

Translation of Matthew

1:1 The book of the generations of Jesus the Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham.¹ **1:2** Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was the father of Jacob, and Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.² **1:3** Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah from Tamar, and Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron was the father of Aram.³ **1:4** Aram was the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab was the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon was the father of Salmon.⁴ **1:5** Salmon was the father of Boaz from Rahab, and Boaz was the father of Obed from Ruth, and Obed was the father of Jesse.⁵ **1:6** Jesse was the father of David the king.

Now, David was the father of Solomon from the wife of Uriah,⁶ **1:7** and Solomon was the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam was the father of Abijah, and Abijah was the father of Asa.⁷ **1:8** Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat was the father of Joram, and Joram was the father of Uzziah.⁸ **1:9** Uzziah was the father of Jotham, and Jotham was the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.⁹ **1:10** Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh was the father of Amon. Amon was the father of Josiah,¹⁰ **1:11** and Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the deportation to Babylon.¹¹

1:12 After the deportation to Babylon, Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.¹² **1:13** Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud, and Abiud was the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim was the father of Azor.¹³ **1:14** Azor was the father of Zadok, and Zadok was the father of Achim, and Achim was the father of Eliud.¹⁴ **1:15** Eliud was the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar was the father of Matthan, and Matthan was the father of Jacob.¹⁵ **1:16** Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus who is called Messiah was born.¹⁶

1:17 Therefore all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.¹⁷

1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Messiah happened like this. After Mary his mother became engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ **1:19** And Joseph, her fiancé, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, decided to break off the engagement secretly.¹⁹ **1:20** But while he was considering these things, behold, an angel of Yahweh appeared in a dream and said,

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For that which has been conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit.²⁰

1:21 And she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. For He will save His people from their sins.²¹

1:22 And all this happened in order that what was said by Yahweh through the prophet would be fulfilled when he said,²²

1:23 Behold, a maiden will be pregnant, and she will bear a son. And they shall call his name Immanuel, which means "God with us." <Isaiah 7:14>²³

1:24 And Joseph rose up from his sleep, and he did as the angel of Yahweh commanded him, and he took her as his wife.²⁴ **1:25** Now he did not know her until she bore a son. And he called his name Jesus.²⁵

2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east appeared in Jerusalem,²⁶ **2:2** saying,

Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and we have come to bow before Him?²⁷

2:3 And when King Herod heard this, he became stirred up, and all Jerusalem with him.²⁸ **2:4** Gathering all the high priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.²⁹

2:5 They said to him,

In Bethlehem of Judea.

For thus it has been written by the prophet,³⁰

2:6 And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah. For out of you will come he who rules, who will shepherd My people Israel <Micah 5:2; 2 Samuel 5:2>.³¹

2:7 Then Herod secretly called the magi and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearing.³² **2:8** And having sent them to Bethlehem he said,

Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, tell me so that I also might come and bow before him.³³

2:9 After listening to the king, they proceeded on their way. Behold, the star which they had seen in the east went before them until it came and stood above where the child was.³⁴ **2:10** Upon seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.³⁵ **2:11** And when they came to the house, they saw the child along with Mary His mother. Then they fell down and bowed before Him. Opening their treasure boxes, they offered to him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.³⁶ **2:12** And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they withdrew to their country by another way.³⁷

2:13 Then after they left, behold, an angel of Yahweh appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying,

Rise up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child in order to destroy him.³⁸

2:14 So he rose up and took the child and His mother by night. And he went away into Egypt.³⁹

2:15 And he was there until Herod's death, so that the statement by Yahweh would be fulfilled when He said through the prophet,

Out of Egypt I called My son <Hosea 11:1>.⁴⁰

2:16 Next, after Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very angry. And he sent and killed all the children in Bethlehem and all its surrounding districts from two years old and under according to the time which he ascertained from the wise men.⁴¹ **2:17** Thus the statement through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled when he said,⁴²

2:18 A sound was heard in Ramah, weeping and much lamentation. Rachel was crying for her children, and she did not wish to be comforted because they no longer existed <Jeremiah 31:15>.⁴³

2:19 After Herod died, behold, an angel of Yahweh appeared to Joseph in a dream in Egypt,⁴⁴
2:20 saying,

Rise up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel. For those who seek the life of the child are dead.⁴⁵

2:21 And he rose up and took the child and his mother and entered into the land of Israel.⁴⁶ **2:22** But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judah instead of his father, Herod, he became afraid to go there. And having been warned in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee.⁴⁷ **2:23** So he went and settled in the city called Nazareth, in order that the statement by the prophets would be fulfilled,

He shall be called a Nazoraion.⁴⁸

3:1 Now in those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the wilderness of Judea⁴⁹ **3:2** and saying,

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.⁵⁰

3:3 For this was the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said,

The voice of one shouting in the wilderness,
Prepare the way of Yahweh.
Make His paths straight <Isaiah 40:3>.⁵¹

3:4 Now John himself had his clothing from camel's hair and a leather girdle around his loins. And his food was grasshoppers and wild honey.⁵² **3:5** At that time Jerusalem was going out to him and all Judea and all the surrounding district of the Jordan,⁵³ **3:6** and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River while confessing their sins.⁵⁴

3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them,

You children of snakes, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?⁵⁵ **3:8** Therefore, produce fruit worthy of repentance,⁵⁶ **3:9** and do not suppose that you can say amongst yourselves, 'We have our father Abraham.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children of Abraham from these stones.⁵⁷ **3:10** And already the ax is laid at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.⁵⁸ **3:11** As for me, I am baptizing you in water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove his sandals. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.⁵⁹ **3:12** His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and gather his grain into the barn. But the chaff he will burn up with inextinguishable fire.⁶⁰

3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee into the Jordan area to John in order to be baptized by him.⁶¹ **3:14** But John tried to prevent him, saying,

I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?⁶²

3:15 And Jesus answered and said to him,

Permit it at this time, for it is thus fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

Then he permitted him.⁶³ **3:16** And after Jesus was baptized, immediately he came up out of the water. And behold the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and lighting on him.⁶⁴ **3:17** And behold a voice out of the heavens, saying,

This is My beloved Son in whom I have been well pleased.⁶⁵

4:1 Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit in order to be tested by the devil.⁶⁶
4:2 And after fasting for forty days and forty nights, he subsequently became hungry.⁶⁷ **4:3** And the tester approached and said to him,

If you are the Son of God, speak so that these stones become bread.⁶⁸

4:4 But he answered him and said,

It has been written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every directive that proceeds out of the mouth of God' <Deuteronomy 8:3>.⁶⁹

4:5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, and he stood him on the highest point of the temple mount,⁷⁰ **4:6** and he said to him,

If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down because it has been written, 'He will command His angels concerning you, and they will lift you up on their hands lest you strike your foot against a stone' <Psalm 91:11,12>.⁷¹

4:7 Jesus said to him,

On the other hand it has been written, 'You shall not test Yahweh your God' <Deuteronomy 6:16>.⁷²

4:8 Again the devil took him to an exceedingly high mountain, and he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory,⁷³ **4:9** and he said to him,

I will give all these to you if you will fall down and worship me.⁷⁴

4:10 Then Jesus said to him,

Go away, Satan, for it has been written, 'You shall worship Yahweh your God, and you shall serve Him only' <Deuteronomy 6:13>.⁷⁵

4:11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels approached and helped him.⁷⁶

4:12 Now, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he returned to Galilee.⁷⁷ **4:13** And leaving Nazareth, he went and settled in Capernaum by the Sea in the districts of Zebulun and Naphtali,⁷⁸ **4:14** so that the statement by Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled when he says,⁷⁹

4:15 Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, across from the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles,⁸⁰ **4:16** the people who are sitting in darkness saw a great light, and as for those who are sitting in the countryside and the shadow of death, a light has sprung up on them <Isaiah 9:1,2>.⁸¹

4:17 From that point on Jesus began to preach and say,

Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is near.⁸²

4:18 And as he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother.⁸³ **4:19** And he said to them,

Come and follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.⁸⁴

4:20 And immediately they left their nets and followed him.⁸⁵ **4:21** Going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with their father Zebedee mending their nets, and he called them.⁸⁶ **4:22** And immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.⁸⁷

4:23 And he was going around the whole area of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.⁸⁸ **4:24** The news about him went out into the whole of Syria. And they brought to him all who were ill, those having various diseases and attacked by torments—people who were demon possessed, epileptics, and paralytics. And he healed them.⁸⁹ **4:25** Thus large multitudes followed him from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.⁹⁰

5:1 When he saw the crowds, he went up to the mountain, and after he sat down his disciples came to him.⁹¹ **5:2** Opening his mouth he began to teach them, saying,⁹²

5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit because theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.⁹³

5:4 Blessed are those who mourn because they will be comforted.⁹⁴

5:5 Blessed are the humble because they will inherit the land.⁹⁵

5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness because they will be satisfied.⁹⁶

5:7 Blessed are the merciful because they will be shown mercy.⁹⁷

5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart because they will see God.⁹⁸

5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers because they will be called sons of God.⁹⁹

5:10 Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness because theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.¹⁰⁰

5:11 Blessed are you whenever they heap insults upon you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you on account of me.¹⁰¹

5:12 Rejoice and exult because your reward is great in the heavens, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you.¹⁰²

5:13 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt becomes tasteless, how will it become salty again? It is suitable for nothing except to be thrown out and trampled on by men.¹⁰³

5:14 You are the light of the world. A city established on a mountain cannot hide.¹⁰⁴ **5:15** And they do not light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a lampstand, and it shines on everything in the house.¹⁰⁵ **5:16** Therefore, let your light shine before men so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens.¹⁰⁶

5:17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.¹⁰⁷ **5:18** For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away not one of the smallest letters nor one small stroke of the letters shall pass away from the Torah, until everything comes about.¹⁰⁸ **5:19** Therefore, whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments and thus teaches men, he shall be called least in the kingdom of the heavens. But whoever performs even the least of these commandments and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens.¹⁰⁹

5:20 For I say to you that if your righteousness is not greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens.¹¹⁰

5:21 You have heard that it was said to the Old Testament people, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders, he will be accountable to the court.’¹¹¹ **5:22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother is accountable to the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘You numskull,’ is accountable to the Sanhedrin. And whoever says, ‘You moron,’ is deserving of fiery hell.¹¹²

5:23 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and you also remember that your brother has something against you,¹¹³ **5:24** leave your offering there before the altar and depart. First be reconciled to your brother, and then go and offer your gift.¹¹⁴

5:25 Settle your case quickly with your opponent while you are with him on the way lest your opponent hand you over to the judge and the judge to his assistant and he throw you in prison.¹¹⁵ **5:26** Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid back the last cent.¹¹⁶

5:27 You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’¹¹⁷ **5:28** But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman so that he desires her passionately has committed adultery towards her already in his heart.¹¹⁸

5:29 And if your right eye causes you to sin, remove it and throw it from you. For this is better for you so that one of your members is destroyed and your whole body is not thrown into hell.¹¹⁹ **5:30** And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it from you. For this is better for you so that one of your members is destroyed and your whole body does not depart into hell.¹²⁰

5:31 And it was said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a divorce notice <Deuteronomy 24:1ff.>.’¹²¹ **5:32** But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife apart from her committing herself to another man as shown by her sexual immorality treats her like a prostitute. And whoever marries a divorced woman is also treating her like a prostitute.¹²²

5:33 Again you have heard that it was said to the Old Testament people, ‘You shall not break your vows, but you shall pay back your vows to Yahweh <Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21,23>.’¹²³ **5:34** But I say to you not to make a vow at all, neither by heaven because it is the throne of God,¹²⁴ **5:35** nor by the earth because it is the footstool for His feet, nor towards Jerusalem because it is the city of the great kingdom.¹²⁵ **5:36** Nor should you swear an oath by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.¹²⁶ **5:37** But let your word “Yes” be “Yes.” And let your word “No” be “No.” That which goes beyond these words is from the evil one.¹²⁷

5:38 You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth <Exodus 21:24>.’¹²⁸ **5:39** But I say to you not to resist the evil person. But he who strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.¹²⁹ **5:40** And to the one who wishes to sue you and take your shirt, give him your coat also.¹³⁰ **5:41** And he who requisitions you to go one mile, go with him two miles.¹³¹ **5:42** To him who keeps on asking you, give. And as for him who keeps on wishing to borrow from you, do not turn away from him.¹³²

5:43 You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy <Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 23:3-6>.’¹³³ **5:44** But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,¹³⁴ **5:45** so that you may be sons of your Father in the heavens, because He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and it rains on the righteous and the unrighteous.¹³⁵ **5:46** For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not the tax collectors also do the same

thing?¹³⁶ **5:47** And if you greet your brothers only, what are you doing that is more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same thing?¹³⁷ **5:48** Therefore, you shall be complete as your heavenly Father is complete.¹³⁸

6:1 Pay attention to your righteousness so that you do not do it before men in order to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward from your Father in the heavens.¹³⁹

6:2 Therefore, when you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, they are receiving their reward.¹⁴⁰ **6:3** But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,¹⁴¹ **6:4** so that your almsgiving is hidden. And your Father who sees into the hidden place will pay you back.¹⁴²

6:5 And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray as they stand in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be obvious to men. Truly I say to you, they are receiving their reward.¹⁴³ **6:6** But whenever you pray, go into your inner room and close your door so that you may pray to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees into the hidden place will pay you back.¹⁴⁴

6:7 And when you pray, do not speak without thinking, using the same words again and again like the Gentiles, for they think that they will be heard by means of their many words.¹⁴⁵ **6:8** Therefore, do not be like them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.¹⁴⁶ **6:9** Therefore, pray like this,

Our Father in the heavens,
Let Your name be different.¹⁴⁷

6:10 Let Your kingdom come.

Let Your desire occur, as in heaven, also on earth.¹⁴⁸

6:11 Give us our daily bread.¹⁴⁹

6:12 And forgive us what we owe You legally as we also forgive those who owe us legally.¹⁵⁰

6:13 And do not bring us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.¹⁵¹

6:14 For if you forgive men their moral offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.¹⁵²

6:15 But if you do not forgive men, your Father will not forgive your moral offenses.¹⁵³

6:16 And whenever you fast, do not be like the gloomy hypocrites, for they darken their faces, so that they appear fasting to men. Truly I say to you, they are receiving their reward.¹⁵⁴ **6:17** But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,¹⁵⁵ **6:18** so that you do not appear to be fasting to men but to your Father who is hidden. And your Father who sees into the hidden place will pay you back.¹⁵⁶

6:19 Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.¹⁵⁷ **6:20** But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.¹⁵⁸ **6:21** For where your treasure is, there also will be your heart.¹⁵⁹

6:22 The eye is the lamp of the body. Therefore, if your eye is single-sighted, your whole body will be full of light.¹⁶⁰ **6:23** But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore, if the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness.¹⁶¹

6:24 No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and show contempt for the other. You cannot serve God and the stuff of this life.¹⁶²

6:25 Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious for your life – for what you eat or what you drink, and do not be anxious for what you put on your body. Is not life more than food and the body more than

clothing?¹⁶³ **6:26** Consider the birds of the sky, that they do not sow, they do not reap, and they do not gather into barns. Indeed, your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than them?¹⁶⁴ **6:27** And which one of you by being anxious is able to add one cubit to his life span?¹⁶⁵ **6:28** And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil and they do not spin.¹⁶⁶ **6:29** But I say to you that Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.¹⁶⁷ **6:30** And if God thus clothes the grass of the field, which exists today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not clothe you much more, those of little faith?¹⁶⁸ **6:31** Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?' Or, 'What will we drink?' Or, 'What will we put on?'¹⁶⁹ **6:32** For the Gentiles seek all these things. But your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.¹⁷⁰ **6:33** So seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.¹⁷¹ **6:34** Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow. For tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.¹⁷²

7:1 Do not judge in order that you are not judged.¹⁷³ **7:2** For you will be judged by the standard by which you judge, and it will be meted out to you by the measure with which you mete out justice.¹⁷⁴ **7:3** And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but you do not consider carefully the beam in your own eye?¹⁷⁵ **7:4** Or how can you say to your brother, 'Permit me to take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the beam in your own eye?¹⁷⁶ **7:5** You hypocrite. First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly in order to take the speck out of your brother's eye.¹⁷⁷

7:6 Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine or they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces.¹⁷⁸

7:7 Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find it. Knock, and it will be opened to you.¹⁷⁹ **7:8** For everyone who asks will receive, and everyone who seeks will find, and it will be opened to everyone who knocks.¹⁸⁰ **7:9** Or what man is there among you whose son will ask for bread? He will not give him a stone, will he?¹⁸¹ **7:10** Or indeed, whose son will ask for a fish? He will not give him a snake, will he?¹⁸² **7:11** Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in the heavens give good gifts to those who ask Him.¹⁸³

7:12 Therefore, everything you want men to do to you, you do also to them. For this is the Torah and the Prophets.¹⁸⁴

7:13 Enter through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it.¹⁸⁵ **7:14** And because the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, few are those who find it.¹⁸⁶

7:15 Watch out for false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are thieving wolves.¹⁸⁷ **7:16** You will know them by their fruit. They neither gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles.¹⁸⁸ **7:17** Likewise, every good tree produces good fruit, and the bad tree produces bad fruit.¹⁸⁹ **7:18** It is impossible for a good tree to produce bad fruit, and for a bad tree to produce good fruit.¹⁹⁰ **7:19** Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.¹⁹¹ **7:20** Therefore, you will know them by their fruit.¹⁹²

7:21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the desire of my Father in the heavens will enter.¹⁹³ **7:22** Many will say to me that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not proclaim truth in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and perform many miracles in your name?'¹⁹⁴ **7:23** And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me you who do lawlessness <Psalm 6:8>.'¹⁹⁵

7:24 Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.¹⁹⁶ **7:25** And the rain poured down and rivers appeared and the winds blew and slammed against that house. But it did not fall, because it had been founded upon rock.¹⁹⁷ **7:26** And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man, who built his house on sand.¹⁹⁸ **7:27** And the rain poured down and rivers appeared and the winds blew and slammed against that house. And it fell, and its disaster was gigantic.¹⁹⁹

7:28 When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,²⁰⁰ **7:29** because he was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes.²⁰¹

8:1 When he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him.²⁰² **8:2** And, behold, a leper came to him and bowed down before him, saying,

Master, if you are willing, you can make me clean.²⁰³

8:3 And he stretched out his hand and touched him. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.²⁰⁴ **8:4** Jesus said to him,

See that you tell no one. But go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering which Moses commanded as a testimony to them.²⁰⁵

8:5 When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, imploring him²⁰⁶ **8:6** and saying,

My servant is lying at home paralyzed and suffering greatly.²⁰⁷

8:7 And he said to him,

I will come and heal him.²⁰⁸

8:8 And the centurion replied to him, saying,

Master, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.²⁰⁹ **8:9** For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it.²¹⁰

8:10 When Jesus heard him, he marveled and said to those who were following,

Truly I say to you, I have not found such great belief in Israel.²¹¹ **8:11** I say to you that many will come from east and west, and they will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.²¹² **8:12** But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.²¹³

8:13 And Jesus said to the centurion,

Go. Let it be done for you as you believe.

And his servant was healed in that hour.²¹⁴

8:14 When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever.²¹⁵ **8:15** So he touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she got up and served him.²¹⁶

8:16 When evening came, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed. So he cast out the spirits with a word, and he healed all who were sick,²¹⁷ **8:17** so that the statement by Isaiah the prophet could be fulfilled,

He took our weaknesses, and he carried away our diseases <Isaiah 53:4>.²¹⁸

8:18 When Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to depart to the other side.²¹⁹ **8:19** Then a scribe approached him and said,

Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.²²⁰

8:20 And Jesus said to him,

The foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky build nests. But the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.²²¹

8:21 Another of his disciples said to him,

Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.²²²

8:22 And Jesus said to him,

Follow me, and permit the dead to bury their own dead.²²³

8:23 He then entered into a boat, and his disciples followed him.²²⁴ **8:24** And behold a great storm occurred on the sea, so that the boat was being covered by the waves. But he was asleep.²²⁵ **8:25** They came to him and woke him up, saying,

Lord, save us. We are perishing.²²⁶

8:26 And he said to them,

Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?

Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea. And there occurred a great calm.²²⁷ **8:27** The men were amazed and said,

What kind of man is this, that the winds and the sea obey him?²²⁸

8:28 When he came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so fierce that no one was able to pass by that way.²²⁹ **8:29** And behold they cried out, saying,

What is it for us and for you, Son of God? Have you come here before the season to torment us?²³⁰

8:30 There was a herd of many pigs feeding at a distance from them.²³¹ **8:31** And the demons were urging him, saying,

If you cast us out, send us into the herd of pigs.²³²

8:32 And he said to them,

Go.

Thus, they came out and went into the pigs. And behold the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.²³³ **8:33** Then the herdsmen ran away and went to the city. And they reported all that happened to the men who were demon-possessed.²³⁴ **8:34** So behold the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they urged him to leave their area.²³⁵

9:1 Getting into a boat, he crossed over and came to his own city.²³⁶ **9:2** And behold they brought to him a paralytic lying on a couch. When Jesus saw their belief, he said to the paralytic,

Be confident, child. Your sins are forgiven.²³⁷

9:3 And behold some of the Pharisees said to one another,

This man blasphemes.²³⁸

9:4 Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said,

Why are you thinking evil thoughts in your hearts?²³⁹ **9:5** For which is easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” or to say, “Get up and walk?”²⁴⁰ **9:6** But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...

Then he said to the paralytic,

Get up. Take up your cot, and go to your house.²⁴¹

9:7 And he got up and went to his house.²⁴² **9:8** When the crowds saw, they became afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.²⁴³

9:9 As Jesus passed by, he saw there a man called Matthew sitting in a tax collector’s booth. And he said to him,

Follow me.

And he got up and followed him.²⁴⁴

9:10 Then it happened that as he was reclining in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.²⁴⁵ **9:11** When the Pharisees saw, they said to his disciples,

Why is your teacher eating with tax-collectors and sinners?²⁴⁶

9:12 But when Jesus heard them, he said,

Those who are healthy do not need a doctor, but those who are sick do.²⁴⁷ **9:13** Go and learn what this means, “I desire loyal love and not sacrifice <Hosea 6:6>.” For I have not come to call the righteous but the sinners.²⁴⁸

9:14 Then the disciples of John came to him and said,

Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?²⁴⁹

9:15 So Jesus said to them,

The groomsmen of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them. But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them. Then they will fast.²⁵⁰ 9:16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for its fullness lifts up from the garment, and a worse tear results.²⁵¹ 9:17 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise the wineskins burst, the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined. Instead, they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.²⁵²

9:18 While he was saying these things to them, behold a leader came and bowed down before him, saying,

My daughter just died. But come and lay your hands on her, and she will live.²⁵³

9:19 So Jesus got up and followed him, along with his disciples.²⁵⁴ 9:20 And behold a woman, suffering from bleeding for twelve years, came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment.²⁵⁵ 9:21 For she was saying to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I will be healed."²⁵⁶ 9:22 But Jesus turned and saw her, and he said,

Daughter, your belief has healed you.

And the woman was healed from that hour.²⁵⁷ 9:23 When Jesus came into the leader's house and saw the flute-players and the agitated crowd,²⁵⁸ 9:24 he said,

Go away, for the girl has not died but is asleep.

And they laughed at him.²⁵⁹ 9:25 But when the crowd had been sent away, he entered and grasped her hand. And the girl was raised.²⁶⁰ 9:26 And the news spread throughout all that land.²⁶¹

9:27 Then two men followed Jesus as he was going out from there. And they were crying out and saying,

Have pity on us, Son of David.²⁶²

9:28 The blind men came up to him as he was entered the house, and Jesus said to them,

Do you believe that I am able to do this?

