Matthew

AUTHOR

Though the author of this gospel is unnamed, the early church consistently considered it to be the work of the apostle Matthew (also known as Levi). Though a Jew by birth, his duties as a Roman tax collector would have made fluency in Greek necessary as a complement to his Aramaic. Recent literary critics have argued that the writer of Matthew used Mark as his source. However, the early church, together with many evangelical scholars through the generations, has argued for the priority of Matthew.

DATE

The evidence for the date of Matthew is inconclusive. Because the book was written primarily to the Jews, many scholars feel it was written before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

BACKGROUND

Setting

A city along the coast of Phoenicia or Syria, such as Antioch, is generally accepted as the place where Matthew wrote his book (see Matt. 17:24, 27). Though a Greek-speaking city, Antioch had a large Jewish population. The book does not state specifically where it was written, yet it is probable that it originated somewhere in Rome’s Syrian province.

Purpose

The author sought to show that the Messiah, whom the prophets predicted in the Old Testament, had come in the Person of Jesus.

Audience

The Gospel of Matthew, though one of four accounts covering the life and ministry of Jesus, was written especially for the Jews, who knew the Old Testament prophecies. The promised kingdom was first offered to them, and they were foremost among those responsible for spreading the Good News.
Literary Characteristics

Matthew is the bridge between the Old Testament and New Testament. It contains more than 50 direct quotations from the Old Testament — more than the other three gospels combined — as well as many other affirming statements such as “you have heard,” “it is written,” and “that which was spoken.” The book is chronologically arranged, yet with a topical structure. Many of Jesus’ teachings, as well as His healings, other miracles, and the parables concerning the kingdom, are grouped together.

The major theme is that what the Old Testament foretold about the Messiah has been fulfilled in Jesus, and thus the book pays detailed attention to the lineage of Christ (Matt. 1). Because the lineage of royalty was important to the Jews, Matthew traced Jesus not only to Abraham, the father of the Jews, but also to the kingly lineage of David.

The book also delineates what a disciple’s life should be. The Sermon on the Mount and related teachings give not only the code of conduct God requires but, more importantly, the quality of the relationship Jesus desired with His disciples. Related to the discipleship theme is the key phrase, “the kingdom of heaven.” This theme encompasses both the daily life of each disciple and the future coming of Christ.

OUTLINE

I. The Messiah’s Coming (1:1—2:23)
   A. His genealogy (1:1–17)
   B. His birth (1:18–25)
   C. His admirers (2:1–12)
   D. His escape to Egypt and return to Nazareth (2:13–23)

II. The Messiah’s Unveiling (3:1—4:11)
   A. His introduction by John the Baptist (3:1–12)
   B. His baptism (3:13–17)
   C. His temptation (4:1–11)

III. The Messiah’s Manifesto (4:12—20:34)
   A. His first disciples (4:12–22)
   B. The beginning of His teaching (4:23—7:29)
   C. His credentials in the form of miracles (8:1—11:19)
   D. The beginning of opposition (11:20—12:50)
   E. His parables about the kingdom (13:1–58)
   F. The death of John the Baptist (14:1—12)
   G. Miracles over nature (14:13–36)
   H. The growth of opposition (15:1—16:12)
   I. Peter’s confession (16:13–28)
J. The Transfiguration (17:1–13)
K. Additional healing and teaching in Galilee (17:14–27)
L. Lifestyles in the kingdom (18:1–35)
M. The teaching of Jesus in Judea (19:1—20:34)

IV. The Messiah's Passion (21:1—28:20)
   A. His triumphal entry (21:1–11)
   B. A sampling of His judgment (21:12—23:39)
   C. A description of His return (24:1—25:46)
   D. His last Passover and the Last Supper (26:1–35)
   E. His agony in Gethsemane (26:36—46)
   F. His betrayal, arrest, and trials (26:47—27:31)
   G. His death and burial (27:32—66)
   H. His Resurrection (28:1–20)
The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. 5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. 7 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. 8 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah.

9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. 10 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. 11 Josiah begot Jechoniah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechoniah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. 13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor.

14 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. 15 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Mattan, and Mattan begot Jacob. 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

1:6 Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Greek. 1:7 NU-Text reads Asaph. 1:10 NU-Text reads Amos.

**ENGAGEMENT**

A STEP IN COMMITMENT

Engagement or betrothal, in Jewish culture, was a formal bond between a man and a woman, almost as binding as marriage itself, yet without physical intimacy. According to the Law of Moses, the penalty for carelessly breaking this commitment through fornication, adultery, incest, or rape was death by stoning (Deut. 22:23–30). Under some circumstances, the engagement could be broken by a bill of divorcement.

The time period for an engagement was usually about a year. Mary and Joseph were betrothed or engaged but did not live together during that engagement period. Joseph is called Mary’s “husband” (Matt. 1:19), although the relationship was still physically celibate.

In modern culture, engagement is considered a couple’s promise of intent for uniting in marriage, although it is not binding. In fact, engagement is seen as the time of deepening intimacy in which a couple has the freedom to make sure that marriage is the step they ought to take. Becoming engaged is the first step toward the joining of two lives, the blending of two personalities and families, replete with the potential of many generations to come.

See also Gen. 24:1–67; 29:15—30:43; notes on Commitment (Matt. 16); Dating (1 Tim. 4); Dowry (1 Kin. 9); Marriage (Gen. 2; 2 Sam. 6; Prov. 5; Hos. 2; Amos 3; 2 Cor. 13; Heb. 12); Romance (Song 2); Weddings (John 2); portrait of Rebekah (Gen. 24).
The Family Tree of Herod the Great

Herod the Great
King of Judea
(Matt. 2:1–19; Luke 1:5)

Mariamne II
(wife; daughter of high priest Simon)

Salampsio
(son)

Alexander
(son)

Cypros
(son)

Herod Agrippa I
King of Judea
(Acts 12:1–24)

Berenice
(wife)

Herod Agrippa II
King of Judea
(Acts 25:13—26:32)

Herod Philip
(son)

Herodias*
(wife)
(Matt. 14:1–12; Mark 6:17)

Herod Antipas
Tetrarch of Galilee

Archelaus
King of Judea
(Matt. 2:22)

Salampsio
(son)

Antipater
(son)

Bernice***
(daughter)
(Acts 25:13; 26:30)

Drusilla
(daughter)
(Acts 24:24)

Malthace
(wife; a Samaritan)

Cleopatra
(wife)

Doris
(wife)

5 other wives

Herodias*
(wife; of Herod Philip, wife of Herod Antipas, mother of Salome)

Salome**
(daughter)
(Matt. 14:1–12)

*** Salome—daughter of Herodias and Herod Philip, wife of another Herod Philip

* Herodias—wife of Herod Philip, wife of Herod Antipas, mother of Salome

** Bernice—daughter of Herod Agrippa I, mistress of Titus, consort of Herod Agrippa II

Women
Marital Relationships
Descendants
Christ Born of Mary

18Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

22So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

24Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

Wise Men from the East

2Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusale, 2saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

3When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

5So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

6‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ ”

7Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

9When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. 10When they saw the star, they rejoiced greatly with exceeding great joy.

1:19 The engagement period was legally binding, requiring a divorce to break it. The engagement period lasted as long as a year, perhaps to provide assurance that the woman was not pregnant by another man (see Engagement). Matthew, as Luke, affirms the virgin conception (vv. 18–25; Luke 1:26–38) and attributes that conception to the Holy Spirit (see Is. 7, The Virgin Birth). Only through the virgin conception could Jesus be both God and man and thus make atonement for sin. 1:19-25b NU-Text reads a Son. 2:6a Micah 5:2
with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

**The Flight into Egypt**

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.”

When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

**Massacre of the Innocents**

Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

"A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more." "

**The Home in Nazareth**

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child’s life are dead.” Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

**John the Baptist Prepares the Way**

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying:

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.’”

Now John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned with exceedingly great joy.

And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

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But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned
The Jews felt that being descendants of Abraham ensured their standing with God. John informed them that no one had special privileges with God, and no one was indispensible (Matt. 21:43).

And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

John Baptizes Jesus

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, tossed in the air, the grain would fall to the ground while the empty shells or chaff blew away. This separation process is also pictured as the division of the sons of the kingdom from the sons of the wicked one (Matt. 13:38), the wise from the foolish (Matt. 7:24–27), and the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:31–46).
the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. Then suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

**Satan Tempts Jesus**

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

4:1, 2 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”

5 Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’

6 and, ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”

7 Jesus said to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

9 Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

11 Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

**Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry**

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

15 “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

16 By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

17 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,

18 And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.”

**Four Fishermen Called as Disciples**

18 And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

21 Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John...
his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them,
and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Jesus Heals a Great Multitude

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

The Beatitudes

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.
10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Believers Are Salt and Light

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Christ Fulfills the Law

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

5:1—7:29 The Sermon on the Mount is the first in a series of five discourses about the Christian life, both present and future. Its basic premise is that the Christian life has no neutral zones free from God. The Lord is sovereign, all-powerful, and omnipresent (see Job 23; 42; Jer. 23, Attributes of God). Believers do not make Him the Sovereign or Lord of their lives; He already is. Whether or not they are living as His subjects does not affect His sovereignty; their obedience or lack of it simply determines what kind of kingdom subjects they are.

5:3—12 Beatitudes are found elsewhere in Scripture, most often in the Psalms, though there are usually no more than two or three together (see chart, Beatitudes in the Book of Revelation). The distinctiveness of these Beatitudes is that they are directly related to the kingdom of heaven, and the blessings promised are due to the presence and activity of Jesus (see chart, Beatitudes for Women).

5:13–16 Both salt and light are forces that change an alien environment permanently. Salt enhances flavor and preserves or slows decay only if the salt itself stays pure. Sodium chloride, a stable compound, cannot lose its saltiness, but it can lose its effectiveness by being diluted. This point is the application for Christians. Light symbolizes purity and divine revelation. If Christians were only slowing the decay, their mission would seem rather bleak, but they are also to be beacons of light to those who will respond.

