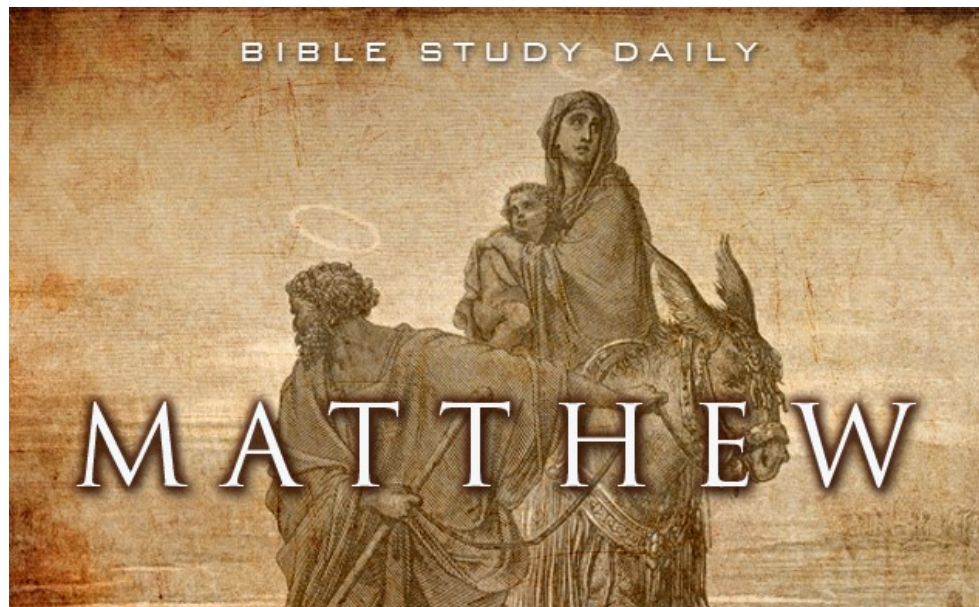




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Matthew as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The title “Matthew” comes from the name of the book’s author. Matthew means “Gift of God.”

Author

Matthew is the accepted author of the Gospel of Matthew although Matthew does not specifically identify himself as the author. One of the most telling signs of Matthew’s authorship is his focus on money, statistics, and numbers in general. This aligns well with his occupation as a tax collector.

Genre

Gospel

Literary Form

Narrative. The Gospel of Matthew includes five significant sections of Discourse: 5:1-7:29, 10:1-42, 13:1-58, 18:1-35, and 24:1-25:46.

Time Frame


Matthew records the life of Jesus from His birth in 4 B.C. through His crucifixion and resurrection in 33 A.D. It is impossible to date the writing of the Gospel of Matthew with certainty. Most scholars accept a date range of between 50-70 A.D.

Emphasis

The emphasis of the Gospel of Matthew is on presenting Jesus as King of the people of God. Matthew is a bridge or a gateway between the Old and New Testaments. It has the strongest connection to the Old Testament as Matthew presents the unfolding of God’s plan and the fulfillment of prophecy in the life of Jesus Christ.

Outline

1. Birth and Infancy of Jesus (1:1-2:23)
2. Jesus ministry begins (3:1-4:25)
3. Jesus teaches the disciples (5:1-7:29)
4. Jesus’ authority and power (8:1-9:38)
5. Disciples and their ministry begins (10:1-10:42)
6. Responses to Jesus’ ministry (11:1-12:50)
7. Jesus’ parables describing the Kingdom (13:1-13:58)
8. Jesus ministry ends in Galilee (14:1-17:27)
9. The character of the disciples (18:1-18:35)

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10. Jesus' ministry on the way to Jerusalem (19:1-20:34)
 11. Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem (21:1-23:39)
 12. Jesus' prophecies about His return and the end of the age (24:1-25:46)
 13. Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion (26:1-27:66)
 14. Jesus' resurrection (28:1-28:20)

What I Noticed Today (Matthew 1-4)

Matthew 1

In verse 1 Matthew declares Jesus Christ as the focus of the book beginning with His lineage traced through Abraham and David.

In verses 2-17 Mathew presents the genealogy of Jesus through his legal father Joseph. Matthew establishes Jesus as King.

- Abraham through David vv. 2-6a
- David through to Josiah vv. 6b- 11
- Jechoniah through to Joseph vv. 12-16

There were 14 generations listed from Abraham to David, 14 generations from David to Josiah and the deportation to Babylon, and 14 generations from Jechoniah to Jesus.

Note: There are four unusual aspects of the genealogy presented by Matthew: 1) it includes women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary. Typically Jews only trace lineage through the men.), 2) it includes bad people, 3) it includes Gentiles, and 4) it includes Rahab, a Gentile woman who was a prostitute.

Note: The listing says “the father of” all the way up to Mary which says “of whom Jesus was born,” indicating Mary as Jesus’ physical mother, but not Joseph as the physical father.


In verses 18-25 the birth of Jesus is described. Mary and Joseph were betrothed (engaged).

Note: In Jewish tradition, marriages were arranged. Once the “contract” was agreed to the man and woman were betrothed, and considered married. They were referred to as husband and wife but did not live together or have sexual relations. The betrothal period was one-year after which a marriage ceremony was conducted and the couple would begin their married life together.

During the one-year betrothal period, Mary was found to be with child although she remained pure. Joseph decided to divorce her quietly but was told by an angel that the child was from the Holy Spirit. *This fulfilled Isaiah 7:14: a virgin will conceive a son and his name will be Immanuel (which means God with us).*

Matthew 2

In verses 1-12 Jesus’ infancy is described.



In verses 2-6 Jesus was born in Bethlehem during the days of King Herod. Wise men (gentiles) from the east came to Jerusalem asking where the king of the Jews was because they came to worship him.

Note: King Herod ruled from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C. Since Jesus was born during Herod's rule Jesus had to have been born during or before 4 B.C.

Herod was troubled by this. He assembled all the chief priests and scribes asking where this child was born. They answered quoting Micah 5:2, a ruler who will shepherd the people of Israel will come from Bethlehem.

In verses 7-12 Herod secretly gathered the wise men together asking when the star had first appeared, told them to go find this child so he could go worship the child. The wise men followed the star to Bethlehem, found Jesus, fell down and worshiped him. They gave offerings of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then after being warned in a dream not to return to Herod then left to return home.

Note: The Hebrew word translated house in verse 11 indicates they were living in a house, not a "stable" as indicated in Luke 2.

Note: The three gifts offered by the wise men are significant: gold signifies his kingship, frankincense his priestly role, and myrrh is death (myrrh used for embalming).

In verses 13-15 an angel appeared to Joseph telling him to take the family to Egypt because Herod was going to search for the child in order to kill him. Joseph complied leaving leavening Egypt immediately. *This fulfilled Hosea 11:1.*

In verses 16-18 Herod realized the wise men had tricked him, and ordered all boys in Bethlehem under two years old to be killed (presumably when the star appeared to the wise men). *This fulfilled Jeremiah 31:15.*

In verses 19-23 After Herod died an angel appeared telling Joseph it was safe to return so he brought his family back to Israel, settling in Galilee in the city of Nazareth.

Note: Matthew 2:23 refers to Nazareth as a fulfillment of what the prophets said. There is no direct Biblical reference to the prophets saying Jesus would be from Nazareth. However Isaiah 4:2 and 11:1 refer to Jesse's "branch." The Hebrew word for branch includes the consonants *nzr* which are also in the word Nazareth

Matthew 3

Matthew 3 skips over the next thirty or so years of Jesus life resuming with the ministry of John the Baptist.

In verses 1-3 John the Baptist in the wilderness of Judea preached a message of repentance for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. *This fulfilled Isaiah 40:3.*

In verses 4-10 many of the people came to John to be baptized. However, the

Pharisees and Sadducees who heard him rejected his message.

In verses 11-12 John carried the message of repentance but believed he was unworthy to carry the sandals of the one who was coming (Jesus). While John baptized with water, Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John also warned that Jesus would winnow (separate) the wheat from the chaff (the believers from the unbelievers) and the chaff would be burned up (Malachi 4:1).

In verses 13-17 Jesus met John at the Jordan river and asked John to baptize him. When Jesus was baptized and came up out of the water the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove, and a voice from heaven announced, this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

Note: John recognized that Jesus did not need to be baptized because his baptism was a baptism of repentance of confessing sins and Jesus was without sin.

Note: The heavens opening, the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice of God are all validations of the Jesus as Messiah the Son of God, and mark the beginning of his earthly ministry.

Note: All three aspects of the Godhead are present at Jesus' baptism: God the Father who speaks to His Son, and the Holy Spirit who descends on Jesus.

Matthew 4

Matthew 4 records the temptation of Christ by Satan.

In verses 1-2 Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert (wilderness) to be tempted (tested) by Satan. After fasting 40 days and nights Jesus was hungry.

Note: It is interesting that Jesus did not get hungry during the fast but *after* the 40 days and nights. Also, note the parallel with the spirit who led the people of Israel out of Egypt into the wilderness for 40 years.

In verses 3-4 Satan challenged Jesus to turn the stones into loaves of bread. Jesus answered quoting Deuteronomy 8:3.