They said to him,

Yes, Lord.²⁶³

9:29 Then he touched their eyes, saying,

Let it be for you according to your belief.²⁶⁴

9:30 And their eyes were opened, but Jesus sternly warned them,

See that no one knows.²⁶⁵

9:31 However, they went out and spread the news about him throughout all that land.²⁶⁶

9:32 As they were leaving, behold, they brought to him a man who was mute and demon-possessed.²⁶⁷ **9:33** After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke, and the crowds were amazed, saying,

Nothing like this has been seen in Israel.²⁶⁸

9:34 But the Pharisees kept saying,

He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.²⁶⁹

9:35 And Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, healing every disease and every sickness.²⁷⁰ **9:36** Seeing the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were troubled and downcast, like sheep who have no shepherd <Numbers 27:17; Ezekiel 34:5; Zechariah 10:2>.²⁷¹ **9:37** Then he said to his disciples,

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.²⁷² **9:38** Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.²⁷³

10:1 And he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits in order to cast them out, and to heal every disease and sickness.²⁷⁴ **10:2** The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John,²⁷⁵ **10:3** Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector, James the son of Alphaeus and Thaddeus,²⁷⁶ **10:4** Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.²⁷⁷ **10:5** Jesus sent out these twelve after commanding them,

Do not go into the way of the Gentiles. And do not enter into a city of the Samaritans.²⁷⁸ **10:6** Instead, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.²⁷⁹ **10:7** And as you go proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven is near.²⁸⁰ **10:8** Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you receive. Give freely.²⁸¹

10:9 Do not acquire gold, silver, or copper for your money belts.²⁸² **10:10** Do not acquire a bag for your journey, two tunics, sandals, or a staff, because the worker is worthy of his provisions.²⁸³

10:11 Whatever city or village you enter, investigate carefully who is worthy in it, and stay there until you leave.²⁸⁴ **10:12** As you enter into the house, greet it.²⁸⁵ **10:13** And if the house is worthy, let your shalom go to it. But if it is not worthy, let your shalom return to you.²⁸⁶ **10:14** And whoever does not welcome you nor listen to your words, as you leave that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet.²⁸⁷ **10:15** Truly 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.²⁸⁸

10:16 Behold I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.²⁸⁹ **10:17** Beware of men, because they will deliver you to the local councils and they will flog you in their synagogues.²⁹⁰ **10:18** And you will be led before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.²⁹¹ **10:19** But when they hand you over, do not

worry about how or what you are to say, because in that hour what you are to say will be given to you.²⁹² **10:20** For it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.²⁹³

10:21 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father will betray his child to death. In addition, children will turn against their parents and put them to death.²⁹⁴ **10:22** You will be hated by everyone because of my name, but the one who endures to the end will be saved.²⁹⁵ **10:23** Whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to another city. Truly I say to you, you will not complete the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.²⁹⁶

10:24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a slave above his master.²⁹⁷ **10:25** It is adequate for a disciple to become like his teacher and for a slave to become like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more his household.²⁹⁸ **10:26** Therefore, do not fear them, for there is nothing which has been covered up which will not be revealed and nothing hidden which will not become known.²⁹⁹ **10:27** That which I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light. And what you hear in your ear, proclaim on the housetops.³⁰⁰ **10:28** Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the person. Instead, fear the One who is able to kill the person and the body in Gehenna.³⁰¹

10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin, and one of them does not fall to the ground apart from your Father.³⁰² **10:30** Indeed, the very hairs of your head are numbered.³⁰³ **10:31** Therefore do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows.³⁰⁴ **10:32** Consequently, everyone who confesses me before men, I will confess him before my Father who is in heaven.³⁰⁵ **10:33** But whoever denies me before men, I will deny him before my Father who is in heaven.³⁰⁶

10:34 Do not think that I came to bring shalom on the land. I did not come to bring shalom but a sword.³⁰⁷ **10:35** For I came to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law <Micah 7:6>.³⁰⁸ **10:36** And a man's enemies will be the members of his own household <Micah 7:6>.³⁰⁹

10:37 The person who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And the one who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.³¹⁰ **10:38** And the one who does not embrace his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.³¹¹ **10:39** The one who finds himself loses himself, and the one who loses himself for my sake will find himself.³¹²

10:40 The one who welcomes you welcomes me, and the one who welcomes me welcomes the One who sent me.³¹³ **10:41** The person who welcomes a prophet in the name of the prophet will receive a prophet's wage, and the one who welcomes a righteous man in the name of the righteous man will receive the wage of a righteous man.³¹⁴ **10:42** And whoever gives a drink to one of these little ones, a drink of something cold in the name of a disciple, truly I say to you, he will not lose his wage.³¹⁵

11:1 And when Jesus finished instructing his twelve disciples, he departed from there to teach and speak in their cities.³¹⁶ **11:2** And when John in prison heard about the actions of the Messiah, he sent word to him through his disciples,³¹⁷ **11:3** and he said to him,

Are you the one who is coming, or should we wait for another?³¹⁸

11:4 Jesus answered and said to them,

Go and report to John what you hear and see.³¹⁹ **11:5** The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them <Isaiah 35:5,6;61:1>.³²⁰ **11:6** And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.³²¹

11:7 As these men were going away, Jesus began to say to the crowds concerning John,

What did you go out into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken by the wind?³²² **11:8** But what did you go out to see, a man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, the ones who wear soft clothing are in the dwelling places of kings.³²³ **11:9** But what did you go out to see, a prophet? Yes, and more than a prophet.³²⁴ **11:10** This is the one about whom it was written,

Behold, I am sending My messenger before you, who will prepare your way in front of you
<Malachi 3:1>.³²⁵

11:11 Truly I say to you, among those born of women, there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist. But he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than him.³²⁶ **11:12** From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven is strongly gaining its objective, and violent men are dragging it away.³²⁷ **11:13** For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.³²⁸ **11:14** And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who was going to come.³²⁹ **11:15** He who has ears, let him hear.³³⁰

11:16 To whom shall I compare this race? They are like children sitting in the marketplace, who call out to the others³³¹ **11:17** and say, “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.”³³² **11:18** For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon.”³³³ **11:19** The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners.” Yet, wisdom is vindicated by its deeds.³³⁴

11:20 Then he began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had occurred, because they did not repent.³³⁵

11:21 Damn you, Chorazin. Damn you, Bethsaida, because if the miracles which occurred in you had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.³³⁶ **11:22** Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more acceptable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.³³⁷ **11:23** And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will go down to Hades, because if the miracles which occurred in you had occurred in Sodom, it would have survived until today.³³⁸ **11:24** Nevertheless, I say to you, it will be more acceptable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.³³⁹

11:25 During that season, Jesus responded and said,

I confess to You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and You have revealed them to infants.³⁴⁰ **11:26** Yes, Father, for thus it was pleasing in Your sight.³⁴¹ **11:27** All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one recognizes the Son except the Father. And no one recognizes the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal Him.³⁴²

11:28 Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.³⁴³ **11:29** Take my yoke, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁴⁴ **11:30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.³⁴⁵

12:1 During that season, Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat them.³⁴⁶ **12:2** But when the Pharisees saw, they said to him,

Look, your disciples are doing what it is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.³⁴⁷

12:3 And he said to them,

Have you not read what David did when he became hungry along with those who were with him,³⁴⁸
12:4 how he entered into the house of God and they ate the loaves of offering, which it was not lawful
for him to eat, nor those who were with him, but for the priests alone?³⁴⁹ 12:5 Or have you not read in
the Torah that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?³⁵⁰ 12:6
But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.³⁵¹ 12:7 And if you had known what
this means, "I desire loyal love and not sacrifice <Hosea 6:6>," you would not have condemned the
innocent,³⁵² 12:8 because the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.³⁵³

12:9 And departing from there, he went into their synagogue.³⁵⁴ 12:10 And behold, there was a
man who had a withered hand. And they questioned him, saying,

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

so that they could accuse him.³⁵⁵ 12:11 And he said to them,

What man is there among you who would have one sheep, and if this one falls into a pit on the
Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?³⁵⁶ 12:12 Consequently, how much more valuable is
a man than a sheep. Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.³⁵⁷

12:13 Then he said to the man,

Stretch out your hand.³⁵⁸

And he stretched it out, and it was restored to normal like the other one. 12:14 But the Pharisees
went out and took counsel together against him, as to how they could destroy him.³⁵⁹

12:15 But Jesus, knowing this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them
all.³⁶⁰ 12:16 But he warned them not to reveal him,³⁶¹ 12:17 in order that what was spoken through
Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled, which says,³⁶²

12:18 Behold, My child whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom My soul is well-pleased. I will put
My Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.³⁶³ 12:19 And he will not quarrel nor cry
out. Nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.³⁶⁴ 12:20 He will not break off a crushed reed, and he
will not extinguish a smoldering wick until he throws justice out for victory.³⁶⁵ 12:21 And the nations
will hope in his name <Isaiah 42:1-3>.³⁶⁶

12:22 Then, a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he
healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.³⁶⁷ 12:23 And all the crowds were amazed, and
they were saying,

This man is not the Son of David, is he?³⁶⁸

12:24 But when the Pharisees heard, they said,

This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.³⁶⁹

12:25 And knowing their thoughts, he said to them,

Every kingdom divided against itself destroys itself, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.³⁷⁰ **12:26** Thus, if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. Therefore, how will his kingdom stand?³⁷¹ **12:27** And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges.³⁷² **12:28** But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived in front of you.³⁷³

12:29 Or how is anyone able to enter into a strong man's house and carry away his things unless first he binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.³⁷⁴

12:30 He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.³⁷⁵

12:31 Therefore, I say to you, all sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy of the Spirit will not be forgiven.³⁷⁶ **12:32** Thus, whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this age nor in the coming one.³⁷⁷

12:33 Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad. For the tree is known by its fruit.³⁷⁸ **12:34** You offspring of vipers, how are you able to speak what is good when you are evil? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.³⁷⁹ **12:35** The good man sends out good things from good treasure, and the evil man sends out evil things from evil treasure.³⁸⁰ **12:36** And I say to you that every useless word which men speak, they will give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.³⁸¹ **12:37** For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.³⁸²

12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees responded to him and said,

Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.³⁸³

12:39 And he answered and said to them,

An evil and adulterous race/generation craves a sign, but no sign will be given them except the sign of Jonah the prophet.³⁸⁴ **12:40** For just as Jonah was in the belly of the sea monster for three days, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.³⁸⁵ **12:41** The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this race/generation and will condemn them, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and behold someone greater than Jonah is here.³⁸⁶ **12:42** The Queen of the South will be raised at the judgment with this race/generation and will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold someone greater than Solomon is here.³⁸⁷

12:43 Whenever the unclean spirit goes out from a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest. But it does not find it.³⁸⁸ **12:44** Then it says, I will return to my house from which I came, and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order.³⁸⁹ **12:45** Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter in and live there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So will it also be for this evil race/generation.³⁹⁰

12:46 While he was still speaking to the crowds, behold, his mother and brothers had been standing outside seeking to speak to him.³⁹¹ **12:47** And someone said to him,

Behold, your mother and brothers have been standing outside seeking to speak to you.³⁹²

12:48 And he answered and said to the one who was speaking to him,

Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?³⁹³

12:49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said,

Behold, my mother and my brothers.³⁹⁴ **12:50** For whoever does the desire of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.³⁹⁵

13:1 On that day, Jesus left the house and was sitting by the sea.³⁹⁶ **13:2** And large crowds gathered around him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach.³⁹⁷ **13:3** And he spoke many things to them in parables, saying,

Behold, the sower went out to sow.³⁹⁸ **13:4** As he sowed, some of the seed fell beside the road, and birds came and ate them.³⁹⁹ **13:5** Others fell on rocky ground where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of soil.⁴⁰⁰ **13:6** And when the sun rose up, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away.⁴⁰¹ **13:7** Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew and choked them.⁴⁰² **13:8** And others fell on good soil, and they yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.⁴⁰³

13:9 He who has ears, let him hear.⁴⁰⁴

13:10 The disciples came to him and said,

Why are you speaking to them in parables?⁴⁰⁵

13:11 He answered and said to them,

To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens, but it has not been given to them.⁴⁰⁶ **13:12** For he who has, it will be given to him, and it will be made to abound. But he who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.⁴⁰⁷ **13:13** Therefore, I speak to them in parables, because while seeing, they do not see, while hearing, they do not hear, nor do they understand.⁴⁰⁸

13:14 Thus the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled with respect to them,

With hearing you will hear, but you will not understand.⁴⁰⁹

And while seeing you will see, but you will not see.

13:15 For the heart of this people has become dull,

And with their ears they hear with difficulty.

And they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise, they would see with their eyes,

And hear with their ears,

And understand with their heart and turn back,

And I would heal them <Isaiah 6:9,10>.⁴¹⁰

13:16 But blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear.⁴¹¹ **13:17** For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and they did not see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, and they did not hear it.⁴¹²

13:18 Hear then the parable of the sower.⁴¹³ **13:19** When anyone hears the message of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one “who was sown beside the road.”⁴¹⁴ **13:20** The one “who was sown on rocky ground,” this is the man who hears the message and immediately receives it with joy.⁴¹⁵ **13:21** But he has no root in himself. Instead, it is temporary, and when tribulation or persecution arises because of the message, he immediately decides to reject it.⁴¹⁶ **13:22** And the one “who was sown among the thorns,” this is the man who hears the message, and the anxiety of the age and the deceit of wealth chokes the message, and it becomes unfruitful.⁴¹⁷ **13:23** And the one “who was sown on good ground,” this is the man who hears the message and understands it, who indeed bears and makes fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.⁴¹⁸

13:24 He presented another parable to them, saying,

The Kingdom of the Heavens may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.⁴¹⁹ **13:25** But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds in the midst of the wheat, and he went away.⁴²⁰ **13:26** So when the wheat sprouted and bore fruit, the weeds appeared also.⁴²¹ **13:27** Then, the slaves of the landowner came to him and said, “Sir, did you not sow good seeds in your field? How then does it have weeds?”⁴²²

13:28 And he said to them, “An enemy has done this.” The slaves said to him, “Do you, then, want us to go and gather them up?”⁴²³ **13:29** And he said, “No, lest while gathering the weeds, you uproot the wheat with them at the same time.⁴²⁴ **13:30** Allow both to grow together until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First, gather the weeds and bind them together into bundles to burn them. And gather the wheat into my barn.’”⁴²⁵

13:31 He presented another parable to them, saying,

The Kingdom of the Heavens is like the seed of a mustard plant, which a man took and planted in his field.⁴²⁶ **13:32** It is smaller than all the seeds, but when it is fully grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches.⁴²⁷

13:33 He spoke another parable to them,

The Kingdom of the Heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened.⁴²⁸

13:34 All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and he was not speaking to them apart from a parable,⁴²⁹ **13:35** so that what was spoken through the prophet could be fulfilled,

I will open My mouth in parables.
I will declare things hidden since the foundation of the cosmos <Psalm 78:2>.⁴³⁰

13:36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him and said,

Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.⁴³¹

13:37 And he answered and said,

The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,⁴³² **13:38** and the field is the world. As for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom, and the weeds are the sons of the evil one.⁴³³ **13:39** And

the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the completion of the age. And the reapers are angels.⁴³⁴

13:40 Therefore, just as weeds are gathered up and burned with fire, so will it be at the completion of the age.⁴³⁵ **13:41** The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they will gather together out of his kingdom all the rejecters of truth and those who perform lawlessness,⁴³⁶ **13:42** and they will throw them into the fiery furnace <cf. Daniel 3:6-20>. In that place there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.⁴³⁷ **13:43** Then, the righteous will shine forth in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.⁴³⁸

13:44 The Kingdom of the Heavens is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid. And from the joy of it, he goes and sells all that he has, and he buys that field.⁴³⁹

13:45 Again, the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a merchant who is seeking fine pearls.⁴⁴⁰ **13:46** And when he found one expensive pearl, he went and sold all that he had, and he bought it.⁴⁴¹

13:47 Again, the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a net thrown across the water which has been cast into the sea, and it is gathering together from every kind of fish.⁴⁴² **13:48** And when it was filled, they dragged it onto the beach, and they sat down and collected the good fish into containers. But the bad they threw away.⁴⁴³ **13:49** So it will be at the completion of the age. The angels will go forth and separate the wicked from among the righteous.⁴⁴⁴ **13:50** And they will throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place, there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.⁴⁴⁵

13:51 Have you understood these things?⁴⁴⁶

They said to him, "Yes."

13:52 And he said to them,

Therefore, every scribe who has been made a disciple of the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a head of the household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.⁴⁴⁷

13:53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he departed from there.⁴⁴⁸ **13:54** And he came to his hometown and taught them in their synagogue, with the result that they were amazed and said,

From where have this wisdom and powerful actions come to this man?⁴⁴⁹ **13:55** Is this not the construction worker's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?⁴⁵⁰ **13:56** And are not all his sisters with us? So from where did all these things come to this man?⁴⁵¹

13:57 And they were offended by him. But Jesus said to them,

A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his household.⁴⁵²

13:58 And he did not perform many powerful actions there on account of their unbelief.⁴⁵³

14:1 During that season, Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus.⁴⁵⁴ **14:2** And he said to his servants,

This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead, and this is why miraculous powers are at work in him.⁴⁵⁵

14:3 For when Herod had arrested John, he bound him and put him away in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip.⁴⁵⁶ **14:4** For John had been saying to him,

It is not moral for you to have her.⁴⁵⁷

14:5 And even though he wanted to put him to death, he was afraid of the crowd because they regarded him as a prophet.⁴⁵⁸ **14:6** But when Herod's birthday arrived, the daughter of Herodias danced in his midst, and it was pleasing to Herod.⁴⁵⁹ **14:7** Therefore, he promised with an oath to give to her whatever she asked.⁴⁶⁰ **14:8** Having been prompted by her mother, she said,

Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.⁴⁶¹

14:9 Although it upset him, the king commanded it to be given to her because of his oaths and his guests.⁴⁶² **14:10** So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.⁴⁶³ **14:11** And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.⁴⁶⁴ **14:12** Then, his disciples took away the body and buried it. And they went and brought the news to Jesus.⁴⁶⁵

14:13 When Jesus heard, he withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by himself. But when the crowds heard, they followed him on foot from the cities.⁴⁶⁶ **14:14** When Jesus got out, he saw the large crowd and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.⁴⁶⁷ **14:15** After evening had occurred, the disciples approached him, saying,

This place is remote, and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.⁴⁶⁸

14:16 But Jesus said to them,

They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.⁴⁶⁹

14:17 They said to him,

We have here only five loaves and two fish.⁴⁷⁰

14:18 So he said,

Bring them here to me.⁴⁷¹

14:19 After commanding the crowds to sit down on the grass, he took the five loaves and two fish. Then, looking toward heaven, he blessed them. And he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples. And the disciples gave them to the crowds.⁴⁷² **14:20** They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward, they picked up the leftovers of the fragments, twelve baskets full.⁴⁷³ **14:21** There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.⁴⁷⁴

14:22 Immediately, he compelled the disciples to embark in the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he sent away the crowds.⁴⁷⁵ **14:23** After he had sent the crowds away, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it became evening, he was there alone.⁴⁷⁶ **14:24** The boat had already moved many stadia away from the land, and it was being battered by the waves, because the wind was blowing against it.⁴⁷⁷ **14:25** During the fourth watch of the night, he

came to them walking on the sea.⁴⁷⁸ **14:26** When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they became terrified, saying,

It is a ghost!

And they cried out in fear.⁴⁷⁹ **14:27** But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying,

Take courage. It is I (ἐγώ εἰμι). Do not be afraid.⁴⁸⁰

14:28 And Peter responded and said to him,

Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the waters.⁴⁸¹

14:29 And he said,

Come.

So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the waters. And he went to Jesus.⁴⁸² **14:30** But seeing the powerful wind, he became frightened. As he began to sink, he cried out,

Lord, save me!⁴⁸³

14:31 Immediately, Jesus stretched out his hand and took hold of him, and he was saying,

You of little belief. Why do you doubt?⁴⁸⁴

14:32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.⁴⁸⁵ **14:33** And those who were in the boat fell down before him, saying,

Truly you are the Son of God.⁴⁸⁶

14:34 When they had crossed over, they came to the land at Gennesaret.⁴⁸⁷ **14:35** When the men of that place recognized him, they sent word out to the whole surrounding district and brought to him all who were ill.⁴⁸⁸ **14:36** And they urged him that they might just touch the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were cured.⁴⁸⁹

15:1 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying,⁴⁹⁰

15:2 Why do your disciples violate the tradition of the elders, because they do not wash their hands when they eat bread?⁴⁹¹

15:3 He answered and said to them,

Why do you violate God's commandment for the sake of your tradition?⁴⁹² **15:4** For God said,

Honor your father and mother <Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16>, and

He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him die <Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9>.⁴⁹³

15:5 But you say,

Whoever says to his father and mother,

Whatever is mine which could benefit you is *qorban* (קֹרְבָן, δῶρον, Leviticus 1:2, etc.),⁴⁹⁴

15:6 he is not to honor his father or his mother. Thus, you have nullified the message of God because of your tradition.⁴⁹⁵ **15:7** Hypocrites, Isaiah spoke well from God of you,⁴⁹⁶

15:8 This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.⁴⁹⁷ **15:9** So they worship Me in vain, while teaching as Torah the commandments of men <Isaiah 29:13>.⁴⁹⁸

15:10 He called the crowd to him and said to them,

Hear and understand.⁴⁹⁹ **15:11** It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.⁵⁰⁰

15:12 Then the disciples came and said to him,

Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard your statement?⁵⁰¹

15:13 but he answered and said,

Every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted.⁵⁰² **15:14** Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into the pit.⁵⁰³

15:15 Peter responded and said to him,

Explain this parable to us.⁵⁰⁴

15:16 Jesus said,

Are you still without understanding?⁵⁰⁵ **15:17** Do you not get it that everything which goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is thrown out into the latrine?⁵⁰⁶ **15:18** But things which come out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.⁵⁰⁷ **15:19** For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false witnesses, and slanders.⁵⁰⁸ **15:20** These are the things which defile the man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.⁵⁰⁹

15:21 Then Jesus went away from there and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.⁵¹⁰ **15:22** And behold a Canaanite woman from those regions came out and was crying out, saying,

Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David. My daughter is severely demon-possessed.⁵¹¹

15:23 But he did not answer her a word. And the disciples came to him and asked him, saying,

Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.⁵¹²

15:24 He answered and said,

I was not sent exclusively to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.⁵¹³

15:25 But she came and fell down in worship before him, saying,

Lord, help me.⁵¹⁴

15:26 And he responded and said,

It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.⁵¹⁵

15:27 And she said,

Yes, Lord, but even the little dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.⁵¹⁶

15:28 Then Jesus answered and said to her,

Oh woman, your belief is great! Let it be done for you as you wish.

And her daughter was healed from that hour.⁵¹⁷

15:29 Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, he was sitting there.⁵¹⁸ **15:30** And large crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others. And they laid them at his feet, and he healed them.⁵¹⁹ **15:31** The result was that the crowd marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.⁵²⁰

15:32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said,

I feel compassion for the crowd, because they have remained with me already for three days and have had nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.⁵²¹

15:33 The disciples said to him,

Where is there enough bread in this desolate place in order to satisfy such a large crowd?⁵²²

15:34 Jesus said to them,

How many loaves of bread do you have?

And they said,

Seven and a few small fish.⁵²³

15:35 And he directed the crowd to sit down on the ground.⁵²⁴ **15:36** He took the seven loaves of bread and fish, and, after giving thanks, he broke them, gave them to his disciples, and his disciples gave them to the crowds.⁵²⁵ **15:37** And they all ate and were satisfied. Then, they picked up what was left over of the fragments, seven large baskets full.⁵²⁶ **15:38** Those who ate were four thousand men, besides the women and children.⁵²⁷

15:39 Now he sent them away, and he got into a boat and came to the regions of Magadan.⁵²⁸

16:1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to him, testing him, and they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.⁵²⁹ **16:2** So he replied and said,

When it is evening, you say, "Fair weather," for the sky is red.⁵³⁰ **16:3** And in the morning, you say, "Storm today," for the sky is red and threatening. You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you are not able to interpret the signs of the seasons.⁵³¹ **16:4** An evil and adulterous race/generation seeks a sign, and no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah.⁵³²

And he left them and went away. **16:5** When the disciples came to the other side, they had forgotten to bring bread.⁵³³ **16:6** And Jesus said to them,

Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.⁵³⁴

16:7 And they were conversing with one another, saying,

Because we did not take bread?⁵³⁵

16:8 But Jesus, knowing what they were discussing, said,

You men of little belief, why are you conversing among yourselves that it is because you have no bread?⁵³⁶ **16:9** Do you not yet get it? And do you not remember the five loaves of bread of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up?⁵³⁷ **16:10** Or the seven loaves of bread of the four thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up?⁵³⁸ **16:11** How do you not understand that I am not speaking to you about loaves of bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.⁵³⁹

16:12 Then they understood that he was not saying to pay attention to the leaven of bread but to the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.⁵⁴⁰

16:13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea of Philip, he was asking his disciples, saying,

Who do people say is the Son of Man?⁵⁴¹

16:14 And they said,

Some say John the Baptist. And others say Elijah. But still others say Jeremiah or one of the prophets.⁵⁴²

16:15 He said to them,

But who do you say that I am?⁵⁴³

16:16 Simon Peter answered and said,

You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.⁵⁴⁴

16:17 Jesus responded and said to him,

Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in the heavens.⁵⁴⁵ **16:18** And I say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my assembly, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.⁵⁴⁶ **16:19** I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in the heavens.⁵⁴⁷

16:20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.⁵⁴⁸ **16:21** From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, to be killed, and to be raised up on the third day.⁵⁴⁹ **16:22** But Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying,

May God be merciful to you, Lord. This will never happen to you.⁵⁵⁰

16:23 He turned to Peter and said,

Get behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me, because you are not thinking of the things of God, but of the things of man.⁵⁵¹

16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples,

If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.⁵⁵² **16:25** For whoever desires to save his existence will lose it, and whoever loses his existence for my sake will find it.⁵⁵³ **16:26** For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his existence? Or what will a man give in exchange for his existence?⁵⁵⁴

16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then he will pay each one according to his performance <Psalm 62:12>.⁵⁵⁵ **16:28** Truly I say to you that there are some of those standing here who will not really taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.⁵⁵⁶

17:1 Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John his brother, and he led them up onto a high mountain.⁵⁵⁷ **17:2** And he was transformed in front of them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.⁵⁵⁸ **17:3** And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him.⁵⁵⁹ **17:4** Peter responded and said to Jesus,

Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.⁵⁶⁰

17:5 While he was still speaking with them, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And, behold, a voice out of the cloud said,

This is My Son whom I love, with whom I am well-pleased. Listen to him.⁵⁶¹

17:6 When the disciples heard, they fell on their face and were greatly terrified.⁵⁶² **17:7** But Jesus came to them, touched them, and said,

Get up, and do not be afraid.⁵⁶³

17:8 When they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.⁵⁶⁴ **17:9** As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying,

Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.⁵⁶⁵

17:10 His disciples asked him, saying,

Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?⁵⁶⁶

17:11 He answered and said,

Elijah is coming, and he will restore all things.⁵⁶⁷ **17:12** But I say to you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands.⁵⁶⁸

17:13 Then the disciples understood that he had spoken to them of John the Baptist.⁵⁶⁹ **17:14** When they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and fell on his knees,⁵⁷⁰ **17:15** saying,

Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers greatly, because he often falls into the fire and often into the water.⁵⁷¹ **17:16** I brought him to your disciples, but they were unable to heal him.⁵⁷²

17:17 Jesus answered and said,

O unbelieving and turned away race/generation, how long will I be with you? How long will I be patient with you? Bring him here to me.⁵⁷³

17:18 And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was healed from that hour.⁵⁷⁴ **17:19** Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said,

Why were we not able to cast it out?⁵⁷⁵

17:20 And he said to them,

Because of your smallness of belief. For truly I say to you, if you have belief like the seed of a mustard plant, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will be moved. And nothing will be impossible for you.⁵⁷⁶ [**17:21** But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]⁵⁷⁷

17:22 And while they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them,

The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.⁵⁷⁸ **17:23** And they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised.⁵⁷⁹

And they were deeply grieved. **17:24** When they came to Capernaum, those who collected the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said,

Does your teacher fulfill his obligation of the two-drachma tax?⁵⁸⁰

17:25 He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus first came before him and said,

What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect tolls or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?⁵⁸¹

17:26 And he said, "From strangers." Then Jesus said to him,

Therefore, the sons are exempt.⁵⁸² **17:27** However, in order that we not offend them, go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish which comes up. When you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take it and give it to them for me and you.⁵⁸³

18:1 In that hour, the disciples came to Jesus, saying,

Who therefore is the greatest in the Kingdom of the Heavens?⁵⁸⁴

18:2 He called a child to himself and stood him in their midst.⁵⁸⁵ **18:3** And he said,

Truly I say to you, if you do not turn and become like children, you will not enter into the Kingdom of the Heavens.⁵⁸⁶ **18:4** Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of the Heavens.⁵⁸⁷ **18:5** And whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.⁵⁸⁸ **18:6** But whoever scandalizes one of these little ones who believes in me, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he was drowned in the depths of the sea.⁵⁸⁹ **18:7** Woe to the world because of its scandalizings. It is necessary that scandalizings come. Nevertheless, woe to the man through whom the scandalizing comes.⁵⁹⁰

18:8 And if your hand or your foot scandalizes you, cut it off and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or crippled than to have two hands and two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire.⁵⁹¹ **18:9** And if your eye scandalizes you, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the Gehenna of fire.⁵⁹²

18:10 See that you do not look down with contempt on one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in the heavens continually see the face of my Father in the heavens.⁵⁹³ [TR **18:11** For the Son of Man has come to save that which is lost.⁵⁹⁴]

18:12 What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountain and go and search for the one who has wandered away?⁵⁹⁵

18:13 And if it happens that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than the ninety-nine who had not wandered away.⁵⁹⁶ **18:14** Likewise, it is not the desire of your Father in the heavens that one of these little ones be destroyed.⁵⁹⁷

18:15 If your brother sins against you, go and talk to him about it between just you and him. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.⁵⁹⁸ **18:16** But if he does not listen to you, take one or two others with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every matter is made to stand <Deuteronomy 19:15>.⁵⁹⁹ **18:17** And if he refuses to listen to them, speak to the assembly. And if he also refuses to listen to the assembly, let him be to you like a pagan/Gentile and a tax collector.⁶⁰⁰

18:18 Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.⁶⁰¹ **18:19** Again I truly say to you, if two of you agree with one another [share a common interest] on earth in regard to any matter of which they ask, it will be such by my Father in the heavens.⁶⁰² **18:20** For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst.⁶⁰³

18:21 Then Peter came and said to him,

How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?⁶⁰⁴

18:22 Jesus said to him,

I say to you, not up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.⁶⁰⁵ **18:23** For this reason the Kingdom of the Heavens may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.⁶⁰⁶ **18:24** When he began to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.⁶⁰⁷

18:25 But because he did not have the means to repay his debt, the Lord ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, children, and all that he had, and repayment to be made.⁶⁰⁸ **18:26** So the slave fell down and prostrated himself before him, saying,

Be patient with me, and I will repay you everything.⁶⁰⁹

18:27 And the lord of that slave felt compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.⁶¹⁰ **18:28** But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii. And he seized him and began to choke him, saying,

Pay back what you owe me!⁶¹¹

18:29 So his fellow slave fell down and called out to him, saying,

Be patient with me, and I will repay you.⁶¹²

18:30 But he was unwilling and went and threw him into prison until he paid back what was owed.⁶¹³

18:31 As a result, when his fellow slaves observed what happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord everything that had happened.⁶¹⁴ **18:32** Then his lord summoned him and said to him,

You evil slave, I forgave you all that debt, because you urged me.⁶¹⁵ **18:33** Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, just as I had mercy on you?⁶¹⁶

18:34 And his lord became angry and handed him over to the merciless jailers until he repaid everything that was owed him.⁶¹⁷ **18:35** So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from his heart.⁶¹⁸

19:1 When Jesus had completed these statements, he departed from Galilee and came to the borders of Judea to the other side of the Jordan.⁶¹⁹ **19:2** And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.⁶²⁰ **19:3** The Pharisees came to him, testing him and saying,

Is it lawful for a man to send away his wife for any reason at all?⁶²¹

19:4 And he answered and said,

Have you not read that the One Who Creates made them male and female from the beginning <Genesis 1:27>.⁶²² **19:5** And it says,

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and he shall be glued to his wife. And the two shall become one flesh <Genesis 2:24>.⁶²³

19:6 Consequently, they are no longer two but one flesh. What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man break apart.⁶²⁴

19:7 They said to him,

Why then did Moses command to give her a written document of divorce and send her away?⁶²⁵

19:8 He said to them,

Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your hearts. And has it not been this way from the beginning?⁶²⁶ **19:9** And I say to you, whoever sends away his wife except for sexual immorality and marries another woman is being unfaithful.⁶²⁷

19:10 His disciples said to him,

If the relationship of a man with his wife is like this, then it is better not to marry.⁶²⁸

19:11 And he said to them,

Not everyone makes it all the way to this message, but to whom it has been given.⁶²⁹ **19:12** For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men. And there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs because of the Kingdom of the Heavens. He who is able to make it all the way to this, let him make it all the way to it.⁶³⁰

19:13 Then some children were brought to him so that he could lay his hands on them and pray. But the disciples rebuked them.⁶³¹ **19:14** But Jesus said,

Leave the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to me, for the Kingdom of the Heavens belongs to such as these.⁶³²

19:15 And after laying his hands on them, he departed from there.⁶³³ **19:16** And behold, someone approached him and said to him,

What good thing should I do so that I may have eternal life?⁶³⁴

19:17 And he said to him,

Why are you asking me about what is good? There is one who is good. But if you desire to enter into life, then guard the commandments.⁶³⁵

19:18 He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said,

You shall not commit murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness.⁶³⁶ **19:19** Honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.⁶³⁷

19:20 The young man said to him,

I have kept all these. What am I still lacking?⁶³⁸

19:21 Jesus said to him,

If you desire to be a complete person, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor. Then, you will have treasure in the heavens, and come, follow me.⁶³⁹

19:22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving, because he was one who owned much property.⁶⁴⁰ **19:23** And Jesus said to his disciples,

Truly I say to you, it is difficult for a wealthy man to enter into the Kingdom of the Heavens.⁶⁴¹ **19:24** Again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a wealthy man to enter into the Kingdom of God.⁶⁴²

19:25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and said,

Then who can be saved?⁶⁴³

19:26 Looking at them, Jesus said,

This is impossible for men. But all things are possible for God.⁶⁴⁴

19:27 Then Peter responded and said to him,

Behold, we have left everything and followed you. What then will there be for us?⁶⁴⁵

19:28 And Jesus said to them,

Truly I say to you, you who have followed me, in the renewal, when the Son of Man sits on his throne of glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.⁶⁴⁶ **19:29** And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or fields for my name's sake will receive a hundred times as much, and he will inherit eternal life.⁶⁴⁷

19:30 And many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.⁶⁴⁸

20:1 For the Kingdom of the Heavens is like a landowner, who went out in the early morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.⁶⁴⁹ **20:2** When he had agreed with the laborers on a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.⁶⁵⁰ **20:3** And about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace.⁶⁵¹ **20:4** And he said to them,

You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right, I will give you.⁶⁵²

20:5 And they went. Then, about the sixth and the ninth hour he went out and did the same.⁶⁵³ **20:6** And about the eleventh hour, he went out and found others standing idle, and he said to them,

Why have you been standing here idle the whole day?⁶⁵⁴

20:7 They said to him,

Because no one hired us.

He said to them,

You also go into the vineyard.⁶⁵⁵

20:8 When evening came, the master of the vineyard said to his foreman,

Call the laborers, and give them their wages, beginning with the last ones to the first ones.⁶⁵⁶

20:9 When those who were hired about the eleventh hour came, they received a denarius apiece.⁶⁵⁷

20:10 And when those who were hired first came, they thought that they would receive more, but they

also received a denarius apiece.⁶⁵⁸ **20:11** And when they received it, they grumbled at the landowner,⁶⁵⁹ **20:12** saying,

These last men worked for one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.⁶⁶⁰

20:13 And he responded and said to one of them,

Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me on a denarius?⁶⁶¹ **20:14** Take what is yours and go. But I desire to give this last man the same as you.⁶⁶² **20:15** Either it is not legitimate for me to do what I desire in my own eyes, or your eye is evil because I am good.⁶⁶³

20:16 Thus, those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last.⁶⁶⁴

20:17 As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took aside the twelve disciples by themselves, and he said to them on the way,⁶⁶⁵

20:18 Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death.⁶⁶⁶ **20:19** Then, they will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock him, beat him with a whip, and crucify him. But on the third day, he will be raised.⁶⁶⁷

20:20 Then, the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached him with her sons, bowing down and making a request of him.⁶⁶⁸ **20:21** And he said to her,

What do you want?

She said to him,

Command that these two sons of mine will sit one at your right hand and one at our left hand in your kingdom.⁶⁶⁹

20:22 Jesus answered and said,

You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?

They said to him,

We are able.⁶⁷⁰

20:23 He said to them,

My cup you shall drink. But to sit on my right and on my left is not for me to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.⁶⁷¹

20:24 And when the ten heard this, they became indignant towards the two brothers.⁶⁷² **20:25** But Jesus called them to himself and said,

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles exercise control over them, and their powerful men exercise authority over them.⁶⁷³ **20:26** It will not be like this among you, but whoever desires to be great among you will be your servant.⁶⁷⁴ **20:27** And whoever desires to be first among you will be your

slave,⁶⁷⁵ **20:28** just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.⁶⁷⁶

20:29 And as they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him.⁶⁷⁷ **20:30** Behold, two blind men were sitting by the way, and hearing that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, saying,

Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!⁶⁷⁸

20:31 But the crowd strongly rebuked them so that they would be quiet. However, they cried out all the more, saying,

Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!⁶⁷⁹

20:32 And Jesus stopped and called them, and he said,

What do you want me to do for you?⁶⁸⁰

20:33 They said to him,

Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.⁶⁸¹

20:34 And moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. And immediately they gained their sight and followed him.⁶⁸²

21:1 And when they approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus then sent two disciples,⁶⁸³ **21:2** saying to them,

Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied up, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me.⁶⁸⁴ **21:3** And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord has need of them," and immediately he will send them.⁶⁸⁵

21:4 This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled,⁶⁸⁶

21:5 Say to the daughter of Zion,

Behold, your king is coming to you, gentle and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey <Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9>.⁶⁸⁷

21:6 And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them.⁶⁸⁸ **21:7** They brought the donkey and the colt, and they laid their coats on them. And he sat on them.⁶⁸⁹ **21:8** And most of the crowd spread their coats on the road, while others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road.⁶⁹⁰ **21:9** The crowds, who were going ahead and following him, were crying out, saying,

Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh <Psalm 118:26>.
Hosanna in the highest places.⁶⁹¹

21:10 And when they entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?"⁶⁹²

21:11 And the crowds were saying,

This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.⁶⁹³

21:12 And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were selling and buying in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those selling doves.⁶⁹⁴ **21:13** And he said to them,

It has been written, My house shall be called a house of prayer <Isaiah 56:7>. But you are making it a cave of robbers <Jeremiah 7:11>.⁶⁹⁵

21:14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.⁶⁹⁶ **21:15** But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things which he had done, and the children crying out in the temple and saying,

Hosanna to the Son of David,

they became angry.⁶⁹⁷ **21:16** And they 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 infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself <Psalm 8:2>.⁶⁹⁸

21:17 And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and he spent the night there.⁶⁹⁹ **21:18** In the morning, when he was returning to the city, he became hungry.⁷⁰⁰ **21:19** And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, he came to it and found nothing on it except leaves. And he said to it,

There is no longer to be any fruit from you into the age.

And the fig tree withered immediately.⁷⁰¹ **21:20** When the disciples saw this, they were amazed, and said,

How did the fig tree wither immediately?⁷⁰²

21:21 Jesus responded and said to them,

Truly I say to you, if you have belief and you are not at odds with yourself, not only will you do what was done to the fig tree, but if you say to this mountain, "Be taken up and thrown into the sea," it will happen.⁷⁰³ **21:22** And everything which you ask in prayer while believing, you will receive.⁷⁰⁴

21:23 When he came to the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him while he was teaching. And they said,

By what authority do you do these things? And who has given you this authority?⁷⁰⁵

21:24 Jesus answered and said to them,

I will ask you one thing, which, if you tell me, I will tell you by what authority I do these things.⁷⁰⁶ **21:25** The baptism of John was from where? From heaven or from men?

And they were reasoning among themselves, saying,

If we say, "From heaven," he will say to us, "Then why did you not believe him."⁷⁰⁷ 21:26 But if we say, "From men," we are afraid of the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet.⁷⁰⁸

21:27 So they answered Jesus and said,

We don't know.

He said to them,

Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.⁷⁰⁹ 21:28 But what does it seem to you? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said,

Child, go work today in the vineyard.⁷¹⁰

21:29 And he answered and said,

I don't want to.

But later he regretted it, changed his mind, and he went.⁷¹¹ 21:30 And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said,

"I will," sir, but did not go.⁷¹²

21:31 Which of the two did the will of father?

They said,

The first.

Jesus said to them,

Truly I say to you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes will go before you into the Kingdom of God.⁷¹³ 21:32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. And you, when you saw, did not regret it and change your minds afterwards in order to believe him.⁷¹⁴

21:33 Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it. And he dug a winepress in it, built a tower, rented it out to tenant-farmers, and went on a journey.⁷¹⁵ 21:34 When the season of fruits drew near, he sent his slaves to the tenant-farmers to receive his fruits.⁷¹⁶ 21:35 But the tenant-farmers took his slaves, and they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.⁷¹⁷ 21:36 Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they did to them likewise.⁷¹⁸ 21:37 Afterwards, he sent his son to them, saying,

They will respect my son.⁷¹⁹

21:38 But when the tenant-farmers saw the son, they said among themselves,

This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.⁷²⁰

21:39 So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.⁷²¹ **21:40** When the master of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenant-farmers?⁷²²

21:41 They said to him,

He will destroy the evil ones with destruction, and he will give the vineyard to other tenant-farmers, who will pay him the fruits in their seasons.⁷²³

21:42 And Jesus said to them,

Have you never read in the scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone. This came about from Yahweh, and it is marvelous in our eyes <Psalm 118:22,23>.⁷²⁴

21:43 Therefore I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a people who do its fruits.⁷²⁵ **21:44** And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and on whomever it falls, it will crush him.⁷²⁶

21:45 When the chief priests and Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he was talking about them.⁷²⁷ **21:46** And when they sought to seize him, they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.⁷²⁸

22:1 And Jesus responded again to them in parables and said,⁷²⁹

22:2 The Kingdom of the Heavens is like a king who gave his son a wedding.⁷³⁰ **22:3** And he sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding, and they were unwilling to come.⁷³¹ **22:4** Again, he sent other slaves, saying,

Tell those who have been invited, Behold, I have prepared my meal. My oxen and my fattened calves have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding.⁷³²

22:5 But they did not care and went their own way, one to his farm and another to his business.⁷³³ **22:6** The rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them.⁷³⁴ **22:7** Consequently, the king became enraged and sent his armies to destroy those murderers, and he burned their city.⁷³⁵ **22:8** Then, he told his slaves,

The wedding is ready, but those who have been invited are not worthy.⁷³⁶ **22:9** Go, therefore, onto the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite them to the wedding.⁷³⁷

22:10 And those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all those whom they found, both the evil and the good, and the wedding was filled with those who reclined at the table.⁷³⁸ **22:11** But when the king entered to look over those who were reclining at the table, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes.⁷³⁹ **22:12** And he said to him,

Friend, how did you get in here without wearing wedding clothes?

And he was speechless.⁷⁴⁰ **22:13** Then, the king said to his servants,

Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the most extreme darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁷⁴¹

22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.⁷⁴²

22:15 Then the Pharisees went and took counsel together how they could trap him in a statement.⁷⁴³ **22:16** And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying,

Teacher, we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and that what others think is of no concern to you. For you are not partial to anyone.⁷⁴⁴ **22:17** Therefore, tell us, is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?⁷⁴⁵

22:18 But Jesus, knowing their evil, said,

Why are you testing me, you hypocrites?⁷⁴⁶ **22:19** Show me the official coin for taxes.

And they brought him a denarius.⁷⁴⁷ **22:20** And he said to them,

Whose image and inscription is this?⁷⁴⁸

22:21 And they said to him, "Caesars." Then he said to them,

Then give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.⁷⁴⁹

22:22 When they heard this, they were amazed. And leaving him, they went away.⁷⁵⁰ **22:23** On that day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, approached him, and they asked him,⁷⁵¹ **22:24** saying,

Teacher, Moses said, if a man dies having no children, his brother should marry his wife and raise up descendants for his brother <Deuteronomy 25:5>.⁷⁵² **22:25** Now, there were seven brothers with us, and the first married and died. And having no descendant, he left his wife to his brother.⁷⁵³ **22:26** Likewise, the second and third down to the seventh.⁷⁵⁴ **22:27** Last of all, the wife died.⁷⁵⁵ **22:28** In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.⁷⁵⁶

22:29 Jesus answered and said to them,

You are mistaken, understanding neither the scriptures nor the power of God.⁷⁵⁷ **22:30** For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage. They are like angels in heaven.⁷⁵⁸ **22:31** And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,⁷⁵⁹

22:32 I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob <Exodus 3:6>.

He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.⁷⁶⁰

22:33 When the crowds heard this, they were astounded at his teaching.⁷⁶¹ **22:34** And when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.⁷⁶² **22:35** And one of them, an expert in the Torah, asked him, testing him,⁷⁶³

22:36 Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Torah?⁷⁶⁴

22:37 And he said to him,

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your person, and with all your mind <Deuteronomy 6:5>.⁷⁶⁵ **22:38** This is the greatest and primary commandment.⁷⁶⁶ **22:39** And the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself <Leviticus 19:18>.⁷⁶⁷ **22:40** The whole Torah and Prophets hang on these two commandments.⁷⁶⁸

22:41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,⁷⁶⁹ **22:42** saying,

What does it seem to you is going on with the Messiah? Whose son is he?

They said to him,

The Son of David.⁷⁷⁰

22:43 He said to them,

Then how does David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,⁷⁷¹

22:44 The Lord said to my Lord,

Sit at My right hand until I put your enemies under your feet <Psalm 110:1>.⁷⁷²

22:45 If therefore David calls him 'Lord,' how is he his son?⁷⁷³

22:46 And no one was able to answer him a word. And no one dared from that day to ask him anything further.⁷⁷⁴ **23:1** Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and his disciples,⁷⁷⁵ **23:2** saying,

The scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses.⁷⁷⁶ **23:3** Therefore, everything which they say to you, do and guard. But do not do in line with their actions, for they speak and do not do.⁷⁷⁷ **23:4** They tie up heavy and difficult to endure burdens, and they lay them on men's shoulders. But they are unwilling to move them with their finger.⁷⁷⁸ **23:5** And they perform all their actions in order to be noticed by men. For they broaden their prayer-cases, and they lengthen the fringes of their garments.⁷⁷⁹

23:6 They love the place of honor at meals and the chief seats in the synagogues.⁷⁸⁰ **23:7** They love the personal greetings in the market places and being called 'Rabbi' by men.⁷⁸¹ **23:8** But do not be called 'Rabbi,' for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.⁷⁸² **23:9** And do not call anyone on earth your father, for One is your Father, He who is in the heavens.⁷⁸³ **23:10** And do not be called teachers, for one is your teacher, the Messiah.⁷⁸⁴

23:11 And the greatest among you will be your servant.⁷⁸⁵ **23:12** Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.⁷⁸⁶

23:13 But damn you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you close the Kingdom of the Heavens to men, for you do not enter, and you do not allow those who are entering to enter.⁷⁸⁷

23:14 Damn you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and with pretense you pray long prayers. Therefore, you will receive condemnation to the fullest.⁷⁸⁸

23:15 Damn you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice the son of Gehenna that you are.⁷⁸⁹

23:16 Damn you blind guides who say,

Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.⁷⁹⁰

23:17 You fools and blind men. Which is greater, the gold or the temple which sets the gold apart?⁷⁹¹
23:18 And,

Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing. But whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.⁷⁹²

23:19 You blind men. Which is greater, the offering or the altar which sets the offering apart?⁷⁹³ **23:20** Therefore, whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything which is on it.⁷⁹⁴ **23:21** And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.⁷⁹⁵ **23:22** And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.⁷⁹⁶

23:23 Damn you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, but you have left out the more important issues of the Torah—justice, loyal love, and belief. These are things which were necessary to do without leaving out the others.⁷⁹⁷ **23:24** You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and drink down a camel.⁷⁹⁸

23:25 Damn you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you clean the outside of the cup and plate, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.⁷⁹⁹ **23:26** You blind Pharisee. First clean the inside of the cup and plate, so that the outside of them may be clean also.⁸⁰⁰

23:27 Damn you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.⁸⁰¹

23:28 So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and immorality.⁸⁰²

23:29 Damn you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you build the tombs of the prophets, and you put in order the memorials of the righteous,⁸⁰³ **23:30** and you say,

If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in the blood of the prophets,⁸⁰⁴

23:31 so that you bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.⁸⁰⁵ **23:32** Therefore, you have filled out the measure of your fathers.⁸⁰⁶ **23:33** You snakes and offspring of vipers. How can you flee from the judgment of Gehenna?⁸⁰⁷

23:34 Therefore, behold, I am sending to you prophets, wise men, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify. Some of them you will whip in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,⁸⁰⁸

23:35 so that on you will come all the righteous blood which has been poured out on the ground, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.⁸⁰⁹ **23:36** Truly I say to you, all these things will come on this generation/race.⁸¹⁰

23:37 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her. How often I have wanted to gather your children together in the manner of a hen who gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were unwilling.⁸¹¹ **23:38** Behold, your house is being left desolate to you.⁸¹² **23:39** For I say to you, you will not see me from now until you say,

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord <Psalm 118:26>.⁸¹³

24:1 Then Jesus came out of the temple and was going away when his disciples came to him and pointed out the temple buildings.⁸¹⁴ **24:2** And he answered and said to them,

Do you not see these things. Truly I say to you, not one stone will be left on another stone, which will not be torn down.⁸¹⁵

24:3 As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying,

Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your blessed appearance and the end of the age?⁸¹⁶

24:4 Jesus answered and said to them,

See that no one deceives you,⁸¹⁷ **24:5** because many will come in my name, saying, “I am the Messiah,” and they will deceive many.⁸¹⁸ **24:6** You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, because it is necessary that they happen. But that is not the end.⁸¹⁹ **24:7** For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in places.⁸²⁰ **24:8** But all these things are the beginning of birth pangs.⁸²¹

24:9 Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and they will kill you. Indeed, you will be hated by all peoples on account of my name.⁸²² **24:10** And many will be caused to sin. They will betray one another, and they will hate one another.⁸²³ **24:11** Indeed, many false prophets will arise, and they will deceive many.⁸²⁴ **24:12** Because lawlessness increases, many people’s love will grow cold.⁸²⁵ **24:13** But the one who endures to the end (εις τέλος) will be saved.⁸²⁶ **24:14** In addition, this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole world (εν ὅλη τῇ οἰκουμένη) for the purpose of being a witness to all the peoples, and then the end (τὸ τέλος) will come.⁸²⁷

24:15 Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken through Daniel the prophet <Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11> standing in the sacred place (let the reader understand),⁸²⁸ **24:16** at that time, those who are in Judea, flee to the mountains.⁸²⁹ **24:17** The one who is on the housetop, let him not go down to get the things out of his house.⁸³⁰ **24:18** And the one who is in the field, let him not return to get his cloak.⁸³¹ **24:19** But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing in those days.⁸³² **24:20** Instead, pray that your flight will not be in the winter nor on a Sabbath.⁸³³

24:21 For at that time, there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now. Nor will there ever be.⁸³⁴ **24:22** Unless those days had been shortened, all flesh would not be saved. But because of the chosen ones, those days will be shortened.⁸³⁵

24:23 Then, if someone says to you, “Behold, here is the Messiah,” or, “Here he is,” do not believe him.⁸³⁶ **24:24** For false Messiahs and false prophets will arise and provide great signs and miracles with the purpose of deceiving, if possible, even those who are chosen.⁸³⁷

24:25 Behold, I have told you in advance.⁸³⁸ **24:26** Therefore, if they say to you, “Behold, he is in the wilderness,” do not go out. Or, “Behold, he is in the inner rooms,” do not believe them.⁸³⁹ **24:27** Just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, thus will be the coming of the Son of Man.⁸⁴⁰ **24:28** Wherever is the corpse, there the vultures will gather.⁸⁴¹

24:29 But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not provide its light. The stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken <cf. Isaiah 13:10; 34:4; Ezekiel 32:7; Joel 2:10,31; 3:15>.⁸⁴² **24:30** And 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 <Daniel 7:13>.⁸⁴³ **24:31** And he will send forth his

angels with a great trumpet, and they will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from one extreme of heaven to the other.⁸⁴⁴

24:32 So learn the parable from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and it puts forth its leaves, you know that the summer is near.⁸⁴⁵ **24:33** In the same way, when you see all these things, you will know that he is near, at the gates.⁸⁴⁶

24:34 Truly I say to you, this ethnic group does not pass away until all these things take place.⁸⁴⁷ **24:35** Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.⁸⁴⁸

24:36 Regarding that day and hour, no one knows, not even the *angeloi* of the heavens, nor the Son, but the Father alone.⁸⁴⁹

24:37 The appearance of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.⁸⁵⁰ **24:38** For as in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered into the ark.⁸⁵¹ **24:39** And they did not realize until the flood came and took them all away. The appearance of the Son of Man will be like this.⁸⁵² **24:40** At that time, there will be two men in the field. One will be taken, and one will be left.⁸⁵³ **24:41** Two women will be grinding on the millstone. One will be taken, and one will be left.⁸⁵⁴

24:42 Therefore, be on the alert, because you do not know which day your Lord is coming.⁸⁵⁵ **24:43** But realize this. If the head of the house had known at which watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert, and he would not have permitted his house to be broken into.⁸⁵⁶

24:44 Therefore, you also are to be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think he will.⁸⁵⁷

24:45 As a result, who is the faithful and properly thinking slave whom the master puts in charge of his household so that he gives them their food at the proper time?⁸⁵⁸ **24:46** Happy is that slave whom his master will find doing such when he comes.⁸⁵⁹ **24:47** Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.⁸⁶⁰ **24:48** But if that evil slave says in his heart, "My master is not coming for a long time,"⁸⁶¹ **24:49** and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and he eats and drinks with the drunkards,⁸⁶² **24:50** the master of that slave will come on a day when he is not expecting him, and in an hour which he does not know,⁸⁶³ **24:51** and he will cut him in half. Then he will assign him his place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁸⁶⁴

25:1 Then the Kingdom of the Heavens will be like ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.⁸⁶⁵ **25:2** Now, five of them were foolish, and five of them were sensible.⁸⁶⁶ **25:3** For when the foolish took their lamps, they did not take any oil with them.⁸⁶⁷ **25:4** But the sensible took oil in flasks along with their lamps.⁸⁶⁸

25:5 And while the bridegroom was taking his time, they all became drowsy and began to fall asleep.⁸⁶⁹ **25:6** But in the middle of the night there was a shout,

Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.⁸⁷⁰

25:7 Then all those virgins got up and put their own lamps in order.⁸⁷¹ **25:8** And the foolish virgins said to the sensible,

Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.⁸⁷²

25:9 But the sensible answered,

No, lest there not be enough for us. Instead, go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves.⁸⁷³

25:10 And while they were going away to buy some, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready entered with him into the wedding, and the door was closed.⁸⁷⁴ **25:11** Later, the other virgins also came and said,

Sir, Sir, open up for us.⁸⁷⁵

25:12 But he answered and said,

Truly I say to you, I do not know you.⁸⁷⁶

25:13 Therefore, be on the alert, because you know neither the day nor the hour.⁸⁷⁷

25:14 For it is like a man who is going on a journey. He calls his own slaves and hands his possessions over to them.⁸⁷⁸ **25:15** And to one he gives five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability. And he went on his journey. Immediately,⁸⁷⁹ **25:16** the one who had received five talents went and worked with them. And he gained five more.⁸⁸⁰ **25:17** Likewise, the one who had received two gained two more.⁸⁸¹ **25:18** But the one who had received one went away, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.⁸⁸²

25:19 After a long time, the master of those slaves came, and he settled accounts with them.⁸⁸³ **25:20** And the one who had received five talents approached him and brought him five more talents, saying,

Master, you handed over five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.⁸⁸⁴

25:21 And his master said to him,

Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.⁸⁸⁵

25:22 The one who had received two talents approached him and said,

Master, you handed over two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.⁸⁸⁶

25:23 And his master said to him,

Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.⁸⁸⁷

25:24 And the one who had received the one talent approached him and said,

Master, I knew that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter.⁸⁸⁸ **25:25** And being afraid, I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.⁸⁸⁹

25:26 And his master answered and said to him,

You evil and lazy slave. You knew that I reap where I did not sow, and I gather where I did not scatter.⁸⁹⁰ **25:27** Then it was necessary for you to take my money to the moneychangers, and when I came, I would receive my money with interest.⁸⁹¹ **25:28** Therefore, take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.⁸⁹² **25:29** For to everyone who has, it will be given to him, and it will be caused to abound. But to him who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.⁸⁹³

25:30 And throw out the useless slave into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁸⁹⁴

25:31 And when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.⁸⁹⁵ **25:32** And all the peoples will be gathered before him, and he will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.⁸⁹⁶ **25:33** And he will put the sheep on his right, and the goats on his left.⁸⁹⁷

25:34 Then the king will say to those on his right,

Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.⁸⁹⁸ **25:35** For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you gathered me in.⁸⁹⁹ **25:36** I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you were helpful to me. I was in prison, and you came to me.⁹⁰⁰

25:37 Then the righteous will answer him and say,

Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?⁹⁰¹ **25:38** And when did we see you a stranger and gather you in, or naked and clothe you?⁹⁰² **25:39** And when did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?⁹⁰³

25:40 And the king will answer and say to them,

Truly I say to you, in the way that you acted towards one of these least important brothers of mine, you acted towards me.⁹⁰⁴

25:41 Then he will say to those on his left,

Depart from me, cursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.⁹⁰⁵ **25:42** For I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink.⁹⁰⁶ **25:43** I was a stranger, and you did not gather me in. I was naked, and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison, and you did not help me.⁹⁰⁷

25:44 Then they will answer and say,

Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and we did not serve you?⁹⁰⁸

25:45 Then he will answer them and say,

Truly I say to you, in the way which you did not act towards one of these least important ones, you did not act towards me.⁹⁰⁹

25:46 And these will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.⁹¹⁰

26:1 It happened that when Jesus finished all these statements, he said to his disciples,⁹¹¹

26:2 You know that after two days the Passover occurs, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.⁹¹²

26:3 Then the chief priests and elders of the people were gathered together in the courtyard of the high priest named Caiaphas.⁹¹³ 26:4 And they counseled together for the purpose of seizing Jesus by stealth and killing him.⁹¹⁴ 26:5 But they were saying,

Not during the festival. Otherwise, a riot might occur among the people.⁹¹⁵

26:6 When Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the leper,⁹¹⁶ 26:7 a woman approached him having an alabaster vial of expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he reclined at the table.⁹¹⁷ 26:8 But when the disciples saw this, they became indignant and said,

Why this waste?⁹¹⁸ 26:9 For this could have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor.⁹¹⁹

26:10 But Jesus was aware of what they were doing and said to them,

Why are you giving this woman a hard time? For she has done a good deed to me.⁹²⁰ 26:11 You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.⁹²¹ 26:12 For when she put this ointment on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.⁹²² 26:13 Truly I say to you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman did will be spoken of in memory of her.⁹²³

26:14 Then one of the twelve called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests⁹²⁴ 26:15 and said,

What are you willing to give me, and I will hand him over to you?

And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.⁹²⁵ 26:16 From then on he sought a good opportunity to hand him over.⁹²⁶

26:17 With regard to the first day of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said,

Where do you want for us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?⁹²⁷

26:18 And he said,

Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him,

The Teacher says, "My time is near. I am performing the Passover at your house with my disciples."⁹²⁸

26:19 And the disciples did as Jesus commanded them, and they prepared the Passover.⁹²⁹ 26:20 When evening came, he was reclining at table with the twelve.⁹³⁰ 26:21 And as they were eating, he said,

Truly I say to you, one of you will hand me over.⁹³¹

26:22 And being deeply grieved, each one began to say to him,

Surely not I, Lord.⁹³²

26:23 He answered and said,

The one who will hand me over is one who has dipped his hand in the bowl with me.⁹³³ **26:24** The Son of Man is proceeding just as it has been written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been good for him if that man had not been born.⁹³⁴

26:25 And Judas, who was handing him over, answered and said,

Surely it is not I, Rabbi?

And he said to him,

You have said it.⁹³⁵

26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took the bread and praised God for it. And he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said,

Take and eat. This is my body.⁹³⁶

26:27 And he took the cup and gave thanks for it. He then gave it to them, saying,

All of you drink from it,⁹³⁷ **26:28** for this is my blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.⁹³⁸ **26:29** And I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vineyard from now until that day when I will drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father.⁹³⁹

26:30 And after singing a song of praise, they went out to the Mount of Olives.⁹⁴⁰ **26:31** Then, Jesus said to them,

All of you will be scandalized because of me this night, for it has been written, I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered <Zechariah 13:7>.⁹⁴¹ **26:32** But after I have been raised, I will go before you into Galilee.⁹⁴²

26:33 Peter responded and said to him,

If everyone will be scandalized because of you, I will never be scandalized.⁹⁴³

26:34 Jesus said to him,

Truly I say to you, this very night, before a rooster crows, you will refuse to acknowledge me three times.⁹⁴⁴

26:35 Peter said to him,

Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.

And all the disciples said the same thing.⁹⁴⁵ 26:36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to the disciples,

Sit here while I go over there and pray.⁹⁴⁶

26:37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and he began to be grieved and distressed.⁹⁴⁷ 26:38 Then he said to them,

My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death. Remain here and keep watch with me.⁹⁴⁸

26:39 He went a little distance beyond them and fell on his face and prayed, saying,

My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, but not as I want, but as You want.⁹⁴⁹

26:40 And he came to the disciples, and he found them sleeping. And he said to Peter,

Were you not thus able to watch with me for one hour?⁹⁵⁰ 26:41 Keep watching and praying, lest you enter into temptation. The Spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak.⁹⁵¹

26:42 And again he went away a second time and prayed, saying,

My Father, if this cannot pass from me except I drink it, let Your desire occur.⁹⁵²

26:43 Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.⁹⁵³ 26:44 He left them again and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same statement one more time.⁹⁵⁴

26:45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them,

Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is being handed over into the hands of sinners.⁹⁵⁵ 26:46 Get up. Let us go. Behold, the one who is handing me over is near.⁹⁵⁶

26:47 And while he was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and a large crowd from the chief priests and elders of the people with him with swords and clubs.⁹⁵⁷ 26:48 And he who was handing him over had given them a sign, saying,

Whomever I kiss, he is the one. Seize him.⁹⁵⁸

26:49 Immediately he approached Jesus and said,

Shalom, Rabbi.

And he kissed him.⁹⁵⁹ 26:50 Jesus said to him,

Friend, whatever!

Then they approached and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.⁹⁶⁰ 26:51 And behold, one of those who was with Jesus reached out his hand and drew his sword, and he struck the high priest's slave and cut off his ear.⁹⁶¹ 26:52 Then Jesus said to him,

Put your sword back in its place, for all those who take up the sword will die by the sword.⁹⁶² 26:53 Or do you think that I am not able to call to my Father, and He will immediately put at my disposal

twelve legions of angels?⁹⁶³ 26:54 Then how will the scriptures be fulfilled, because it must happen this way?⁹⁶⁴

26:55 In that hour, Jesus said to the crowds,

Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as you would against an insurrectionist? Every day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me.⁹⁶⁵ 26:56 But all this has happened in order that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled.

Then all the disciples left him and fled.⁹⁶⁶ 26:57 And those who had seized Jesus led him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.⁹⁶⁷ 26:58 But Peter was following him from a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and he entered in and sat down with the servants to see the outcome.⁹⁶⁸

26:59 Now, the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were seeking to obtain false witness against Jesus, so that they could put him to death.⁹⁶⁹ 26:60 But they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. However, later, two did come forward,⁹⁷⁰ 26:61 and they said,

This man stated, I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it after three days.⁹⁷¹

26:62 And the high priest stood up and said to him,

Are you not going to answer? What is it that these men are testifying against you?⁹⁷²

26:63 However, Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to him,

I solemnly command you by the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God?⁹⁷³

26:64 Jesus said to him,

You said it. Nevertheless, I tell you, after this you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power <Psalm 110:1>, and coming on the clouds of heaven <Daniel 7:13>.⁹⁷⁴

26:65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said,

He has intentionally spoken falsely. What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard his intentional false statement.⁹⁷⁵ 26:66 What does it seem to you?

And they answered,

He is guilty of death.⁹⁷⁶

26:67 Then they spat in his face, and they beat him with their fists. And others slapped him.⁹⁷⁷

26:68 And they said,

Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who is the one who hit you?⁹⁷⁸

26:69 Now, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a female slave approached him and said,

Indeed, you were with Jesus of Galilee.⁹⁷⁹

26:70 But he denied it in front of all of them, saying,

I don't know what you are talking about.⁹⁸⁰

26:71 When he had gone out to the gate, another female slave saw him and said to those who were near,

This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.⁹⁸¹

26:72 Again he denied it with an oath,

I do not know the man!⁹⁸²

26:73 A little while later, those who had been standing approached Peter and said,

Surely you are one of them, for indeed your manner of speaking gives you away.⁹⁸³

26:74 Then he began to curse and declare emphatically,

I do not know the man!

And immediately a rooster crowed.⁹⁸⁴ **26:75** And Peter remembered the statement when Jesus had said,

Before a rooster crows, you will deny me three times.

And he went out and wept bitterly.⁹⁸⁵

27:1 When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put him to death.⁹⁸⁶ **27:2** They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.⁹⁸⁷ **27:3** Then, when Judas, who had handed him over, saw that he had been condemned, he felt great regret and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,⁹⁸⁸ **27:4** saying,

I have sinned by handing over innocent blood.

But they said,

What is that to us? You see to it.⁹⁸⁹

27:5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple and left. And he went out and hanged himself.⁹⁹⁰ **27:6** The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said,

It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.⁹⁹¹

27:7 And they conferred together and bought the Potter's Field with it as a burial place for strangers.⁹⁹² **27:8** Therefore, that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.⁹⁹³ **27:9** Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled,

And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one whose price has been set by the sons of Israel,⁹⁹⁴ 27:10 and they gave them for the Potter's Field, according to how the Lord ordered me <Zechariah 11:12,13>.⁹⁹⁵

27:11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying,

Are you the king of the Jews?

And Jesus said to him,

You are saying it.⁹⁹⁶

27:12 And while he was being accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer.⁹⁹⁷ 27:13 Then Pilate said to him,

Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?⁹⁹⁸

27:14 And he did not answer him in regard to one statement, so that the governor was absolutely amazed.⁹⁹⁹ 27:15 At the feast, the governor had adopted the custom of releasing for the people one prisoner whom they wanted.¹⁰⁰⁰ 27:16 At that time, they were holding a notorious prisoner named Barabbas.¹⁰⁰¹ 27:17 Therefore, when the people gathered together, Pilate said to them,

Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called the Messiah?¹⁰⁰²

27:18 For he knew that because of envy they had handed him over.¹⁰⁰³ 27:19 And while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent a message to him, saying,

Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I suffered greatly last night in a dream because of him.¹⁰⁰⁴

27:20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death.¹⁰⁰⁵ 27:21 Nevertheless, the governor answered and said to them,

Which of the two do you want me to release to you?

And they said,

Barabbas.¹⁰⁰⁶

27:22 Pilate said to them,

Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?

They all said,

Crucify him.¹⁰⁰⁷

27:23 And he said,

But what evil has he done?

And they kept shouting all the more, saying,

Crucify him!¹⁰⁰⁸

27:24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but instead a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying,

I am innocent of this man's blood. See to the matter yourselves.¹⁰⁰⁹

27:25 And all the people answered and said,

His blood be on us and our children.¹⁰¹⁰

27:26 Then he released Barabbas to them, and after having Jesus beaten with a whip, he handed him over to be crucified.¹⁰¹¹ **27:27** Next the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's official residence, and they gathered the whole military unit around him.¹⁰¹² **27:28** And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him.¹⁰¹³ **27:29** After twisting together a crown of thorns, they placed it on his head and a staff in his right hand. And they knelt down before him and mocked him, saying,

Hail, King of the Jews.¹⁰¹⁴

27:30 Plus, they spat on him, and they took the staff and were beating him on the head.¹⁰¹⁵ **27:31** When they had mocked him, they took the robe off him, and they put his own garments back on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.¹⁰¹⁶ **27:32** As they were coming out, they found a Cyrenian named Simon, and they forced this man to take up his cross.¹⁰¹⁷ **27:33** And when they came to the place called Golgotha, which means the Place of the Skull,¹⁰¹⁸ **27:34** they gave him wine to drink mixed with bitters. And after tasting it, he was unwilling to drink.¹⁰¹⁹ **27:35** After they crucified him, they divided up his garments by casting lots.¹⁰²⁰ **27:36** Then, sitting down, they began to keep watch there.¹⁰²¹ **27:37** And above his head they placed the charge against him which was written, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."¹⁰²²

27:38 At the same time, two bandits were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.¹⁰²³ **27:39** And those passing by were verbally abusing him, wagging their heads¹⁰²⁴ **27:40** and saying,

You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.¹⁰²⁵

27:41 In the same way, the chief priests, the scribes, and elders were mocking him, saying,¹⁰²⁶

27:42 He saved others. He cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.¹⁰²⁷ **27:43** He trusts in God. Let Him now rescue him, if He delights in him <cf. Psalm 22:8>.¹⁰²⁸

27:44 And the bandits who were crucified with him were also insulting him in the same way.¹⁰²⁹

27:45 And from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.¹⁰³⁰ **27:46** About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying,

Eli, Eli, lama sabakthani <cf. Psalm 22:1>?

This means, My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?¹⁰³¹

27:47 And some of those standing there, when they heard him, were saying,

He is calling for Elijah.¹⁰³²

27:48 And immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and he gave him a drink.¹⁰³³ 27:49 But the rest of them were saying,

Let us see if Elijah comes and saves him.¹⁰³⁴

27:50 Then Jesus again cried out with a loud voice and gave up his spirit.¹⁰³⁵ 27:51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook, and the rocks were split.¹⁰³⁶ 27:52 In addition, the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the ones who were set apart and had fallen asleep were raised,¹⁰³⁷ 27:53 and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the sacred city and appeared to many.¹⁰³⁸

27:54 Now the centurion and those who were keeping guard over Jesus with him, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said,

Truly, this was the Son of God.¹⁰³⁹

27:55 And many women were there looking on from a distance who had followed Jesus from Galilee while serving him.¹⁰⁴⁰ 27:56 Among them were Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the two sons of Zebedee.¹⁰⁴¹ 27:57 When evening occurred, there came a wealthy man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had become a disciple of Jesus.¹⁰⁴² 27:58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.¹⁰⁴³ 27:59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth¹⁰⁴⁴ 27:60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock. And he rolled a large rock against the entrance to the tomb and went away.¹⁰⁴⁵ 27:61 And Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the grave.¹⁰⁴⁶

27:62 On the next day, which was after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate¹⁰⁴⁷ 27:63 and said,

Sir, we remember that when he was still alive, that deceiver said,

After three days I will rise again.¹⁰⁴⁸

27:64 Therefore, order that the grave be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal him away and say to the people,

He has risen from the dead.

And the last deception will be worse than the first.¹⁰⁴⁹

27:65 Pilate said to them,

You have a guard. Go and make it secure as you know how.¹⁰⁵⁰

27:66 And they went and made the grave secure, setting a seal on the stone along with the guard.¹⁰⁵¹

28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.¹⁰⁵² **28:2** And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for the *angelos* of Yahweh had descended from heaven, and he came and rolled away the stone and sat on it.¹⁰⁵³ **28:3** And his appearance was like lightening, and his clothing as white as snow.¹⁰⁵⁴ **28:4** The guards shook for fear of him, and they became like dead men.¹⁰⁵⁵ **28:5** Later, the *angelos* responded and said to the women,

Do not fear, for I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified.¹⁰⁵⁶ **28:6** He is not here, for he has risen just as he said. Here now, see the place where he was lying.¹⁰⁵⁷ **28:7** Go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. And behold, he is going before you into Galilee. There you will see him. Behold, I have told you.¹⁰⁵⁸

28:8 And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and they ran to report it to his disciples.¹⁰⁵⁹ **28:9** And behold, Jesus met them and said,

Rejoice!

And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.¹⁰⁶⁰ **28:10** Then Jesus said to them,

Do not be afraid. Go and report to my brothers that they should leave for Galilee, and there they will see me.¹⁰⁶¹

28:11 And while they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened.¹⁰⁶² **28:12** And when they had assembled with the elders and taken council together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers¹⁰⁶³ **28:13** and said,

You are to say,

His disciples came at night and stole him away while we were asleep.¹⁰⁶⁴

28:14 And if this becomes heard by the governor, we will persuade him and keep you safe.¹⁰⁶⁵

28:15 And they took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story was widely spread among the Jews up to this day.¹⁰⁶⁶ **28:16** But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee to the mountain which Jesus had designated to them.¹⁰⁶⁷ **28:17** When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some were doubtful.¹⁰⁶⁸ **28:18** And Jesus came up and said to them,

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁰⁶⁹ **28:19** Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,¹⁰⁷⁰ **28:20** teaching them to guard all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days, even to the completion of the age.¹⁰⁷¹

¹ Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ – Matthew begins his account of Jesus' life with a genealogy, what Matthew calls the "book of generations." And this is such for "Jesus Messiah," i.e., the man whose name is Jesus and who is the Messiah, the long-expected Anointed One of God among the Jewish people who will both reign over God's people as their king according to the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7 and intercede on their behalf as their priest according to Psalm 110, while also being God's ultimate spokesman and prophet (fulfilling all three roles of the OT where people had oil poured over their heads to symbolize God's setting them aside one of these special functions within the nation of Israel).

The phrase "son of David" ties Jesus to the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7 whereby he is the final and eternal king of Israel. This phrase means the same thing as Son of God, i.e., God's proxy and representative on earth as a human being who rules over God's territory with his same authority.

The phrase "son of Abraham" ties Jesus to the Abrahamic Covenant as someone who is blessed with Abraham in association with him (cf. Genesis 12:3, "And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed," and Genesis 12:7, "To your seed I am giving this land"). Jesus is the ultimate imitator of Abraham's belief and the ultimate "seed" of Abraham (cf. Galatians 3:16). Indeed, all who desire to be members of the "seed of Abraham" and receiving the blessing of eternal life which God promised him must be "in the Messiah" by virtue of their belief in Jesus as both king and priest (cf. Galatians 3:28).

In this way, Matthew mentions the three most important men in human history who were promised eternal life and the Kingdom of God, whose fulfillment is made possible through Jesus the Messiah.

² Ἀβραάμ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰσαάκ, Ἰσαάκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ

³ Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Φάρες καὶ τὸν Ῥάρα ἐκ τῆς Θαμάρ, Φάρες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἑσρὼμ, Ἑσρὼμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀράμ –

⁴ Ἀράμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀμιναδάβ, Ἀμιναδάβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ναασσών, Ναασσών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλμών –

⁵ Σαλμών δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Βόες ἐκ τῆς Ραχάβ, Βόες δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωβὴδ ἐκ τῆς Ρούθ, Ἰωβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεσσαί –

⁶ Ἰεσσαί δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα Δαυὶδ δὲ ἤ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου – Abraham to David = 14. The first third of this genealogy, the first "fourteen generations," take the reader from Abraham, the father of the Jews in whom God's blessing would come to all the families of the earth, to David the king, i.e., David the first Messiah and king as well as the first Son of God, because it is the king of Israel who becomes instrumental in bringing the promise of blessing to Abraham to the whole world.

⁷ Σολομῶν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥοβοάμ, Ῥοβοάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥαβιά, Ῥαβιά δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥασάφ – Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, an Ammonitess (1 Kings 14:21). So Rehoboam was half-Gentile.

⁸ Ῥασάφ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσαφάτ, Ἰωσαφάτ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωράμ, Ἰωράμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ὀζίαν –

⁹ Ὀζίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωαθάμ, Ἰωαθάμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥαχάζ, Ῥαχάζ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐζεκίαν –

¹⁰ Ἐζεκίας δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥαμανασσῆ, Ῥαμανασσῆ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ῥαμῶς, Ῥαμῶς δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσίου –

¹¹ Ἰωσίου δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰεχονίαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνας – David to Josiah, the last king not under foreign domination = 14. Cf. 2 Kings 23:25, "And there was no king like him [Josiah] before him who turned to Yahweh with all his heart and with all his soul and will all his strength according to all the Torah of Moses. Nor did any arise like him after him." But Pharaoh Neco killed Josiah and took over control of the land (2 Kings 23:29), and the people of Israel anointed Jehoahaz as king (2 Kings 23:30). Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him and set Jehoiaikim as king over Israel (2 Kings 23:34). Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon gained control of Israel, and when Jehoiaikim died, his son Jehoiachin (Jechoniah) became king, who eventually went into exile to Babylon (2 Kings 24:6-16). Afterwards, Nebuchadnezzar set Jehoiachin's uncle (? – LXX says "his son"), Zedekiah, as king over Israel (2 Kings 24:17). This would be Jehoahaz' and Jehoiaikim's brother, a third son of Josiah (?). Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and the Babylonian king laid siege to Jerusalem and destroyed it and the temple (2 Kings 25:1-21).

Thus, there were three sons of Josiah, all obviously brothers, Jehoahaz, Jehoiaikim, and Zedekiah (?), who all ruled Judah just before and even during the Babylonian exile. Thus, Jechoniah (Jehoiachin) represents one generation of leaders who were deported to Babylon, and he is mentioned probably because it was during his reign that the Babylonians began to take the people of Judah into exile. [EBC – Another name has been dropped: Josiah was the father of Jehoiaikim (609–597 B.C.), who was deposed in favor of his son Jehoiachin (some MSS in both OT and NT have "Jeconiah" for the latter). He was deposed after a reign of only three months and his brother Zedekiah reigned in his stead till the final deportation and destruction of the city in 587 B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 23:34; 24:6, 14-15; 1 Chronicles 3:16; Jeremiah 27:20; 28:1). The words "and his brothers" are probably added in this instance because one of them, Zedekiah, maintained a caretaker reign until the tragedy of 587 B.C.; but Zedekiah is not mentioned because the royal line does not flow through him but through Jechoniah.]

So the second third of this genealogy, the second "fourteen generations," take the reader from David's son Solomon to Jechoniah and the Babylonian exile where the "king of Israel" as an actual position within an independent nation of Israel disappears, no longer to exist until the final king, Jesus of Nazareth, arrives on the scene. In this second third of the genealogy, all those mentioned are kings, because the position of king within Israel is vital for the blessing of Abraham to come to fruition.

¹² Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλώνας Ἰεχονίας ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαλαθιήλ, Σαλαθιήλ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ζοροβαβέλ –

¹³ Ζοροβαβέλ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀβιοῦδ, Ἀβιοῦδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλιακίμ, Ἐλιακίμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀζώρ –

¹⁴ Ἀζώρ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Σαδώκ, Σαδώκ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἀχίμ, Ἀχίμ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλιοῦδ –

¹⁵ Ἐλιοῦδ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἐλεάζαρ, Ἐλεάζαρ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ματθάν, Ματθάν δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰακώβ –

¹⁶ Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν Ἰωσήφ ‘τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός’ – Jechoniah to Jesus = 14. The third third of this genealogy, the third “fourteen generations,” take the reader from the loss of the throne and position of independent king in Israel starting with Jechoniah to the final king Jesus. He is the Messiah, the Anointed One who will rule over an independent Israel in the millennial kingdom and all those who believe in him as their Messiah for all eternity. Therefore, everyone mentioned in this third is not a king *per se* until the list reaches Jesus, who is the only and final king in the list. His being king is essential and necessary for the blessing of Abraham to come to fruition. Thus, Matthew moves from Abraham to David to Jesus the Messiah in this list, i.e., in reverse order from the mention of these three men in 1:1.

¹⁷ Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ ἀπὸ Ἀβραάμ ἕως Δαυὶδ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ Δαυὶδ ἕως τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλῶνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες – Matthew is basically saying, As I have listed the generations for my purposes where “fourteen” is the number I am using to make the point that God is fulfilling His promises through Jesus the Messiah in a completely orderly fashion from Abraham to Jesus in spite of all the sin in between. But this will the point. Jesus will resolve the issue of sin, even David’s two great sins of adultery and murder, through the crucifixion of the Messiah, in order that David may receive God’s eternal mercy.

¹⁸ Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ ἑξέλιξις οὕτως ἦν. μνηστευθεῖσης τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Μαρίας τῷ Ἰωσήφ, πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εὐρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου –

¹⁹ Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν ἑδειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρα ἀπολῦσαι αὐτήν –

²⁰ ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ’ ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς

²¹ παραλαβεῖν Ἐμμανουὴλ τὴν γυναῖκα σου· τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου ἐστὶν ἁγίου –

²² τῆς αὐτῆς δὲ υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν· αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν –

²³ τοῦτο δὲ ὄλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ ἁγίου κυρίου διὰ ἁγίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος –

²⁴ ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουὴλ ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνεύμενον μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός – In Isaiah’s day, a young woman gave birth to a son whose was named Immanuel as representative of the fact that God was protecting the people of Judah from those who wanted to attack them and replace their king, Ahaz, with someone of their choice (cf. Isaiah 7, especially v. 14). Matthew calls Mary’s pregnancy by the Holy Spirit a fulfillment of this prophecy. But what he means is that the event in Israel’s history around 730 B.C. was a foreshadowing of another event in their history that is centered in Jesus as the Messiah and therefore takes on greater significance. Just as God used the pregnancy of a young woman and the birth of her son to indicate that He was saving his people Israel, the southern Kingdom of Judah, from their enemies, the northern Kingdom of Israel and Aram, he is going to use the pregnancy of this young woman, Mary, and her son to save “His people from their sins” and His wrath and eternal condemnation (1:20-21).

²⁵ Ἐγενθὲς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ παρέλαβεν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ –

²⁶ καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν ἕως οὗ ἔτεκεν υἱόν· καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν – We notice and Mary and Joseph did not name their same Immanuel. Instead, his name is Jesus, and Matthew is saying in vs. 22-25 that this young son fills out the notion of “God with us” (=Immanuel) even more than the young boy in Isaiah’s day. Jesus not only represents the fact that God is with His people and rescuing and protecting them from their enemies, but he also IS God incarnate, the very embodiment of the transcendent Creator within the story of creation.

²⁷ Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρῴδου τοῦ βασιλέως, ἰδοὺ μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα – This is Herod the Great, born in 73 B.C. and who ruled from 40 B.C. to approximately 4 B.C.

²⁸ λέγοντες· ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἠλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ –

²⁹ ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρῴδης ἐταράχθη καὶ ὅλη Ἱερουσόλυμα μετ’ αὐτοῦ – Herod was stirred up because this “king” threatened his own legitimacy and power, while the Jews in Jerusalem were stirred up because of their long standing expectation for a Messiah who would liberate them from their enemies.

³⁰ καὶ συναγαγὼν πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπυνθάνετο· ὅπου αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ὁ χριστὸς γεννᾶται –

³¹ οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας· οὕτως γὰρ γέγραπται διὰ τοῦ προφήτου –

³² καὶ σὺ Βηθλέεμ ἡ γῆ Ἰούδα· οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰούδα ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραὴλ – Unlike 1:22-23, 2:15, and 2:17-18, this verse refers to a direct prediction of a NT event in Micah 5:2. The event is the appearance of the Messiah and Israel’s king who will rule over them during the millennial kingdom.

³³ Τότε Ἡρῴδης λάθρα καλέσας τοὺς μάγους ἠκρίβωσεν παρ’ αὐτῶν τὸν χρόνον τοῦ φαινομένου ἀστέρος –

³⁴ καὶ πέμψας αὐτοὺς εἰς Βηθλέεμ εἶπεν πορευθέντες ἑξετάσατε ἀκριβῶς περὶ τοῦ παιδίου· ἐπὶ δὲ εὗρητε, ἀπαγγεῖλατέ μοι, ὅπως κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ –

³⁵ Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπορεύθησαν καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ ἀστὴρ, ὃν εἶδον ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ, προῆγεν αὐτούς, ἕως ἐλθὼν ἑστάθη ἐπάνω ὅπου ἦν τὸ παιδίον –

³⁶ ἰδόντες δὲ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν μεγάλην σφόδρα –

³⁷ καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀνοίξαντες τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῶν προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν –

³⁸ Καὶ χρηματισθέντες κατ’ ὄναρ μὴ ἀνακάμψαι πρὸς Ἡρῴδην, δι’ ἄλλης ὁδοῦ ἀνεχώρησαν εἰς τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν –

³⁹ Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ’ ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων· ἐγενθὲς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ φεύγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἄν εἶπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρῴδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολλέσαι αὐτό –

³⁹ ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβεν τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς καὶ ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον –

⁴⁰ καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἕως τῆς τελευτῆς Ἡρώδου· ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱὸν μου – In Hosea 11:1, God is speaking of a past event when He rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt around 1500 B.C. and, under the leadership of Moses, led them to the land of Canaan. Therefore, this is another clear example like Isaiah 7:14 and the young woman’s son named Immanuel (=God with us) where “fulfilled” does not have to mean that the OT statement predicted a future NT event, and now it is happening. Instead, the NT event is similar to that which is referred in the OT and takes on a significance that even surpasses that of the latter. The Messiah literally travels from Egypt to Israel as the ancient Israelites did, but think of how important it is for the Messiah to be rescued from being killed by Herod in order to fulfill his responsibility of growing up, declaring his messiahship through his words and actions, and *then* be killed on the cross. Thus, as God called his “son” Israel out of Egypt around 1500 B.C. to rescue them from Pharaoh and slavery, He is calling His Son, the Davidic king Jesus, out of Egypt to rescue him from Herod.

Exodus 4:22 “Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Israel is My son, My firstborn. **23** So I said to you, ‘Let My son go that he may serve Me’; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.’”

⁴¹ Τότε Ἡρώδης ἰδὼν ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη ὑπὸ τῶν μάγων ἐθυμώθη λίαν, καὶ ἀποστείλας ἀνείλεν πάντας τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς ἐν Βηθλέεμ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ὀρίοις αὐτῆς ἀπὸ ‘διετοῦς καὶ κατωτέρω’, κατὰ τὸν χρόνον ὃν ἠκριβώσεν παρὰ τῶν μάγων –

⁴² τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν ἑ δὲ διὰ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος –

⁴³ φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμὰ ἠκούσθη ἑ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὄδυρμὸς πολὺς Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακληθῆναι ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν – Rachel’s children were Joseph and Benjamin. Joseph’s sons were Ephraim and Manasseh, whose descendants became members of the northern Kingdom of Israel, which was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Ramah was a city five miles north of Jerusalem and according to Jeremiah 40:1 was a staging point for the exile of the Jews of the southern Kingdom of Judah. Because Rachel was also the mother of Benjamin, whose descendants were members of this southern kingdom, God uses her name to refer to Jeremiah’s present day situation of both kingdoms being taken into exile, leaving the land of Israel vacant with respect to His people.

The killing of the male children two years old and younger in the Bethlehem area by Herod is another significant example of the land’s losing its occupants, the Jews, because of the Messiah’s presence, the most important Jews, thereby providing Matthew with the opportunity to point out another “fulfillment” of an OT event in the NT. Jeremiah 30-31 also describes the hope to which Israel can look forward when God restores them to the land and fulfills His promise of Genesis 12:1-3 to make them the greatest nation in human history.

Genesis 35:22 It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine, and Israel heard of it. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob — **23** the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun; **24** the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin; **25** and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel’s maid: Dan and Naphtali; **26** and the sons of Zilpah, Leah’s maid: Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

⁴⁴ Τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Ἡρώδου ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἑ φαίνεται κατ’ ὄναρ ἑ τῷ Ἰωσήφ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ –

⁴⁵ λέγων ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ πορεύου εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ· τεθνήκασιν γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου –

⁴⁶ ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβεν τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰσήλθεν εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ –

⁴⁷ Ἀκούσας δὲ ὅτι Ἀρχέλαος βασιλεύει τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἀντὶ ἑ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἡρώδου ἑ ἐφοβήθη ἐκεῖ ἀπελθεῖν χρηματισθεὶς δὲ κατ’ ὄναρ ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὰ μέρη τῆς Γαλιλαίας – Archelaus ruled until A.D. 6 when he was deposed by Augustus and exiled to Gaul where he probably lived out the rest of his days. In his place, a series of governors ruled Judea with eventually the fifth of these being Pontius Pilate who began his rule around A.D. 26.

⁴⁸ καὶ ἐλθὼν κατόκησεν εἰς πόλιν λεγομένην Ῥαζαρέτ· ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται – Matthew is not quoting directly any particular prophet of the OT. He is giving the substance of statements regarding the Messiah which come for the prophets (plural) of the OT (cf. Psalm 22:6-8,13; 69:8,20,21; Isaiah 11:1; 49:7; 53:2,3,8; Daniel 9:26). Just as Nazareth was a place of scorn and a despised city, so the Messiah, who grew up there and not in a more acceptable place such as Bethlehem, was to be scorned, despised, and rejected by even his own people, the Jews (cf. Matthew 8:20; 11:16-19; 15:7-9; Acts 24:5) [EBC, Jack].

Or does the fact that Ναζωραῖος is just one letter different from ναζιραῖος = Nazirite (cf. Judges 13:5-7) make it more plausible that Matthew is saying that Jesus’ hometown name made it clear that he was a person especially dedicated to God, so that the Jews in Acts 24:5 are referring to the fact that the “sect of Nazarenes” are those who claim to be dedicated to God? However, as is obvious to any good Jew as a follower of the Mosaic Covenant, they and their leader are not because they do not seem to be taking the MC as seriously as they should. Indeed, they are placing more emphasis on Jesus and his being the Messiah than they are on Moses and the MC.

⁴⁹ Ἐν ὁδῷ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις παραγίνεται Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστῆς κηρύσσων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας – The wilderness of Judea is most likely the arid area between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea that would include the southern part of the Jordan River north of the Dead Sea.

⁵⁰ ὁ [καὶ] λέγων μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν – John calls the people of Israel to repent of their sins in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. It is only those who genuinely seek God’s mercy, even His eternal mercy and forgiveness, who qualify to participate in God’s kingdom.

This kingdom John calls the Kingdom of Heaven, i.e., the kingdom which comes from God, because it is actually earthly in both the first stage of the restored Kingdom of Israel and the second stage of the new earth which will be eternal (cf. Revelation 20 & 21).

John says that this kingdom is near, meaning both spatially and chronologically. Assuming that he had been taught well by his parents whom Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visited, and who learned from the OT in synagogue, John connected Jesus' presence, his having been born three months after John, with the presence of the kingdom which requires a king. But he must also be connecting Jesus' presence with the nearness of the kingdom chronologically, even if this is at John's time more a psychological nearness. Certainly the Kingdom of God has been nearer ever since Jesus appeared. This appearance really started the clock rolling towards Jesus' return and the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel (cf. Acts 1).

Based on John 1 and John the Baptist's calling Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, he must also have known that Jesus would have to die in order to bring about the Kingdom of God. Thus, the chronological nearness for John of the Kingdom of God is at least as far away as Jesus' death and resurrection, the latter being what John would have to presume also.

⁵¹ οὗτος γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ῥηθῆεις διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου ὑθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ – Here Matthew connects John the Baptist with Isaiah 40, stating that this OT passage is a direct prediction of John's appearing first before the Messiah in order to pave the way for Jesus' appearance.

⁵² αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Ἰωάννης εἶχεν τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τριχῶν καμήλου καὶ ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφύνα αὐτοῦ, ἡ δὲ τροφή ἦν αὐτοῦ ἄκριδες καὶ μέλι ἄγριον – Probably to communicate how unusual and unique this whole situation is with the appearance of Jesus, Matthew adds colorful description of John. We can imagine that he was the only Jew in the whole of Israel whose clothing consisted of camel skin with a leather belt. And he was probably the only one who was sustaining himself on a diet of grasshoppers and honey. In other words, John was truly separate and distinct from normal Jewish society and culture, and this was obviously his intention. Why? Because, by paving the way for Jesus, he was beginning a separate and distinct stage in Israel's history—that of the Messiah. We are still in this stage as we await Jesus' return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

⁵³ Τότε ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία καὶ πᾶσα ἡ περιχώρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου – This sounds like a lot of people who were traveling all the way to the Jordan River away from their homes in order to experience this unusual phenomenon of John the Baptist. He was definitely capturing people's attention. Because of his clothing and food, or because of his message, or both? Probably the last. John not only looked and acted unusual, but his message to the effect that God's promise of a restored kingdom for Israel was touching on the great longing of all the Jewish people who knew their OTs.

Jerusalem would be west and up the road from the northern shore of the Dead Sea. Judea would be the area surrounding Jerusalem which would include Bethlehem. All the surrounding district of the Jordan would include both sides of the river extending up even into the Decapolis just south and east of the Sea of Galilee.

⁵⁴ καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ὄποιμα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν – This water baptism seems to have been an invention of John, particularly a water baptism in the midst of confessing one's sins and repenting before God in the outdoors and in a river. Ritual baths in homes were common, but not outdoor group baptisms in the Jordan River accompanied by public confession of one's sins before God. I would think that people would have to be pretty serious about going through this ceremony to do it.

⁵⁵ Ἰδὼν δὲ πολλοὺς τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων ἐρχομένους ἐπὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὁ αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς – Because John is speaking to Jews and the Jewish leadership, he could be referring to God's judgment of the nation of Israel during the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord. But, in light of vs. 10-12, it seems more likely that he is referring to the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20. Nevertheless, of course if a person is condemned by the latter judgment while having been alive during the former, he would suffer physical death through it too.

Four judgments at the end of this age in chronological order –

1) Of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles throughout the world culminating in judgment of unbelieving Jews on the land of Israel by the invading armies of Gentile nations just before the return of Jesus – the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord in regard to Israel mainly, but some Gentiles also, i.e., those who are members of the invading army of the Man of Lawlessness and those who die in the cities destroyed by the last earthquake (see #2a below) – cf. 2 Thessalonians 2; Ezekiel 38,39; Joel 2:1-11; 3:9-16, 19-21; Amos 5:18-27; Zephaniah 2,3; Zechariah 12,14; Malachi 4

2a) Of the first invading armies of the Gentile nations on the land of Israel and many Gentiles in cities around the world at the return of Jesus when he establishes the millennial kingdom – in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Yahweh Decides and Judges) – cf. Ezekiel 38,39; Joel 2:20,3:9-16; Zephaniah 2,3; Zechariah 12,14; Revelation 16:19 – The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

2b) Of the believers who have died (the first resurrection of Revelation 20) or who are still alive at the time of the invading armies of the Gentile nations on the land of Israel and at the return of Jesus when he establishes the millennial kingdom. This is not a condemnatory judgment, but a salvific judgment – cf. Matthew 3:10-12, especially 11; John 5:21-30; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; Revelation 20:4-6

3) Of the second invading armies of the Gentile nations on the land of Israel who desire to destroy Jesus and the Jews at the end of the millennial kingdom (“Gog and Magog” of Ezekiel 38,39 is used to symbolize this army, its invasion, and its destruction) – Revelation 20:7-10

4) Of unbelievers (the second resurrection of Revelation 20) at the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the millennial kingdom – cf. Matthew 3:10-12, especially 12; John 5:29; Revelation 20:11-15

Examples of judgment passages in the OT and NT –

cf. **Joel 3:1** “For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, **2** I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land.”

cf. also Joel 3:3-17 where God continues speaking of the judgment of the surrounding nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat

(Yahweh Decides and Judges).

cf. **Is. 63:1** Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah [cf. Isaiah 34:5,6], This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

Is. 63:6 “I trod down the peoples (עַמִּים) in My anger And made them drunk in My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.”

cf. **Rev. 20:11** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. **12** And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. **13** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. **14** Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. **15** And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

⁵⁶ ποιήσατε οὖν καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας – John exhorts his listeners to be committed to God’s message of mercy and life as demonstrated by their repentance and pursuit of truth and goodness in their lives. The Pharisees and Sadducees may think they already are by their physical descendance from Abraham and their obedience to the MC, but John is definitely implying by his harsh words and criticism that they are not.

⁵⁷ καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι δύναται ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγεῖραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ – John exhorts his listeners not to rely on their physical pedigree and genealogy as members of God’s chosen people, the ethnic group of the nation of Israel, for their acceptance by God. Instead, they must demonstrate as much inward repentance of their sin and pursuit of truth and goodness as any other human being, Jew or Gentile.

John emphasizes his point by stating that God can create “children of Abraham” from stones. Two possibilities for what he means. 1) God can convert stones into actual physical Jews who look, act, and sound as though they truly descend from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 2) God can convert stones into human beings, indeed sinners, who are inwardly oriented towards God and authentic believers like Abraham, which is the key characteristic for his physical descendants or Gentiles to obtain his blessing of eternal life and mercy. #2 is more profound and seems the more likely here where John the Baptist is concerned about the motivation of the Pharisees and Sadducees in coming to him to repent and be baptized. In other words, even he realizes before Peter proclaims the gospel to Cornelius and his family in Acts 10 that it is authentic inwardness by God’s love through the Spirit of God that fulfills the requirement and condition to obtain the Kingdom of God. Has John figured out that Gentiles will be a large part of these people of God? Maybe.

⁵⁸ ἤδη δὲ τὴ ἄξινη πρὸς τὴν ρίζαν τῶν δένδρων κεῖται πᾶν οὖν δένδρον μὴ ποιῶν καρπὸν ἑκαλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται – John is saying that God is ready to judge Israel and the Jews according to their repentance and actions that should flow out of genuine repentance—love, kindness, forgiveness, patience, etc.

Is this the “fire” of God’s judgment that constitutes the destruction mainly of Israel and the Jews before the return of Jesus or of God’s judgment that is the final one of the Great White Throne of Revelation 20? Probably the latter in this context of v. 12 especially with the unquenchable fire that will destroy people’s existences. Therefore, John is saying that if a person’s actions are not the effect of authentic repentance of their sin, then the consequence will be eternal destruction in accordance to God’s judgment and condemnation.

cf. these passages in Isaiah that are referring to the millennial kingdom and not to the eternal heavens and earth of Revelation 21, even though the phrase “new heavens and new earth” is the same,” because Revelation is using this phrase to symbolize the final creation just as it uses “Gog and Magog” to symbolize the final battle (not that of Armageddon – cf. Revelation 16:13-16 and 20:7-9) – **Is. 65:17** “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind... (notice 65:20-23 that speak of normal life of Jews who live on the land of Israel and who die!); **Is. 66:13** As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you will be comforted in Jerusalem. **Is. 66:14** Then you will see this, and your heart will be glad, And your bones will flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the LORD will be made known to His servants, But He will be indignant toward His enemies. **Is. 66:15** For behold, the LORD will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. **Is. 66:16** For the LORD will execute judgment by fire And by His sword on all flesh, And those slain by the LORD will be many. **Is. 66:17** Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the gardens, Following one in the center, Who eat swine’s flesh, detestable things and mice, Will come to an end altogether,” declares the LORD (notice v. 20 that speaks of bringing the Jews from all the nations where they have been scattered). Therefore, Isaiah 65 and 66 are referring to the judgment of God before the millennial kingdom.

⁵⁹ Ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι εἰς μετάνοιαν, ὁ δὲ ῥοπίσω μου ἔρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν, οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι· αὐτὸς ὑμᾶς βαπτίσει ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρὶ – All John can do is dip people in the water for the purpose of symbolizing their repenting of their sins before God which results in being cleansed, i.e., forgiven by Him. He is saying that Jesus will do more, not because Jesus can cause God to work within sinners through His Spirit, but because he is the focal point of God’s inward work by His causing them to believe in him as the Lord and Savior, their king and their advocate. Two options for “fire” – 1) Jesus will be the focal point of God’s judgment (“fire”) of sinners, both believers and non-believers. Jesus, i.e., God, acting on his behalf and for the purpose of indicating how people have been oriented towards Jesus, will gather sinners who authentically believe into his kingdom and sinners who reject him into God’s destruction (cf. Revelation 20:15 – And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.). 2) Jesus, and therefore God, will cause His Spirit to act within sinners so that they become wheat in the following analogy or, if the Spirit does not act within them, He will cause “fire” to consume and destroy them after they are judged for being unbelievers. #2 seems more coherent with both 3:10 and 3:12, so that John is more accurately saying “the Holy Spirit or fire.”

⁶⁰ οὗ τὸ πτύον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ διακαθαριεῖ τὴν ἄλωνα αὐτοῦ καὶ συναξει τὸν σίτον ‘αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην’, τὸ δὲ ἄχυρον κατακαύσει πυρὶ ἀσβέστω – Jesus, i.e., God who is acting on his behalf, will gather people of authentic belief into the eternal Kingdom of God and will gather people of committed rebellion against God for destruction by Him. (cf. Revelation 20 and the first resurrection of believers and the second resurrection of unbelievers).

The winnowing fork on the threshing floor is metaphorical for the trials of life during a person’s earthly existence. These are what reveal either a person’s authentic faith that perseveres or a person’s false faith or simply abject rebellion. The former will result in being characterized as “wheat” and gathered into Jesus’ “barn,” which is metaphorical for the Kingdom of God, starting with the millennial kingdom and culminating in existence on the new earth. The latter will result in being characterized as “chaff” and burned up with unquenchable (it will not disappear until it has accomplished its ultimate, destructive purpose) “fire,” which is metaphorical for a person’s simply passing out of existence and never again appearing in God’s story.

⁶¹ Τότε παραγίνεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην πρὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ – Jesus travels southwest from the west and north shores of the Sea of Galilee to the Jordan River northeast of Jerusalem.

⁶² ὁ δὲ Ἰωάννης διεκώλυεν αὐτὸν λέγων ἐγὼ χρεῖαν ἔχω ὑπὸ σοῦ βαπτισθῆναι, καὶ σὺ ἔρχῃ πρὸς με – John has just finished saying that his baptism is for the purpose of people repenting. Therefore, if Jesus wants to be baptized by him, is this not turning baptism upside down? In other words, John knows that Jesus is the solution to his own sin and obtaining God’s mercy. Therefore, if anyone ought to be confessing his sins while someone else baptizes him, it should be John and not Jesus. So why would Jesus want John to baptize him? The answer is in vs. 16 & 17—God’s publicly declaring Jesus to be the Messiah.

⁶³ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ‘πρὸς αὐτόν’ ἄφες ἄρτι, οὕτως γὰρ πρόπον ἐστὶν ἡμῖν πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην. τότε ἀφήσιν αὐτόν τ – To fulfill all righteousness is for Jesus and John to do all that God commands with respect to the two of them for His own purpose, which is for the Spirit of God to manifest Himself as a dove and then for the audible public declaration to occur in vs. 16 & 17.

⁶⁴ βαπτισθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐβύθη ἀνέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος καὶ ἰδοὺ ἠνεώθησαν ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ εἶδεν ὁ [τὸ] πνεῦμα ὁ [τοῦ] θεοῦ καταβαῖνον ὡσεὶ περιστερὰν ὁ [καὶ] ἐρχόμενον ἐπ’ αὐτόν – Here is the first part of the fullness of righteousness that Jesus and John are providing the opportunity for in God’s story. God makes a visual sign of His choosing Jesus as His Son and king of Israel. It is not that the Holy Spirit does not affect any other human beings, because we know He absolutely does. But this sign with the dove being the manner in which the Holy Spirit manifests Himself, just as Yahweh manifested Himself by the burning bush in Exodus 3, is combined with the audible words in the next verse to indicate something special about Jesus. He is the Messiah, the Son of God, according to the Davidic Covenant. In other words, the dove is just as much a theophany as the burning bush so that God may make it clear that He is present and accomplishing what He wants in this scene.

⁶⁵ καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν λέγουσα τ. ‘οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα – cf. Is. 42:1 Ἰακωβ ὁ παῖς μου, ἀντιληψομαι αὐτοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ἐκλεκτός μου, προσεδέξατο αὐτόν ἡ ψυχὴ μου: ἔδωκα τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν, κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐξοίσει. Cf. Matt. 12:18 Ἰδοὺ, ὁ παῖς μου ὃν ἠρέτισα: ὁ ἀγαπητός μου: εἰς ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου: θήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν, καὶ κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ.

God declares in an audible voice that all the crowd can hear that Jesus is the Davidic king whom He loves and in whom He is pleased with his obedience to Him. Jesus will be the final Davidic king and the primary means by which God fulfills all three promises to Abraham of 1) making his physical descendants, the Jews, the greatest nation in human history during the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20, 2) blessing Abraham with eternal life, and 3) blessing those who copy Abraham’s belief with eternal life too, because all three require people of changed hearts who qualify to be forgiven by God through Jesus’ advocacy.

At the Mt. of Transfiguration – Matt. 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him! (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα: ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.)”

As the end of Jesus’ life nears and he approaches the crucifixion – John 12:27 “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 “Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again (καὶ ἐδόξασα καὶ πάλιν δοξάσω).”

Thus, the three times when we know that God spoke audibly for the people to hear were 1) Jesus’ baptism, 2) Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration, and 3) when Jesus prays to God after learning in Jerusalem that Gentiles are seeking to see him.

⁶⁶ Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη ‘εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος πειρασθῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου’ – Could this be farther east of the Jordan River or simply the wilderness of Judea which would include the west shore of the Dead Sea?

⁶⁷ καὶ νηστεύσας ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα ‘καὶ νύκτας τεσσαράκοντα’, ὕστερον ἐπείνασεν –

⁶⁸ καὶ ‘προσελθὼν ὁ πειράζων εἶπεν αὐτῷ: εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰπὲ ἵνα οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι ἄρτοι γένωνται –

⁶⁹ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν γέγραπται οὐκ ἐπ’ ἄρτω μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος θεοῦ –

⁷⁰ Τότε παραλαμβάνει αὐτὸν ὁ διάβολος εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἔστησεν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ –

⁷¹ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ: εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, βάλε σεαυτὸν τ κάτω: γέγραπται γὰρ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ ἐντελεῖται περὶ σοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ χειρῶν ἀροῦσίν σε, μήποτε προσκόψῃς πρὸς λίθον τὸν πόδα σου –

⁷² ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς: πάλιν γέγραπται: ‘οὐκ ἐκπειράσεις’ κύριον τὸν θεόν σου –

⁷³ Πάλιν παραλαμβάνει αὐτόν ὁ διάβολος εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν λιαν καὶ δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ πᾶσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν –

⁷⁴ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ταῦτά σοι πάντα δώσω, ἐὰν πεσὼν προσκυνήσῃς μοι –

⁷⁵ τότε λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς: ὑπάγε τ, σατανᾶ: γέγραπται γὰρ κύριον τὸν θεόν σου προσκυνήσεις καὶ αὐτῷ μόνῳ λατρεύσεις –

⁷⁶ Τότε ἀφήσιν αὐτόν ὁ διάβολος, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄγγελοι προσήλθον καὶ διηκόνουν αὐτῷ –

⁷⁷ Ἀκούσας δὲ τὸ ὅτι Ἰωάννης παρεδόθη ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν –

⁷⁸ καὶ καταλιπὼν τὴν Ἰαζαρά ἐλθὼν κατέκησεν εἰς Ἡκαφαρναοὺμ τὴν παραθαλασσίαν ἐν ὁρίοις Ζαβουλὼν καὶ Νεφθαλίμ –

⁷⁹ ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος –

⁸⁰ γῆ Ζαβουλὼν καὶ γῆ Νεφθαλίμ ὁδὸν θαλάσσης· πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν –

⁸¹ ὁ λαὸς ὁ καθημένος ἐν Ἰσκότει φῶς εἶδεν μέγα καὶ τοὶ καθημένοι ἐν χῶρα καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου φῶς ἀνέτειλεν αὐτοῖς –

⁸² Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρῦσαι καὶ λέγειν μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν –

⁸³ Ἐπιπετατῶν δὲ παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἶδεν δύο ἀδελφούς, Σίμωνα τὸν λεγόμενον Πέτρον· καὶ Ἀνδρέαν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, βάλλοντας ἀμφίβληστρον εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· ἦσαν γὰρ ἀλιεῖς –

⁸⁴ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου, καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς ἰσκότει ἀνθρώπων –

⁸⁵ οἱ δὲ εὐθέως ἀφέντες τὰ δίκτυα ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ

⁸⁶ καὶ προβάς ἐκεῖθεν εἶδεν ἄλλους δύο ἀδελφούς, Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ μετὰ Ζεβεδαίου τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν καταρτίζοντας τὰ δίκτυα αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐκάλεσεν αὐτούς –

⁸⁷ οἱ δὲ εὐθέως ἀφέντες τὸ πλοῖον καὶ τὸν πατέρα αὐτῶν ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ·

⁸⁸ Καὶ περιῆγεν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ διδάσκων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ κηρῦσσων τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ θεραπεύων πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν ἐν τῷ λαῷ –

⁸⁹ Καὶ ἀπήλθεν ἡ ἀκοὴ αὐτοῦ εἰς ὅλην τὴν Συρίαν καὶ προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ποικίλαις νόσοις καὶ βασάνοις συνεχόμενους· καὶ ἰαμαχομένους καὶ σεληνιζομένους καὶ παραλυτικούς· καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς –

The fact that the news of his miraculous healings spread into “Syria” and people came from this region indicates that probably Gentiles are included. These Gentiles, then, would be not only those whom Jesus is healing but also those who will be present during his presentation of the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7.

⁹⁰ καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ Ἑκαπόλεως καὶ Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ Ἰουδαίας καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου – The regions designated here include people who are both Jews and Gentiles and therefore the “crowds” who hear the Sermon on the Mount.

⁹¹ Ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ –

⁹² καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων – Jesus is addressing this Sermon on the Mount to his disciples within earshot of the crowds.

⁹³ μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν – Within the context of the Mosaic Covenant and the rest of the Old Testament, all of these beatitudes of vs. 3-10 make perfect sense, especially when considered within the demographic context of the Jewish people. Of course, his disciples among the Jews as the chosen ethnic people of God (and all disciples of his) and with authentic faith should be people as Jesus is describing in these verses. And they will acquire the land of Israel and the kingdom of God when the Messiah rules over them.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of Adonai Yahweh is upon me, because Yahweh has anointed (מָשַׁח) (ἐχρισέν) me to bring good news to the afflicted (בְּשַׁלְּחַן לְבָבוֹ) (εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς). He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; **61:2** to proclaim the favorable year of Yahweh and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn (παρακαλέσαι πάντας τοὺς πενθοῦντας). (See next endnote too.)

This is the kingdom “of the heavens” in that it comes from heaven as the place of God’s existence outside the creation and will begin with the millennial kingdom on the earth (cf. 5:5).

It is granted to those who recognize the poverty of their inner orientation, that they are fundamentally sinners at both the level of their moral nature and the level of their hearts. As a result, they become genuinely repentant, seeking God’s mercy and His promise of moral perfection and life in the kingdom of God. And these people recognize their sinfulness and become authentically repentant because God causes them to do so by means of the inner work of His Spirit and His circumcising their hearts. In other words, the beatitudes are not commandments to be obeyed. They are personal and individual qualities of Jews (and Gentiles) who have become genuinely changed in their inner being by virtue of the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is saying that these characteristics will just naturally (actually, supernaturally!) happen in and by people who are predestined, chosen, and caused by God for this kind of life this side of eternity.

It is important to remember that this sermon is being presented to his Jewish disciples who are living under the occupying force of Gentiles, the Romans.

⁹⁴ μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται – This is mourning over sin because of not only its evil nature and detrimental effects in a person’s relationships with others (and with himself), but also because it will result in the pain and suffering of God’s condemnation and destruction at the final judgment. Therefore, to find comfort from the consequences of sin, a person must genuinely grieve his sin and repent of it, seeking to do what is good and right before God in his life. And it is the Spirit of God who brings this about.

Isaiah 61:2 To proclaim the favorable year of Yahweh and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn (παρακαλέσαι πάντας τοὺς πενθοῦντας).

cf. **1 Corinthians 5:2** You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

⁹⁵ μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν – cf. Psalm 37:11 to the effect that the humble Jews, who do not try to earn God’s blessings through their performance of the Mosaic Covenant, will inherit the land of Israel and will delight themselves in abundant shalom/prosperity (שְׁלֹמֹת וְשִׁשְׁתִּים וְשִׁשְׁתִּים וְשִׁשְׁתִּים וְשִׁשְׁתִּים וְשִׁשְׁתִּים) (οἱ δὲ πραεῖς κληρονομήσουσιν γῆν καὶ κατατρυφήσουσιν ἐπὶ πληθείᾳ εἰρήνης).

Thus, because Jesus is addressing his Jewish disciples, it makes more sense to translate τὴν γῆν as “the land,” meaning the land of Israel which God promised to the Jews in the midst of His making them a “great nation” (גִּוּלֵי גִבּוֹר) (ἔθνος μέγα).

⁹⁶ μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται – The sense is probably of continually desiring to be and do what is good and right before God, regardless of the outcome, i.e., whether or not people actually appreciate it and respond positively. In fact, Jesus will go on in chapter 6 to say that people finding out about what good I do is irrelevant and not my concern at all. He is also saying that those who long for moral perfection will eventually be satisfied with moral perfection—in the eternal kingdom of God after Jesus returns and first establishes the millennial kingdom on this earth and the eternal kingdom on the new earth of Revelation 21.

Or Jesus could be referring to justification and not actual righteousness or moral perfection. If a Jewish sinner is hungry and thirsting for God’s forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, then he will be satisfied with what God provides through Jesus the Messiah—his life, death, resurrection, etc.

⁹⁷ μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται – God in the Septuagint is labelled as both ἐλεήμων and ἔλεος to say that He is a God of רַחֵם, indeed רַחֵם-בְּרַחֵם (πολυέλεος). And a “merciful man” (רַחֵם שׂוֹמֵר) (ἀνὴρ ἐλεήμων) in Proverbs is extolled and commended. Therefore, Jesus seems to be speaking of Jewish sinners who are both loyal in their loving of others, as well as gracious, merciful, and forgiving towards other sinners. This is the person who will be granted grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness in return.

Proverbs 11:17 The merciful man does himself good (רַחֵם אִישׁ יִשְׁפֹּץ לְבָבוֹ) (τῆ ψυχῆ αὐτοῦ ἀγαθὸν ποιεῖ ἀνὴρ ἐλεήμων), but the cruel man does himself harm.

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious (רַחֵם וְרַחֲמָנִים) (οἰκτίρων καὶ ἐλεήμων), slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth (רַחֲמָנִים רַחֲמָנִים וְרַחֲמָנִים) (μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινός).

⁹⁸ μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται – Jesus is probably thinking of Psalm 24, that the Jewish sinners who are pursuing righteousness because of their changed heart are also those who will “see God” in the sense that after seeking His face, they will receive a blessing from Him, even salvation—on the land of Israel.

Psalms 24:3 Who may ascend into the hill of Yahweh? And who may stand in His holy place? **24:4** He who has clean hands and a pure heart (רַחֵם וְרַחֲמָנִים) (καὶ καθαρὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ), who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully. **24:5** He shall receive a blessing from Yahweh (רַחֵם וְרַחֲמָנִים) (οὗτος λήμψεται εὐλογίαν παρὰ κυρίου) and righteousness from the God of his salvation (רַחֵם וְרַחֲמָנִים) (καὶ ἐλεημοσύνην παρὰ θεοῦ σωτήρος αὐτοῦ). **24:6** This is the generation of those who seek Him (רַחֵם וְרַחֲמָנִים) (ζητούντων αὐτόν), who seek Your face (רַחֵם וְרַחֲמָנִים) (ζητούντων τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακώβ)— even Jacob.

⁹⁹ μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοὶ ὅτι ὁ αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται – Jewish sinners who are “peacemakers” are probably those who are the very opposite of angry and aggressive people who can find contentment only in hating and fighting others—because they hate themselves so much that they have to take out this self-loathing on other people. But those who are willing to work on being conciliatory and reconciling with those who are at odds with them are like God, who does this towards sinners who do not deserve His reconciliation but to whom He nevertheless grants it. Thus, they become “sons of God,” children of God who imitate His grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

Romans 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved into his life.

¹⁰⁰ μακάριοι οἱ διωγόμενοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν – This is the book end of the first beatitude. To be persecuted by their fellow Jews for not adhering to their perspective on how to be righteous according to the Mosaic Covenant and to adopt a view that is described by these beatitudes, that ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus as the crucified Messiah, is to be someone who qualifies for the kingdom of God that will begin on the earth with the millennial kingdom and will continue on the eternal earth of Revelation 21.

¹⁰¹ μακάριοι ἐστε ὅταν ὀνειδίσωσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ διώξωσιν καὶ εἰπωσιν ἅπαν πονηρὸν κατ’ ὑμῶν ὅτι [ψευδόμενοι] ἕνεκεν ἑμοῦ – Here in vs. 11-16, Jesus expands on v. 10 and how fortunate his disciples will be to be treated like the prophets by their fellow Jews who remain stubbornly disobedient towards God.

The previous beatitudes describe a person whose heart has been changed by God and who really grasps Jesus’ identity as the Messiah and therefore can put the Mosaic Covenant in perspective—that Jesus is the center of one’s relationship with God, not Moses and the covenant God made with the Jews through him. This will become clearest when Jesus is arrested, tried, and crucified by both the Jews and the Romans. Therefore, Jesus is indicating that the misunderstanding of the Jews regarding his entire responsibility as the Messiah, which will include his rejection by his own people, the nation of Israel, and their executing him will result in his disciples’ being persecuted by these very same people.

This is also quite striking in the light of so many OT predictions in especially the prophets that the Messiah will “rule the world with a rod of iron,” thus protecting his followers from anyone who might oppose either him or them, which must be what the Jews of Jesus’ day are expecting. They cannot fathom a crucified Messiah and one rejected by his own people, and it is because they cannot grasp that they will murder him and persecute his followers afterwards.

¹⁰² χαίrete καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε. ὅτι ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· οὕτως γὰρ ἐδίωξαν τοὺς προφῆτας τοὺς πρὸ ὑμῶν – The same kind of Jews who refused to listen to the OT prophets of God will also persecute Jesus’ followers (and of course Jesus himself).

¹⁰³ Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ ἅλας τῆς γῆς· ἐὰν δὲ τὸ ἅλας μωρανθῇ, ἐν τίνι ἀλισθησεται; εἰς οὐδὲν ἰσχύει ὅτι εἰ μὴ ἔβληθῃ ἐξω κατὰ κατατεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων – His disciples’ being persecuted by their fellow Jews is still in the background.

Since the “you” is plural, Jesus is speaking to the disciples as mostly representative of the nation of Israel (even though there are Gentiles present, too), saying that their responsibility since the time of Moses especially has been to bring preservation and salvation to the world through their obedience to God and the teaching that this presents to the Gentiles. This, therefore, becomes especially true of those Jews who become genuine followers and disciples of Jesus. However, if they fail to fulfill their responsibility, then God will “throw” them out and men will trample them. When the Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah, they set in motion God’s judgment that will end with the Beast of Revelation trampling them and God’s destroying all of them but the 144,000. This is also a warning to Jewish followers of Jesus to stay the course and persevere in their faith in order to escape God’s condemnation.

Thus, the “salt” of the disciples is their living, acting, and speaking like genuine followers of his so that the world, the unbelieving Jews, recognize their being different and are hostile towards them. To be saltless, for the salt to leak out of of their beings, is to become invisible to the world because they are just like the world are no longer persecuted.

JC – God expects a disciple of Jesus to live as a genuine disciple. Salt cannot lose saltiness in our world. But could in ancient world because a mixture, so that the salty part of it is gone. Why would salt on a field be beneficial? Probably using salt in small doses for weed suppressant. Wants people to serve God’s purposes and affect society and culture the way God wants Jesus’ disciples to do so—like the people of the beatitudes.

Implicit is that Jesus will be gone so that his disciples will affect societies and cultures instead of Jesus’ doing so. If he were to restore the Kingdom of Israel immediately, then this parable would not have the same impact.

¹⁰⁴ Ὑμεῖς ἐστε τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου. οὐ δύναται πόλις κρυβῆναι ἐπάνω ὄρους κειμένη – To be enlightened by God is to become obvious to the world that the disciples of Jesus are different, which results in their being persecuted by the world—even by fellow Jews who are unbelievers.

¹⁰⁵ οὐδὲ καιοῦσιν λύχνον καὶ τιθέασιν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὸν μόδιον ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τὴν λυχνίαν, καὶ λάμπει πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ – Analogy of a lamp. Its purpose is to provide light to the room or house.

JC – Same as parable #6 and #30. Different point in different context here. Beatitudes describe attributes of those who are being marked and set apart by the HS as belonging to God and will gain the Kingdom of God and eternal life. Including being persecuted for their position before God. The children of the devil are hostile towards the children of God. God’s purpose is that His children positively affect the world around them and reflect the truth to the world. Light is obvious as truth is in the immoral darkness of the world, which will make us targets of persecution because the children of the devil hate God’s agenda and truth. The temptation will be to hide and not give ourselves away as truth bearers in this world in order to avoid persecution. But this is not God’s purpose for us. Instead, God invades people’s lives and wants them to expose the light of His truth to the world that is hostile to the truth. Implied is that if we do not do what God wants in this way, then He will not grant us His final gift of eternal life and salvation (and the Kingdom of God for the Jews). Romans 8 – must walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh. Must follow promptings of the HS, pursuing understanding of the truth and then living it once we learn it. Instead of responding to the strong desires of the flesh and sin. [2 Peter and Jude – leaving out certain truths to remain acceptable to the culture]. God wants people to be able to see the behavior that comes as a result of the HS, e.g., the beatitudes. [cf. Galatians 4:22-23]. Glorifying God in heaven reflects the miracle of God at work within us. Only this miracle of God’s grace produces the marks of the HS in a persons’ life.

¹⁰⁶ οὕτως λαμψάτω τὸ φῶς ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων. ὅπως ἴδωσιν ὑμῶν τὰ καλὰ ἔργα καὶ δοξάσωσιν τὸν πατέρα ὑμῶν τὸν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς – Jesus is exhorting his Jewish followers, those who make the correct distinction between the MC and him, to manifest their pursuit of truth and biblical morality by God’s grace and their faith to other sinful human beings and hopefully become genuine followers themselves. This is why his disciples exist. God intends to use them to manifest truth and goodness to the rest of the world, even if it means that they are persecuted for it.

Hopefully, the new believers who see their “light” will worship and glorify God by properly imitating Jesus’ Jewish followers. But even if they do not, they will still “glorify” God by His executing His justice on them during the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord and/or at the final Great White Throne Judgment.

¹⁰⁷ Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφῆτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι – Even though there is a radical distinction between Jesus as Messiah/offering/High Priest and the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Hebrews), nevertheless they are still completely compatible within Judaism as Jews follow both while understanding the primacy of Jesus as the Messiah, etc.

¹⁰⁸ ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν· ἕως ἄν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ, ἰῶτα ἐν ἡ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἢ, ἕως ἄν πάντα γένηται – Because Jesus speaking to Jewish disciples, it makes more sense for him here to be referring to the destruction of the present cosmos after the millennial kingdom has existed than to some kind of elimination of the present cosmos to bring about the millennial kingdom. This would also permit him to be saying the God’s making the Jews the greatest nation in history according to Genesis 12:1-3 is part of “everything coming about.” In other words, the restored Kingdom of Israel lasting as long as God has planned is part of the strokes and letters of the Torah that will not pass away until the kingdom reaches its end.

There are ten uses of the phrase “the heaven and the earth” in the NT. This is the first one. Five of them pertain to the “passing away” of the heaven and the earth, and five pertain to God as the maker (ποιεῶ) of heaven and earth.

¹⁰⁹ ὅς ἐάν οὖν λύσῃ μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων καὶ διδάξῃ οὕτως τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν· – “These commandments” means the instructions and commandments that Jesus is presenting in the Sermon on the Mount.

Two options – 1) It is possible for a Jew to have an improper perspective on the MC like the Pharisees (cf. Matthew 23) while also believing in Jesus and still obtain eternal life; 2) To understand Jesus correctly will lead to a proper perspective on the MC,

so that a Jew who remains stuck in an improper perspective on the MC will not obtain eternal life.

#2 makes more sense, that to the “least” is to miss out on the kingdom of God, while to be the “greatest” is to gain eternal life.

This is also more coherent with Jesus’ next statement in v. 20.

¹¹⁰ Ἀλέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐὰν μὴ περισσεύσῃ ὑμῶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη πλείον τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. – Matthew 23 is the best description by Jesus of the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Following Jesus as a result of recognizing all this means in the light of his being the final king and new priest of Israel opens one’s eyes up to how to follow the MC as a Jew. It is to see how much more moral value certain commandments have, such as being merciful, humble, patient, and loving in contrast to eating certain foods and performing only the ritual requirements of the covenant.

¹¹¹ Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις· οὐ φονεύσεις· ὃς δ’ ἂν φονεύσῃ, ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ κρίσει –

¹¹² ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ὀργιζόμενος τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ κρίσει· ὃς δ’ ἂν εἴπῃ τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ ῥακά, ἔνοχος ἔσται τῷ συνεδρίῳ· ὃς δ’ ἂν εἴπῃ ἄνωγε, ἔνοχος ἔσται εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός –

¹¹³ Ἐὰν οὖν προσφέρῃς τὸ δῶρόν σου ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον κάκει μνησθῆς ὅτι ὁ ἀδελφός σου ἔχει τι κατὰ σοῦ – Jesus indicates that for Jews following the MC is compatible with following him.

¹¹⁴ ἄφες ἐκεῖ τὸ δῶρόν σου ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ ὑπάγε· πρῶτον· διαλλάγηθι τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου, καὶ τότε ἐλθὼν πρόσφερε τὸ δῶρόν σου – Worship of God and especially appealing to Him from mercy and forgiveness assumes that a person of genuine faith in Jesus has done all he can to be in good relationship with his fellow Jew and believer.

¹¹⁵ Ἴσθι εὐνοῶν τῷ ἀντιδίκῳ σου ταχύ, ἕως ὅτου εἶ μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, μήποτε σε παραδῶ ὁ ἀντίδικος τῷ κριτῇ καὶ ὁ κριτῆς τῷ ὑπρέτῃ καὶ εἰς φυλακὴν βληθῆσῃ – Taking a cue from their legal system of the day, pacify their opponent before they get to court and the magistrate. Negotiate a settlement with their opponent before the “judgment.” We need to negotiate with God before His judgment by acquiring a broken and contrite heart by the Spirit of God. Otherwise, it will be too late.

¹¹⁶ ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃς ἐκεῖθεν, ἕως ἂν ἀποδώσῃς τὸν ἔσχατον κοδράντην – The issue for sinners can be described in legal terms, that they need to obtain God’s forgiveness and mercy, which they can through Jesus’ advocacy. Look at all the signs around us and respond with appropriate repentance and obedience to gain God’s mercy. Otherwise, we will incur and just and commensurate punishment according to God’s justice and condemnation.

¹¹⁷ Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη ἄνωγε· οὐ μοιχεύσεις –

¹¹⁸ ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ βλέπων γυναῖκα πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι αὐτήν ἤδη ἐμοίχευσεν αὐτήν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ –

¹¹⁹ Εἰ δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ὁ δεξιὸς σκανδαλίζει σε, ἔξελε αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ· συμφέρει γὰρ σοι ἵνα ἀπόληται ἐν τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου βληθῆ εἰς γέενναν –

¹²⁰ Ἐὰν εἰ ἡ δεξιὰ σου χεὶρ σκανδαλίζει σε, ἔκκοψον αὐτήν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ· συμφέρει γὰρ σοι ἵνα ἀπόληται ἐν τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ μὴ ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου εἰς γέενναν ἀπέλθῃ. –

¹²¹ Ἐρρέθη δὲ ὃς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, δότω αὐτῇ ἀποστάσιον –

¹²² ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἡ ἀπολύσις τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ παρεκτός λόγου πορνείας ποιεῖ αὐτὴν μοιχευθῆναι, καὶ ὃς ἐὰν ἀπολελυμένην γαμήσῃ, μοιχάται – In the culture of Jesus’ day, men treated women like objects for their convenience. Jesus is saying that if his disciples continue this trend, they are wrong in their understanding of marriage and women.

¹²³ Πάλιν ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις· οὐκ ἐπιορκήσεις, ἀποδώσεις δὲ τῷ κυρίῳ τοὺς ὄρκους σου –

¹²⁴ ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ ὁμόσαι ὅλως· μήτε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὅτι θρόνος ἐστὶν τοῦ θεοῦ – cf. Deuteronomy 23:22.

¹²⁵ μήτε ἐν τῇ γῆ, ὅτι ὑποπόδιόν ἐστιν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ, μήτε εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, ὅτι πόλις ἐστὶν τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως –

¹²⁶ μήτε ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ σου ὁμόσης, ὅτι οὐ δύνασαι ἑμίαν τρίχα λευκὴν ποιῆσαι ἢ μέλαιναν –

¹²⁷ Ἔστω δὲ ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν· ναὶ· ναί, οὐ· οὐ· τὸ δὲ περισσὸν τούτων ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἐστὶν –

¹²⁸ Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη ὀφθαλμὸν ἀντὶ ὀφθαλμοῦ· ὁκαὶ ὀδόντα ἀντὶ ὀδόντος –

¹²⁹ ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ· ἀλλ’ ὅστις σε ῥαπίζει εἰς τὴν δεξιὰν σιαγόνα [σου], στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην –

¹³⁰ καὶ τῷ θέλοντί σοι κριθῆναι καὶ τὸν χιτῶνά σου λαβεῖν, ἄφες αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον –

¹³¹ καὶ ὅστις σε ῥαγαρεύσει μίλιον ἐν, ὑπάγε μετ’ αὐτοῦ ἑξήμιον –

¹³² τῷ αἰτοῦντί σε ῥόδον, καὶ τὸν θέλοντα ἀπὸ σοῦ δανίσασθαι· μὴ ἀποστραφῆς –

¹³³ Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου –

¹³⁴ ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν· ἀγαπάτε τοὺς ἐχθρούς ὑμῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ᾖτε ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐρανός, ὁτι τὸν ἥλιον αὐτοῦ ἀνατέλλει ἐπὶ πονηροὺς καὶ ἀγαθοὺς καὶ βρέχει ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ἀδίκους –

Cf. **Psalm 35:11** Malicious witnesses rise up; they ask me of things that I do not know. **12** They repay me evil for good, to the bereavement of my soul. **13** But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer kept returning to my bosom. **14** I went about as though it were my friend or brother; I bowed down mourning, as one who sorrows for a mother. **15** But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together; the smiters whom I did not know gathered together against me. They slandered me without ceasing. **16** Like godless jesters at a feast, they gnashed at me with their teeth.

¹³⁵ ὅπως γένησθε υἱοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς, ὅτι τὸν ἥλιον αὐτοῦ ἀνατέλλει ἐπὶ πονηροὺς καὶ ἀγαθοὺς καὶ βρέχει ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ἀδίκους –

¹³⁶ ἐὰν γὰρ ἀγαπήσῃτε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, τίνα μισθὸν ἔχετε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ τελῶναι τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν –

¹³⁷ Ἐὰν ἐὰν ἀσπάσῃσθε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὑμῶν μόνον, τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ ἔθνη τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν; –

Another indication that Jesus is addressing himself mainly to the Jews in the crowd and wanting them to understand the fundamental distinction between biblical morality and that of their Judaism. This distinction finds its basis in understanding exactly who he is as the Messiah and believing in him as such.

¹³⁸ ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὥς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ ὁυράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν – The Greek word τέλειός can mean perfect, but it contains the connotation of achieving a goal or being complete. The immediate context contains instructions from Jesus to his disciples as to how to treat other human beings, whether the good (believers) or the evil (unbelievers), and to do so as God treats them—equally by causing the sun to rise on both and by sending rain on both. Therefore, Jesus could be saying that he wants his disciples to be complete in their treatment of other human beings just as God is complete in His treatment of them—by loving their enemies and praying for those who persecute them, along with of course loving and greeting their fellow believers.

The larger context contains further instructions from Jesus about how to obey correctly the Mosaic Covenant instead of how the present Jewish leadership of scribes and Pharisees have interpreted such obedience. Therefore, Jesus could be saying that he wants his disciples to be complete in both their understanding and living of God’s covenant as God Himself is complete in His moral behavior, even though of course God’s is perfect and without sin or evil like that of human beings.

¹³⁹ Προσέχετε ὅ[δὲ] τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν μὴ ποιεῖν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι αὐτοῖς· εἰ δὲ μὴ γε, μισθὸν οὐκ ἔχετε παρὰ τῷ πατρὶ ὑμῶν τῷ ἐν οὐρανοῖς –

¹⁴⁰ Ὅταν οὖν ποιῆς ἐλεημοσύνην, μὴ σαλπίσσης ἔμπροσθέν σου, ὥσπερ οἱ ὑποκριταὶ ποιοῦσιν ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ ἐν ταῖς ρύμαις, ὅπως δοξασθῶσιν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων· ἀμὴν ὁ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀπέχουσιν τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν –

¹⁴¹ σοὺ δὲ ποιῶντος ἐλεημοσύνην μὴ γνώτω ἡ ἀριστερὰ σου τί ποιεῖ ἡ δεξιὰ σου –

¹⁴² ὅπως ἢ σου ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἂποδώσει σοι –

¹⁴³ Ἐὰν ὅταν προσεύχησθε, οὐκ ἔσεσθε ὥς οἱ ὑποκριταί, οἱ φιλοῦσιν ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς καὶ ἐν ταῖς γωνίαις τῶν πλατειῶν ἐστῶτες προσεύχασθαι, ὅπως φανῶσιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀπέχουσιν τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν –

¹⁴⁴ σοὺ δὲ ὅταν προσεύχη, εἰσελθε εἰς τὸ ταμεῖόν σου καὶ κλείσας τὴν θύραν σου πρόσευξαι τῷ πατρὶ σου τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἂποδώσει σοι –

¹⁴⁵ Προσευχόμενοι δὲ μὴ βατταλογήσητε ὥσπερ οἱ ἔθνηκοί, δοκοῦσιν γὰρ ὅτι ἐν τῇ πολυλογίᾳ αὐτῶν εἰσακουσθήσονται. – Jesus is referring to the prayers of pagan Gentiles who hope their gods will be more prone to respond to them if they repeat over and over their requests to them.

¹⁴⁶ μὴ οὖν ὁμοιωθῆτε αὐτοῖς· οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὃν χρειαίαν ἔχετε πρὸ τοῦ ὑμᾶς αἰτῆσαι αὐτόν· – God knows what we need even before we pray. Therefore prayer is not for God. It is for us. As Kierkegaard says, “Prayer does not change God, but it changes the one who prays.”

¹⁴⁷ Οὕτως οὖν προσεύχεσθε ὑμεῖς Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου –

¹⁴⁸ ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου· γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς· –

¹⁴⁹ τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἑπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον –

¹⁵⁰ καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα· ἡμῶν ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν –

¹⁵¹ καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν· ἀλλὰ ρύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ –

¹⁵² Ἐὰν ἄφῃτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, ἀφήσει καὶ ὑμῖν ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ ὁυράνιος –

¹⁵³ ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀφῃτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, οὐδὲ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ἀφήσει τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν –

¹⁵⁴ Ὅταν δὲ νηστεύητε, μὴ γίνεσθε ὥς οἱ ὑποκριταὶ σκυθρωποί, ἀφανίζουσιν γὰρ τὰ πρόσωπα ὡς φανῶσιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύοντες· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀπέχουσιν τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν –

¹⁵⁵ σοὺ δὲ νηστεύων ἄλειψαι σου τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου νίψαι, –

¹⁵⁶ ὅπως μὴ φανῆς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύων· ἀλλὰ τῷ πατρὶ σου τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυφαίῳ· καὶ ὁ πατήρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυφαίῳ ἂποδώσει σοι – Cf. *Isaiah 58:5* “Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one’s head like a reed and for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the LORD? 6 “Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke? 7 “Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?”

¹⁵⁷ Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅπου σῆς καὶ βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπτει διορύσσουσιν καὶ κλέπτουσιν –

¹⁵⁸ θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ, ὅπου οὔτε σῆς οὔτε βρῶσις ἀφανίζει καὶ ὅπου κλέπτει οὐ διορύσσουσιν ὡς κλέπτουσιν· – In the context, to store up treasures in heaven is to serve God (v. 24) by doing what is good and moral, regardless of one’s economic status.

¹⁵⁹ ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρός σου, ἐκεῖ ἔσται ἡ καρδία σου – Is your heart dedicated to the things of this life and finding happiness in them, or to biblical morality and its outcome of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

¹⁶⁰ Ὁ λύχνος τοῦ σώματός ἐστιν ὁ ὀφθαλμός. ἐὰν οὖν ἢ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου ἀπλοῦς, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται – What do you look at in this world as really valuable—things, including religious performance to be noticed by men, or moral goodness? If the latter, then your whole being is rightly oriented towards God.

¹⁶¹ ἐὰν δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρὸς ἢ, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου σκοτεινὸν ἔσται. εἰ οὖν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐν σοὶ σκότος ἐστίν, τὸ σκότος πόσον – Above, if the former, then your whole being is immoral, no matter how good you might look to men.

¹⁶² Οὐδεὶς δύναται δυσεὶ κυρίως δουλεύειν· ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἕναμισήσει καὶ τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει, ἢ ἐνὸς ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει. οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ – Serve can be a rather light term in our language. The word that Jesus is using is making oneself a slave of something or someone. He is saying that it is theologically, spiritually, and morally impossible to be obsessed with both God and the things of this life.

Certainly, he is not discouraging enjoying one’s life during this time of the earth’s existence. He is implying that people naturally want to enjoy it to the extent of making God and his agenda secondary in their lives.

¹⁶³ Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ μεριμνάτε τῇ ψυχῇ ὑμῶν τί φάγητε (ἢ τί πίνητε), μηδὲ τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν τί ἐνδύσησθε. οὐχὶ ἡ ψυχὴ πλεῖον ἐστὶν τῆς τροφῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ἐνδύματος – Here Jesus is pointing to eternal life beyond a person’s physical existence. He is encouraging people to be attracted to it and not to the stuff of this life.

¹⁶⁴ ἐμβλέψατε εἰς τὰ πετεινά τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὅτι οὐ σπεύρουσιν οὐδὲ θερίζουσιν οὐδὲ συνάγουσιν εἰς ἴσθητάς, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τρέφει αὐτά· οὐχ ὑμεῖς μᾶλλον διαφέρετε αὐτῶν –

¹⁶⁵ τίς δὲ ἐξ ὑμῶν μεριμνῶν δύναται προσθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὴν ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ πῆχυν ἓνα –

¹⁶⁶ Καὶ περὶ ἐνδύματος τί μεριμνᾶτε; καταμάθετε τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ πῶς ἀυξάνουσιν οὐ κοπιῶσιν οὐδὲ νήθουσιν –

¹⁶⁷ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδὲ Σολομὼν ἐν πάσῃ τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ περιεβάλετο ὡς ἐν τούτων –

¹⁶⁸ εἰ δὲ τὸν χόρτον τοῦ ἀγροῦ σήμερον ὄντα καὶ αὔριον εἰς κλίβανον βαλλόμενον ὁ θεὸς οὕτως ἀμφιέννυσιν, οὐ πολλῶ μᾶλλον ὑμᾶς, ὀλιγόπιστοι – To be clothed much more by God is to be granted a thriving existence in the eternal kingdom.

¹⁶⁹ Μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε λέγοντες· τί φάγωμεν; ἢ τί πίωμεν; ἢ τί περιβαλώμεθα –

¹⁷⁰ ἵπαντα γὰρ ταῦτα ἔθνη ἐπιζητοῦσιν· οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρήζετε τούτων ἀπάντων –

¹⁷¹ ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ] καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν – This verse is the key to understanding what Jesus is saying in this paragraph, that it will ultimately be in the Kingdom of God when with the new heavens and earth that God grant all these things to authentic believers. Thus, these things will be added to their seeking the Kingdom of God.

¹⁷² Μὴ οὖν μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὔριον, ἢ γὰρ αὔριον μεριμνήσει ἑαυτῆς· ἄρκετόν τῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἡ κακία αὐτῆς –

¹⁷³ Μὴ κρίνετε, ἵνα μὴ κριθῆτε –

¹⁷⁴ ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίματι κρίνετε κριθήσεσθε, καὶ ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν –

¹⁷⁵ Τί δὲ βλέπεις τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου, τὴν δὲ ἐν τῷ σῷ ὀφθαλμῷ δοκὸν οὐ κατανοεῖς –

¹⁷⁶ ἢ πῶς ἔρεῖς τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου ἄφες ἐκβάλω τὸ κάρφος ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ σου, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἡ δοκὸς ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σοῦ –

¹⁷⁷ ὑποκριτά, ἐκβαλε πρῶτον ἑκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ σοῦ τὴν δοκόν, καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου –

JC – not an analogy, because nothing in life really is like this. Wood of beam in a person’s eye? No. But metaphorical language. What is metaphor speck and wood of beam in a person’s eye? Hinders a person from seeing clearly. Seeing something in particular. In context, mercy and condemnation when someone has done something evil towards me. Hindered from seeing what I have done wrong. A person’s blindspot. Point it out to them, and meet with defensiveness. If speck is a small blindspot, then wood of beam is a much larger one. Someone offering to point out a habitual sin in a person to help him get rid of it. Probably has in mind the Pharisees who love to point out sins of others to correct them. And they have a bigger sin in them, which is completely missing the truth that they are sinful in their whole being and think that they are without sin when they are filled with sin. Human sinfulness in all of us. How can someone help another person with their sin if he does not fully grasp his own sinfulness.

¹⁷⁸ Μὴ δώτε τὸ ἅγιον τοῖς κυσίν μηδὲ βάλητε τοὺς μαργαρίτας ὑμῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν χοίρων, μήποτε καταπατήσουσιν αὐτοὺς ἐν τοῖς ποσίν αὐτῶν καὶ στραφέντες ῥήξωσιν ὑμᾶς –

¹⁷⁹ Αἰτεῖτε καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν, ζητεῖτε καὶ εὕρησθε, κρούετε καὶ ἀνοιγήσεται ὑμῖν –

¹⁸⁰ πᾶς γὰρ ὁ αἰτῶν λαμβάνει καὶ ὁ ζητῶν εὕρισκει καὶ τῷ κρούοντι ἀνοιγήσεται –

¹⁸¹ ἢ τίς ἔστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος, ὃν αἰτήσῃ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἄρτον, μὴ λίθον ἐπιδώσει αὐτῷ –

¹⁸² ἢ καὶ ἰχθὺν αἰτήσῃ, μὴ ὄφιν ἐπιδώσει αὐτῷ –

¹⁸³ εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὄντες οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς δώσει ἀγαθὰ τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν –

¹⁸⁴ Πάντα ὅσα ἐὰν θέλητε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς· οὕτως γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται –

¹⁸⁵ Εἰσέλθατε διὰ τῆς στενῆς πύλης· ὅτι πλατεία ἡ πύλη καὶ εὐρύχωρος ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν καὶ πολλοὶ εἰσὶν οἱ εἰσερχόμενοι δι’ αὐτῆς – More Jews are going to be unwilling to listen to and embrace appropriately the entire biblical message and Jesus’ teaching.

¹⁸⁶ Ἰσχυροὶ ἢ πύλη καὶ τεθλιμμένη ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ζωὴν καὶ ὀλίγοι εἰσὶν οἱ εὕρισκοντες αὐτήν – Only a few Jews will gain the *aiōnic* life of the “great nation” and eternal life of the Abrahamic promises that come through believing in and obeying Jesus’ teaching and instructions.

¹⁸⁷ Προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν ψευδοπροφητῶν, οἵτινες ἔρχονται πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ἐνδύμασιν προβάτων, ἔσωθεν δὲ εἰσὶν λύκοι ἄρπαγες – There are certain Jewish teachers (“prophets”) who claim to understand the OT and what God is requiring of the nation of Israel to obey Him properly and to gain the promises of becoming the most powerful nation in history and of *aiōnic* and eternal life. However, as righteous as they think they are and they look, they are false teachers who are misunderstanding what God has taught through the OT authors.

¹⁸⁸ ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιγνώσεσθε αὐτούς· μήτι συλλέγουσιν ἀπὸ ἀκανθῶν σταφυλὰς ἢ ἀπὸ τριβόλων σῦκα – The fruit is not the effects of what they do, but it is what they do that reveals their inner commitments—whether embracing what Jesus is instructing here in the Sermon on the Mount from a heart that is single-mindedly dedicated to God and biblical goodness, or embracing the lies and deceptions of Satan that includes the worldly religiosity of the scribes and Pharisees.

¹⁸⁹ Οὕτως πᾶν δένδρον ἀγαθὸν καρποῦς καλοὺς ποιεῖ, τὸ δὲ σαπρὸν δένδρον καρποῦς πονηροῦς ποιεῖ – There are two kinds of people among the Jews—those who have a correct understanding of God and who do what is good out of their changed inner being and those who misunderstand the Bible and do what may look like good actions but with the wrong perspective of thinking that they make themselves worthy of God’s blessings.

The fruit of the tree depends upon the kind of tree and its nature. Similarly, a person’s deeds flow from the kind of person he is

on inside. Yet, hypocrisy occurs when a person does good deeds on the outside but does not have a changed heart on the inside. Nevertheless, his hypocrisy will manifest itself eventually, because he will reveal what is really going on by his what he says and/or does in line with his true desires. And this will also be something he probably persists at and is not truly repentant of.

¹⁹⁰ οὐ δύναται δένδρον ἀγαθὸν καρπὸς πονηροῦς ποιεῖν οὐδὲ δένδρον σαπρὸν καρπὸς καλοῦς ποιεῖν. – In fact, the two kinds of Jews behave according to their inwardness—either a changed inwardness of humility and repentance resulting in kindness and love, or an unchanged inner being resulting in obsession with religiosity.

Jesus' point in this parable is that we do not make ourselves holy and set apart by doing righteousness (which was the belief of the religious establishment in his day), but we do righteousness (albeit with an evil basic and foundational moral nature) by virtue of God's having made our inner beings set apart and holy.

¹⁹¹ πᾶν τ δένδρον μὴ ποιῶν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται –

¹⁹² ἄρα γε ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιγνώσεσθε αὐτούς – See the note above for 7:17.

Also, there are two possible levels of inner being for us sinners –

1) our basic and foundational moral nature is evil and sinful. At this level, we (except Jesus) are all sinners and remain sinners throughout the rest of our lives.

2) our spirit, heart, and mind is where our fundamental commitments and desires reside. If they are transformed by the Holy Spirit, then we are “sanctified” and “set apart” sinners with the same foundational moral nature that is evil, but with new commitments that are good and right, i.e., desirous of obeying God with humility that comes from recognizing the depth of the problem of our sin and sinfulness. Therefore, we pursue biblical righteousness, including humble and appropriate repentance of sin.

¹⁹³ Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι κύριε κύριε, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἀλλ' ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. –

¹⁹⁴ πολλοὶ ἐροῦσίν μοι ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ: κύριε κύριε, τ οὐ τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι ἐπροφητεύσαμεν, καὶ τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι δαμόνια τ ἐξεβάλομεν, καὶ τῷ σῶ ὀνόματι δυνάμεις πολλὰς ἐποιήσαμεν –

¹⁹⁵ καὶ τότε ὁμολογήσω αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὐδέποτε ἔγνω ὑμᾶς: ἄποχωρεῖτε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τ οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν – Jesus will reject those who proclaim him as the Messiah, even seem to cast out demons and perform miracles, but in addition they are acting outside the boundaries of God's moral commandments. They are doing ἀνομία. They are envious, hateful, committing adultery, etc. They look as though they are all about Jesus and proclaiming his as the Messiah, but they are more about engaging in immorality when they have the opportunity.

¹⁹⁶ Πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ἀκούει μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ ποιεῖ αὐτούς, ὁμοιωθήσεται ἀνδρὶ φρονίμῳ, ὅστις ᾠκοδόμησεν αὐτοῦ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν –

¹⁹⁷ καὶ κατέβη ἡ βροχὴ καὶ ἦλθον οἱ ποταμοὶ καὶ ἔπνευσαν οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ προσέπεσαν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐκείνῃ, καὶ οὐκ ἔπεσεν, τεθεμελίωτο γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν – The flood that is coming is the wrath and judgment of God that will result in the destruction of those who do not remain within the boundaries of biblical morality in the midst of their pretending to be following Jesus by proclaiming him as the Messiah.

¹⁹⁸ Καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀκούων μου τοὺς λόγους τούτους καὶ μὴ ποιῶν αὐτούς ὁμοιωθήσεται ἀνδρὶ μωρῷ, ὅστις ᾠκοδόμησεν αὐτοῦ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον –

¹⁹⁹ καὶ κατέβη ἡ βροχὴ καὶ ἦλθον οἱ ποταμοὶ καὶ ἔπνευσαν οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ προσέκοψαν τῇ οἰκίᾳ ἐκείνῃ, καὶ ἔπεσεν καὶ ἦν ἡ πτώσις αὐτῆς μεγάλη –

²⁰⁰ Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἔτελεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους, ἐξεπλήσσαντο οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ –

²⁰¹ ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτούς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς οὐτῶν –

²⁰² Καταβάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοὶ –

²⁰³ καὶ ἰδοὺ λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνη αὐτῷ λέγων κύριε, ἐάν θέλῃς δύνασαι με καθαρίσαι –

²⁰⁴ καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἥψατο αὐτοῦ τ λέγων θέλω, καθαρῶς καὶ εὐθέως ἐκαθαρίσθη αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα –

²⁰⁵ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅρα μηδενὶ εἴπῃς, ἀλλ' ὕπαγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκον τὸ δῶρον ὃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς –

²⁰⁶ Εἰσελθόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἑκατόνταρχος παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν –

²⁰⁷ καὶ λέγων ὁ κύριε, ὁ παῖς μου βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ παραλυτικός, δεινῶς βασανιζόμενος –

²⁰⁸ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ τ ἐγὼ ἔλθὼν θεραπεύσω αὐτόν –

²⁰⁹ καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος ἔφη κύριε, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθῃς, ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου. –

²¹⁰ καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν τ, ἔχων ὑπ' ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ πορεύητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου ποιήσον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ – This Gentile, Roman member of the military that is occupying the land of Israel understands Jesus' position better than any Jew so far. It certainly appears in fact that he grasps Jesus' relationship with God the Father, that he is under His authority, and that Jesus has authority over the creation in line with God's plans and purposes for him. Did the centurion get this understanding from the OT and the Davidic Covenant specifically? Probably as a Gentile proselyte and student of the Bible with Jews and Gentiles in the local synagogue.

²¹¹ ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς ἀκολουθοῦσιν ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ἄρα οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὑρον – Jesus means quality and quantity of understanding by “belief.”

²¹² Λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἔξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν – Those who come from east and west will be Gentiles who will “eat,” i.e., participate and receive life, with the Jews, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And these are believing Jews, which is the point—that authentic belief and understanding with changed inwardness is what qualifies a sinner for eternal life with these Jewish patriarchs of the faith.

The kingdom of heaven is the Kingdom of God that comes from “heaven,” i.e., from God, not a place where people live eternally that is up there somewhere in heaven.

²¹³ οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἔκβληθήσονται εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων – The “sons of the kingdom” are Jews who have the ethnic right to the initial phase of the Kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom when Jesus and the Jews will rule the world. To be cast into outer darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth is to experience God’s measured punishment for rejecting Jesus and the truth, which will ultimately result into eternal destruction.

²¹⁴ καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη ὑπαγε, ἵνα ὡς ἐπίστευσας γεννηθῆτω σοι καὶ ἰάθῃ ὁ παῖς ὁ[αυτοῦ] ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ. –

²¹⁵ Καὶ ἐλθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Πέτρου εἶδεν τὴν πενθερὰν αὐτοῦ βεβλημένην καὶ πυρέσσουσαν –

²¹⁶ καὶ ἤψατο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ ἀφήκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός, καὶ ἠγέρθη καὶ διηκόνει αὐτῷ –

²¹⁷ Ὁσίας δὲ γενομένης προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δαίμονιζομένους πολλούς· καὶ ἐξέβαλεν τὰ πνεύματα λόγῳ καὶ πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ἐθεράπευσεν –

²¹⁸ ὅπως πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥῆθὲν διὰ Ἰσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν –

²¹⁹ Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὄχλον περὶ αὐτὸν ἐκέλευσεν ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὸ πέραν –

²²⁰ καὶ προσελθὼν εἰς γραμματεὺς εἶπεν αὐτῷ διδάσκαλε, ἀκολουθήσω σοι ὅπου ἐὰν ἀπέρχῃ – cf. Luke 9:57-62. This person sounds noble and sincere. But the question always is, is someone who outwardly comes across as sincere actually so inwardly?

²²¹ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· αἱ ἀλώπεκες φαλεοὺς ἔχουσιν καὶ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατασκηνώσεις, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἔχει ποῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν κλίνει – If the person is still hoping to find safety and security in the present realm, then he is not up to the task of following Jesus. He has not chosen to settle down in this world but to fulfill his mission of dying on the cross, which requires that the world reject him and seek to destroy him and his influence.

²²² ἕτερος δὲ τῶν μαθητῶν ὁ[αυτοῦ] εἶπεν αὐτῷ κύριε, ἐπιτρέψον μοι πρῶτον ἀπελθεῖν καὶ θάψαι τὸν πατέρα μου – This person has certain family obligations, including waiting until his father dies and performing not only his burial but also the responsibility of inheriting his property before he can wander off with Jesus. He is more concerned about dealing with his relationship with his father than he is with Jesus.

²²³ ὁ δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτῷ ἀκολούθει μοι καὶ ἄφες τοὺς νεκροὺς θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκροὺς – However, Jesus’ commands the man to focus on what really matters—life from God and not property and the things of this realm, which are the focus of those who are “dead,” i.e., not awakened to their need for God’s forgiveness in order to gain eternal life through the Messiah. So when Jesus is telling this man to follow him, it is not just or even primarily physically, but it is inwardly.

²²⁴ Καὶ ἐμβάντι αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ –

²²⁵ καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμός μέγας ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, ὥστε τὸ πλοῖον καλύπτεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκάθευδεν –

²²⁶ καὶ προσελθόντες ἠγγειραν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, σώσον ἡμᾶς, ἀπολλύμεθα –

²²⁷ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τί δειλοὶ ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι· τότε ἐγερθεὶς ἐπέτιμησεν τοῖς ἀνέμοις καὶ τῇ θαλάσῃ, καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη –

²²⁸ οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· ποταπὸς ἐστὶν οὗτος ἵνα καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ θάλασσα αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν; – Unlike the Gentile, Roman centurion in the previous story, Jesus’ own Jewish disciples do not understand Jesus’ role and his relationship with the Father, the transcendent God. What a great lesson, that God grants understanding of the truth when and how He desires. It is not something of which we are in control.

²²⁹ Καὶ ἔλθοντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πέραν εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γαδαρηνῶν ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ δύο δαίμονιζόμενοι ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἐξερχόμενοι, χαλεποὶ λίαν, ὥστε μὴ ἰσχυεῖν τινὰ παρελθεῖν διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐκείνης – about

²³⁰ καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔκραξαν λέγοντες· τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, ἵνα υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ; ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς; –

²³¹ ἦν δὲ ἡμαρτῶν αὐτῶν ἀγγέλιος χοίρων ὀ πολλῶν βοσκομένη –

²³² οἱ δὲ δαίμονες παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· εἰ ἐκβάλλεις ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀγγέλιον τῶν χοίρων –

²³³ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὑπάγετε. οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἀπήλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους· καὶ ἰδοὺ ὤρμησεν πάσα ἡ ἀγγέλιος κατὰ τοῦ κρημοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἀπέθανον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι –

²³⁴ οἱ δὲ βόσκοντες ἔφυγον, καὶ ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν πάντα καὶ τὰ τῶν δαίμονιζομένων –

²³⁵ καὶ ἰδοὺ πᾶσα ἡ πόλις ἐξῆλθεν εἰς τὴν ὑπάντησιν τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν παρεκάλεισαν ὅπως μεταβῆ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρίων αὐτῶν – Unlike the Gentile centurion in the previous story, these Gentiles are not willing to be curious about what it means for Jesus and his ability to send demons into pigs. Yes, whoever owned the pigs lost his source of income, but this is what God does sometimes to signal to people that they need to think about Him and their eternal salvation. Instead of learning more about Jesus, they send him away. This is a grievous error on their part.

²³⁶ Καὶ ἐμβὰς εἰς τὸ πλοῖον διεπέρασεν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν –

²³⁷ καὶ ἰδοὺ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παραλυτικὸν ἐπὶ κλίνῃς βεβλημένον. καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν εἶπεν τῷ παραλυτικῷ· θάρσει, τέκνον, ἵνα ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι –

²³⁸ Καὶ ἰδοὺ τινες τῶν γραμματέων εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· οὗτος βλασφημεῖ –

²³⁹ καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν· ἵνα τί ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρὰ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν –

²⁴⁰ τί γὰρ ἐστὶν εὐκόπωτερον, εἰπεῖν ἵνα ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν ἕγειρε καὶ περιπάτει –

²⁴¹ ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφίεναι ἁμαρτίας – τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ· ἕγειρε, ἄρῃ σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὑπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου –

²⁴² καὶ ἕγειρε ἀπήλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκόν αὐτοῦ –

²⁴³ ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν τὸν δόντα ἐξουσίαν τοιαύτην τοῖς ἀνθρώποις – I wonder if Matthew uses the plural “men” because he himself has performed such miracles as an apostle of the Messiah.

all reality. Cf. John 14:26 – John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you, and John 16:7 “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

²⁷⁵ Τῶν ὁδὲ δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστιν ταῦτα· πρῶτος Σίμων ὁ λεγόμενος Πέτρος καὶ Ἀνδρέας ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, ὁ καὶ Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ –

²⁷⁶ Φίλιππος καὶ Βαρθολομαῖος, Θωμᾶς καὶ Μαθθαῖος ὁ τελώνης, Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ἀλφαίου καὶ ῥαββὴς –

²⁷⁷ Σίμων ὁ Ῥαββίος ὁ καὶ Ἰουδᾶς ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης ὁ καὶ παραδοὺς αὐτόν – Καναναῖος is from the Aramaic ܟܢܢܝܐ

meaning enthusiast, zealot, probably because he had been a member of the freedom fighters in northern Israel in the area of the Sea of Galilee.

²⁷⁸ Τοῦτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς παραγγείλας αὐτοῖς λέγων εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε – In spite of Matthew 15:24 and the way I have interpreted it, at this point in his Jewish disciples’ learning how to follow him, Jesus does not want them to put themselves in situations where they are going to have to discern exactly how to relate to the Gentiles. This is coming later when Jesus himself does in Matthew 15 with the Syrophoenician woman and in Acts when both Peter and Paul proclaim the gospel to Gentiles. Things are confusing enough now for his disciples that Jesus wants to keep things rather simple for them, especially as they perform some very profound miracles, which will be brand new for them.

²⁷⁹ ῥορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ – Jesus wants the disciples to confine their activities to Jews, probably in line with Paul’s comments to the effect that the gospel is “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” in Romans 1:16, etc. This also makes sense in the light of God’s continued faithfulness to the Jews to fulfill His promise to Abraham to make of them a great nation (cf. Genesis 12:1-3).

²⁸⁰ πορευόμενοι δὲ κηρύσσετε λέγοντες ὅτι ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν – This kingdom is “of heaven,” meaning that it comes from God as planned and purposed by Him. It is His ultimate project to bring about first the restored Kingdom of Israel during the millennium kingdom of Revelation 20 and then the eternal creation with a new earth where immortality and moral perfection will characterize it (cf. 2 Peter 3:13 – “in which righteousness dwells” (?); Revelation 21).

And it seems reasonable to interpret Jesus as meaning that they should include him and his presence on earth as part of their message because he as the king of the kingdom is here. Thus, the kingdom is near, not because it will occur any moment, but because the clock has definitely starting ticking towards it with Jesus’ first appearance.

²⁸¹ ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε, νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε, λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε, δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλετε· δωρεὰν ἐλάβετε, δωρεὰν δότε – Again the exhortation to exercise compassion towards Jewish sinners by healing them of physical and spiritual infirmities. They will be receiving from God through His grace the authority and “ability” to heal sinners and proclaim the message of Jesus’ gospel of the nearness of the kingdom. In other words, they will not be earning this authority and ability. Likewise, they should perform their miracles and proclaim his message as strictly a gift to people.

Or is Jesus speaking of freely receiving physical sustenance and support from the people whom they heal? Certainly, the former is more profound and probably correct. Jesus is encouraging his disciples to realize that their ability to perform such marvelous miracles is strictly a gift from God, just as his ability to do so is. Therefore, he does not want them to become arrogant as they carry out their duties. Yes, God and he have chosen them for this special role. But it is not because of anything they have done to deserve it. They should remain humble in the midst of all the wonderful acts of love that they will be performing.

²⁸² Μὴ κτήσῃσθε χρυσὸν μηδὲ ἄργυρον μηδὲ χαλκὸν εἰς τὰς ζώνας ὑμῶν – Jesus does not want these disciples to think that they will have to take of their own money before they begin this trip or that they will have to “earn” their way through it. Instead, he wants them to expect God to provide through people’s generosity as they presumably recognize the value of what is being provided them through the proclaiming of the message of God’s mercy and demonstration of it through the healing miracles. If people correctly and appropriately recognize the value of what God is giving them by healing them through the work of these disciples, then they will have no problem providing them with what they need to live during this event.

This probably implies that this was how Jesus was sustaining himself, through the generosity of those who recognized him as the Messiah and the value of this for them in their lives.

²⁸³ μὴ πύραν εἰς ὁδὸν μηδὲ δύο χιτῶνας μηδὲ ὑποδήματα μηδὲ ῥάβδον ἄξιος γὰρ ὁ ἐργάτης τῆς τροφῆς αὐτοῦ – Jesus is saying the same thing here as in the previous verse and adding the reason for their being able to expect others to support them during their trip of proclaiming the nearness of the Kingdom of God and of healing people of diseases and spiritual oppression. It is because of the invaluable service that they are providing, which those who appreciate the value will then be motivated to “pay” for the service in return. In this way, they are “worthy” of their support.

This is somewhat of a confusion element with Christianity. We do not deserve God’s grace and salvation, but our serving people on behalf of God and the gospel “deserves” a material response of gratitude and appreciation from them.

²⁸⁴ Ἐἰς ἣν δ’ ἂν πόλιν ἢ κώμην εἰσέλθῃτε, ἐξετάσατε τίς ἐν αὐτῇ ἄξιός ἐστιν· κακεῖ μείνατε ἕως ἂν ἐξέλθῃτε – The disciples should seek out in each city those whom God has granted authentic belief and pursuit of truth and goodness. And they should enjoy their hospitality as long as they are in the city. But they will need to continue their evaluation of these “worthy” people as they proclaim the message of the kingdom and perform their miracles of healing and casting out demons. The test will be how they receive the news about Jesus as the Messiah (cf. 10:14). If they seem to embrace this news with belief, then they remain “worthy.” If not, then they have demonstrated their obedience of God and the OT is a pretense.

²⁸⁵ εἰσερχόμενοι δὲ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν ἀσπάσασθε αὐτήν – If they are correct in assessing authentic belief in their hosts, then their message of eternal shalom, i.e., a wholesome, morally perfect, and painless life in the Kingdom of God, will reside within them for the sake of their obtaining eternal life.

²⁸⁶ καὶ ἐὰν μὲν ἦ ἡ οἰκία ἀξία, ἐλθάτω ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν ἐπ' αὐτήν. 'ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἦ ἀξία,' ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν ἴπρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐπιστραφήτω – There is the possibility that the disciples will initially misread the spiritual condition of their hosts (just as it was possible for Paul to misread it as implied in his letters; as it is possible for any of us to misread it). If they detect that their hosts lack authentic faith, probably by their becoming hostile to the information of Jesus as the Messiah and to their miracles (how bizarre would this be!), then the message of eternal shalom and life will not remain with them—by definition.

These people appeared to be interested in the things of God and the truth of His message about Jesus, but over time they demonstrated that they actually were not. People can get excited about miracles, but will they be and remain as excited about Jesus and everything it means to be a Christian?

²⁸⁷ καὶ ὅς ἂν μὴ δέξηται ὑμᾶς μηδὲ ἀκούσῃ τοὺς λόγους ὑμῶν, ἐξερχόμενοι ἔξω ἰτῆς οἰκίας ἢ τῆς πόλεως ἑκεῖνης ἐκτινάξατε τὸν κονιορτὸν ἑ τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν – This act must be symbolic of expressing one's human judgment (God always has the last say) that these people are not expressing genuine belief. Apparently, the Talmud and Midrash encourage a Jew to shake the dust off his feet as he leaves a pagan land, thus showing that he is disassociating himself from everything anti-God in that land on which the people who reject God dwell. Probably, in the ANE, the people cannot be separated religiously, psychologically, emotionally, etc. from their land. Certainly this is true of the Jews to whom God promised the land of Israel through Abraham in Genesis 12.

From EBC and Mark 6:11 – The shaking off the dust from their feet (v.11) may be understood in the light of the Jewish custom of removing carefully the dust from both clothes and feet before reentering Jewish territory (cf. SBK, 1:571). For the Jews heathen dust was defiling. The significance of the act here is to declare the place to be heathen and to make it clear that those who rejected the message must now answer for themselves. This seems to be the meaning of the phrase “as a testimony against them.” The disciples' message, like that of Jesus, brings judgment as well as salvation. This always happens when the gospel is preached.

Jesus is saying that it could only one household, that in which they stayed, or an entire city that becomes hostile to their message and miracles. Whatever the case, they can be assured from their limited human perspective that these people will not acquire eternal shalom.

Luke 10:10 “But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, **11** ‘Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’

Acts 13:50 But the Jews [of Psidian Antioch] incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. **51** But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

²⁸⁸ ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται γῆ Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρων ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως ἢ τῆ πόλει ἐκεῖνη – Because Jesus mentions Sodom and Gomorrah, Gentile cities, this judgment is most likely that of the Great White Throne in Revelation 20. Thus, Sodom and Gomorrah are the prime examples in human history of moral rebellion against God by people who deserve His eternal condemnation and will experience destruction. This will be the case in spite of God's having destroyed the cities and their people. In other words, their inhabitants went through physical destruction in Genesis 19 and will be resurrected and go through eternal destruction at the end of this age.

See the notes for Matthew 3:7 regarding the four judgments at the end of this age.

Thus, here Jesus is saying that there is the possibility that the disciples are correct and that if the people, even their hosts, keep going in the direction they are without authentic belief and being hostile to their message from him of the Kingdom of God, they will incur His judgment and destruction. Jesus is well aware of the spiritual landscape of current Israel, i.e., the Jews of his day. Most are in rebellion against God. And to rebel against God during the first appearance of the Messiah with the affirming signs of the miracles that his disciples and he are performing is a more grievous crime against God than all the immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah. Because God's punishment of sinners is measured and proportionate to their sins, Jesus is saying that the evidence for the truth of the gospel provided by both his and the apostles' proclamation of the message in combination with the miracles will make these cities' rejection result in greater punishment than even the sins of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

This shows just how significant it is for any sinful, human being to hear the gospel. Their response will result in either eternal salvation and life, a huge gift, or punishment and eternal destruction. And the punishment will be the worse for these people who have also witnessed the apostles' miracles. Therefore, Jesus wants his disciples to be cognizant of this and discern as carefully as possible when they are dealing with authentic believers and when they are not. If they detect that their fellow Jews are without changed hearts because of their negative reaction to the information about him, then they should guard themselves from being influenced by them away from the truth.

²⁸⁹ Ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς πρόβατα ἐν μέσῳ λύκων· γίνεσθε οὖν φρόνιμοι ὡς οἱ ὄφεις καὶ ἰἀκέραιοι ὡς αἱ περιστέραί – It would be nice for the disciples if all they met with in a negative fashion was simply a lack of reception to their message of the kingdom. But Jesus says that they should expect an even more intense negative response. He is very aware of the spiritual climate among his own people, the Jews. And he wants his disciples to understand all that they are up against—hostile rebellion towards God by their fellow Jews (just as he will experience). Therefore, he exhorts them to act with wisdom while recognizing that carrying out their responsibility of proclaiming his message may eventually cost them their lives, like sheep being killed by wolves (cf. John 16:1-4). Their wisdom is this. If people are obviously not interested in the truth, then they should move on and find those who are—if the people allow them simply to walk away. They can shake the dust off their feet and leave. Their innocence is in their good and moral behavior that cannot be legitimately used against them by their opponents.

Therefore, they should not have unrealistic expectations about the effects of their efforts to spread the good news of God's mercy and eternal life through Jesus as the Messiah, even though they are performing such wonderfully beneficial miracles. And they should not expect that they will always be met with joyful enthusiasm and approval everywhere. Instead, they can expect

resistance, opposition, and even hostility as Jesus goes on to describe. The world is divided between vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy, the former being greater in number.

²⁹⁰ Προσέχετε ὅδε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων παραδώσουσιν γὰρ ὑμᾶς εἰς συνέδρια καὶ ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν μαστιγώσουσιν ὑμᾶς – Now Jesus is referring to the disciples' future after his death and resurrection and his departure from this world until he returns. They are going to encounter the same hostility that he has and will from their fellow Jews. They will be brought before the local leadership of the Jews in various cities and villages because of their belief in him as the Messiah. Their mistreatment will even include physical punishment. Cf. John 13-17 and Acts 3-7 where Peter and John first are arrested, then all the apostles, and finally Stephen is brought before the Sanhedrin, speaks incredibly eloquently, and is stoned to death with Paul standing there watching.

And whatever Jesus says about his disciples' and what they will encounter in their religious environment among their fellow Jews who consider themselves students of the scriptures and bona fide followers of God most likely applies to authentic Christians and what they will encounter in the religious environment of churches and other religions, even something such as scientific atheism, throughout history. Just because people claim to be Christians, study the Bible, and sing songs to Jesus does not make them authentic in their faith. It is their commitment to truth, humility, repentance, and morality through pain and suffering that does. And just because people are convinced in their own minds that there is no God (in opposition to what they know is true according to Paul in Romans 1), does not make them right.

Cf. [Matthew 23:34](#) “Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, [35](#) so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

²⁹¹ καὶ ἐπὶ ