the mountain to pray.

Jesus Walks on the Water to go to the disciples who were having hard rowing against a contrary wind. They think it is a spirit (phantom or ghost) they see, and are afraid, but Jesus reassures them. Peter asks permission to come to Him on the water, and obtains consent to do so. While his faith lasted he walked on the water, but when he got his eyes on other things his faith failed and doubts caused his sinking. Jesus did not rebuke him for trying to walk to Him, but for doubting. For a man to believe he could walk on the water would not make it possible for him to do so, but to attempt to do so in faith in Jesus' command to do so would be successful. Faith must rest on God's revealed truth.

Many Miracles are performed when Jesus reaches the "land of Gennesaret." This appears to have been in the locality where the woman touched His garment and was made whole, for on this occasion the people are healed by touching the hem of His garment, possibly in imitation of what they heard she had done in order to be healed.

Tradition and Scripture are brought into contrast in the criticism of the Pharisees. They asked, "Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" But Jesus responds with the question, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God?" They encouraged the breaking of the commandment to honor father and mother by telling a man that if he devoted his money to the use of the temple he would be relieved of caring for his parents. Defilement is not from happening to get a little dirt in the mouth, but from what comes from inbred sin in the heart.

Racial Prejudices are tactfully dealt with by Jesus in the case of the "woman of Canaan." To His disciples the woman was classed as a "dog." For Jesus to have treated her as He did the Jews when she addressed Him as the Son of David would have offended His disciples. So He paid no attention to her when she addressed Him by that title. His statement, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," might well have ended her entreaties, but then "she worshipped Him." His further statement, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs," would have been the end of petitioning by some. Racial pride would have precluded any further attempt. But what seemed to be a denial was seized by her as a promise: "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." By this statement she takes her place and gets the blessing she seeks. Jesus, by this method, not only succeeds in giving to the woman all her desire, but does it in a way that no Jew could possibly be offended. Here is a great lesson for persons who have to work in neighborhoods where different races are divided by prejudicial lines. While these prejudices are many times unkind, yet my one who desires to do good to both classes, must take into consideration the general feeling and guide his conduct tactfully.

Another Group of Miracles is recorded in 15:29-31. He returns to the neighborhood of the Sea of Galilee, which was the center of much of His ministry. The mountain was evidently not a very high one, and the multitude again resort to Him bringing their afflicted friends and relatives. Evidently all who came to Him or were brought to Him were healed of whatever infirmity they had.

Jesus' Compassion lends Him to care for the physical needs of the multitude aside from the healing of the sick. Three days the multitude lingered with Him, and by that time any provisions they brought with them must have been exhausted. He therefore miraculously feeds them after much the same manner as He fed the five thousand in the preceding chapter.

Slowness to Believe is manifest in the attitude of the disciples. Though, only a little while before, they had witnessed His feeding of five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, now they ask, under similar circumstances, "Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness?"

Jesus Marveled at the faith of the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:10) and of the woman of Canaan he said "great is thy faith." But of His disciples He was constrained to say "O ye of little faith." (Matt. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8).

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A SIGN is Sought by the Pharisees and Sadducees as recorded in the first four verses. Jesus repeats what He said in the 12th chapter -- that no sign will be given but the sign of the prophet Jonah, which means His death, and resurrection after three days. They are rebuked for being able to read the signs of the weather and not knowing the signs of their times.

Forgetting to Take Bread on the part of the disciples gives Jesus occasion to warn the disciples about the "leaven" of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They think He is warning them against buying bread from those classes, but understand finally that He is warning against their doctrine. (See also Mark 8.15 and Luke 12.1). This explains also the parable of leaven in chapter 13.

FOUR FOUNDATION STONES OF THE CHURCH -- Four Fundamentals of the Christian religion are set forth in the remainder of this chapter.

A Question and Answer in vs. 13-20 bring out the first of these fundamentals. Various opinions were abroad about Jesus -- that He was John the Baptist risen from the dead, Elijah, Jeremiah, or some other of the Old Testament prophets, all of which were kind opinions, but incorrect. Jesus says of Himself that He is the Son of man, and Peter's answer, which Jesus approves, states that He is the Son of God, This double fact about the nature of Jesus is the first fundamental of the Christian religion. Any statement purporting to be Christian that does not square with this double fact is heretical.

The Death of Jesus, mentioned in vs. 21, is another of the foundation stones of the Christian church. From other Scripture we know this is a vicarious death, that is, a death as substitute for those condemned to die. (See Matt. 20.28, and read the entire 53rd chapter of Isaiah and note how many times Jesus' death is stated as substitutional). Think how much is made of the death of Jesus in the Bible. The Old Testament has an array of prophecies about it. Note these: hands and feet pierced -- Psa. 22:16; parting garments -- Psa. 22.18; His cry -- Psa. 22.1; His taunting -- Psa. 22.8; in fact the 22nd Psalm is called the "Crucifixion Psalm." These are but a few. One writer has said that he finds thirty-three O. T. prophecies fulfilled the day Jesus was crucified. Note also the space given to His death in N. T. We do not even know from the Bible how Paul died -- the most noted of the Apostles. Note also the frequent reference to Christ's death and His blood in the Epistles.

The Resurrection of Jesus, also mentioned in v. 21, is a third foundation stone of the church. The resurrection proved Jesus to be the Son of God (Rom. 1.4). The Jews crucified Him as an impostor because He claimed to be the Son of God, (Matt. 26.63-66), and God's raising Him from the dead is Heaven's attestation of His claim to be the Son of God. Note also the relation to salvation; "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification -- Rom. 4.25. Jesus is the only one ever yet resurrected. Those restored to life were not resurrected, but restored to their natural bodies. Compare the raising of Lazarus (John 11.44) and the resurrection of Jesus (John 20.5-8). The one had to be disentangled from his grave clothes; the other came right through the clothes leaving them standing just as they were about His body, for the body was transformed.

The Second Coming of Jesus is the fourth foundation stone of the church, prophesied in the last two verses of the chapter. This is a much neglected truth in some parts. Let us ask, What if Jesus truly was the Son of man and the Son of God, did die, was resurrected, of what value to us will all this be if we are never resurrected? For our resurrection is predicted on His coming again. The second coming of Jesus and our resurrection to be forever with Him is the hope of the Christian. Some may be puzzled about "some standing here" etc. Read in this connection II Peter 1.16-18 where Peter says they were eye-witnesses of His majesty at the time of the transfiguration, and note that the transfiguration is the next thing recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke.

Commendation and Rebuke both came to Peter that day. He was commended for the truth he spoke about the nature of Jesus, but rebuked for his failure to see the need for the death of Christ. In common with other Jews the disciples thought Jesus would soon take His throne if He was the Messiah promised in the O. T. The death and resurrection were not understood until after they occurred. From this we see that truth and error may reside in the same mind.

Two Crosses are implied in this chapter: the cross on which Jesus was to die, and the cross that His followers must take up. Notice "coming after Jesus" is conditioned on taking up our cross and following Him. We are saved by His cross alone; we follow Him by taking up our cross. We cannot follow until we are saved. Jesus voluntarily took up His cross, and we must voluntarily take up ours. It is not proper to say that sinners have crosses, They may have troubles, but they are not in the Bible sense crosses. Troubles that come to us that we cannot avoid are not necessarily crosses. A cross is something that we take up of our free will, and our cross may be different from that of any other Christian.

Profit and Loss -- It is helpful to the understanding of v. 26 to find that the word translated "soul" in this verse is the same as that translated "life" in the previous verse. While the verse makes a very powerful text for sinners, it has an application to Christians. One may invest his lifetime in such a way that he profits nothing for eternity; and he may so invest his lifetime that he profits in eternity.

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### 13 -- THE KING TRANSFIGURED -- Matthew 17:1-27

SIX days after the events of the preceding chapter Jesus takes three of His disciples with Him to a mountain in the region north from Caesarea Philippi and is there transfigured before them. Luke says eight days. Matthew and Mark count the intervening days, and Luke counts inclusive of the beginning and ending days. The mountain was probably one of the foothills of Mount Hermon.

The three disciples were Peter, James and John, the three that were more often than the others taken with Jesus on special occasions. (Mark 5.37; Matt. 26.37). It is a matter of remark that many of the great scenes God has granted to His people have been observed by the few rather than by the many. Crowds gathered when Jesus was dispensing bread and fish, but no crowd assembled on the mount of transfiguration. Think of Moses alone on Sinai, Elisha alone seeing Elijah taken up to heaven. If you would see visions of God you need not seek them in the crowd. This also harmonizes with the fact that few find the narrow way.

Jesus went to pray on this occasion, according to what Luke says (Luke 9.28). He doubtless prayed with and for His disciples, but, after they fell asleep, He doubtless prayed for Himself. If we would be transfigured in spirit we, too, must pray.

Moses and Elijah also came to that mountain top that night. They talked with Jesus, and the disciples, now awakening, heard the conversation. They were talking of "His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9.31). Note that word "accomplish." Death is not ordinarily considered as an accomplishment, but in the case of Jesus it was the crowning event of His earthly life. Without it salvation could never have been provided. That word "decease" in the original is "exodus." Moses, the leader of the exodus out of Egypt, is interested in the coming exodus Jesus is to accomplish. Moses led a host of captives out of Egypt, but Jesus is to "lead captivity captive" (Eph. 4.8), or as the margin says, "a multitude of captives." Moses led out of physical bondage; Jesus leads out of spiritual bondage.

The Law and the Prophets were represented by Moses and Elijah; the Gospel by Jesus Christ. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1.17). The law is the pattern of good works, the prophets condemned Israel for breaking the law, but Jesus Christ provided the life by which the law can be kept. The law-giver and the prophet are intensely interested in the work of grace. Think what these men might have talked about after being in the other world, one of them about 1500 years and the other about 900! But evidently in all their experience there they had found nothing so interesting to them as what Jesus was about to do on Calvary. Notice also what the angels desire to look into (I Peter 1.12).

"Elias Is come already" is a puzzling statement until we realize that the name Elijah is both personal and official. John the Baptist was not Elijah personally, as he himself said when questioned (John 1.21); but he came "In the spirit and power of Elias," (Luke 1.17). As an imperfect illustration we know that different persons may hold the office of President, so different persons may do the office work of Elijah. See also Mal. 4.5; Matt. 11.14; Mark 9.13.

At the foot of the mountain a contrasted scene is presented. The baffled nine disciples had been unable to cope with the devil-possessed child, though at one time this power had been granted them. (Matt. 10.8). Lack of prayer on their part is assigned as the probable reason. Jesus said it was their unbelief, and unbelief grows in a prayerless atmosphere.

Jesus Speaks twice in this chapter of His coming death, once as He was coming down the mountain with the three, and later as He spoke to the twelve. This, in addition to the conversation of Moses and Elias about His coming decease, we would think would have impressed the minds of the disciples to such an extent that the crucifixion, when it came, would not have been a surprise, nor the resurrection unexpected.

The tribute money asked for in verse 24 was not a Roman tax, but a tax assessed on every Jew annually for the temple service. It seems to have received its authority from the taking from every Israelite over twenty years of age a half a shekel when they were numbered at Sinai. (Exodus 30.12-15) It seems that Jesus, having been away from the synagogue, had not as yet paid this tax, and possibly those asking Peter were trying to use it as another means of accusing Jesus.



Jesus questions Peter, who had answered without consulting Him. Does a king tax his own children? No; strangers. Then the children go free of taxation. By this Jesus asserted, in a manner, His Sonship of God. Why should He, the Son of God, be taxed to keep up the temple of God?

To avoid offense Jesus gave instruction to pay the tax for Himself and also for Peter. There are times when it is best to submit to unjust demands rather than offend some one and bring about misunderstandings.

An unusual miracle provides the coin necessary to pay for both Jesus and Peter. Peter was accustomed to fish with a net, but on this occasion he was instructed to fish with a hook. The first fish he caught had in its mouth the coin necessary for the tax. This shows that Jesus has control over the fish of the sea. He also knows the location of even a coin in the bottom of the sea, and power to tell a fish to go and get it, and to go to a certain place and bite a certain hook.

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#### 14 -- TEACHINGS ABOUT THE KINGDOM -- Matthew 18:1-19:30

THE term "Kingdom of heaven" occurs seven times in these two chapters, and there are various teachings about entrance into the kingdom that are instructive.

Who Is the greatest? is a question that the disciples asked Jesus in the beginning of 'the 18th chapter. Jesus illustrated His answer by an object lesson, as He often did. Except people humble 'themselves as a little child they will not even enter the kingdom, to say nothing of being great in it.

Offenses will come, but woe to him by whom they come. Stumbling blocks, or occasions 'that make people stumble, are here meant by offences. If you have something about you as dear as a hand or foot that occasions backsliding get rid of it, for it may land you in hell.

Children are saved in the period of innocency is the general teaching of the first 14 verses of chapter 18. While they are born with inbred sin, until they disobey some known law, they stand in a justified relation to God through the merits of Christ's atonement.

The lost sheep, and the quest of the shepherd illustrate the value of a soul. The application in this case appears to be the fact that God will not allow one little child to be lost in the period of its innocency.

Forgiveness between man and man is variously taught in verses 15 to 35 of chapter 18. How to deal with an offending brother is first taught. If individual dealing will not correct him, attempt reconciliation by taking faithful witnesses with you. If that does not avail bring the matter to the church. If the offender will not listen to the advice of the church the relation of brother ceases to exist. But note, while he is to be considered as a heathen, how do we deal with the heathen? We endeavor to save them.

The authority of the church in discipline and prayer is set forth in verses 18-20. Compare with what Jesus said to Peter in 16.19. The church's binding power can never be contrary to the scriptures. The preaching of the Gospel looses those who believe and binds those who disbelieve.

Peter's question as to the number of times a repenting brother should be forgiven is the occasion of Jesus giving the parable of the two debtors. The enormous debt of the first debtor, running up into millions, is an illustration of the greatness of man's sins against God. The second debtor's debt, amounting to a few dollars, is illustrative of the comparative littleness of men's sins against us as set over against what men have done against God. If God has forgiven us a debt comparable to many millions of dollars, we should be willing cheerfully to forgive the offense of a brother comparable to a few dollars.

The Pharisee's question about the rightfulness of divorce was asked with a view to getting Jesus into a trap. He is now in the territory ruled by Herod who beheaded John for condemning him for divorcing his wife and marrying his brother's wife, The alarming extent of the divorce evil is an indication of the hardness of peoples' hearts. There is one condition on which a divorce may be granted, but not with a view to marrying another person. If more care was taken in mating, there would not be so much married unhappiness.

Prohibition of marriage was not intended by Jesus, as the disciples seem to have at first interpreted His meaning, for immediately afterward He blessed little children, who are the fruit of happy marriage.

Desire for eternal life is manifested by the one who asked Jesus what he must do to inherit it. Since he was committed to the "do" of salvation, Jesus told him how much doing it would take. Jesus said to keep the commandments. The question "Which" indicates that the inquirer was conscious of not keeping all. Jesus first gives the six commandments that pertain to duties of man to man. The inquirer said he had kept all these from his youth up, but was conscious of something lacking yet. Instead of giving the four commandments that pertain to duties to God, Jesus made a demand that showed the inquirer was not keeping the first commandment: he had another god before God -- his possessions. Great wealth does not always give happiness. This man went away sorrowful, and the reason given is that he had great possessions.

The Unfortunate rich -- From what Jesus says in this connection it is not an easy thing for a rich man to be saved. Fortunately, in spite of the apparent impossibility. Jesus said it was possible with God.

Peter thinks of something as Jesus speaks on this line. "We," the disciples, "have forsaken all ... what shall we have therefore?" Jesus tells them that in "the regeneration" they will sit on twelve thrones judging 'the twelve tribes of Israel. This refers to the national regeneration of Israel, the nation that is to be born in a day. Read Isaiah 66.7, 8 in this connection. This new birth of the nation will take place at the beginning of the Millennium and the reigning here spoken of is evidently to continue for the thousand years.

The promise to all who leave things for Jesus and His service should encourage every one who is hesitating between two opinions to immediately close with the Lord and take His way. Few

have taken God at His Word on this subject. Notice the hundredfold is in this life, as we find from comparing Mark 10.30, and everlasting life in the world to come. There will also be persecutions thrown in, as the same verse says. If we would follow Jesus in His work we may expect some unpleasant things, but the rewards are far better than enough to make up for the crosses. Let us take courage and go with the Lord in the narrow way.

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## 15 -- THE KING COMES TO THE CAPITAL -- Matthew 20:1-21:46

CHAPTER 20 begins with a parable that, from the way it closes (v. 16), is in elucidation of what Jesus said at the end of the preceding chapter -- "Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."

Laborers are hired by a householder at the stated wage of "a penny a day," (H. V. says "shilling,") which seems to have been the prevailing wage in Palestine at this time. The first ones hired begin in the morning. At nine o'clock, at twelve and at three: he hired more laborers with no stated bargain, except that he would pay what was right. One hour before the end of the day he hires others. At the end of the day he instructs his steward to pay off the men, beginning with the last ones hired. To the surprise of those first hired the one-hour laborers receive as much as the householder agreed to pay them. So they anticipate they, who have worked all day, will receive more, but are disappointed and complain to their employer.

Several lessons may be gathered from this parable. One is that an employer has a right to decide what wages he will pay, and employees have no right to complain about what he pays others if he pays what he agrees to pay them. It also illustrates justice and grace: the first were paid on the basis of justice; the last on the basis of grace. It also is calculated to humble pride. God gives full salvation to those who come to Him late in life as surely as He does to those who come early in life. But a call early in life must not go unheeded. These eleventh-hour laborers had not worked earlier "because no man hath hired us." There may also be a dispensational application, and the eleventh-hour laborers may be those who in these closing days of the age are called to the Lord's service.

Jesus' statement about what will happen to Him at Jerusalem seems not to be understood by the disciples, for almost immediately there is planning for the best places in the kingdom they anticipate will be set up in Jerusalem when Jesus arrives there this time. He could not promise James and John places at His right and left hand, but He could assure them that they would experience the same baptism of suffering and drink of a similar cup. James was beheaded, and John was exiled to Patmos in old age. We can each trust the Father to give us the places that are prepared for us. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us, and, knowing this, we may well be content. The way to greatness in the kingdom is opposite to the way of greatness among men.

The blind men of verses 30-34 took what was their last opportunity to receive help from Jesus, for He never passed that way again. They had no plea but their need; and no claim on Jesus but His mercy. He who hears of Jesus today better call upon Him now, as he has no assurance of His passing their way again before the end.

The Last Week of Jesus' life on earth is now entered. There is confusion as to the days on which these events occurred. There is some reason to believe the entry was on the Jewish sabbath. Comparison with Mark 11.11-16 indicates that the first day He went to the temple He looked around. Being the sabbath the traders were not there, but the next day, being the first day of the week, the traders were there. The length of the journey from Bethany might not be longer than the prescribed "sabbath-day's journey," (Acts 1.12), and the demonstration of the crowd not unbecoming the sabbath day.

A beast was necessary on this occasion. Without it Jesus could not have fulfilled the prophecy of Zech. 9.9, which specified the manner of His coming. The ass and colt were tied in a place where His disciples could conveniently find them. All things move in accord with what the prophets say. The puzzle as to how the disciples set Him thereon, that is on both the animals, may be solved by His riding alternately on one and then on the other. The multitude of the common people appeared to recognize the import of the occasion, but the official Jews criticized and rejected.

The official Jews were further grieved at His cleansing of the temple, for they obtained some of their graft from the profits of these sales and money changing. Temple dues had to be paid in Jewish coin, while business and Roman taxes were paid in Roman coin. This made business for these money changers. They were also displeased with the joy of the children.

Jesus' authority for the doing of these things is questioned. But the fault-finders are silenced by Jesus' question about John, for John was a priest and he had initiated Jesus into His life's work.

The parable of the two sons is explained. The official Jews were the ones pictured by the second son. They purported to obey God, but did not do so. The publicans and harlots are pictured by the first son. Their attitude was that of disobedience, but at the preaching of John they repented and became obedient to God. Of course this was not universal.

The Wicked husbandmen pictures the Jewish nation and its history. A similar parable is found in Isaiah 5.1-7. Psalm 80.8-19 may be studied in the same connection. The former and latter prophets were the servants sent first; and Jesus, of course, is the Son in the parable. The "they" in the 41st verse who say "He will miserably destroy those "wicked men," were doubtless the bystanders who in the main were favorable to Jesus, but the chief priests and Pharisees who overheard the parable, "perceived that He spoke of them." But, in spite of His plain warning of them, they proceeded to bring to pass just what He had prophesied would take place. They were so enraged against Him that no warning would cause them to take heed to His words. The multitude took Him for a prophet, but it seems they did not fully grasp the fact that He was the Son of God and their promised Messiah.

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A DAY of Many Events -- If we consider the day of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as having been on the Jewish sabbath, and His cleansing of the temple on the first day of the week, the events of these two chapters appear to have occurred on Monday. Whether Monday or Tuesday it appears that all the events recorded from the 20th verse of chapter 21 to the end of chapter 25 occurred on the same day.

The Parable of the Marriage Feast -- Those first invited to the feast did not highly regard the invitation. Is not this like the way most people treat the invitation of the Gospel? Excuses for not becoming a Christian will look very slim when those who have rejected the invitation land in hell. The first verses set forth the attitude of the official Jews. The 7th verse sets forth the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The remainder of the parable symbolizes the church age when the invitation is extended to all nations.

The Wedding Garment was a very essential preparation for participation in the feast. In those days the guests invited to a feast were supplied with wedding garments at the expense of the host, and to refuse to accept one was an insult to the host. This man evidently considered his garment good enough, perhaps better than the one offered him. So some men take the attitude that they are good enough for heaven without the salvation provided by the atonement made by Christ. If he had been poorly clothed he would have been glad to have had a wedding garment to cover his rags. The down-and-out person is more likely to accept salvation than the self righteous.

Three Sects of Jews, generally unsympathetic with each other, join forces in their attempt to bring Jesus into disrepute, destroying His influence with the common Jews or bringing him under the displeasure of the Roman authorities. The Pharisees were the better class of Jews so far as their belief was concerned. The Sadducees were what we would call now the modernists, denying the supernatural. The Herodians were the political type of Jews who favored the Roman rule probably because they had political jobs or favor from the Roman authorities.

The Pharisees and Herodians join in the first attempt to entangle Jesus. "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" This is one of those questions that cannot be fully answered "Yes" or "No." The questioners expected such an answer, but were disappointed. To have answered "Yes" would have lost the confidence of pious Jews who opposed the tax. To have answered "No" would have brought upon Jesus an indictment from the Roman authorities as teaching treason. The Jews had lost their position as the people of God because they had not rendered unto God His dues, so now they are under obligation to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

The Sadducees brought what they evidently considered an unanswerable question, reflecting on the consistency of the laws of Moses. Jesus shows them that they are ignorant of two very important things. They do not know the Scriptures, and they do not know the power of God. Jesus more than answers their question. The saints in heaven do not marry, and in that particular are like the angels, so the problem suggested by the Sadducees will never occur. Jesus bases the resurrection on the tense of the verb "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," not "I was" their God, indicating them as still alive when God spoke to Moses in the burning bush, years after all of them had been buried.

The Lawyer's Question was one to test out the Bible knowledge of Jesus, and He answered it to their satisfaction.

Jesus' Question puzzled the Jews and revealed where their understanding of the Scriptures was faulty. How could Jesus be both David's Lord and David's Son? Only because Jesus was both God and man.

The Common People are instructed in the first 12 verses of Chapter 23 to observe the teachings of the scribes because they sit in Moses' seat, that is, teach the laws of Moses. But they are cautioned not to follow the example of these same scribes. Even today it is quite a common thing to hear a preacher say things in the pulpit that it is well to observe to do, but it would not do to follow his example. Balaam the prophet said things under inspiration that were great messages from God and true, but in practice he deceived the Israelites into the evils of Baal-peor. Compare Numbers 24.15-25 and Numbers 31.8, last clause and verse 16.

Eight Woes are then pronounced in verses 13 to 33. All but one of these woes begin with the words, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." The other one begins, "Woe unto you, ye blind guides." It will be found an interesting study to compare these eight woes with the eight beatitudes of the fifth chapter of Matthew. The contrast is significant.

Righteous Blood shed upon the earth is eventually avenged. From the blood of Abel, which was not avenged as a mark was put on Cain, the murderer, that he should not be killed, since the law of retribution seems not to have been given until after the flood, (Compare Gen. 4.5 and Gen. 9.5) to the blood of Zacharias. (See II Chron. 24.20-22). All this unavenged blood, Jesus said, would be required of that generation. It is estimated that in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, 40 years later, more than a million Jews were slaughtered.

The Lament of Jesus in the last three verses of chapter 23 closed His service in the temple courts. He would often have gathered them tenderly to Himself, but they would not. He went out, leaving their house desolate, never again to return to it until official Judaism says as the common people had said a few days before, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

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17 -- PROPHECIES OF THE KING -- Matthew 24:1-25:46

AS Jesus Went Out of the Temple His disciples called His attention to the magnificent buildings of the temple. Jesus' response 'was that the time should come when there should not be one stone left upon another.

Sitting on the Mount of Olives a little later, opposite the temple, His disciples asked Him a question concerning three things: 1. "When shall these things be?" 2. "What shall be the sign of Thy coming?" 3. "The end of the world (age)?" Notice these questions are different from those asked in Luke 21.5-7, and the two chapters should not be confused. Two distinct destructions of Jerusalem are dealt with in these similar chapters. The destruction in Luke is that which occurred 40 years after Jesus' ascension. The one in Matthew refers primarily to the destruction that will take place

in the great Tribulation. While there is a blending of the prophecies in the telescopic method common to many Bible prophecies, the distinction should be observed.

The Question about "These Things" is general, applying to all that Jesus has said. The signs to flee from Jerusalem are different. In Luke 21.20 it is "when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies." This was the sign for the Christians to flee from Jerusalem before it was destroyed by Titus. In Matt. 24.15 it is "when ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation." This is the sign by which the devout Jews will be warned to flee before the destruction of Jerusalem under the Anti-christ. In verses 5 to 11 may be found epitomized the souls of Revelation 6: False prophet, war, famine, pestilence, persecution, earthquake.

The Gospel of the Kingdom, which was preached by John the Baptist, and also by Jesus and His disciples in the early part of His ministry, but discontinued after the Jews manifested their antagonism, will again be preached at the end of the age, especially for the Jews, who will be scattered among all nations. The Gospel of the Kingdom is the good news that the Kingdom is at hand.

The Great Tribulation, as indicated by verse 21 is inaugurated at the time of the putting of the abomination of desolation in the temple, and answers to the "midst of the week," (Dan. 9.27). The tribulation will have its center at Jerusalem, and will fall most heavily upon the Jews, but will affect all civilized lands and to some extent all the world. Its period is generally conceded to be three and one-half years.

The Two Phases of the Second Coming of Christ are mentioned in the reverse order here. The Gospel of Matthew being particularly to the Jews the subject is carried on to the end. After the tribulation will be the spectacular, visible coming of Christ as given in verses 29-35. This phase of His coming is preceded by signs in the heavenly bodies, and finally Christ will be seen coming. The fact that all tribes of the earth will mourn when they see Him coming indicates that He will be seen for as much as 24 hours, while the earth makes a complete revolution: otherwise how could all the tribes of the earth see Him coming? The statement to the effect that this generation will not pass until all is fulfilled doubtless means the generation that sees the fig-tree sign -- the signs of national life in the Jewish nation.

A Sudden and Unexpected Coming is prophesied in the remainder of the chapter, beginning with the 36th verse. This phase of the Lord's coming must of necessity precede the other coming. There are no signs preceding this phase of His coming. People are about their ordinary occupations, which would not be the case if the sign of the Lord's coming was seen in the sky. This is the phase of the coming that more particularly concerns the church, for at this time the church will be raptured, the dead saints resurrected and the living saints changed in the twinkling of an eye and caught up to the Lord. (See particularly I Thess. 4.13-18).

The Parable of the Ten Virgins may be better understood if it is realized that the virgins are companions of the bride, and not the bride herself. She is not mentioned in the parable, being out of sight in the house. Compare Psalm 45.14. Possibly all those raptured at the coming of Christ will not be in the bride: some may be virgins and guests. (Compare Matt. 22.14).

The Parable of the Talents deals with rewards for service, and not primarily with the question of salvation. See in this connection I Cor. 3.10-15, where building material, answering to a Christian's work, and his soul are differentiated. The burned-up works not being sin, but works that have no value in the world to come. The two passages are not exactly on the same line, for, observe, the unprofitable servant in the parable is doomed to outer darkness. Not to do as well as one knows, even in Christian work ostensibly for the Lord, is dangerous to one's future.

The Sheep and Goats, while symbolizing like a parable indicate more than a parable. The coming of the Lord here mentioned is, as plainly stated, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory" and begin His reign, and not His coming for the church. Nations here are considered as national units and not as individuals. The group mentioned as "My brethren" cannot be either the sheep or the goats, and refers to the Jews as a nation separate from the sheep and goat nations. This is a Judgment of nations that takes place at the beginning of the Millennium, and seems to be to decide what nations will continue their national existence in the thousand-year period. Their attitude to the Jews evidently determines their continued existence.

It is possible to make an individual application of the facts here stated, as it often occurs that one interpretation does not exhaust the meaning of a passage of Scripture. The original words for "everlasting" and "eternal" in verse 46 are the same. Punishment lasts as long as life eternal.

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#### 18 -- THE KING'S UNJUST CONDEMNATION -- Matthew 26:1-75

THE Plot to Kill Jesus had been brewing some time, but is nearing completion. The ones guilty of the plot planned that it should not take place on the feast day. To fulfill the type of the Passover lamb Jesus being our Passover, Jesus must be slain on the day of the Passover. In spite of this evident plan of Satan to defeat the type, it did come to pass that Jesus, the fulfillment of the Passover, died at the hour when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered by the Jews.

A Very Different Scene is enacted at the house of Simon the leper, which we better know as where Martha, Mary and Lazarus lived. The woman is Mary as we know from John's Gospel, chapter 12. Comparison of that chapter with the one we are studying indicates that the anointing occurred before the events recorded in verses 1-5. The indignation and criticism of the disciples began with Judas, as we know from John 12.4. Such fault-finding is contagious. No one but Jesus appreciated the act of Mary. The world, and even the ordinary Christian, does not grasp the importance of self-sacrifice as exemplified in this act. The nearer we walk with Jesus the less the world and the nominal Christian will understand us. The disciples said it was a waste, but it is to be observed, in contrast, that no one found fault with the ointments that the women brought to the grave of Jesus and evidently were wasted, for Jesus was resurrected before they reached the grave.

Contrast emphasizes its opposite, for it seems that the act of Mary, and Jesus' commendation of it, brought Judas' plot to betray Jesus to a climax. It was just after this act of devotion in which Mary gave to Jesus the best she had, that Judas planned to sell Jesus for what he could get.



The Passover Supper appears to have been eaten by Jesus and His disciples the night before the crucifixion, whereas, it appears, the Jews in general ate it the afternoon Jesus died on the cross. However, as the Jews counted the day from sunset to sunset, both occasions would have been the same day.

Jesus' announcement that one of them should betray Him came as a surprise to the disciples, and doubtless Judas was surprised that Jesus knew his plot. He was the last to ask Jesus if he was the one, and had no cause for surprise that Jesus said he was the one.

The Bread and the Wine are symbolical of the body and blood of Jesus, shed for the remission of sins. The Passover lamb was the outstanding symbol of the old covenant of God with the Jews. The blood of Jesus is the great fact of the new covenant, or testament as it is here called, of which the wine is a symbol.

Jesus' Warning must have come as a rude shock at the close of such a period of sweet fellowship and quiet instruction. Peter's boast was ill-timed and practically a denial of what Jesus had said would occur. The sequel showed how unlocked for were the events that soon followed in such quick succession on that memorable night.

The Prayer In the Garden was the most intense in the human life of Jesus. The cup that Jesus desired, if possible, might pass from Him is variously interpreted. Naturally the human nature of Jesus, for He had two natures, shrank from the suffering of the cross, He therefore asked if there was any other way to accomplish the desired end, the salvation of sinners, He might be spared the cross. On this interpretation we are sure there was no other way or God would not have subjected His Son to the cross. In support of this view John 18:11 might be Quoted -- "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"

On the other hand it might have been that Jesus felt He was about to die in the garden, and therefore would never come to the cross and accomplish the very thing for which He came into the world. That would have been a bitter cup indeed. He much preferred the cup of the cross that the Father gave Him, to the cross of failure to accomplish what He came into the world to do.

The Sleeping of the Disciples indicated how little they understood the importance of the hour they slept through. They were poorly prepared for what was about to take place. The betrayal with a kiss was the foulest deed of hypocrisy on record. It is worse to betray Jesus with a kiss than with a kick. Some nice things modernists say about Jesus are only kisses to cover their denial of the efficacy of his blood.

Peter's Puny Defense was ill-timed. Jesus could have halted the mob by calling angels to His help, but "how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled?" was Jesus concern rather than escaping arrest.

Jesus had Six Trials, as follows: Before Annas -- John 18.13; before Caiaphas -- John 18,24; before Jewish Council -- Matt. 27.1 and Luke 22.66; before Pilate -- Matt. 27.2 and Mark 15.1; before Herod -- Luke 23.7; and before Pilate the second time -- Luke 23:11. It might be said

that as a seventh trial His case was reviewed in the court or heaven and He was pronounced innocent and set free from the grave.

Jesus Was Condemned, not on the testimony of the witnesses, true or false, that testified against Him, but, contrary to legal processes, on His own testimony to the effect that He definitely claimed to be the Son of God. This is plainly set forth in verses 63-66.

Peter's Denial, just as Jesus foretold, ends this chapter. He who thought he could go to prison and death with Jesus, cowed before a maid who merely accused him of being a disciple of Jesus. Is it possible that there are still those who claim to be the disciples of Jesus that will deny Him when merely asked if they are disciples of Jesus? Satan's attacks are very subtle. Peter would doubtless have stood his ground and died swinging his sword in defense of Jesus, but Satan defeated him on a line where he was not guarded.

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## 19 -- THE KING CRUCIFIED -- Matthew 27:1-66

THE Ecclesiastical Trials of Jesus are now past, and He is now to face trial in the civil courts. The Jewish officials, having given the semblance of legality to their predetermined decision, arrived at in their trials before Annas and Caiaphas, to get Jesus Crucified, have, after sunrise, rushed the decree through the Jewish council, hastily summoned, and now take Him to Pilate expecting him to concur in their plan.

Judas experiences unaccountable conviction for his deed and tries to find relief in returning the money received for the betrayal to the Jewish officials. He found no sympathy from the officials who should have been the very ones to help such a person. He casts down the money as it burned his hands, and, in his remorse, commits suicide.

The Money was Used to buy a plot of ground where strangers who came to Jerusalem and died while there could be buried. The chief priests acknowledged that it would not be lawful to put it in the treasury because it was the price of blood. They were very conscientious in little things like that, but not about bringing about the murder of the Son of God.

Brought before Pilate, that Roman official undertook to conduct a fair trial, from which he was diverted evidently by fear of what the Jews might do if he did not please them. To Pilate's question as to whether He was the King of the Jews, Jesus responded readily that He was. When accused by the Jews Jesus answered nothing. Their accusations were all false, and Jesus would not notice them as bearing on the case.

Pilate realizes his dilemma, and undertakes to escape responsibility by resorting to a custom that had become traditional. To placate the Jews at Passover time when so many were in Jerusalem, the governors had been in the habit of releasing some noted Jewish prisoner. Pilate appeals to the common rabble of Jews (knowing the official Jews have delivered Jesus through envy) to try to get the people to appeal to him for release of Jesus. But the officials head off this

attempt, and the Jews vote for Barabbas to be released rather than Jesus. Thus is the Gospel exemplified -- the innocent Lamb of God died, and the wicked Barabbas went free.

Pilate Washes his hands in an attempt to shift the blame for Jesus' condemnation to others than himself. The Jews brought upon themselves and their posterity an age-long calamity when they said "His blood be on us, and on our children."

The Roman Soldiers, after Pilate had turned Jesus over to them for execution, made a mockery of His claim to be King of the Jews. They crowned Him with thorns, robed Him in scarlet, and put a reed in His hand as a mock scepter. How this ribald abuse must have grated on the refined nature of Jesus. But He bore it patiently.

Simon of Cyrene, appears to have been a proselyte Jew coming over from Africa to celebrate the Passover at Jerusalem, perhaps the first time in his life. He must have been much disturbed by being seized by the soldiers and compelled to bear Jesus' cross; but, in after years, he may have been happy to tell his children (Mark 15.21) of that day when he bore Jesus' cross for Him.

"They crucified Him" is the simple, brief statement of the Bible about Jesus' execution with no mention of the harrowing details to distract the mind of the reader from the more important facts of the occasion. The soldiers disposed of Jesus' garments as the prophet said they would. It is remarkable how many Old Testament prophecies were precisely fulfilled that day. One writer thinks he can find thirty-three such fulfillments.

THE KING OF THE JEWS was the true title that Pilate placed over the cross. He may have placed it in derision and as an affront to the Jews, but it was correct, and he would not change it on their request. It was written in the three languages of the civilized world, which, in part, accounts for the different translations in the different Gospels.

The Mocking of the Jews was also a fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus had few friends on the cross. John appears to have been the only one of the twelve that was there, and Jesus' mother and a few women (John 19.25-27). The same temptation was hurled at Him on the cross by the Jews as that Satan used on Him in the wilderness temptation -- "If Thou be the Son of God." A truth is expressed in the statement of these enemies -- "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." Had He saved Himself from the cross He would not have saved a single member of the human family. Finally He was forsaken of God Himself -- "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He died that we need not die; He was forsaken that we might not be forsaken.

The Darkness lasted from noon until three o'clock. It was not an eclipse of the usual kind, for it occurred at the time of the full moon, when an eclipse of the sun cannot occur. It also lasted longer than an eclipse. This event added to the gloom of the occasion, and was another sign that the crucifixion of Jesus was no ordinary occasion.

The Rending of the Temple Veil indicated the end of the age of symbols by the bringing in of the reality. It took the shed blood of Jesus, shed when His heart broke for sorrow at God's forsaking, to rend the veil. His incarnation, though necessary for His work, did not rend the veil;

His teachings, though true, did not; His miracles, though works of power, were not adequate; even His garden prayer and sweating blood there, did not do it. This is why it is important to recognize the blood as the thing to emphasize in preaching the Gospel.

The Centurion's Testimony, "truly this was the Son of God," indicated that that observing man of the world admitted that the manner of Jesus' death confirmed His testimony.

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## 20 -- THE KING TRIUMPHANT -- Matthew 28:1-20

THE Burial of Jesus, recorded in the latter part of Chapter 27, was by Joseph of Arimathaea, who was assisted by Nicodemus (John 19:39). While the twelve, now eleven, who had been openly Jesus' disciples up to this time, fled; these secret disciples came boldly to the front and did what was necessary that the prophecy might be fulfilled, though they evidently did not realize they were fulfilling prophecy. (Isa. 53:9).

The Jews' Solicitude that led them to have the tomb sealed shows a strange mixture of ideas. Jesus had never publicly said, in so many words, He would rise again, having always said that privately to His immediate disciples. But Jesus had said "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19), which the Jews at the time appeared to believe He spoke of the temple at Jerusalem. When they asked for a sign He had said they should see no sign but that of the prophet Jonah, that He would be three days and nights in the heart of the earth. (Matt. 12:38-40). What the eleven did not believe would happen, the antagonistic Jews feared would happen. The sealing of the tomb made all the more authentic the resurrection.

The Time in the Tomb is variously estimated. Tradition has so attached itself to the Friday crucifixion that the general belief is that He was in the tomb from Friday night to Sunday morning. But since Jesus said He would be there three days and three nights some hold He must have been crucified on Wednesday. We do not have space to discuss the merits of the different views, but dwell on the great fact He was crucified and resurrected. It is also impossible to take space to discuss the order of the events of the resurrection day.

The Guard Placed by Pilate was displaced on the resurrection morning by an angel from heaven, and they were no longer needed. The soldiers who had been set to guard reported to the chief priests what they had seen. The story the soldiers told as prompted by the priests was a very poor makeshift. They were to say that the disciples came by night and stole the body of Jesus while the guard was asleep. They must have been unusual men to know who came and did things while they were asleep.

Angels Know God's People, it is evident from what this angel says. This angel knew of the crucifixion, knew the women, and knew who the disciples were, even naming one of them (Mark 16:7). Frail women feared, but did not faint; while the soldiers, supposedly brave, fell as dead men. The angel called attention to the empty tomb; as evidence of the resurrection: "see the place where the Lord lay." The women did not stay to examine the tomb, but later Peter and John did so (John 20:1-8) noting especially how the grave-clothes were left, and one look at them convinced

them of Jesus' resurrection, for, if Jesus had been revived in His natural body the clothes would have been strewn around in the tomb as He extricated Himself from them. Compare the ease of Lazarus, who had to be loosened by others before he could get free after being brought to life. Jesus came through the clothes without disturbing their folds, just as, afterward, He entered rooms when the doors were closed, and appeared and disappeared at will.

There Were Twelve Appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, as follows:

To Mary Magdalene -- Mark 16.9, 10.

To women going to tell disciples -- Matt. 28.9.

To two disciples going to Emmaus -- Luke 24.13-32.

To Peter -- Luke 24.34.

To ten disciples -- Luke 24.36; John 20.19-23.

To eleven disciples -- Mark 16.14; John 20.26-29.

To seven disciples at sea of Tiberias -- John 21.1-24.

To eleven disciples, mountain in Galilee -- Matt. 28.16-20.

To five hundred brethren at once -- I Cor. 15:6.

To James -- I Cor. 15.7.

To disciples at ascension -- Mark 16.19; Luke 24.50, 51.

To Paul, as he records in I Cor. 15.8.

To which might be added His appearance in bodily form to John on the Isle of Patmos -- Rev. 1.10-18.

The Great Commission committed to His disciples and to the church is not exhausted in baptizing people with water. It is remarkable that there is no record in the Acts of any of the Apostles using verse 19 as a formula for water baptism. In fact it is doubtful if they understood Jesus was talking about water baptism. The same figure is used by Paul in I Cor. 10.2 where he speaks of the Israelites being "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." They were immersed in neither, but by those manifestations were indoctrinated into the doctrine taught by Moses. The preposition "in" used in Matt. 28.19 is the same in the Greek as the "unto" in I Cor. 10.2. The commission is to indoctrinate people into the doctrine of God -- the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

All Power is Given to Jesus, but that power is not yet manifested politically. It will be in due time (Rev. 11.17). The disciples of Jesus are to go forth backed by that power to preach the Gospel to all nations. The Gospel age is a period of suspension of retribution on this wicked world, so that opportunity may be given for any who will to surrender to King Jesus before He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords to execute vengeance on this rebellious world.

Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world on condition He would fall down and worship him. But that would have left Satan still the high ruler ever all. Jesus has taken the way of the cross to save those who put their trust in Him, and along with it He has overcome the devil and will eventually for ever break his rule and influence over angels and men. "Lo, I am with you alway," is the assurance of Jesus to those who go forth to obey His great commission.

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THE END