In verses 5-7 Satan took Jesus to Jerusalem to the pinnacle of the temple and said throw yourself down the angels will protect you. Jesus answered quoting Deuteronomy 6:16.

Note: In tempting Jesus, Satan quoted from Psalm 91:11-12 taking the verse out of context (Satan is the deceiver!).

In verses 8-11 In Satan's third test, Satan took Jesus to a high mountain showing him all the kingdoms of the world promising that if Jesus would worship him he would give these kingdoms to Jesus. Jesus answered quoting Deuteronomy 6:13, and 10:20.



With that Satan left Jesus and the angels came to minister to him.

Note: Satan's temptations of Jesus are similar in nature to his temptations of Eve. Satan tempted both with an appeal to their physical appetite, with an appeal to personal gain, and with an appeal to power.

In verses 12-17 Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been imprisoned so Jesus left Nazareth and went to Capernaum in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali. *This fulfilled Isaiah 9:12.* Jesus' public ministry began as he preached repentance for the kingdom of God is at hand.

In verses 18-22 Jesus called the first disciples Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew who were fishermen, to become fishers of men. Immediately they left their nets and began to follow Jesus. From there Jesus called James the son of Zebedee and his brother John who were also fishermen and they also left their nets and boats and immediately followed Jesus.

Note: This was not Jesus first meeting with these men. See John 1:35-42.

In verses 23:25 Jesus went throughout all of Galilee *teaching* in the synagogues, *proclaiming* the gospel, and *healing* disease. News of his ministry spread throughout Syria (north of Galilee). Jesus healed all those who came to him. As a result of his ministry great crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem and Judea, and the region west across the Jordan river.

Note: The reference to "Decapolis" is a region of 10 largely Gentile cities south of the Sea of Galilee. It is important to note even in the beginning Jesus' ministry was to both Jews and Gentiles.

What I Noticed Today (Matthew 5-6)

Matthew 5

Chapters 5-7 are Jesus's first discourse or teaching.

In verse 1 seeing the crowds following him (continued from chapter 4) Jesus sat down and taught the disciples.

In verses 2-12 Jesus teaches the disciples what is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. Blessed are...

- The poor in spirit (v. 3). Be humble with an honest view of ourselves.
- Those who mourn (v. 4). God will bring comfort.
- The meek (v. 5). Surrender to God's authority.
- Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (v. 6). Always seek righteousness.
- The merciful (v. 7). Show mercy to others.
- The pure in heart (v. 8). Real righteousness that derives from a pure heart brings you close to God.
- The peacemakers (v. 9). Resolve conflict, and do not seek revenge.
- Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (v. 10). Those who live righteous lives can expect persecution.
- Those who are reviled and persecuted falsely on account of Jesus (v. 11). Expect others to lie about you when you follow Christ.

Rejoice and be glad that our reward is in heaven. Believers will be persecuted just as the prophets were persecuted.

Note: Jesus is teaching about the attitudes and life of a righteous believer. These stand in stark contrast to the scribes and Pharisees of the Old Testament. Note also the general progression of the attitudes. They begin with our attitude toward ourselves (v. 3), our attitude toward our sin (vv. 4-6), our attitude toward God (vv. 7-9), and our attitude toward the world (vv. 10-11).

In verses 13-16 Jesus compares believers to salt and light. Salt that loses its taste cannot be made salty again. A light is not hidden under a basket but put on a table so it gives light to the house. In the same way, we should not hide our "light" but let it shine before others so they will see it and be drawn to Jesus.

This is so important for us as believers today! As Christians we represent

Christ. People judge Christianity by our actions. We need to be model Christ!

In verses 17-20 Pharisees were concerned that Jesus was there to abolish the Law, but He said no, He came to fulfill the Law. Jesus said to the contrary those who relax the Law will be the least in heaven but those who teach the Law will be called great

In verses 21-48 Jesus gives examples of six Old Testament Law and how believers should live. Each contains the phrase, "But I say..."

- Murder/Anger (vv. 21-26, Exodus 20:13).
- Adultery/Lust (vv. 27-30, Exodus 20:14).
- Divorce/Divorce (vv. 31-32, Deuteronomy 24:1).
- Oaths/Swearing (vv. 33-37, Leviticus 19:12).
- Retaliation/Retaliation (vv. 38-42, Leviticus 24:19-22).
- Love your Enemies/Love Your Enemies (vv. 43-48, Leviticus 19:17-18).

Note: This section (vv. 21-48) is known as the "Six Antithesis."

Matthew 6

In chapter 6 Jesus provides three principles regarding our worship of God (vv. 1-18), and two principles regarding our relationship to material possessions (19-34).

- Giving to the poor (vv. 1-4). Give out of your heart without making a fuss to gain attention to yourself.
- The Lord's Prayer (vv. 5-15). Pray privately, sincerely, for God's will in our lives, in a spirit of forgiveness to others.
- Fasting (vv. 16-18). Do not make a show of your fasting to gain attention for pious behavior.
- Laying up treasures in Heaven (vv. 19-24). Do not let material gain become the focus of your life, but invest in the Kingdom. Being focused on the accumulation of wealth for wealth's sake makes it impossible to focus on the riches of Heaven.
- Do not be anxious (vv. 25-34). Worrying about tomorrow doesn't change a thing, but it causes a loss of joy today!

Note: The issue of hypocrisy is seen in verses 2, 5, and 16 (giving to the poor, praying, and fasting).

What I Noticed Today (Matthew 7-9)

Matthew 7

Chapter 7 examines three major themes: 1) judging ourselves, 2) judging oth-

ers, and 3) judging the Lord.

In verses 1-6 Jesus warns us not to judge others with a different standard than we use to judge ourselves (take the log out of your own eye, before you worry about the speck in your brother's eye).

Taking the speck out of our own eye will enable us to see so we can help others.

In verses 7-11 Jesus tells the disciples ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, and knock and it will be opened for you.

Note: The words ask, seek, and knock are in present tense which in Greek implies continuous action: keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking. Don't stop! God wants to hear from us and He wants to provide good gifts for us.

Note: Some take this verse out of context and make God seem like a genie in a bottle, ask and you will receive, but note that what God gives us are good gifts. They are what God knows we need, not necessarily what we want or ask for.

In verses 12-14 Jesus proclaims what we call the Golden Rule as this is a summary of the Law. In so doing Jesus also warns the way to righteousness (Jesus' teaching) is narrow, the way to destruction (the teaching of the Pharisees) is broad.

In verses 15-23 Jesus warns about the false prophets who appear as sheep but are really wolves. He said you can tell who is a false teacher by their fruit: those who are good produce good fruit, those who are bad produce thorns and thistles. Jesus warns not everyone who proclaims His name driving out demons is good if they are not obedient to the Father.

In verses 24-27 Jesus closes this instruction to the disciples with a call to action in the form of a parable. Everyone who has heard His words and does them is wise, building on a solid foundation. Those who hear and reject Him are foolish, like a man who builds a house on a foundation of sand.


Matthew 8

In chapter 8 Jesus displays the power of the Son of God as a way of convincing those who were following him that He was who He said He was with five dramatic miracles.

In verses 1-4 as Jesus came down from the mountain, a leper presented himself to Jesus asking to be cleansed. Jesus healed his leprosy and told him to present himself to the priests as proof of the cleansing.

Note: In the history of Israel no one had ever been cured of leprosy. By sending the man to the priests Jesus provided a testimony to his claims.

In verses 5-13 a Roman centurion (an officer commanding 100 soldiers) presented himself to Jesus and asked for his paralyzed servant to be healed. The



centurion's faith was so great that he believed Jesus could heal just by speaking the command to be healed. The man was healed the moment Jesus spoke the command.

In verses 14-17 Jesus entered Peter's house and found Peter's mother-in-law sick. Her fever left her when Jesus touched her. Later that evening many came to be healed and to have demons cast out, and He healed them all. *This was in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4-6.*

In verses 18-22 a scribe (a teacher of the Law) approached Jesus and said he would follow him, but Jesus said he did not even have a place to lay his head.

I believe Jesus knew the man's objective was to gain prominence by following a man of prominence and wanted only those who followed Him out of belief in who He was, the Son of Man.

A second man, already a disciple, said he would follow Jesus, but needed to bury his father first. Jesus told the man to follow him and let the dead bury their own dead.

The man's father was not dead. He thought he could go home until his father died and then begin to follow Jesus. Jesus said those who are spiritually dead could bury those who are physically dead.

In verses 23-27 Jesus and the disciples set sail across the sea of Galilee. As he slept a great storm rose up and Jesus rebuked the wind and the seas and brought calm.

The men's question what sort of man is this was answered by what Jesus had done. He had demonstrated his power over the forces of nature as only the Creator could.


In verses 28-34 Jesus and the disciples arrived across the sea in the region of Gadarenes (some translations say Gergesenes or Garasenes). Two demon possessed men presented themselves to Jesus. The demons recognized and referred to Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus cast the demons out of the men into a nearby herd of pigs who then drowned themselves in the sea. When the people of the city heard what had happened they all came out to meet Jesus and begged him to leave their region.

The people were more concerned with maintaining their possessions (not losing any more of their pigs) than their own salvation.

Note: Gedarenes is in the region of the tribe of Gad. If these people were Jews they had no business being in the pig business (Leviticus 11:17, pigs are unclean).

Matthew 9

In verses 1-8 Jesus sailed back across the sea arriving at Capernaum ("his own town"). Some men brought a paralytic man lying on a mat. Jesus saw their faith so he forgave the man's sins. Some scribes (teachers of the law) accused him of blaspheming (only God can forgive sins). Jesus was claiming



divine authority when he referred to himself as the Son of Man. Since healing the man physically could not be disputed Jesus also healed the man. When the crowds saw it they were afraid and glorified God.

In verses 9-13 Jesus calls Matthew the tax collector to be a disciple. Jesus ate with Matthew, other tax collectors, and sinners. The Pharisees chided Jesus for eating with such people but Jesus responded the well don't need doctors, only the sick do. I desire mercy not sacrifice. I came to call sinners, not the righteous.

Note: Tax collectors were viewed as traitors to their faith because they were collecting taxes on behalf of the Romans and their income came from collecting more than they had to turn over to Rome.

Note: Pharisees did not think of themselves as sinners so they would not have sought out Jesus, the Great Physician. Pharisees were all about their sacrifices thinking that made them righteous, but they neglected to show mercy to those who needed it.


In verses 14-17 disciples of John came and asked Jesus why they and the Pharisees fast but your disciples do not. Jesus replied people do not fast at a wedding when the bridegroom is with them. In this way Jesus was describing himself as the bridegroom and the followers as the bride.

In his next example of the wineskins, Jesus was comparing his ministry to that Jewish traditional religion. Jesus was not trying to "patch" Judaism, He was bringing a new belief and a new relationship with God.

In verses 18-38 Jesus performs four miracles:

- The girl brought back to life (vv. 18-19 & 23-26). A ruler of the synagogue (from Mark 5:22 we know this is Jairus) came to Jesus to heal his dying daughter. It is interesting that Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came to Jesus for healing!
- Woman with the issue of blood (vv. 20-22). This woman had suffered for twelve years but had faith that just touching Jesus clothing would be enough to heal her.
- Two blind men (vv. 27-31) came to Jesus addressing him as the Son of Man asking to have their sight restored. Despite warning the men not to tell anyone His fame spread throughout the region.
- A man unable to speak (vv. 32-34) was mute because of demon possession was brought to Jesus who cast out the demon enabling the man to speak. While the crowds marveled because no one had ever done this before the Pharisees said Jesus was casting out demons because he was the prince of demons (Satan).

In verses 35-38 (nearly a repetition of Matthew 4:23) Jesus' three-fold ministry is described as teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the Gospel, and healing all kinds of sicknesses. He saw the people as helpless, without a shepherd (leader) to guide them in spiritual matters.



And to the disciples Jesus said the harvest is plentiful, but there were few laborers to bring in the harvest. He told them to pray the Lord to send additional workers to bring in the harvest.

Note: In the example of the harvest Jesus referred to himself as “Lord of the Harvest” but said he could not do the work of bringing in the harvest himself. That work of bringing in the harvest fell to His disciples then and to us as Christians today.

Some important principles in chapters 8-9:

- *God cares about us as individuals (He healed individuals).*
- *He can meet our every need (He has the power raise the dead, heal the sick, calm the sea).*
- *He responds to our faith (the example of the centurion).*
- *He cares about our salvation more than anything.*
- *He has called us, as believers, to join with Him in building the Kingdom.*

What I Noticed Today (Matthew 10-11)

Matthew 10

Chapter 10 is Jesus' second discourse or teaching.

In verses 1-4 Jesus calls the disciples together and commissions them with the authority to cast out unclean spirits and heal every disease.

Note: Whenever the lists of the apostles are given Simon Peter is listed first and Judas is last.

Note: The word "disciple" means "learner." The word "apostle" means "one sent forth to represent an official." The disciples became apostles when Jesus commissioned them and sent them out.

In verses 5-15 Jesus directs the apostles to proclaim the Gospel to the people of Israel and avoid the Gentiles and Samaritans.

Note: Samaritans in this time were half-breeds due to intermarriage with Gentiles after Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C.

As they went the apostles were not to carry money, supplies, extra clothing, or even a walking stick. They were to be completely dependent on the Lord to provide for them. When they entered a city they were to stay with those who were worthy (accepted the Gospel message), and if anyone would not listen they were to shake the dust off of their feet and move on.

Note: It was a tradition for Jews to shake the dust off of their feet after visiting a pagan land and before re-entering Israel. The apostles shaking the dust off of their feet marked that family (or town) as pagan; one who had rejected Christ.

Verse 15 transitions to the day of judgment in the end times.

In verses 16-23 Jesus warns the apostles about the response they will encounter as they spread the gospel. He said they would be like sheep among wolves and cautioned them to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves. Jesus said they would be dragged before governors and kings to bear witness to them and the Gentiles. They should not worry about what they were to say, the Lord would guide them through the Spirit. Jesus went on to warn them to expect betrayal and hatred by their own families. As soon as they faced persecution in one town they were to move on to another. Even then they would not be able to reach all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man would come.

Note: the reference to the Son of Man is to the end times. The idea that the apostles would not reach all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man returns suggests they would not be able to reach all the towns through-



out the world where the Jews had been scattered.

In verses 24-33 Jesus encourages the apostles saying it is enough for them to be like their teacher (a student is not above the teacher).

Note: Beelzebub is a name for Satan and means “lord of the flies.”

Jesus goes on to encourage them, explaining that they need not be afraid of those who can kill the body but fear those who can also kill the soul. Anyone who acknowledges Jesus before men, Jesus will acknowledge before the Father, but whoever denies Jesus before men, Jesus will deny before the Father.

In verses 34-39 Jesus warns that division will occur within families as soon choose to follow Him and others choose to reject Him. Jesus said His disciples must be willing to pick up their cross and follow Him. They must be willing to die for Him.

Note: In the Roman world a convicted criminal was often forced to carry their own crosses to their deaths as a sign of their guilt. Do we pick up our cross in such a way that we can be seen as “guilty” of being a Christ follower?

In verses 40-42 Jesus speaks of the rewards of discipleship. The one who receives a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, the one who receives a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward. Even the simple act of offering a cup of cold water to a disciple, because he is a disciple, will be worthy of a heavenly reward.

Some important principles in this chapter:

- *Whom God calls, God equips.*
- *Don’t expect life as a Christian to be without persecution and trials.*
- *We have nothing to fear from man as we serve our Lord.*
- *Every act of service done for the Kingdom is noticed and will be rewarded in Heaven.*

Matthew 11

In verse 1 Jesus had finished instructing the disciples and left them to teach and preach in their cities.

In verses 2-6 John the Baptist sends a messenger to Jesus from his prison cell asking if Jesus is the One. Jesus tells the messenger to tell John about what they themselves had seen and heard (the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the dead brought back to life, and the Gospel preached). These miracles were evidence that Jesus was indeed the Messiah (Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 61:1).

In verses 7-15 Jesus taught the crowd about John the Baptist. John, said Jesus, was a true prophet, Jesus’ own messenger as prophesied in Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. Although John was the greatest man on earth, the least man



in heaven will be greater.

The kingdom of heaven had suffered violence due to religious leaders who had rejected John's claims about the Messiah and persecuted believers.

In verses 16-19 Jesus compared the current generation to children in the marketplace complaining that they played the flute and no one danced, and they played a dirge and no one mourned. They claimed John was a demon because he didn't eat or drink, and claimed the Son of Man was a glutton and drunkard because he ate and drank. Wisdom eluded them or they would have accepted John's message about Jesus.

In verses 20-24 Jesus began to denounce cities (Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum) where He had done His greatest works yet they did not repent and believe. It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for these cities because they had seen Jesus' miracles and still rejected Him.

In verses 25-30 Jesus prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father for all those who would hear His message and turn to Him. Jesus called all who were weary and heavy-laden to come to Him. His burden was light and they would find rest. His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

Note: Animals (commonly oxen) were frequently yoked together to plow a field. Jesus is saying His yoke is easy and His burden light in contrast to the yoke of the Jewish leaders, which imposed a heavy burden on the people.

What I Noticed Today (Matthew 12)

Matthew 12

In verses 1-2 Jesus and the disciples were walking through a grain field, and being hungry they plucked the heads of grain to eat. The Pharisees saw this and immediately complained that Jesus and the disciples were breaking the Law by working on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11).

Note: Pharisees considered picking the grain as reaping, rubbing the grain between the hands as threshing, and blowing away the chaff as winnowing. Reaping, threshing, and winnowing were all defined as work and illegal on the Sabbath.

In verses 3-8 Jesus refuted the Pharisees claim with three examples:

- David ate the consecrated bread (1 Samuel 21:1-6).
- The priests worked on the Sabbath (Numbers 28:9-10).
- Jesus said He was Lord of the Sabbath and He decides what is allowed and what is not. Jesus quoted from Hosea 6:6 reminding the Pharisees that God desired mercy more than sacrifice.

In verses 9-14 Jesus arrived at the synagogue on the Sabbath, and there was a man with a shriveled hand there. The Pharisees attempting to trap Jesus asked if it was legal to heal on the Sabbath. Jesus said it was legal to do good on the Sabbath. A man would rescue a sheep from a pit and men were more valuable to God than sheep. So Jesus healed the man. Instead of being convinced by Jesus' argument the Pharisees plotted against him planning to destroy him.


In verses 15-21 Jesus withdrew from the Pharisees. Many people followed him, and he healed them all but ordered them not to say anything. This fulfilled Isaiah 42:1-4.

Note: In verses 18 the three elements of the Godhead are in view (the Trinity): God the Father, who spoke regarding His servant Jesus, who was imbued with the Holy Spirit.

In verses 22-24 A blind and mute demon-possessed man was brought to Jesus and Jesus healed him. When the Pharisees hear about it, they said it was through the power of Beelzebub (Satan) that Jesus was able to cast out the demons.

In verses 25-29 Jesus, knowing their thoughts, responded no kingdom that is divided against itself will survive. Jesus asked by what power their judges cast out demons, was it Satan or God.

Note: By driving out demons Jesus demonstrated that he was



stronger than Satan (who can enter a strong man's house without first binding him).

If Jesus were driving out demons by Satan's power why would he drive out one of his own demons? Also, if Jesus was driving out demons by Satan's power why would he be preaching about the kingdom of God?

In verses 30-33 Jesus then called the people to make a decision. They were either with Him or against Him. Attributing Jesus's acts to the power of Satan was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Every sin would be forgiven except for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

In verses 33-37 Jesus declared that a tree is known by its fruit. Good trees produce good fruit. He referred to the Pharisees as a brood of vipers who could not say anything good because they were evil. On the day of judgment they will be held accountable for every careless word.

In verses 38-42 some scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus to perform another miracle (they had already witnessed and heard about many of Jesus' miracles). Jesus answered they were wicked for asking for another sign except for the sign of Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and nights, just as the Son of Man will be in the earth for three days and nights. Jesus said even the people of Nineveh repented when they heard Jonah preaching. The queen of the south repented when she heard Solomon's wisdom. Jesus was greater than Jonah or Solomon.

Note: The queen of the south is the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13).

Note: The pagan nation of the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba were more responsive to the word of God, than were the Jews, God's chosen people.

In verses 43-45 Jesus compared the Pharisees to a man with an unclean spirit. The man cleans up his life but the unclean spirit returns and brings more spirits with it and the man is worse off than before. They had attempted to follow God's Law, but by their own power, without the power of God, and so, in the end, they were targets for Satan.

In verse 46-50 Jesus family stood outside to asking to speak to him. Jesus responded that whoever does the will of the Father is His brother and sister. Jesus was saying His spiritual family was valued even more than His physical family.

Some things for additional thought in this chapter:

- *Jesus faced hostility from established leaders because he challenged their belief system.*
- *Many leaders Jesus faced were hypocrites; they made a show of following God, but their hearts were far from Him.*
- *Jesus warned about being indecisive. You are either with Him or against Him, and if you are against Jesus you are for Satan.*

What I Noticed Today (Matthew 13-14)

Matthew 13

Chapter 13 is Jesus' third discourse or teaching.

In verses 1-3 Large crowds followed Jesus by the Sea of Galilee. He got into a boat and went out from shore to teach them.

Note: For the first time Jesus used parables as a teaching method. Parable means "to throw alongside." A parable compares a known truth with an unknown truth. There are seven parables in chapter 13.

In verses 3-9 the parable of the sower. A farmer casts his seed and it falls on four different kinds of soil with different results.

In verses 10-17 the disciples asked Jesus why he was teaching with parables. Jesus said he was using parables to reveal the truth (the secrets of the kingdom of heaven) to those who were willing to listen and accept, and to hide the truth from those who rejected His truth.


In verses 18-23 Jesus explains the meaning of the parable of the sower. The farmer casting his seed on the ground is like the condition of people's hearts when they hear the Gospel: some have the Word snatched away as soon as they hear it, some hear and rejoice but have no foundation and fall away when persecution arises, one hears but cares more for the world and its riches, and the last person hears the word understands it and bears fruit.

In verses 24-30 the parable of the weeds in which a farmer sowed good seed but an enemy came along at night and planted bad seed amongst the good. The good plants sprouted alongside the bad. The bad cannot be removed without disturbing the good so they will be separated at harvest. The weeds will be gathered first and burned, the good will then be gathered and stored.

In verses 31-35 the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven teach the same principle. A small mustard seed sprouts and becomes the largest plant in the garden. A small amount of leaven will leaven a whole lump of dough.

In verses 36-43 the parable of the weeds is explained. The man who sows the good seed is the Son of Man (Jesus). The field is the world. The good seed represents the sons of the kingdom (believers). The weeds are the sons of the evil one (Satan). The harvest is the judgment that will occur in the end times. The Son of Man will send angels who will gather all the causes of sin and throw them into the fiery furnace. Then the righteous will shine like the sun.

In verse 44 the parable of the hidden treasure describes a man who finds a treasure hidden in a field so he goes and sells everything he has in order to buy the field.



Note: Since Jesus did not explain this parable there are multiple interpretations. One interpretation is that Israel is God's treasured possession (Exodus 19:5) so Israel is the field that is redeemed (purchased) by Jesus' death on the cross. Another interpretation is broader, suggesting that the Church is the treasured possession that was redeemed by Jesus' death on the cross.

In verses 45-46 the parable of the pearl of great price is similar to the previous parable in that a merchant finds a pearl of great value and sells everything he has in order to purchase the pearl.

Note: Jesus did not explain this parable either. Its close proximity to the previous parable and similar emphasis suggest similar interpretations.

In verses 47-50 the parable of the net describes a fishing net thrown into the sea. As the net is pulled up good fish were caught along with bad fish. The fisherman sorted the fish, keeping the good and throwing away the bad. In the end days, angels will come and separate the good from the bad. The bad will be thrown into a fiery furnace.

In verses 51-52 Jesus asked the disciples if they understood what He had been teaching and they answered, yes. Jesus then said they were in a better position to teach about the Law than the scribes and Pharisees because they had been exposed not only to the old truths (the Old Testament) but to new ones (Jesus' teachings).

In verses 53-58 Jesus left the Sea of Galilee and returned to his hometown of Nazareth where he taught in the synagogue. While the people were amazed at His teaching they still rejected him saying He was only the son of a carpenter. Because of their lack of faith, Jesus performed only a few miracles there.

Note: Jesus' three half-brothers mentioned (James, Simon, and Judas) are not to be confused with the disciples of the same names.

Matthew 14


In verses 1-12 Herod Antipas ruled as tetrarch over the region that included Galilee and Perea. Herod had heard about the miracles and teaching of Jesus and thought that John the Baptist had risen from the dead.

Note: From this point on the majority of Jesus' teaching was directed to His disciples.

Note: Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great who killed the babies in Bethlehem.

Note: A tetrarch was two steps below the position of king.

Herod Antipas had previously arrested John the Baptist and put him in prison because John confronted Herod about sleeping with his brother Philip's wife Herodias. John was executed (beheaded) because his step-daughter asked him (at the prompting of her mother Herodias) to bring the head of



John on a platter.

In verses 13-21 when Jesus heard of John's death, He withdrew to a quiet place, but the crowds followed Him and having sympathy for them He healed them. In the evening His disciples came suggesting they send the crowd away. Jesus said there was no need to send them away to buy food. Jesus took five loaves of bread and two fish, prayed over the bread and fish and then gave them to the disciples to distribute to the crowd. They all ate and the disciples collected twelve baskets of leftovers (one basket for each of the twelve disciples!).

Note: From Luke 9:10 we know this took place in Bethsaida.

Note: Verse 21 says about five thousand men were fed. With wives and children, the number of total people fed was likely around 20,000.

In verses 22-33 After feeding the people Jesus ordered the disciples to get in the boat and go to the other side of the sea of Galilee while he went by himself to pray. As evening approached a storm came up on the lake. Sometimes between 3am and 6am (the fourth watch) Jesus came to the disciples in the boat walking on the water. At first, they did not recognize Him and were afraid, but Jesus comforted them.

Peter asked to walk on the water with Jesus and Jesus said, come. Peter got out of the boat and began walking toward Jesus but he took his eyes off of Jesus and began to sink. Peter cried out for the Lord to save him and Jesus reached out His hand to Peter. Jesus rebuked Peter for his lack of faith.

Note: I wonder what the rest of disciples were thinking when all this happened? After all, Peter was the first and only one at this point who had enough faith to believe that Jesus really was the Son of God.

As soon as they were back in the boat the wind stopped, they worshiped Jesus exclaiming surely He was the Son of God.

In verses 34-36 Jesus and the disciples reached Gennesaret. The people there recognized Jesus. Word spread and people from all over the region came to be healed. Their faith was so strong that even touching Jesus' cloak was enough to heal them.

What I Noticed Today (Matthew 15-17)

Matthew 15

In verses 1-9 the scribes and Pharisees came all the way from Jerusalem to see Jesus. They accused the disciples of breaking tradition by not washing their hands before they ate.

Note: The Mishnah (the first written record of the oral traditions prescribed for Jews) has a lengthy section devoted to the ritual of washing the hands before and after every meal. It was a matter of tradition, not God's law.

Jesus answered asking why they (the scribes and Pharisees) break God's commandment to honor their fathers and mothers (Exodus 20:12). Rather than caring for their parents they would claim that something was a gift devoted to God (some translations say Corban which means a gift or offering to God). That way they avoided caring for their parents.

Note: They appeared to be spiritual by claiming their possessions were dedicated to God, but in fact were hypocritical, using this as an excuse not to follow God's command. Isaiah prophesied this kind of hypocrisy in Isaiah 29:13.

In verses 10-20 Jesus called the people to him warning that it is not what goes into your mouth that defiles a person but what comes out of the mouth. What comes out of the mouth is a reflection of the condition of one's heart. Jesus said the Pharisees and scribes were not "planted" by the Father and they would be rooted up (undergo judgment).


In verses 21-28 Jesus left Israel and went to Tyre and Sidon.

Note: Tyre was about 35 miles north of Galilee and Sidon about 60 miles.

A Canaanite woman came to Jesus addressing Him as Lord, Son of David (a Messianic title) begging him to heal her demon possessed daughter. Jesus said it is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. The woman answered but the dogs can eat the crumbs that fall from the table. The woman had recognized her position as outside the tribe of Israel kept her from receiving the choice food, but she was willing to settle for a small blessing. Her faith in Jesus caused Him to grant her request and her daughter was healed.

In verses 29-31 (returning from Tyre and Sidon) Jesus walked alongside the Sea of Galilee and great crowds assembled around Him. Jesus healed them all and they glorified God.

In verses 32-39 the crowd had been with them for three days and Jesus did



not want to send them away hungry. Seven loaves of bread and a few fish were found. Jesus blessed the food, it was given to the crowd. They all ate and seven baskets of leftovers were collected. Four thousand men were fed (probably somewhere near 16,000 people total). After this Jesus left by boat and went to Magadan (also spelled Magdala, aka Dalmanutha or Taricheae), just north of Tiberias on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew 16

In verses 1-4 the Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus asking for a sign from heaven. Jesus said they were an evil and wicked generation for asking for a sign. Again he told them no sign would be given except for the sign of Jonah (previously in Matthew 12:38-42).

In verses 5-12 Jesus warned the disciples against the leaven (yeast) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Note: Jesus' point is the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees had a corrupting influence on the nation of Israel; it was like leaven that spreads throughout the dough.

In verses 13-16 Jesus and the disciples went to Caesarea Philippi (the region 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee governed by Herod Philip, Antipas' brother). Jesus asked the disciples who do people say the "Son of man" is, and who do you say I am. Simon Peter said, "you are the Christ the Son of the living God."

Note: In referring to Jesus as Christ Simon Peter is recognizing Jesus' deity.

In verses 17-20 Jesus blessed Simon Peter, acknowledging that this had been revealed to him by the Father. Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter (*Petros*, which means rock). Then he told the disciples not to tell anyone He was the Christ.

In verses 21-26 Jesus explained to the disciples that the time was near for Him to go to Jerusalem where he would be tortured by the priests and scribes, killed, and raised on the third day.

Note: This is the first of three predictions Jesus made of His death (Matthew 17:22-23, 20:18-19).

Peter rebuked Jesus, he couldn't accept the idea of Jesus the Messiah dying. Jesus rebuked Peter saying he was more interested in the things of man than in the plan of God, which included Jesus' death on the cross to save mankind.

Note: Satan had earlier tempted Jesus to avoid the cross (Matthew 4:8-10), and Peter was essentially being manipulated by Satan to accomplish the same end.

In verses 24-28 Jesus, teaching the disciples, said if anyone wishes to follow me he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him. By holding onto

one's life, by focusing on the world, by rejected Jesus, one loses their future in heaven.

Note: In verses 27-28 Jesus is speaking prophetically of His coming as the Son of Man, his return in His Father's glory with his angels and the judgment of man.

Matthew 17

In verses 1-8 after six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a high mountain where He was transfigured before them. Moses and Elijah appeared next to Jesus talking to Him. God, speaking from heaven, said this is my Son in whom I am well pleased. The disciples fell to the ground terrified, but Jesus comforted them telling them not to be afraid.

Note: The word for transfigured is *metemorphōthē* where we get our word metamorphosis.

In verses 9-13 as they were coming down the mountain Jesus warned them not tell anyone about this until the Son of man is raised from the dead. The disciples were confused because the scripture teaches that Elijah must come before Messiah (Malachi 4:5). Jesus clarified that Elijah had already come in the form of John the Baptist but the nation had rejected him.

In verses 14-21 a man came out of a crowd asking Jesus to heal his epileptic son. Nine disciples had not been able to drive the demon out of the boy. Jesus rebuked the disciples and the crowd for their lack of faith. He drove the demon out of the boy and he was healed. Jesus explained to the disciples they had not been able to heal the boy because they lacked faith.

Note: Jesus explanation is that if it is the will of God, nothing will be impossible. If it is the will of God only a small amount of faith (the size of a mustard seed) is needed.


In verses 22-23 As they were gathering in Galilee Jesus reminded the disciples again that soon he would be delivered into the hands of man, killed, and raised on the third day. The disciples were greatly distressed.

I wonder why, after this second mention of Jesus being resurrected, the disciples didn't ask Jesus about His resurrection and what that would mean for the Kingdom.

In verses 24-27 when Jesus and the disciples return to Capernaum tax collectors from the temple were asking if Jesus paid the temple tax. Jesus answered the kings of the earth do not pay taxes nor does his family. Jesus as king and his disciples were also exempt, but to not make a fuss Jesus told Peter to cast a line in the lake and there would be a fish with a four-drachma coin – enough to pay the tax for He and Peter.

Points for further thought...

- *Jesus warned about the danger of false doctrine and how easily it can creep into our lives. A little leaven leavens the whole lump.*

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- *There is a cost to following Jesus and being His disciple. We must be willing to die to ourselves, pick our cross, and follow Him – daily!*
 - *Satan would love nothing better than to influence our walk with Christ by tempting us to follow our plan as he distracts us away from following God's plan.*

What I Noticed Today

(Matthew 18-20)

Matthew 18

In verses 1-6 still in Capernaum, the disciples asked Jesus who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus responded saying one must have the humility of a child to be great in heaven.

Note: The disciple's pride was driving them to be concerned with position and power (the same problem as the scribes and Pharisees). Greatness in heaven comes from being humble and willing to serve those in need.

Note: In verses 7-14 Jesus switches from speaking of literal children to speaking of all those who are spiritually young.

In verses 7-11 Jesus warns of temptations that are certain to come in the world and pronounces a woe on those who give in to temptation. Jesus goes on to warn against despising one of the little ones because their angels in heaven are always before the Father in heaven.

In verses 12-14 the parable of the Lost Sheep. Jesus explains that a shepherd who is missing a sheep will leave the flock to look for the missing sheep and will rejoice when he finds it. Likewise, God does not want any of his "little ones" to be lost.

In verses 15-20 Jesus describes the action that should be taken when a brother sins against another. First, the two should speak together. However, if the sinning brother does not repent then 2-3 witnesses should be brought together (Deuteronomy 19:15). If the sinning brother still does not repent he should be brought before the entire church. If the sinning brother still refuses to repent they should be treated as a Gentile or tax collector.

Note: Verses 18-20 are sometimes taken out of context suggesting that whenever 2-3 believers are gathered together God will do whatever they ask. This is not the case. The word "Again" connects verse 18 to the principle just stated about church discipline, bringing a sinful believer back into relationship with God.


In verses 21-35 Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who sins against him, as many as seven times.

Note: Peter's suggestion of forgiving seven times was much higher than Jewish tradition which taught that you must forgive three times.

Jesus' response was 70 times 7 times, or 490 times.

Note: Jesus' point is we should always be willing to forgive a brother who repents.

Jesus teaches the parable of the Unforgiving Servant. Here a servant owes



his master a great deal of money (10,000 talents was about 200,000 years income for the average laborer). The master forgave the debt. Then the servant goes out and treats those who owe him small amounts of money harshly refusing to forgive their debts. The master hears about the unforgiving servant and throws him in jail until he paid all of his debt. Jesus says God will do the same to believers who do not sincerely forgive their brothers.

Note: The lesson of the parable is that because God has forgiven our debts (sins) we should be willing to forgive our brothers.

Matthew 19

In verses 1-12 Jesus left the region of Galilee entering Judea beyond the Jordan (this would be Perea). Large crowds followed Him and He healed them. The Pharisees approached Him asking if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife.

Note: There were two schools of thought on the subject of divorce. Some believed that a man could divorce his wife for nearly any reason, and another group believed that he could divorce her only for reason of sexual impropriety.

Jesus reminded them of God's intention for the marriage of a man and a woman to be of one flesh, never to be separated. Moses had allowed divorce, only because of the hardness of their hearts (Deuteronomy 21:1-4). Jesus says anyone who divorces except for sexual immorality and remarries is guilty of adultery.

In verses 13-15 parents brought their children to Jesus for healing and prayer. The disciples rebuked the people for bringing the children to Jesus, but Jesus rebuked the disciples saying the kingdom of heaven belonged to such as these, and He healed them.

In verses 16-22 a man who was young, rich, and a ruler approached Jesus, referring to him as Teacher asking what good deeds he would have to perform in order to receive eternal life. Jesus told him to keep all of the law (obey the commandments). The man said he had kept all of these commandments. Jesus told him to go, sell all his possessions and give to the poor to store up treasures in heaven. The man left sad because he had great wealth.

Note: We never hear about this young man again. It is interesting in the list of commandments he needed to keep Jesus did not mention the 10th not to covet (Exodus 20:17). But as the story unfolds it seems the man loved his money more than God (and that would also make his money an idol, a violation of the 1st commandment (Exodus 20:3).

In verses 23-26 Jesus taught the disciples saying it is difficult for a rich man to get into heaven because they trust in their riches instead of trusting in God.

Note: Jesus illustrated His point by saying it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The camel was the largest animal in

use by the Jews. The word for needle means a sewing needle, not a small gate in the city wall as some people suggest.

In verses 27-30 Peter asked Jesus what reward they would have (since they had left all their possessions to follow Jesus, just as Jesus had told the rich man to do). Jesus said in the day of judgment those who had followed Him would sit on twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel. Jesus went on to say anyone who has sacrificed for His sake will have physical blessings and will inherit eternal life.

Matthew 20

In verses 1-16 Jesus continues the teaching with the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. A landowner hired men for a specific wage and throughout the day he hired more men. But at the end of the day, all of the men, even those who worked only part of a day received the same wage as those who worked all day.

Jesus said the men hired early should not be envious of those who were hired later because it was the master's money to do with what he wished. The lesson of the parable is it is God's sovereignty to reward those whom He wishes to reward.

In verses 17-19 Jesus, now on His way to Jerusalem predicts his death a third time. But He also reminds the disciples that He will rise again on the third day.

In verses 20-23 the mother of James and John (the sons of Zebedee) asked Jesus for her sons to be seated at his right and left side when He came into His kingdom. Apparently, James and John were with her because Jesus responds asking James and John if they are able to drink the cup he was about to drink (suffer like Jesus). They said they were, and Jesus agreed they would suffer as he would suffer. However, the positions of who would sit where were up to the Father.


Note: James and John (and their mother) are still more concerned with positions of prominence, authority, and power than the humility that Jesus had taught about previously.

In verses 24-28 when the other ten disciples hear about this, they were upset but Jesus warned them not to lord their authority over one another like the Gentiles and leaders do. Greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven comes from serving not from ruling so they should seek to serve one another.

Jesus concluded using himself as an example. He came to serve not to be served, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Note: The reference to giving His life as a ransom for many speaks to Jesus paying for our sins in His substitutionary death on the cross.

In verses 29-34 as Jesus and the disciples left Jericho they passed by two blind men who recognized Jesus' voice and begged to be healed, referring to Jesus as Lord, and Son of David.



Note: Their reference to Jesus as Lord, Son of David is clear recognition of Jesus as Messiah.

Jesus had compassion on them, healed them, and they followed Him.

Points for further thought:

- *Several times the disciples seek positions of prominence, power, and authority despite Jesus teaching in God's economy it is the humble servant who is greatest.*
- *God expects us to forgive other believers, who repent of their sins against us because He has forgiven us much more.*
- *Marriage is a sacred covenant between a man, a woman, and God. Too often we forget that God is a partner in our marriages.*
- *God will reward us for the service we perform for others in His name, but at the same time, we should not be envious of the rewards God chooses to bestow on others.*

What I Noticed Today

(Matthew 21-22)

Matthew 21

In verses 1-5 Jesus and the disciples are on their way to Jerusalem. When they reach the town of Bethphage on the eastern side of the Mount of Olives Jesus sends two of the disciples into the town to find a donkey and a colt. This took place to fulfill the prophecies of Zechariah 9:9 and Isaiah 62:11.

Note: It was the time of the Passover so many people were traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate.

In verses 6-8 the disciples got the donkey and the colt as directed and put their cloaks over the animals to form a saddle. As Jesus rode some people laid the cloaks on the road, others placed palm branches on the road. They were singing Psalm 118:26 and Psalm 118:25.

Note: Covering the road with robes and branches was typical for how kings entered the city (2 Kings 9:13).

In verses 10-11 as Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem crowds of people asked who he was. The crowd with Jesus answered this is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.

Note: The crowd referred to Jesus not as “a” prophet but “the” prophet promised by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15). Jesus was arriving in Jerusalem just as Daniel had predicted some 500 years before (Daniel 9:25-26).

In verses 12-13 Jesus entered the temple and drove out the money-changers and those who sold animals accusing them of making the house of the Lord a den of robbers rather than a place of prayer.

Note: The money-changers insisted people exchange their money for temple money for a fee, and then use the temple money to purchase animals for sacrifice at highly inflated prices.


In verses 14-17 The blind and lame gathered around Jesus and He healed them. The chief priests and scribes saw this and heard the children crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David” and they were mad.

Note: Hosanna (Hoshana) in Hebrew means “I beg you to save” or “Please deliver us.”

Jesus answered them quoting Psalm 8:2: “out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise.”

With that Jesus left them, and journeyed to Bethany and stayed there.

In verses 18-22 Jesus was returning to Jerusalem when He saw a fruit tree that was not bearing fruit so he cursed it and it withered immediately. Jesus



explained to his disciples that if they have faith they can do such things and more if they ask God in prayer and have faith.

In verses 23-27 when Jesus entered the temple courts, the chief priests and elders challenged Jesus asking by what authority he did these things. Jesus promised to answer their question if they answered his, did the authority for John's baptism come from heaven or man. The chief priests and elders realized if they said from heaven then the question would be why you didn't believe him. If they answered from man the people would be upset because they regarded John as a great prophet. Ultimately the chief priests and elders said they didn't know so Jesus refused to answer their question.

In verses 28-32 Jesus taught the parable of the two sons. The father told one son to go work in the vineyard. He said he would not but later changed his mind and did. The other son said he would go but did not. Jesus asked which son had done the will of the father. Jesus explained the parable relating it to the chief priests and elders saying they had promised to do the will of God and had heard the message of John the Baptist but rejected him, yet tax collectors and prostitutes had not made the promise but when they heard the message they believed and repented.

In verses 33-41 Jesus taught the parable of the vineyard owner and the tenants. The vineyard owner sent his servants to collect the rent from the tenants at harvest time. The tenants beat one of the servants, killed one, and stoned another. The owner sent more servants and the tenants did the same to the next servants. Finally, the vineyard owner sent his own son, but the tenants killed the son thinking they would then inherit the vineyard.

In verses 42-46 Jesus quoting Psalm 118:22-23 explained the land would be taken away from these tenants and given to tenants who would produce fruit.


Note: There are several interpretations of this parable. The most likely is that because the nation of Israel had rejected Jesus, the message would be given to Gentiles who would believe, and there will come a time when the nation of Israel will accept the message of Jesus.

When the chief priests and Pharisees heard these parables they knew Jesus was talking about them and they wanted to arrest him but they didn't because they were afraid of the reaction of the crowds.

Matthew 22

In verses 1-14 Jesus taught the parable of the king and the wedding feast directed at the religious leaders. The king sent his servants out to invite people to the wedding feast but they rejected the invitation going about their business. Others killed the king's servants. The king sent his soldiers to destroy those who had killed his servants. Then the king sent his servants to invite others to the feast. But the king saw one man who had entered the feast but was not wearing a wedding garment so the king had him bound and cast out.

Note: Both bad and good are included in the expanded invitation. The guests are the disciples, followers of Jesus. The guests who did not wear



the wedding garment provided by the king is a false disciple. One who appeared to be a follower, but was not. Many are invited, few are chosen, but an individual response is essential.

In verses 15-22 the Pharisees plotted to trap Jesus asking him whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not.

Note: If Jesus answered it is legal to pay taxes to Rome he would be siding with Romans against the Jews and would be a traitor to his people. If however, he said it was not legal to pay taxes to Rome he would be guilty of opposing Rome and incur the wrath of the Herodians (Herodians were of the family of Herod who supported Roman rule).

Jesus asked whose picture is on the coin. Since Caesar's picture was on the coin it belonged to Caesar, therefore give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and give to God things that are God's.

In verses 23-33 the Sadducees posed a question to Jesus about the resurrection. If a man was married but the wife died and he remarried and this happened several times, they wondered who would be his wife in the resurrection. Jesus responded in the resurrection there will be no need for marriage (the purpose of marriage was procreation).

Note: The Sadducees believed only the Pentateuch (first five books of Moses) so they rejected the idea of resurrection and an eternal life. Jesus challenged their knowledge of scripture quoting Exodus 3:6. God said, "I am the God of..." (Present tense) implying he still is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If there was not eternal life God would have said "I was the God of" (past tense).

In verses 34-40 when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had answered the Sadducees they sent a lawyer with a question; which is the greatest commandment. Jesus summarized all the law and the teachings of the prophets saying the greatest commandment is to love God (Deuteronomy 6:5) and the second commandment is to love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18).

In verses 41-46 Jesus turned the tables on the Pharisees and asked them a question; what do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he? They answered that Christ was the son of David. Why then, Jesus asked, did David refer to him as Lord quoting Psalm 110:1.

Note: The word David used for Lord was "*adonay*" a word only used for God.

If David called him Lord, how is he his son? None of the Pharisees could answer Jesus so they stopped asking him questions.

Note: To this point Jesus had silenced all his critics: the chief priests and elders (Matthew 21:23-27), the Pharisees and Herodians (Matthew 22:15-22), the Sadducees (Matthew 22:23-33), and the Pharisees (Matthew 22:34-36).

What I Noticed Today

(Matthew 23-24)

Matthew 23

In verses 1-12 Jesus had just finished answering questions from the religious leaders and was still in the temple. He turns to the crowd and the disciples, and refers to the religious leaders as those who sit on Moses' Seat (teachers of the law) are hypocrites. They preach but they do not practice what they preach.

They place heavy burdens on the people but not on themselves.

They make a show of their positions (large phylacteries, long tassels, seats of honor, and being called by their titles).

Jesus said you have one Father who is in heaven, and one teacher who is Christ. The greatest among them will be the servant, and whoever exalts themselves will be humbled.

Note: Jesus is not suggesting there should be any titles or lines of authority. His point is where is your focus? Are you focused on man or on God? Humble service to God is what is most important in God's economy.

In verses 13-36 Jesus pronounces seven woes on the scribes and Pharisees for being hypocrites.

Note: Most Bible translations skip from verse 13 to verse 15. The addition of verse 14 includes an additional woe that is listed in both Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47.

- Woe 1, Verse 13. They refused to accept Jesus and this kept others from accepting His message.
- Woe 2, Verse 15. They worked to make converts to Judaism and forced them to follow their traditions and in so doing kept people from seeing the truth of the Gospel.
- Woe 3, Verses 16-22. They were deceptive and dishonest when swearing oaths.
- Woe 4, Verses 23-24. They were meticulous about their tithing but neglected the most important matters of justice, mercy, and faithfulness.
- Woe 5, Verses 25-26. The Pharisees were focused on outward issues but neglected in the inward condition of their hearts that were filled with greed and corruption.
- Woe 6, Verses 27-28. They appear righteous on the outside but in reality were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
- Woe 7, Verses 29-32. They piously said if they had lived in the times of

the prophets they would never have been involved in the shedding of their blood but Jesus knew they were already plotting His death.

In verses 33-36 Jesus condemned them saying He had sent them prophets, wise men, and scribes and they had persecuted and even killed them beginning with Abel (the first killed in Genesis 4:8) through Zechariah (Zechariah 1:1).

In verses 37-39 Jesus laments the judgment that will come to the city of Jerusalem because they have killed the prophets. Jesus concludes saying they will not see him again until they say “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (which occurs when Christ return to earth to begin His Millennial reign).

Matthew 24

Matthew 24-25 are Jesus’ fifth discourse.

In verses 1-2 Jesus had just spoken of the desolation of the temple, and as they left the temple the disciples pointed out the building and Jesus said not one stone would be left upon another.

In verse 3 reaching the Mount of Olives, the disciples then asked Jesus: 1) when will this happen and 2) what would be the sign of His coming and 3) what would be the sign of the end of the age.

Note: The balance of chapter 24 and chapter 25 are what is referred to as the Olivet Discourse (because it was given on the Mount of Olives). It is prophetic in that it speaks to the Tribulation period and Christ’s second coming.

In verses 4-14 Jesus answered the disciples describing the first half of the Tribulation period.

- There will be false messiahs (vv. 4-5).
- There will be wars and rumors of wars, famines, and earthquakes (vv. 6-7).
- These are the signs of the beginning of the Tribulation period (birth pains (v. 8).
- Believers will be persecuted, hated, and killed. Many will fall away (apostasy) as a result of the persecution (vv. 9-10).
- There will be false prophets who will deceive many (v. 11).
- There will be lawlessness (v. 12).
- BUT, the one who endures and survives will be saved (v. 13).
- AND the Gospel will be preached throughout the world (v. 14).

In verses 15-28 Jesus describes the second half of the Tribulation period.

- The abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel (Daniel 9:27) occurs



in the middle of the 70th week or at 3-1/2 years (v. 15).

- Those in Judea should flee to the mountains (v. 16).
- They must flee quickly, leaving everything behind (vv. 17-19).
- Pray that it does not come in winter or on a Sabbath (because a Sabbath's day journey Less than 1/2 mile) would not get them to safety (v. 20).
- The Tribulation will be the worst in the history of mankind (v. 21).
- The tribulation will be so severe that unless the days of tribulation are shortened no one would survive (v. 22).
- There will be false prophets and false messiahs that will arise and lead even the elect astray (vv. 23-26).
- The coming of the Son of Man will be sudden coming from the east to the west (v. 27).
- Vultures will hover wherever there is a corpse (v. 28).

In verses 29-31 the second Advent of Christ is described.

- The sun and moon's light will be darkened. A great heavenly upheaval will occur (v. 29).
- The sign of the Son of Man will appear on the clouds of heaven in power and glory, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn (v. 30).
- The Son of Man will send His angels to gather the elect from all over the world (v. 31).

In verses 32-35 Jesus gives the parable of the fig tree. When you see leaves and buds on the fig tree you know harvest is near. When the first half of the Tribulation begins you know that the coming of the Son of Man is near.

In verses 36-44 Jesus says no one knows the day or the hour of the return of the Son of Man. Even the Son does not know, only the Father.

Note: When Jesus says the Son does not know the time He is speaking from his human perspective not His perspective as Messiah.

Just as the wicked were removed from the earth in the days of Noah, so will the wicked be removed when Christ return.

In verses 45-51 Jesus describes the faithful servant who is found working when the master returns. But if the servant thinks the master is delayed in coming and engages in sinful behavior he will be cut off along with the hypocrites in a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What I Noticed Today

(Matthew 25-26)

Matthew 25

Jesus' fifth discourse continues through chapter 25. Here the focus is on being ready for the end times, and the judgment that will come upon the nations.

In verses 1-13 the parable of the 10 virgins. Ten virgins took their lamps to meet the bridegroom. Five were wise and took extra oil for their lamps, and five were foolish having no extra oil for their lamps. When the bridegroom came the lamps of the foolish virgins went out and they had to leave to get more oil. The five wise virgins were invited into the wedding feast. When the foolish virgins return they found the door shut and were denied entrance to the wedding feast.

The lesson of the parable is we do not know when the Lord will return but we must be ready. Commentators generally agree the bridegroom is Christ, five wise virgins represent true believers, the oil represents the Holy Spirit, the foolish virgins those who believe in Messiah but have not accepted Jesus as Messiah.


In verses 14-30 the parable of the talents. A master who is leaving on a long trip assembles his servants and gives one 5 talents, one 2 talents, and to the third 1 talent, each according to their ability. The servants with five and two talents each made five and two talents more, but the servant with one talent buried it in the ground. When the master returned he gathered the servants for an accounting. The two servants who doubled what they were given were praised and promised much more. The servant who buried the talent returned it to his master claiming that he was afraid of the master. The master rebuked him calling him wicked and lazy, then took the one talent from him and gave it to the servant with ten talents. The worthless servant will be cast into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The lesson of the parable is that we are each given talents, according to our ability. They must be invested into the Kingdom while the master is away for when He returns He will demand an accounting for how the gifts were used. To not invest them at all is to reject the gift of the master.

In verses 31- 46 when the Son of Man returns in His glory he will sit on His throne and judge the nations.

Note: The word translated nations refers to Gentiles, not Jews.

- People will be separated in the final judgment like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Sheep on the right, goats on the left. Those on the right will be invited into the Father's Kingdom (vv. 32-34).

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- Those sheep invited in served the people of God's kingdom in some way: welcomed me, met physical needs food, clothing, emotional needs visited me when I was sick (vv. 35-36).
 - They wondered when they had done this for the king and He said when you did it for the least of my brothers you did it for me (vv. 37-40).
 - Then the Father will send those on the left away to be with the Devil, accusing them of not welcoming him or of serving or caring for His brothers (vv. 41-45).
 - The righteous will go on to eternal life, while the wicked will be sent to eternal punishment (v. 46).

Matthew 26

In verses 1-2 as soon as He was finished with the Olivet discourse (chapters 24-25), Jesus reminded the disciples that Passover was only two days away and that at that time he would be delivered to be crucified.

In verses 3-5 the chief priests and elders gather together with the high priest, Caiaphas, and plotted how to arrest and kill Jesus.

In verses 6-13 Jesus was in Bethany (east of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives) in the home of Simon the leper. A woman (Mary, John 12:3) anointed Jesus with a jar of expensive ointment (oil worth a year's wages). A disciple (Judas Iscariot, John 12:4) complained the oil could have been sold to the poor. Jesus commended the woman saying she did it to prepare Him for burial.

In verses 14-16 Judas betrayed Jesus by going to the chief priests and taking 30 pieces of silver to deliver Jesus over to them.

Note: 30 pieces of silver was the common redemption price for a slave (Exodus 21:32).


In verses 17-25 the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread (Thursday of Passion Week), the disciples asked Jesus where they would prepare the Passover. Jesus answered a certain man in the city would host them. They gathered the food, prepared it and began the Passover meal that evening. Jesus told them the one He dips bread with would betray Him. Judas asked if it was him, and Jesus confirmed it was.

Note: Judas referred to Jesus as Rabbi, not Lord. The other disciples now recognized Jesus as Lord.

In verses 26-29 Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper. The bread representing His body, and the cup representing His blood.

Note: The elements of the bread and the cup represent Jesus' body and blood, a new covenant for the forgiveness of sins.

In verses 30-35 after singing a hymn they went to the Mount of Olives and Jesus told them they would all fall away that night, but after He was raised



up He would meet them again in Galilee. Peter said he would never fall away and Jesus told him he would deny him three times before the rooster crows (in the morning).

In verses 36-46 Jesus went with the disciples to a place called Gethsemane (means olive vat or olive press). Jesus asked the disciples to sit and wait for Him while He prayed. Taking Peter, James, and John (Matthew 4:21) Him he asked them to watch over Him while he went a little further and prayed. He returned to Peter, James, and John and found them asleep. He told them to pray that they might not enter into temptation. When he returned a second time he found them sleeping again. He left them and went to pray for the third time. When Jesus finished praying he woke them and told them it was time to go his betrayer was at hand.

In verses 47-56 while Jesus was still speaking Judas came with a large crowd including the chief priests and elders. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, and they grabbed Him. Peter (John 18:10) grabbed his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus the servant of the high priest (John 18:10). Jesus reprimanded Peter saying if He desired He could call twelve legions of angels to protect Him but this must happen to fulfill the scripture.

Note: A Roman legion was 6,000 soldiers, so twelve legions of angels would be 72,000 angels.


Jesus asked them why they came in this way at night when they could have captured Him anytime while He was teaching in the synagogue. The disciples abandoned Jesus and fled.

In verses 57-68 Jesus is brought before Caiaphas the high priest surrounded by the chief priests and elders, with Peter in the background. The chief priests and the Council (the Sanhedrin) solicited false testimony against Jesus, but they could find none. Finally, a man came forward saying that Jesus had said he would destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days. Ultimately the high priest accused Jesus of blasphemy for saying He was Christ the Son of God and condemned him to death.

Note: Jesus endured a total of six trials: three religious and three civil trials.

- Religious. Before Annas (John 18:12-14)
- Religious. Before Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57-68)
- Religious. Before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 27:1-2)
- Civil. Before Pilate (John 18:28-38)
- Civil. Before Herold (Luke 23: 6-12)
- Civil. Before Pilate (John 18:39-19:6)

In verses 69-75 while the trial before the Sanhedrin was going on Peter was asked three times if he was with Jesus. At first, he denied he was with Jesus, then he took an oath that he was not with Jesus, and finally he swore a curse



upon himself saying he was not with Jesus. As soon as he finished denying Jesus three times the rooster crowed.

Points for further thought:

- *When Jesus returns the righteous and the foolish will be separated.*
- *There will be a time of accountability in which people will be evaluated based on what they did with the gifts God gave them.*
- *Many kingdom building opportunities come our way to accept or reject. Mary chose to serve, while Judas chose to reject.*

What I Noticed Today (Matthew 27-28)

Matthew 27

In verses 1-2 that morning the chief priests and elders decided to put Jesus to death, so they bound Him and delivered him to Pilate the governor.

Note: It was against Jewish law to conduct trials at night. So these initial trials by the chief priests and elders were all a violation of Jewish law. Also, under Roman law Jews did not have the right to pass a death sentence on someone so they took the trial to Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.

In verses 3-10 Judas had a change of heart having realized that he had betrayed an innocent man. He attempted to return the money to the chief priests by throwing it down at their feet. They refused, so Judas went out and hanged himself. The chief priests took the money and bought a potter's field as a burial place for strangers (called the Field of Blood because it was purchased with blood money). This was in fulfillment of Zechariah 11:12-13, and Jeremiah 32:6-9.

In verses 11-14 Jesus was brought before Pilate who asked if He was king of the Jews, and Jesus answered only, "You have said so." When accused by the chief priests and elders Jesus said nothing.


Note: According to Roman law refusing to put on a defense was equivalent to an admission of guilt.

In verses 15-23 it was a tradition during the feast of governors to release a prisoner. Pilate asked the crowd do you want me to release Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ. Pilate's wife warned him not to have anything to do with Jesus' death, but the chief priests and elders stirred up the crowd so that they shouted for Barabbas' release, and for the crucifixion of Jesus.

In verses 24-26 When Pilate realized the crowd was determined he washed his hands before them saying he was innocent of Jesus' blood. He then had Jesus scourged and released him to be crucified.

Note: Scourging prior to crucifixion was a common Roman punishment. The scourging was done with a whip that had multiple thongs, each with bone or metal shards. When the whip hit the body it was then pulled away tearing off pieces of flesh.

In verses 27-30 the battalion of the governor's soldiers took Jesus to the governor's palace, stripped him, put on a scarlet robe, and a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his hands. They mocked him, saying "Hail, King of the Jews." They spit on him and hit him with the reed. Finally, they put his own clothes on him and led him away to be crucified.



Note: A Roman battalion was between 420 and 480 men.

Note: Scarlet was associated with sin (Isaiah 1:18). Putting on the scarlet robe is a picture of Jesus taking on our sins.

Note: Jesus said nothing during this time of humiliation.

In verses 32-44 Jesus carried his cross on the way to be crucified. The Romans compelled Simon the Cyrene (in northern Africa) to help carry the cross to Golgotha.

Note: Golgotha is Aramaic for “skull.” So named perhaps because the place was shaped like a skull. Also, Calvary is the Anglicized translation of the Latin for the Greek word *kranion*.

When Jesus had been lifted up on the cross they offered him wine mixed with gall but he refused it. The soldiers divided his garment by casting lots for them in fulfillment of Psalm 22:18. Jesus was crucified with two robbers in fulfillment of Isaiah 53:12. The chief priests, elders, and the crowd continued to mock Him, because of His claim to be king of the Jews, the Son of God.

Note: Gall was narcotic used as a pain deadener.

In verses 45-50 between the sixth hour and the ninth hour (12n – 3pm) there was darkness over all the land and in the ninth hour Jesus said, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”

Note: It was during this time that Jesus had taken on the sins of man. Since God is Holy and cannot be in the presence of sin, Jesus for the first time felt separated from the Father.

Jesus cried out again in a loud voice and gave up His spirit.

Note: Jesus’ life was not taken from Him, He gave it up, releasing His spirit to the Father.

In verses 51-54 three miraculous events occurred at the time of Jesus’ death:

- The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The curtain separated the place where the priests ministered from the Holy of Holies where God lived. Rabbinic tradition speaks of the veil being as thick as a man’s hand or about 4 inches.
- There was a strong earthquake.
- The tombs of many saints were opened. They were raised up and went into the city and appeared to many!

When the centurion watching over Jesus saw all this he said, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

In verses 55-56 many women from Galilee who had been following Jesus and ministering to Him, looked on from a distance, including Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother (Salome) of the sons

of Zebedee.

Note: It is telling that these women were faithful in their ministry to Jesus right up until the end. It stands in stark contrast to the disciples who had deserted Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In verses 57-61 Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and a disciple of Jesus went to Pilate asking for Jesus' body. He buried Jesus in his own new tomb. Mary Magdalene and the "other" Mary were there by the tomb.

In verses 62-66 the day after the Passover the chief priests and Pharisees were concerned about Jesus' claim to be raised on the third day so they went to Pilate asking for permission to secure Jesus' tomb. Pilate gave his permission so they sealed the tomb and posted a guard.

Matthew 28

In verses 1-10 as dawn was breaking on Sunday morning the two Mary's went to the tomb. There was a great earthquake, and an angel from heaven rolled back the stone from the entrance to the tomb. His appearance was like lightning and his clothes as white as snow. The guards trembled. The angel spoke to the women comforting them, saying that Jesus had risen from the dead. The angel told them to go tell the disciples and go to Galilee where you will see Him again. They ran to tell the disciples and along the way Jesus met them, telling them again to go tell the disciples and then meet Him in Galilee.

In verses 11-15 the guards went to tell the chief priests what had happened. The elders and the priests gave money to the guards telling them to tell people that the disciples had come in the night and taken Jesus away.


Note: Falling asleep during guard duty was punishable by death according to Roman law. So for the soldiers to say they had fallen asleep while on duty was an admission of a crime. Of course this story begs additional questions, like how is it that all the soldiers fell asleep at the same time, if they did fall asleep how did they know it was the disciples who took Jesus' body, and how is it that in the act of rolling away the stone none of the soldiers woke up?

In verses 16-20 the eleven disciples went to Galilee, found Jesus and worshiped Him. Jesus then gave the disciples the Great Commission: 1) go 2) make disciples of all the nations, 3) baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and 4) teach them to observe all that He had commanded them.

Note: "Go" is an imperative verb. It tell us what to do. Making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them are all imperative participles. They tell us how to do it. These are not suggestions from Jesus, these are commands of what and how we are to fulfill His commission.

Some points for additional thought:

- *Jesus did not defend himself when he was accused. None of His accusers*



would have believed Him anyway.

- *Despite the humiliation, the torture, and abuse Jesus did not retaliate.*
- *In His death on the cross and resurrection, He overcame all His enemies.*
- *Jesus kept His promises to His disciples.*
- *Jesus goes before us.*
- *Jesus has all authority on earth and in heaven.*
- *Jesus will be with us always!*