5:17 The Law and the Prophets refers to the OT. Jesus is the subject and the goal of the OT and the fulfillment of its prophecies (Matt. 1:22; 2:6, 15, 17, 18, 23; 3:3; 4:14–16).
Jesus repudiated wrong thoughts and attitudes with astounding severity. “Raca” (Aram. lit. “empty headed”) was a term of dehumanization (v. 22). “Fool” (Gk. moros) may also be understood as “rebel.” Jesus identified wrong attitudes as triggering other sins (vv. 21, 22). A woman’s personal relationships directly affect her relationship (though not her position) with God (see Matt. 6:14, 15).

Murder Begins in the Heart

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder,’ and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to break one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

5:21–43 Jesus repudiated wrong thoughts and attitudes with astounding severity. “Raca” (Aram. lit. “empty headed”) was a term of dehumanization (v. 22). “Fool” (Gk. moros) may also be understood as “rebel.” Jesus identified wrong attitudes as triggering other sins (vv. 21, 22). A woman’s personal relationships directly affect her relationship (though not her position) with God (see Matt. 6:14, 15).
his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Adultery in the Heart

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Marriage Is Sacred and Binding

Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Jesus Forbids Oaths

Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Go the Second Mile

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Love Your Enemies

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than those that greet all? Therefore if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than those that greet all?
Beatitudes for Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLESSED ARE ...</th>
<th>CHARACTER QUALITY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>REFERENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>those who are poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3)</td>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>Stripped of pride and sensitive to God’s ministry on their behalf</td>
<td>Is. 61:1; Luke 4:16–21; 7:22</td>
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<tr>
<td>those who mourn (Matt. 5:4)</td>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>Responsive to personal sinfulness and tenderhearted toward one another</td>
<td>Is. 61:2; Eccl. 3:1–8; Luke 19:41; John 11:33, 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those who are meek (Matt. 5:3)</td>
<td>Meekness</td>
<td>Demonstration of self-control and submission</td>
<td>Matt. 6:33; 1 Pet. 3:1–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6)</td>
<td>Obedience</td>
<td>Desire to hear and do the will of God</td>
<td>Luke 1:53</td>
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<tr>
<td>those who are merciful (Matt. 5:7)</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Outworking of faith to meet the needs of others</td>
<td>Luke 1:58</td>
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<tr>
<td>those who are pure in heart (Matt. 5:8)</td>
<td>Holiness</td>
<td>Lifestyle of set-apartness, including thoughts and actions</td>
<td>Ps. 24:4–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those who are peacemakers (Matt. 5:9)</td>
<td>Reconciliation</td>
<td>Forbearance instead of retaliation; forgiveness of wrongs; restoration of fellowship</td>
<td>Rom. 3:25; 12:18; Eph. 4:32; Phil. 1:3–5; Titus 3:2; 1 John 1:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake (Matt. 5:10)</td>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Steadfast loyalty that cannot be broken</td>
<td>Luke 13:35; 2 Thess. 2:15–17; 2 Tim. 2:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>those who are reviled and persecuted (Matt. 5:11)</td>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>Willingness to endure suffering</td>
<td>1 Pet. 2:19–21; 3:14; Rev. 12:11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Do Good to Please God

6 “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

The Model Prayer

5 “And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they

5:47 \(^a\) NU-Text reads Gentiles.
6:4 \(^a\) NU-Text omits openly.
6:6 \(^a\) NU-Text omits openly.
The model prayer illustrates how to pray rather than prescribing necessary words to use (see chart, Lessons from the Model Prayer). The Jews did not address God directly as Father but used this personal title to describe God’s relationship to Israel or to refer to Him as Creator. “Our Father” was a new title used by Jesus, who chose the term “Abba” (carrying the more intimate sense of “daddy”) and invited all who belong to Him to do the same (see Gal. 4:6).

8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.

10 For Yours is the kingdom
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.

11 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 12 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

13 And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
14 And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.”

6:9–13 The model prayer illustrates how to pray rather than prescribing necessary words to use (see chart, Lessons from the Model Prayer). The Jews did not address God directly as Father but used this personal title to describe God’s relationship to Israel or to refer to Him as Creator. “Our Father” was a new title used by Jesus, who chose the term “Abba” (carrying the more intimate sense of “daddy”) and invited all who belong to Him to do the same (see Gal. 4:6).
Pear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

PLANNING YOUR DAYS

Often women are overwhelmed by too many things to do (see Luke 10:40) because there are many good choices concerning how to apportion their time (Eccl. 3:1–8). To set priorities is to determine what is important to you and how your time is to be apportioned—that is, who and what will take precedence over other parts of life.

Scripture contains guidelines for God’s order (Ps. 119:105, 130):

- Your personal relationship to Jesus Christ (Matt. 6:33; Phil. 3:8);
- Your commitment to home and family—especially spouse and children (Gen. 2:24; Ps. 127:3; Eph. 5:22, 25; 6:4; 1 Tim. 3:2–5; 5:8; 1 Pet. 3:7) and even to the extended family, as so beautifully portrayed in the relationship between Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:16, 17);
- Your responsibility to employer and tasks assigned (see 1 Thess. 4:11, 12); and
- Your service to God through ministries in the church and involvement in the community (see Col. 3:17).

Once you have these divinely appointed criteria in mind, you are ready to sort out the opportunities that come (Ps. 32:8) and move forward in the most effective and productive management of time and resources. A very practical way of accomplishing this is to list all the tasks before you, consider each prayerfully as to merit and timeliness (see Col. 2:5), arrange them in order of importance, then proceed to do the most important things first (see 1 Cor. 14:40).

To be consistent in your priorities, consider these admonitions: assign God first place (Matt. 6:33); consult with the Father regularly in your quiet time (Ps. 55:17; Luke 5:15, 16); examine your own heart (Eccl. 3:1); and keep yourself spiritually fit (Is. 30:15). Jesus met with the Father in intensive prayer and meditation to determine His priorities and to prepare Himself for each day (see Luke 5:15, 16).

Note also these cautions: Put people before things (see 2 Cor. 8:5). Do not limit your investment in those you love, and others who cross your path, to money and gifts. Look for ways to invest yourself, your time, your energies. Family must be more important than occupation since Scripture clearly states that there is no success if the family is lost (1 Tim. 3:5; 5:8; Titus 2:4, 5). Sometimes you must say “no,” as did even Jesus when seemingly good requests for His time did not fit the overall plan for His ministry (Luke 4:40, 43). The underlying principle in determining priorities is always that spiritual values must overshadow worldly pursuits (2 Cor. 4:18).

See also Prov. 16:3; Luke 12:31; Eph. 5:15, 16; notes on Goal Setting (Is. 58); Organization (John 9); Time Management (Ps. 31)
be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven
19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Lamp of the Body
22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

You Cannot Serve God and Riches
24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Do Not Worry
25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?
31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Do Not Judge
7 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.
6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

14:23). The purpose of a spiritual fast is always the same: to draw the believer closer to God (Joel 2:12–15). From the most humble circumstances, one reaches out to God. The Lord is not moved by fasting itself but rather by the turning of the hearts of His people toward righteousness (Acts 10:30–33). The Bible repeatedly cautions that true fasting is not merely abstinence from food (Matt. 9:14, 15). Fasting must be accompanied by sincere repentance and good works (Is. 58:3–7) and must never be done to impress others, as mere ritualism or as a source of spiritual pride (Luke 18:10–14; see also Dan. 2:23, note; Luke 24:47, note; Jer. 33; Heb. 4; 1 John 5; 3 John, Prayer; Eph. 6, Spiritual Warfare; Esth. 2, Esther).

6:24 Mammon (Aram.), a reference to wealth and riches, is offered as one of two options: a relationship with God or with possessions (see vv. 19–21).
Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! 12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

I Never Knew You

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord,’ have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Build on the Rock

24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” 28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

8 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2 And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” 7:14 ⁴ NU-Text and M-Text read How . . . !
8:5 Centurions were Roman military officers, typically in charge of 100 soldiers, representing the emperor’s authority (see Mark 15:39; Acts 10; 27:3). Usually they pursued military service as a career.

8:11, 12 Instead of limiting the kingdom to the physical descendants of Abraham (as the Jews did), Jesus taught that it was open to all. Faith alone would determine a position in God's family (see Matt. 3:9, note).
Women Healed by Jesus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WOMAN</th>
<th>HER FAITH</th>
<th>JESUS’ RESPONSE</th>
<th>HER RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter’s mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14, 15; Mark 1:30, 31; Luke 4:38, 39).</td>
<td>None stated, although her family’s faith was demonstrated.</td>
<td>He saw, touched, and healed her fever.</td>
<td>She arose and served those present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All who were sick (Matt. 8:16, 17; Mark 1:32–34).</td>
<td>The people came in faith.</td>
<td>He cast out the spirits and healed all who were sick.</td>
<td>None stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hemorrhaging woman (Matt. 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–48).</td>
<td>Her faith caught the attention of Jesus.</td>
<td>He felt her touch, saw her, and healed her.</td>
<td>She must have rejoiced in the healing she sought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Canaanite woman’s daughter (Matt. 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30).</td>
<td>The mother expressed her faith by her persistence. She worshiped Jesus.</td>
<td>He heard and answered her request and healed her daughter.</td>
<td>None stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The infirm woman (Luke 13:11–13).</td>
<td>Her faith was not stated.</td>
<td>He saw, called, and healed her.</td>
<td>She responded to His healing, being made straight and glorifying God.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.”

The Cost of Discipleship

18 And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. 19 Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.”

20 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

21 Then another of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.”

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

Wind and Wave Obey Jesus

23 Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. 24 And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. 25 Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!”

26 But He said to them, “Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?” Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

Two Demon–Possessed Men Healed

28 When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon–possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. 29 And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

30 Now a good way off from them there

8:28–34 The region of the Gergesenes lay in the Gentile territory of the Decapolis. This fact explains the presence of pigs, which would have been repulsive to the Jews. Jesus was seeking rest, not ministry. Two men are mentioned here, while only one is cited in the record of the same incident in Mark and Luke. Perhaps Matthew had personal knowledge of a second man, or one man may have been more prominent and thus the only one of two mentioned. Demon possession is to be distinguished from mental or emotional illness. It involves evil spirits who, though unseen, indwell and control individuals and their actions. The demons in these verses spoke and were spoken to, but they were no match for Jesus.
was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.”

And He said to them, “Go.” So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.

Jesus Forgive and Heals a Paralytic

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.”

And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, “This Man blasphemeth!”

But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” And he arose and departed to his house.

Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Matthew the Tax Collector

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’” For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting

Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.” So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples.

And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. For she said in her heart, “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made whole.” But Jesus turned and saw her, and said, “Take courage, daughter, your faith has made you whole.” And her issue of blood stood dry. But let them tell this thing throughout the whole region of Galilee.”

9:14 Eating in biblical times had ramifications beyond physical nourishment or social enjoyment. It could have religious significance when accompanying worship, festivals, and covenant-making. Fasting (or “afflicting” the soul) could also have religious significance such as repentance (Lev. 16:29–31), obedience, responding to a loss (2 Sam. 1:12), preparation for a great event (1 Sam. 7:6), and preparation for communication with God (Deut. 9:9; see Matt. 6:16–18, note).

9:20–22 The woman had several things against her:
1) She was a woman (see The Hemorrhaging Woman);
2) She approached Jesus at one of the busiest times of His ministry; and
3) Her bleeding was considered unclean, and rabbis were not to touch or to be touched by someone bleeding (Lev. 15:25–33).
The Hemorrhaging Woman Who Was Healed

For 12 years this woman had suffered with chronic hemorrhaging. Visiting physicians had only given her more pain, depleted her funds, and left her worse than when she began. She had tried everything. She could have become a legitimate cynic. Then she heard about Jesus.

Her approach to Jesus was different from most. She came from behind and touched the edge of His outer garment, hoping no one, including Jesus, would notice. We are not told whether she felt unworthy to talk to Him, fearful because of her uncleanness (see Lev. 15:25–33), or concerned that there would be no chance of an audience with Him in such a crowd. We are told that she had enough faith in the person of Christ to believe that just touching His clothes would prove life-changing, and she was right. Though the passage makes clear that her body was healed at the time she reached out to Him, that was not enough for Jesus. He wanted to give her more.

Jesus came to an abrupt halt and demanded, “Who touched Me?” The disciples were incredulous. “What was He talking about?” They saw the many, but He saw the one. Power had gone out of Him, but His power had not been depleted. The healing had not been completed. She was more than a hemorrhaging body; she was a needy woman. When this woman contacted God—He knew and she knew, though no other was aware. Jesus would not move until she approached Him.

Her approach was three-faceted: She came forward trembling with fear, fell down at His feet, and told the whole truth. He gave her a fourfold response: He called her “daughter” (an intimate and endearing term), assured her that her body was healed (by her faith, not His clothes), sent her away free from all anxiety (go in peace), and healed (Gk. sozo, “saved,” Mark 5:34) her soul.

Between the healing of a demon-possessed man and the raising of a dead girl, this woman’s situation could be considered a lesser concern by human measurements, but not by Christ. He stops for everyone.

See also Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–48; notes on Healing (James 5)

Two Blind Men Healed

27When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!”
28And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”
29Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.”
30And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See that no one knows it.”

But when they had departed,
they spread the news about Him in all that country.

A Mute Man Speaks

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. 33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!” 34 But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

The Compassion of Jesus

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.
37 Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

A CHILD’S SECURITY IS BASED NOT ON HOW MUCH HIS PARENTS LOVE HIM, BUT ON HOW MUCH HIS PARENTS LOVE EACH OTHER.

The Twelve Apostles

And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

Sending Out the Twelve

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. 9 Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. 12 And when you go into a house—hold, greet it. 13 If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Persecutions Are Coming

Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they call those of his household! Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

10:1 Jesus’ disciples first learned about Him; then He sent them out. In each list of the Twelve, Peter is first and Judas Iscariot is last (see Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:14–16). These men with such diverse personalities, backgrounds, education, and vocations were not the usual choices for a religious movement.

10:14 NU-Text reads Canaanite. 10:15 NU-Text reads raise the dead, cleanse the lepers; M-Text omits raise the dead.

Their mission was to be shared by others who would offer them hospitality and support. The worthiness of a person was determined by his response to Jesus (see vv. 37, 38). To turn the disciples away meant they were turning away the Messiah, which meant the Messiah would turn away from them (see v. 33). Sodom and Gomorrah pictured the certainty and completeness of God’s judgment.
Jesus Teaches the Fear of God

27“Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. 28And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. 30But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Confess Christ Before Men

32“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Christ Brings Division

34“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ 37He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

A Cup of Cold Water

40“Whoever receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. 42And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”

John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus

11Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

2And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples 3and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”

4Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. 6And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.” 7As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. 9But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. 10For this is he of whom it is written:

‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You.’

11“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least among them is greater than John. And whoever receives one of these little ones whom I have received, receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.”

10:37 God is in a category separate from all else. He does not ask any woman to love her family less. However, even the closest human relationship must not stand between or supersede an individual’s primary loyalty to the Lord (Matt. 16:24).

10:39 Sacrifice indicates a deliberate act of bringing a possession to the altar — abdicating all rights, stepping away, and leaving it there. Jesus asked His followers to sacrifice financial security (vv. 9, 10), personal defense (vv. 19–21), physical safety (vv. 22–31), earthly status (vv. 32, 33), family relationships (v. 37), personal agendas (v. 38), and even life itself (v. 39). The rewards promised are great: the meeting of personal needs (Matt. 6:30, 31); the ability to deliver God’s words (Matt. 10:19, 20); the Lord’s eternal protection (v. 28); value in the eyes of the Father (v. 31); membership in God’s family (Matt. 12:49, 50); a role in His agenda (Matt. 10:24–26); and genuine life (v. 39). 11:10, 11 Although John’s mission was to announce the coming of the Messiah, his understanding was veiled. The disciples who witnessed the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the glorification of Jesus had an even greater message to share.
in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

16 “But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, 17 and saying:

‘We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.’

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children.”

Jesus Gives True Rest

25 At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. 26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, “Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!”

3 But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? 6 Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. 7 But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have committed the insignificant things.”

11:25 The kingdom Jesus offered is available and understandable to anyone who is interested. The “wise and prudent” were those who were self-sufficient and prided themselves on their great understanding of spiritual things (see Matt. 9:12).

11:27 Jesus claimed to have an exclusive relationship with the Father and to be the exclusive Way to the Father (see John 10:15, 14:6).

11:28, 29 Jesus is the touchstone for everything. Individuals are to “come” and “take” His yoke, and He does the rest. A person who labors is struggling, and one with a heavy burden is overloaded. The yoke was a double harness in which two animals pulled together. Often, one harness was larger and meant for the stronger, more experienced animal, while the smaller was used for the animal being trained. The yoke of Jesus clearly implies that even though individuals are free from the Law, they are not to make their own rules. Rather, they are to be harnessed to Him, living life His way.

12:1–8 The yoke the religious leaders had put on the people is illustrated. The rules God gave concerning the Sabbath were few and to the point. By contrast, the Jewish additions were numerous and detailed. At the heart of this system was an effort to manipulate God. The idea was that if one could keep and enforce all the added rules, God would have no choice but to bless Israel. This religious system was given precedence...
condemned the guiltless. 8For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Healing on the Sabbath

9Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. 10And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—that they might accuse Him.

11Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” 13Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other. 14Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

PROPER PARENTING GOD’S WAY IS TO PONDER AND PRAY.

Joyce Rogers

Behold, My Servant

15But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes9 followed Him, and He healed them all. 16Yet He warned them not to make Him known, 17that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

18 “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

19 He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory; 21 And in His name Gentiles will trust.”

A House Divided Cannot Stand

22Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

24Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub,4 the ruler of the demons.”

25But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. 30He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

The Unpardonable Sin

31“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy

over everything, including God’s glory and the welfare of His people.

12:31 The unpardonable sin is defined as continually attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan in full knowledge that the work is God’s. All sin can and will be forgiven when there is genuine repentance. Even blasphemy, or profaning God’s name in some way, can be forgiven when God’s forgiveness is sought. However, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit ascribes to Satan what is done by God, and that cannot be forgiven. To be against Jesus in this way requires that the perpetrator know precisely what he is doing and willingly credit Satan rather than the Holy Spirit with the work of God. Why would someone do this? Because to admit these miracles were from God would require acknowledging and following Jesus as Messiah, resulting in abandoning his own way (see Is. 53:6).
Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

A Tree Known by Its Fruit

33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

The Scribes and Pharisees Ask for a Sign

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

42 The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

An Unclean Spirit Returns

43 “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

44 Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.

45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.”

Jesus’ Mother and Brothers Send for Him

46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

47 Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.”

48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?”

49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

The Parable of the Sower

13 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow.

4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured it.

5 But other seed fell on rocky ground, and as soon as it sprang up it withered away because it had no moisture.

6 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it and it yielded no fruit.

7 And some fell on good ground and yielded fruit, and one fold, others two, and others three.

8 He said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

9 And when He had finished saying these things, the multitudes were astonished at His doctrine.

10 For He taught them in parables and spoke nothing to them without parables.

11 The parables He was using were such as these: The sowers went out to sow.

12 The first one they sowed on the path; and the birds came and devoured it.

13 The second one they sowed on the rock; and as soon as it sprang up it withered away because it had no moisture.

14 The third one they sowed among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it and it yielded no fruit.

15 But the one that fell on good ground produced fruit, and one fold, others two, and others three.

16 And He said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

17 And when He had said these things, He stayed long in Galilee.

18 But when the multitudes knew that He was there, they pressed upon Him, so that He could not even eat what was set before Him.“

12:38–40 In the face of miracles, healings, and deliverances from demon possession, the Pharisees and scribes wanted yet another “sign.” They were not seeking the truth but were seeking to entrap. As He often did, Jesus gave new meaning to a simple historical event with which His hearers were familiar (Jon. 1:17—2:10). The remarkable deliverance of Jonah from the fish after three days was presented as a precursor to the death, burial, and His Resurrection on the third day (Matt. 12:40).

12:46–50 Jesus was not diminishing the importance of family ties, nor was He anything other than caring and courteous in relating to His mother and other family members (see Matt. 10:37, note). Rather, He introduced an entirely new category of spiritual commitment. Jesus knew that He must give priority to doing the Father’s will.

13:3 Parables (Gk. parabole, lit. “a placing beside”) are simple, short stories in the form of a “type,” “figure,” or “illustration” with two levels of meaning. They present a comparison or contrast in order to stimulate thought, decision, and action. Parables are the most difficult yet powerful form of literature to create (see chart, Women and the Parables of Jesus). Their power comes both in the simplicity and brevity of their teaching as well as in the memory tool they provide. Approximately one-third of Jesus’ teaching was done in parables that revealed the nature of the kingdom of God. Here, the first four were given to the general public, and the last four were given to the disciples.

13:3–9 The foundational parable is set apart from the others since it is the key to the rest. The kingdom of God that Jesus offered to the Jews involved their receiving this message. The
devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

The Purpose of Parables

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not perceive;
For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.’

But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

“Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

The parable of the soils is a parable of hearing. This parable warned that unless the mind and the heart would hear and accept the Word of God, the teaching of parables would be meaningless. Jesus’ parables were a teaching method designed to reveal spiritual truths in such a way that those who wanted to respond would understand and receive more (vv. 9, 12, 43). Those who chose not to respond would not completely understand, and what little understanding they did have would disappear.
than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

The Parable of the Leaven

33Another parable He spoke to them: “The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.”

Prophecy and the Parables

34All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

“I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”

The Parable of the Tares Explained

36Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

37He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

45“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Dragnet

47“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

51Jesus said to them, “Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”

52Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.”

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

53Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. 54When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, a Simon, and Judas? 56And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?”

57So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” 58Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

John the Baptist Beheaded

14At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus 2and said to his

13:33 a Greek sata, approximately two pecks in all
13:35 b Psalm 78:2
13:35 c NU-Text omits Jesus said to them.
13:51 a NU-Text omits Lord.
13:52 a Or for
13:55 a NU-Text reads Joseph.

14:1 Herod the tetrarch or Antipas was the ruler responsible for the death of John the Baptist (see chart, The Family Tree of Herod the Great). “Herod” was a dynastic title used to describe many different rulers. This family was ruthless with each other
as well as with outsiders. No one was safe. Herod the Great, the father of Antipas, had numerous members of his own family put to death, including his favorite wife Mariamne. To have ascended to power in such a family revealed the ruthlessness and ingenuity of Herod Antipas. He helped depose his brother Archelaus, stole his brother Philip’s wife Herodias, and was devoted to whomever had the most power in Rome at the time (see Herodias and Salome).

Herodias, who lived in Tiberias, the capital city built by her husband on the southwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, was a woman out of control. Crafty, ambitious, greedy, and politically astute, Herodias would stop at nothing to attain what she wanted.

Herodias and her first husband, her uncle Philip, had a daughter named Salome. When Herod Antipas, the brother of Philip and the stepbrother of Herodias’ father Aristobulus, visited Philip, he and Herodias were immediately attracted to one another. Herod Antipas was a far more powerful man than Philip. Herodias saw her chance for more power, a better position, and an increase in wealth. She insisted Herod divorce his wife; she divorced her husband, and they married. This incestuous marriage was very offensive to the Jews.

Herodias definitely brought out the worst in Herod as is apparent in the account of the beheading of the fearless preacher John the Baptist, the only one who dared to stand up and rebuke this unscrupulous couple. Herodias hated John the Baptist because he did not hesitate publicly to call her alliance with Herod “sin.” She wanted to sentence John to death (Mark 6:19), but Herod was awed and fascinated by John. He liked to hear him speak, even though John confronted him with the truth, and he feared the reaction of the people if this popular preacher were harmed.

Herodias’ resentment and anger festered like a sore. Her opportunity for revenge finally came on Herod’s birthday. The military and political leaders came to help him celebrate at a great feast in his palace at Machaerus. Herodias’ sensuous teenaged daughter, Salome, danced so alluringly that Herod loudly offered the girl anything she wanted up to half his kingdom. Her mother was ready with what she wanted, and it was not half a kingdom. Herodias knew that her husband was an unprincipled, cruel man. He was also boisterous and proud, and the embarrassment of backing down on his offer to Salome in front of all these people would be a humiliation he could not tolerate, even at the expense of an innocent man’s life. Sometimes simple manipulation can outdo any political maneuvering and power.

Obviously, Herodias had entangled her daughter Salome in her obsession since the daughter added to her mother’s request. Not only did Salome ask for John’s head, but she also demanded it “immediately” and “on a platter.” Obsessions of hate not only take over a person’s life but usually infect others as well. By example, influence, and manipulation, Herodias led her young daughter into sin—as an accomplice in the murder of a godly preacher. Her husband and daughter were merely tools in the hand of Herodias, who had planned and orchestrated the tragic crime.

See also Mark 6:14–29; Luke 3:19, 20; notes on Dancing (Ex. 15); Family (1 Sam. 3); Motherhood (Ezek. 16)
mother, said, “Give me John the Baptist’s head here on a platter.” 

9And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her. 10So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. 11And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. 12Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Feeding the Five Thousand

13When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. 14And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. 15When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.”

16But Jesus said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

17And they said to Him, “We have here only five loaves and two fish.”

18He said, “Bring them here to Me.”

19Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

20So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

21Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Sea

22Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. 24But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, a tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

25Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear.

27But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

28And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”

29So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, a he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”

IF YOU CAN’T FEED A HUNDRED, FEED ONE.

Mother Teresa

31And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

32And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

Many Touch Him and Are Made Well

34When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. 35And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

14:24 a NU-Text reads many furlongs away from the land.
14:30 a NU-Text brackets that and boisterous as disputed.
14:33 a NU-Text omits came and. 14:34 a NU-Text reads came to land at.

14:13 Solitude was an important part of Jesus’ life (see Matt. 4:1–11; 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 4:42; 5:16; John 17).
14:21 The size of a crowd was often numbered only by counting the men (in this case, 5,000). The number could possibly have been three times as great when women and children were included. The feeding of the 5,000, one of three miracles through which food or drink was provided (Matt. 15:32–38; John 2:1–10), is the only miracle recorded in all four gospels (Mark 6:35–44; Luke 9:12–17; John 6:5–13).
Defilement Comes from Within

15 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

3 He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ 5 But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God”—then he need not honor his father or mother.’ 6 Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’” 9

10 When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

11 Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

12 But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 13 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

15 Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.”

16 So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

A Gentile Shows Her Faith

21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.” 23 But He answered her not a word.

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.” 24 But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” 25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” 26 But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” 27 And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” 28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you...
The feeding of the 4,000 had many similarities to the feeding described in Matthew 14:13–21. The people had been listening to His teaching; they were in a rural area; the food was the same; Jesus blessed and broke it; the disciples served it. But there are also marked differences: The number of people; the time they spent with Him; the different seashore; the initial amount of food; the amount left over.

Feeding the Four Thousand

32 Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”

33 Then His disciples said to Him, “Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?”

34 Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?”

And they said, “Seven, and a few little fish.”
35 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. 36 And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. 37 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. 38 Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala. 

The Pharisees and Sadducees Seek a Sign

16 Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered and said to them, “When it is evening you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red’; 3 and in the morning, ‘It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. 4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet a Jonah.” And He left them and departed.

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees

5 Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” 7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have taken no bread.”

8 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, “O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? 9 Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? 10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? 11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” 12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” 14 So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and..."
FOLLOWING JESUS

“Following Jesus” is the definition of “commitment.” Commitment demands a choice. Jesus wasted no time getting to the heart of commitment: Either the disciples would be committed to Him and deny their own desires, or they would be determined to go their own ways and deny Him (Matt. 10:32–37). The choice to commit is the same for all believers — either we deny ourselves or deny Him; either we go His way or we pursue our way.

Talk about Christ would be meaningless without the walk with Him. The disciples were to take up their crosses. Carrying the cross beam was a public declaration of Rome’s authority. Jesus challenged them to put themselves voluntarily under God’s authority, doing His will His way. Commitment demands action; it cannot be divorced from responsibility. It extends beyond our relationship to the heavenly Father to other areas of life. Ruth’s words of commitment to Naomi did not speak as loudly as did her actions. She left her family and homeland to return with Naomi to Bethlehem (Ruth 1:16, 17).

Commitment definitely limits choices because it is exclusive. For example, in a commitment to marriage, God’s plan is for one woman and one man to commit to each other exclusively and permanently (Matt. 19:5, 6).

Jesus demonstrated in the Garden of Gethsemane that the Father’s will always takes precedence over His. The next day, He picked up His Cross, demonstrating that He would do the Father’s will the Father’s way.

Commitment builds up faith and develops character. It is a spiritual discipline (Prov. 16:3). It is a lifetime venture, requiring time, work, and determination (Matt. 16:24).

See also Eccl. 5:4, 5; Matt. 5:33, 37; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:62; 14:27; notes on Decision Making (1 Cor. 8); Integrity (Ps. 27); Marriage (Gen. 2; 2 Sam. 6; Prov. 5; Hos. 2; Amos 3; 2 Cor. 13; Heb. 12); Salvation (Eph. 2); Vows (Num. 30); portrait of Ruth (Ruth 2)

whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed.a in heaven.”

20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”

23 But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to whatever you bind on earth will be bound . . . will have been loosed.
his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount

17 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

9 Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

10 And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

11 Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

A Boy Is Healed

14 And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.” So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.”

17 Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.” And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”

20 So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”

21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection

22 Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to suffer at the hands of men and will be delivered to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and insult Him, and scourge Him, and kill Him; and after three days He will arise.”

16:28 Three major interpretations are suggested:

1) the coming of Christ in judgment to destroy the temple in A.D. 70;
2) a reference to Jesus’ Resurrection, Ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers;
3) a pointing to the Transfiguration in which three of these men would see Jesus in His glorified state.

The latter seems most likely because of the proximity of the Transfiguration account (Matt. 17:1–5).

17:1 The Transfiguration took place within a week of Christ’s prediction that He would die. The three disciples included were the ones He allowed to witness the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:37); they later would accompany Him to the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:33). Though tradition long held this “high mountain” to be Mt. Tabor, there is no record that Jesus was near Mt. Tabor at this time. In addition, archaeological excavations discovered here a fortified city dating to this time, which would have made it difficult for them to have been in seclusion. Mt. Hermon seems a more likely place. Three events took place: Jesus’ body was transfigured (v. 2); Moses, the giver of the Law and deliverer from bondage in Egypt, and Elijah, the forerunner of John the Baptist and representative of the prophets in the OT, appeared (v. 3); and God spoke from a cloud (v. 5).

17:5 At Jesus’ baptism the disciples heard God saying the same thing (Matt. 3:17). The message is repeated near the end of His ministry: God is still pleased with His Son. This time the admonition “Hear Him” was added, but they still were not listening.

17:9 The message must have been confusing. The Transfiguration was not for the masses but for His followers. The timing of this event was important. The disciples were at the crucial point of commitment to Jesus. Everything hinged on who He was to them. In fact, He had recently challenged them with
to be betrayed into the hands of men, 23 and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

**Peter and His Master Pay Their Taxes**

24 When they had come to Capernaum, a those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, “Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?”

25 He said, “Yes.”

And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?”

26 Peter said to Him, “From strangers.”

Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.”

**Who Is the Greatest?**

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

4 Therefore whoever humblest himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

**Jesus Warns of Offenses**

6 “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

8 “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

**The Parable of the Lost Sheep**

10 “Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. 11 For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? 13 And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

**Dealing with a Sinning Brother**

15 Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you two. 16 And if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear, take with one or two more witnesses, that every word may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. 17 And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church; and if he refuse to hear even the church, take it unto your brethren.

18:24 NU-Text reads Capharnaum (here and elsewhere).
17:27 Greek stater, the exact amount to pay the temple tax (didrachma) for two.
RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

Conflict is inevitable in personal relationships. It is humanly impossible to live in total harmony with others at all times. Jesus told His disciples how to settle disputes between believers (Matt. 18:15–20). Paul resolved his conflict with John Mark, which had developed between the first and second missionary journeys (Acts 15:36–41). John warned Christians not to hate each other (1 John 4:20, 21).

The Bible offers several steps to resolving conflict and settling disagreements among people:

- Scripture admonishes the believer to face the conflict — acknowledge its existence and accept its impact. Christ advised His disciples to go immediately and directly to the person and discuss the grievance (Matt. 18:15). Others should be enlisted to mediate the conflict only if the conflict cannot be resolved one-to-one (Matt. 18:16, 17).
- Scripture instructs the believer to forgive the conflict — to put the disagreement behind and move ahead in harmony once it has been resolved. Euodia and Syntyche were encouraged to replace their bitterness with gentleness and to live in peaceful harmony, rejoicing in the Lord (Phil. 4:2–7).
- Scripture encourages the believer to move beyond the conflict. Paul resolved his grudge against Mark and sought opportunities to minister with him (compare Acts 15:36–41 with 2 Tim. 4:9–11; see Eccl. 1, Healing).

Jesus reminded the Pharisees of the greatest commandments — to love the Lord and love your neighbor (Matt. 22:37–40). The desire of God is for His children to live in harmony. Christians are to resolve conflict with others by replacing discord with love. The emphasis is not punitive but redemptive (see 2 Cor. 2:5–11; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15).

See also 1 John 3:10–18; notes on Communication (Prov. 15); Conflict (Song 5); Forgiveness (Ps. 51; Luke 17); Marriage (Gen. 2; 2 Sam. 6; Prov. 5; Hos. 2; Amos 3; 2 Cor. 13; Heb. 12)

and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. 18-Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But as

18:21 Rabbinical tradition taught a repeated sin should be forgiven three times, but on the fourth, there was to be no forgiveness. Peter probably thought he was being generous to forgive “seven times.” Jesus’ answer suggested forgiving an unlimited number of times. He amplified that answer in a parable. The comparison of the debt owed the king and the debt owed the servant is almost ridiculous (see chart, Money and Measurements in the Bible). The picture is clear: God has forgiven believers an immense debt; they dare not refuse to forgive others for small offenses. The lack of forgiveness is another subtle form of playing god and puts believers in direct opposition to God. Those who are forgiven must forgive if they are to receive forgiveness (see Ps. 51; Luke 17, Forgiveness; chart, Your Path to Freedom).
he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ 27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay the debt.

35 “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

19 Marriage and Divorce

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. 2And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

3 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?” 4 And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?’ 6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” 8 He said to them, “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

10 His disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

Jesus Teaches on Celibacy

11 But He said to them, “All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it.”

Jesus Blesses Little Children

13 Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, “Let the little children come 18:29 NU-Text omits at his feet. b NU-Text and M-Text omit all. 18:35 NU-Text omits his trespasses. 19:3 NU-Text reads created. a Genesis 1:27; 5:2 19:4 NU-Text reads created. b Genesis 2:24 19:9 Or fornication

19:9 Sexual immorality (Gk. porneia) is a broad term, referring to a wide range of illicit sexual practices. The presupposition here is that immorality breaks the one-flesh union, which God declared to be part of the marriage relationship. For some, such a violation is a legitimate reason for divorce. However, Jesus was not requiring divorce, even in this case: He was simply noting that Moses gave this permission clause (Deut. 24:1–4) because of “the hardness of . . . hearts” (Matt. 19:8).

19:10, 11 Jesus was not condemning either marriage or single life but rather pointing out that both had advantages. Singleness may mean more time for kingdom work, but not everyone can handle single life (see Ps. 62; John 2; 1 Cor. 7; 12, Singleness) 19:12 The reference is not to physical castration, but to God-directed, self-imposed celibacy (see 1 Cor. 7, Celibacy). 19:13 Customarily children were brought to rabbis and elders for blessing. The disciples appeared to be rude and thoughtless, especially in the light of Jesus’ recent teaching (Matt. 18:2–6). They may have been annoyed that their private discussion with the Lord was interrupted by the seeming triviality of blessing children.
MATTHEW 19:15

19:16–22 Luke identified this young man as a ruler (Luke 8:18). The ruler’s question revealed his problem. He wanted to know what to do to earn eternal life. Jesus’ emphasis was always on the attitude of the heart, not on deeds. Jesus showed the young man that he had failed, even in the areas in which he thought he had done well. His wealth was not his problem;

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler

16 Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

17 So He said to him, “Why do you ask Me about what is good? No one is good but One, that is, God.”

Jesus' view of divorce (Gk. apostasion, from apolouy, “to send away,” meaning “to remove from the center of a relationship” or “to break fellowship”) can be understood only against the background of His view of permanent monogamy, one man and one woman together for a lifetime. The plan for permanence is clear in the “one-flesh” metaphor used by the Lord. Moses allowed divorce as a human device to protect ill-treated Hebrew women from unscrupulous men who sought to manipulate the betrothal process. The Pharisees took the “permission” of the Law and turned it into a “command” that made human frailty a justification for circumventing God’s divine plan and purpose.

Jesus did not teach that the innocent party must divorce the unfaithful one. The purpose of the “exception” clause in the Mosaic Law, which is repeated again in Jesus’ explanation, is not to encourage divorce. The binding commitment of marriage does not depend upon human wills or upon what any individual does or does not do but rather upon God’s original design and purpose for marriage (Hos. 3:1–3).

God rejects divorce for these reasons:

• Marriage is a divine institution the Lord used to teach His children about their relationship to Him (Gen. 1:27; Matt. 19:4).
• Marriage is by express command of the Creator and carries His imprimatur (Matt. 19:4, 5).
• Marriage brings two people together as one flesh, testifying to the permanence God planned for this most intimate union (Matt. 19:6).
• Jesus points to the example of the first couple (Matt. 19:8).
• Evil consequences are inevitable when separation comes (Matt. 19:9).

Divorce is never God’s choice. Indeed, God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). However, whenever divorce occurs for whatever reason, God desires to work redemptively when the person who has experienced this tragedy is repentant and desires reconciliation to God.

See also Ex. 21:7–11; Esth. 1:10–22; Jer. 3:1; Mal. 2:14–16; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10–17; notes on Adultery (Hos. 3); Commitment (Matt. 16); Husbands (Job 31; 2 Cor. 6); Marriage (Gen. 2; 2 Sam. 6; Prov. 5; Hos. 2; Amos 3; 2 Cor. 13; Heb. 12); Remarriage (Matt. 5); Vows (Num. 30); Wives (Prov. 31)

to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” 15 And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.

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“Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good?” No one is good but One, that is, God. a

19:16 b NU-Text omits Good. 19:17 b NU-Text reads Why do you ask Me about what is good? a 19:17 b NU-Text reads There is One who is good.

a
But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

18 He said to Him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ 19 ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ a and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ b

20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

21 Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

With God All Things Are Possible

23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

25 When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

26 But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?”

28 So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife a or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

IN RAISING CHILDREN, ALL YOU CAN DO
IS YOUR BEST . . . WE TAKE CARE
OF THE POSSIBLE AND LEAVE
THE IMPOSSIBLE TO GOD.

Ruth Bell Graham

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. 5 Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, 7 and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’ 8 They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.’

19:19 a Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20
b 19:20 NU-Text omits from my youth.
19:26 NU-Text omits idle.
20:7 NU-Text omits the last clause of this verse.

19:23–26 Jesus was not condemning wealthy people. For example, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, and Joseph of Arimathea were wealthy. But the Jews often interpreted wealth as a sign of God’s blessing in the sense of a sure ticket to heaven. Instead, Jesus saw the dangers inherent in wealth and taught that only a few, with God’s help (v. 26), could handle wealth properly. The camel was the largest animal commonly seen, and the eye of a needle was the smallest opening. Jesus used a figure of speech that demonstrated the dangers of wealth.

19:28, 29 Whether or not the 12 disciples would have a special assignment of judging Israel because of Israel’s rejection of the Messiah is not clear. Jesus elsewhere said all His followers would have a part in judging (Luke 22:30; 1 Cor. 6:2). Clearly, all who have responded to His call to follow Him will receive not only eternal life but also hundredfold rewards.

20:1 The parable of the laborers is found only in Matthew. Jesus illustrated why and how the last can become the first. Everything God has done for humanity is grace; individuals do not earn His favor, and He is never in their debt. God is sovereign — He is in charge. Rank, position, and reward are His to give to whomever He chooses. This parable illustrates two other points: God’s concern with far more than the amount of work done; the people’s anger with God because He is viewed as generous with others while only being fair with them.
Matthew 20:8

8So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.’ 9And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. 10But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. 11And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, 12saying, ‘These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.’ 13But he answered one of them and said, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. 15Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good? 16So the last will be first, and the first will rise again.”

Jesus a Third Time Predicts His Death and Resurrection

17Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, 18“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, 19and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again.”

Greatness Is Serving

20Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

21And He said to her, “What do you wish?” She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.” 22But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

They said to Him, “We are able.” 23So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; 24but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.” 25And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. 26But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Two Blind Men Receive Their Sight

29Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. 30And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!”

20:20–24 A few days before Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, Zebedee’s wife made a request for her sons James and John. Though her request suggested dangerous ambition on her part, the angry response of the other 10 disciples was also unwise and reflected similar self-interest. “The cup” was a common expression for great suffering (v. 22; Matt. 26:39; John 18:11; Ps. 75:8; Is. 51:17). Just as His suffering and death must come before His rule, so also their suffering would come before their ruling with Him. Even though they would suffer for Christ, the positions, ranks, and rewards of the kingdom were a matter of God’s sovereign choice (see Matt. 20:1–16). Jesus wanted His disciples to approach Him freely with their requests, but He was disappointed in their inflated view of their own importance and with their lack of spiritual sensitivity in understanding His mission. They were reaching for glory without a willingness to endure the prerequisite sufferings. The brothers were confident that they were willing to share Jesus’ mission, and indeed Jesus prophesied that they would endure great suffering for the gospel (Acts 12:2; Rev. 1:9).

20:25 The Jews used the term “Gentiles” to refer to anyone who was not ethnically a Jew. In common usage this term also included the idea that they were pagans, since they usually did not worship the God of Israel.

20:26, 27 Greatness in His kingdom is servanthood—the opposite of the world’s view of greatness. Servanthood begins in the heart. Again, Jesus is concerned more about the attitudes in the hearts of His followers than with their works (see John 13:1–17).
21:5 The Triumphal Entry is the culmination of the offering of the kingdom by Jesus (see Mark 11:2–8, note).

The Triumphal Entry

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, a at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, b saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. c And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them." d

All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

5 "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'" e

6 So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. f They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him g on them. h And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and

34 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

33 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

32 So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

31 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

30 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

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2 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

1 Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!

Zebedee’s Ambitious Wife

When Jesus taught His disciples, the mother of James and John listened with pride in her two sons. Naturally talented and dedicated to the Lord, they were included in Jesus’ inner circle. James was a born leader (see Acts 12:17; 15:13). John was commonly called the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (see John 13:23).

This mother’s pride also included human (as opposed to godly) ambition, and she knelt before Jesus, requesting special favors (Matt. 20:21). Three times Jesus had foretold that He would be condemned to death, then rise the third day; yet at the Crucifixion, most of His disciples deserted Him, proving that they had heard Him selectively. They heard only the promise that His followers would sit on thrones (Matt. 19:28).

James and John may have urged their mother to speak, but neither they nor their mother understood the basic requirements for spiritual responsibility. Jesus listened to her request, but He posed His question to her sons (see also Mark 10:36). “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Matt. 20:22). They assured Him that they were, and Jesus proceeded to teach them and their mother elementary truths about servant leadership. Jesus did not reject this mother’s request for her sons, but rather He corrected it in an unexpected way (vv. 23, 26).

This woman, who undoubtedly loved the Lord passionately, having joined the women who attended Him, is thought to be Salome (not to be confused with Salome, the daughter of Herodias; see Mark 15:40). She followed Jesus to the Cross and to the grave. Her highest fulfillment was to give her two sons to Christ, and the influence of a godly mother is certainly evident in these sons. But like many believers, she failed to grasp the essence of greatness—true humility. To follow Him is to take up one’s own cross (see Luke 9:23, 24). Salome teaches us the importance of imitating Christ Who “did not come to be served, but to serve” (Mark 10:45).

See also Matt. 27:56; Mark 10:35–45; 15:40; 16:1; notes on Favoritism (Prov. 28); Motherhood (1 Sam. 1)
spread them on the road. 9 Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

“Hosanna to the Son of David! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’ a

Hosanna in the highest!”

10 And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, “Who is this?”
11 So the multitudes said, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.”

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

12 Then Jesus went into the temple of God a and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 13 And He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ a but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’ b

14 Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

The Fig Tree Withered

15 So the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indifferent 16 and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?”

And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read,

‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise’?” a

17 Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

21:9 See Mark 11:9, note.
21:12, 13 When people came to worship at the temple, they needed animal sacrifices, wood, oil, and other items. Stalls were set up at the temple to sell these necessities, but since these objects sold for temple currency, the people needed to exchange their money. The temple, designed as a house of prayer, had become a marketplace where money changing and bargaining took place.
21:18, 19 The tree looked like it was bearing figs, but no fruit was there. Just as in Jesus’ cleansing of the temple, His striking of the tree indicated the imminence of judgment. This miracle of destruction could be understood as an illustrated parable or teaching device. In this case, the fig tree represented Israel (see Hos. 9:10; Nah. 3:12; Zech. 10:2). The tree with its leaves had the marks of fruitfulness, but it bore no fruit. Israel was likewise practicing hypocrisy (Mark 7:6), and for this reason the nation was in line for judgment. Jesus might also have been illustrating religious hypocrites like the ones He had just thrown out of the temple (Matt. 6:2, 5; 16; 7:5; 15:7, 8; 22:18).
21:28–32 Jesus clearly applied this parable to the religious
answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said to Him, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers

33“Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ 39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” 41 They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.” 42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

‘The stone which the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.’

This was the Lord’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes”?

43“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” 45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

22 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2“‘The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.” ’ 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ 10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

21:42 6 Psalm 118:22, 23

leaders confronting Him. The tax collector’s status was similar to that of a prostitute in society. Jesus taught that the outcasts of society could enter His kingdom if they would repent, while those who had lived a “religious” life but would not repent were the real outcasts.

21:33–41 The components of the parable are obvious: The landowner is God; the vineyard is Israel; the vinedressers are the religious leaders; the servants are the prophets (including John the Baptist); and the son is Jesus. The vinedressers have attempted to usurp the authority of the owner and make the property their own—the essence of rebellion against God. To do so they must kill the son. Jesus had been telling His followers the leaders would kill Him; here He confronted the leaders with the same message.

21:42–46 The line was clearly drawn and supported by the OT (Ps. 118:22, 23; Is. 28:16). To reject Jesus was and is to reject God (Acts 4:11, 12).
Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with a hypothesis: “Teacher, which is the first commandment of all?”

Jesus answered and said to them, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

The trap seemed masterful — His answer would have to support either a rebellion against Rome or a rebellion against God. He effectively diffused their trap, while addressing an issue with which the conquered Jews wrestled — paying taxes to Rome (see Mark 12:14, note).

The Scribes accepted only the Torah and thus rejected the Resurrection, which is not mentioned in the Penta-teuch (Acts 23:8; see chart, Jewish Sects). By appealing to levirate marriage (Matt. 22:25–27; see Deut. 25:5, 6, note) in which a brother marries the childless widow of his deceased brother in order to perpetuate the brother’s lineage, the Scribes created a hypothetical worst-case scenario to entrap Jesus. Jesus pointed to their misunderstanding of God’s power and ignorance of Scripture and its teaching on the Resurrection (Matt. 22:29; see Is. 26:19). Though marriage as we know it will not exist in heaven, the lack of sexual relationships will in no way hinder the heavenly happiness and fulfillment God has planned for that blessed place. In fact, all relationships will surely surpass even the most joyous pleasure of intimacy on earth. 22:23–33 The Scribes were experts in both theology and legal matters and thus the crafters of a hotly debated test question for Jesus. Jesus answered by linking the two commandments because the first is not possible without the second (see 1 John 4:20), any more than the second could stand without the first. This wholehearted devotion to God is at the heart of the OT Law and the teachings of Jesus. A right relationship to God is the beginning of everything and produces a right relationship to others.
Prior to this time Jesus had primarily talked about the religious leaders to His disciples and others. In these last confrontations and parables He had dealt with them directly. They have seen Him and heard the truth and now must answer the most important question: “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?”

They said to Him, “The Son of David.”

He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying:

Jesus: How Can David Call His Descendant Lord?

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?”

They have seen Him and heard the truth and now must answer the most important question: “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” “The Son of David” was not a
44 “The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"”?\(^a\)

45 If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?\(^b\) And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

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THE PLEASURE OF SEX, THE COMMUNICATION OF LOVE, AND THE DESIRE FOR CHILDREN ARE UNIQUELY LINKED.

Charlene Kaemmerling

Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees

23 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, \(^2\) saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. \(^3\) Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, \(^4\) that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. \(^4\) For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. \(^5\) But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. \(^6\) They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, \(^7\) greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ \(^8\) But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi;’ for One is your Teacher, the Christ, \(^9\) and you are all brethren. \(^9\) Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. \(^10\) And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. \(^11\) But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. \(^12\) And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. \(^13\) But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. \(^14\) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. \(^15\) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. \(^16\) Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.’ \(^17\) Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies\(^a\) the gold? \(^18\) And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.’ \(^19\) Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? \(^20\) Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. \(^21\) He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells\(^a\) in it. \(^22\) And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. \(^23\) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. \(^24\) Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! \(^25\) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. \(^26\) Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and its phylacteries showpieces, drawing attention to their supposed adherence to Scripture.

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sufficient answer (v. 42). This title was used for the Messiah in reference to descent from the line of David, but many had not understood (or believed) that the Messiah would also be God’s Son.

23:5 Phylacteries were leather boxes containing Scripture. They were worn by Jewish men during prayer time on the arm or the forehead. Biblical commands were written on small scrolls and placed in the OT frontlets or NT phylacteries (Ex. 13:9; 16; Deut. 6:8; 11:18). The Pharisees and scribes made their phylacteries showpieces, drawing attention to their supposed adherence to Scripture.
dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’

30 "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 31 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. 32 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 33 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city. 34 What I prophesied to you in synagogues and in other places, that you must all hear:

35 "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Jesus Laments over Jerusalem

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 Behold! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ "

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

24 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the obvious demands a longer period to transpire: the coming of false prophets, wars and rumors of wars, kingdom rising against kingdom, famine, earthquakes, and the extension of the gospel to the entire world before the kingdom would come literally. The emphasis then would be upon the necessity of faith and obedience even in times of suffering and sorrow rather than on a timetable of events.

24:12 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 24:14 Jesus described the overall future of the world that would include natural disasters, persecution, false prophets, hatred of Christians, betrayal, defection, lawlessness, and lack of love. The gospel would be spread despite all this.
love of many will grow cold. 13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The Great Tribulation
15 “Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ a spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.

23 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand.

26 “Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The Coming of the Son of Man
29 “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree
32 “Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! 34 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour
36 “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, a but My Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.
tered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

45 “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

6 “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; a go out to meet him!’ 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ’Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

11 “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ 12 But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

13 “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

The Parable of the Talents

14 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

24:42 a NU-Text reads day. 24:48 a NU-Text omits his coming. 25:6 a NU-Text omits coming. 25:13 a NU-Text omits the rest of this verse.
MATTHEW 25:20

The Wise and Foolish Virgins

As part of the Olivet Discourse, Jesus told several parables about the importance of being prepared for His Return. For example, He pointed out that His Coming would be unexpected (Matt. 24:42–44) and that His followers would need to maintain a lifestyle of faithful obedience as they wait for Him (vv. 45–51).

The backdrop for Jesus’ next parable was a wedding custom of His day (Matt. 25:1–13). Three events took place: the legal agreement made by the couple’s parents; the procession to the bride’s house by the bridegroom and his friends and the wedding party’s return to the bridegroom’s house; and the subsequent marriage feast. Jesus described the second phase in which the bridegroom and his party come to the bride’s home, where the bride is awaiting him with the 10 virgins who are her bridesmaids. Since the time of his arrival was uncertain, perhaps even after dark, each young woman needed to have both her lamp and an extra flask of oil for it. The five wise virgins were prepared with additional oil, but the foolish ones were not. When the bridegroom suddenly arrived at midnight, the foolish virgins’ lack of preparation was exposed, and they were ultimately denied entrance to the wedding feast.

Jesus’ message is clear: His Coming, like that of the bridegroom in the parable, may be delayed; and the women and men who follow Him need continually to be prepared (v. 13).

See also 1 Thess. 5:1–3; notes on Commitment (Matt. 16); Spiritual Discipline (2 Pet. 3); Weddings (John 2)

20 “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’

21 His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

22 He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’

23 His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

24 “Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

26 “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

29 “For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

31 “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the

25:31–46 The separation of the sheep and goats illustrates a truth. God knows who belongs to Him (see Matt. 13:24). God’s children can be detected in how they treat “the least of these My brethren” (Matt. 25:40). Reaching out to Jesus’ brethren does not enable a person to attain salvation; that comes only through confession of Jesus (Matt. 10:32). Reaching out is a result of salvation because it is a matter of responding to His love by obeying His commands.
26:1, 2 The Passover was an annual celebration of the ceremony Moses instituted the night before the people left Egypt (Ex. 12).  

26:1–46 The Lord’s Passion is described in this section. Jesus prepared His disciples for the trial, sentencing, and crucifixion; His enemies prepared their plans for taking Him; a plot to kill Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”  

26:14 Judas’ motivation for betrayal is not indicated. Perhaps he was offended by Jesus’ earlier rebuke or by the finality of Jesus’ words, which indicated that He would not seek an earthly kingdom; even the money itself could have entered into consideration. In any case, Judas’ decision to betray Jesus stands in sharp contrast to Mary’s devotion.

and an earlier one in Galilee (Luke 7:36). To honor a revered rabbi in this manner was not an uncommon event. The oil was costly (about 300 denarii), worth about a year’s wages (see chart, Money and Measurements in the Bible). Mary of Bethany is identified as the woman (John 12:1–8). Though the text does not actually say Mary fully understood that Jesus was going to die, her actions may indicate she had a better grasp of what was taking place than did the disciples. Jesus understood her act as one of devout preparation and distinguished it as something set apart from mere good works.  

26:2 The Plot to Kill Jesus  

26:38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? 40 And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’  

41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’  

44 Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ 45 Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples

17Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

18And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.’”

19So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

20When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”

21And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?”

22He answered and said, “He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”

23Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?”

He said to him, “You have said it.”

Jesus Institutes the Lord’s Supper

26And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

27Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

30And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

31Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”

32But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”

33Peter answered and said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.”

34Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.”

35Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And so said all the disciples.

The Prayer in the Garden

36Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray over there.”

26:15 Thirty pieces of silver was the value of a male or female slave gored to death accidentally by an ox (Ex. 21:32).
26:17 The first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was the beginning of the Passover celebration. Jews were to rid the house of all leaven and use only unleavened bread during the celebration (Lev. 23:6).
26:24 Though the betrayal by one of the disciples was foretold, Judas was still personally responsible for his actions.
26:26–29 Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper by using two symbols — bread and the fruit of the vine. The unleavened bread was a reminder of the hasty departure of God’s people from Egypt (Ex. 12). Jesus gave the bread new meaning by associating it with His body, which would be broken (Matt. 26:26). This object lesson pointed to His death on the Cross. The original Passover ceremony used several “cups” (Ex. 6:6, 7). Jesus gave new meaning to the cup as well (Matt. 26:28, 29). It would stand for His blood, which would be shed on the Cross. After His Resurrection, this celebration would look back to Jesus’ death on the Cross and forward to His return. The hymn would probably be from one of the Hallel psalms (see Ps. 114–118; see chart, The Types of Psalms). Jesus reminded them there would be a kingdom, and He would be with them again.
26:31 Jesus also referred to Himself as the Shepherd who would give His life for His sheep (John 10:1–15; see also Zech. 13:7).
26:36–44 Gethsemane (lit. “oil press”), the garden located across the Kidron on the Mount of Olives, was likely so named because of the abundance of olive trees. There, in prayer, Jesus fought His greatest battle. The intense sorrow was not primarily over the physical torture or dying, for He had been telling
them for months He was willing to die (vv. 21–23). Rather, it was over needing to experience God’s “cup of wrath.” In the OT God’s cup of wrath was poured out on sinners, resulting in desolation, waste, and becoming a curse (Jer. 25:13–18; 49:12, 13). He, the pure, sinless Son of God, would become sin, which would result in separation between Himself and the Father (2 Cor. 5:21). It was this separation that He dreaded (Matt. 27:46). Because He was obedient, He experienced something no Christian would ever experience — separation from God (Rom. 8:38, 39).

26:47–56 A series of predictions were fulfilled: Judas betrayed Him, the priests and elders seized Him, and the disciples fled. The central character, of course, was Jesus. His amazing calmness and willingness to endure what faced Him reflected the results of His prayer battle in the garden.

Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.”

Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him.

But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?”

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus

And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.”

And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Just as a master craftsman knows how to put a small amount of pressure in the right place at the right time in order to reveal weaknesses, God often uses small things to reveal the weaknesses of an individual.

Peter was sure that he, of all the disciples, would never desert Jesus (Matt. 26:35). He may not have had the sensitivity of John, the literary gifts of Matthew, or the servant’s heart of Andrew, but the one thing he did have was courage. He proved his courage when he swung his sword at the priest’s servant in the Garden of Gethsemane. However, only a few hours later he met the servant girl and denied he ever knew Jesus. What the powerful temple rulers could not make Peter do one moment, a seemingly insignificant servant girl accomplished the next.

The girl’s name or from where she came is unknown. She belonged to the household of the high priest (Mark 14:66), and one of her duties was to meet people at the door (John 18:17). God used her in one brief encounter to put the right amount of pressure at the right time on one of His children in order to bring his weakness to the forefront. Just as with David’s small stone (see 1 Sam. 17:49), God often combines little things with His strength to overpower the weaknesses in the lives of His children.

See also Mark 14:66–68; Luke 22:56, 57; John 18:17; notes on Girlhood (Prov. 1); Testing (Ps. 12); Vows (Num. 30)
and took Him. 51And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out His hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

52But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? 54How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

55In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. 56But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

57And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

59Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses

26:59, 60 The chief priests, the elders, and all the council would constitute the Jews’ highest court, known as the Sanhedrin. Scholars have discussed at length what parts of Jesus’ trials were illegal. For example, the proceedings took place at the high priest’s home rather than the courts; no one spoke for His defense; and the trial was at night. Whether or not these were illegal, the calling of false witnesses certainly was a travesty in legal proceedings.
The Sanhedrin had found Jesus guilty of blasphemy, a capital offense for the Jews, though not for the Romans. The Jews, however, were restricted in carrying out a death penalty. The Romans would have to do executions. The Roman trial eventually centered on Jesus’ kingship — something Rome did take seriously.

Blood money could not be used in the treasury (Deut. 23:18); so they bought a field to be used for the burial of foreigners.

In the first step of a Roman trial, the magistrate listened to the charges and gave the accused opportunity for rebuttal. Pilate asked the first question, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus’ answer was the reason for the inscription later put on the Cross.
while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.

13 Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?”

14 But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

15 Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. 16 And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. 17 Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?” 18 For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.”

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor answered and said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

They said, “Barabbas!”

22 Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”

They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!”

23 Then the governor said, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they cried out all the more, saying, “Let Him be crucified!”

24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.” You see to it.”

25 And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.”

26 Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

27:16 *NU-Text reads Jesus Barabbas. 27:24 *NU-Text omits just.

27:15–20 Pilate obviously thought Jesus was innocent, and he offered His accusers a way out, while not backing down himself. His offer for “Passover amnesty” was rejected. He underestimated their hatred.

Pilate’s Wife

Only one verse in the Bible refers to Pilate’s wife (Matt. 27:19), yet it tells much. She appeared at Jesus’ trials when all Jerusalem was divided over His fate, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” (v. 22). Some were hiding, most were condemning, and a few — almost all women — were following at a distance (vv. 55, 56).

Her husband was on precarious ground. He was not popular with the Jewish people he governed and had few, if any, diplomatic skills (brute force was his style). The danger of rebellion continually bubbled beneath the surface, and Pilate had learned to avoid offending the Jewish leaders unless personally threatened. Releasing Jesus would mean no political gain; in fact, the opposite was true. Yet he tried. Obviously, he was impressed by this man (v. 14) and considered Him innocent (v. 18). Then his wife had a dream.

Whether her dream was divinely inspired or a result of her own feelings is unknown. She was disturbed enough to send a note in the middle of the trial procedures. She described Jesus as a “just Man,” giving a clue to her dream. Convinced of His innocence, she encouraged her husband to an action that was politically unsound.

Did she actually respond to Christ? No evidence is presented. But she had, at least one time in her life, faced the universal decision, “What then shall I do with Jesus?” and responded with conviction and courage.

See also notes on Decision Making (1 Cor. 8); Influence (Esth. 4)
The Crucifixion of Jesus by Pilate is well documented not only in the gospels, but also by non-Christian writers (Tacitus, Josephus, Mara bar Serapion, and Thallus). Crucifixion was a cruel form of death since it did not damage any vital organs or cause excessive bleeding but caused a long, slow death, mostly from asphyxiation or shock. This cruel and humiliating execution was reserved for foreigners, not Roman citizens. It was always a public affair, becoming an especially useful deterrent to those who might be entertaining thoughts of insurrection. The Jews detested this inhumane act of execution, not only for its cruelty, but because the OT clearly stated that anyone who hangs on a tree is “accursed of God” (Deut. 21:22, 23). And Jesus, of course, was accursed by God for our sins (chart, Prophecies Fulfilled at the Cross).

Jesus had many “behind the scene” followers. All four gospels describe a group of women who were devoted to special ministries to the Savior. These women served, supported, and even traveled in order to prepare the way for Jesus and the Twelve. Mary, the mother of James the Less and Joses, was one of these women. In fact, she was one of the few followers (mostly women) who did not desert Jesus at the Cross. She remained for the entire tragic ordeal. Imagine the wrenching of her heart as she helplessly watched the hideous torture, humiliation, and Crucifixion of the One she had found so understanding and gentle.

Staying behind when the crowds left the death scene, she and a few of this loyal group followed Joseph of Arimathea as he took Jesus’ body to the tomb. Though they saw Him die, they could not let Him go — not yet. They needed to know where His body would rest. After the Sabbath, these women spent hours gathering the spices used for burial — they still served Him. With heavy hearts they got up early in the morning, packed the spices, and trudged toward the tomb. When they arrived, there was an eerie silence, not the silence of death but rather of wonder — the tomb was open and empty.

God had honored these faithful women in a special way. At the lowest point of Christianity, Mary and her companions were the first to receive the news that revolutionized the world. Composers, writers, and artists through the centuries have celebrated the message they, alone, heard that morning — “He is risen.”

Mary is a prime example of the reward of faithfulness. Every act of service done for the Master counts.

See also Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1; Luke 24:10; notes on Influence (Esth. 4); Motherhood (1 Sam. 1).
Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.” He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’

Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

Jesus Dies on the Cross

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, “This Man is calling Elijah!” Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

The rest said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.”

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

Jesus Buried in Joseph’s Tomb

Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

Pilate Sets a Guard

On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, “Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come and steal Him and say that He rose from the dead; and the last deception will be worse than the first.” So when the centurion and those with him who guarded Jesus saw the earthquake, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

27:40–43 Jesus stayed on the Cross because He was the Son of God obeying His Father. Had Jesus saved Himself, He would not have been able to save others. The Resurrection demonstrated God’s powerful work in His Son.

27:45 From the sixth hour to the ninth would be from noon until 3:00 in the afternoon. The darkness was a sign of judgment and a reminder that mankind does not know fully what transpired on the Cross. Matthew only stated the reason for His suffering and death.

27:51 The veil of the temple was the heavily woven curtain that hung between the holy place and the Most Holy Place (see Luke 23:45; note; Heb. 9:3). Its presence was a continual reminder of the separation between mankind and God. The author of Hebrews stated that the veil represented Jesus’ body (Heb. 10:19, 20). The tearing signified the removal of the barrier between God and anyone who would accept Jesus’ sacrifice (Heb. 4:16; 6:19).

27:55, 56 The women faithfully stayed through the Crucifixion and followed His body to the tomb (see chart, Women and Jesus in His Last Days).

27:57 Only a rich man could have owned ground so close to the city. Many think Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin who had believed in Christ. He had to be a man of influence in order to approach Pilate.

27:61 Mourning for a victim of a Roman execution was not allowed. The women would have had to grieve silently.
principles come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.”

Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.” So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.
MATTHEW 28:1

The women, not the guards, were addressed by the angel. His first words were to quiet their fears. When Jesus walked on the water and the disciples expressed fear, He told them not to fear (Matt. 14:27). Here the angel again used the Person of Jesus as the reason for dismissing fear. The second thing the angel wanted to make clear was that Resurrection had taken place. No other explanation was possible. The grave was opened not to let Jesus out but to let His followers see that back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

28:2 NU-Text omits from the door.

28 Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

3But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Fear not; for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

4Then go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and behold, He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. This report is first to you.' Then the women went out of the sepulchre, Seizing the spices, and went quickly from the tomb; for they trembled and were amazed; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

WOMEN AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

When Christ gave the Great Commission, He did not consider gender, just as gender is not a consideration when the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts. God has chosen every believing woman to carry His message to her sphere of influence as she is filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit and anointed and equipped with His power (Acts 1:8). The mission of every believer in Jesus Christ is to communicate to the world who Jesus is and to extend to all His offer of salvation and spiritual refuge. Jesus has commissioned all believers to go to the most distant and remote points of the earth—as well as to their neighbors next door—to reach the lost with the gospel message of redemption and reconciliation. We are to make the Savior known:

- through the spoken word (Rom. 10:14, 15),
- through good works (James 2:14–17),
- through the example of a new character (Matt. 5:16, 20).

The single woman, the wife, the mother, the grandmother, the widow are called to “go into all the world.” “Going” does not necessarily mean leaving home and family, but it does mean making yourself totally available to serve wherever, whenever, and however He directs. The foremost manifestation of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life is that she will be a witness of the Lord’s life and commandments (Acts 1:8). She is to be ready at all times to speak His name, tell of His marvelous works, give a defense of the reason for our hope, and tell others about His sacrifice and the abundant life He provides now and for all eternity (1 Pet. 3:15).

The New Testament gives certain requirements for soul-winning. The first, of course, is a genuine experience of grace through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1–3). A love for Christ and for people is also essential (Ps. 126:6), as is a willingness to be used by the Holy Spirit in sharing the gospel (Acts 8:29). An effective soul-winner will determine to live a separated life (2 Cor. 6:17) since lifestyle testimony is also a key ingredient. Creativity in using every opportunity for saying a word about Christ is also helpful (1 Pet. 3:15), as is a diligence in the study of God’s Word, which enables the believer to explain more effectively the way of salvation (Ps. 51:13; 1 Pet. 2:2). All must be undergirded with specific and unceasing prayer (1 Thess. 5:17). Any woman willing to commit herself to this high and holy responsibility will indeed be rewarded (Dan. 12:3).

When unbelievers see those in the church generously giving their time, resources, and love to carry out the Great Commission, they are compelled to glorify the Father (Matt. 5:16).

See also 1 Pet. 3:15; notes on Evangelism (John 6; Col. 4; 1 Pet. 3); Salvation (Eph. 2); Spiritual Gifts (Rom. 12); Women’s Ministries (John 4; Acts 2; 1 Cor. 11; Eph. 2; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 2); portrait of The Samaritan Woman (John 4).
women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.”

So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

The Women Worship the Risen Lord

9And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “Rejoice!” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. 10Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.”

The Soldiers Are Bribed

11Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’ 14And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.”

They took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The Great Commission

16Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. 17When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

18And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

I LIKE TO DEFINE FORGIVENESS AS “GIVING UP THE RIGHT TO PUNISH THE ONE WHO HAS HURT YOU.” THAT'S WHAT JESUS DID ON THE CROSS.

Jan Silvious

[28:9] NU-Text omits the first clause of this verse.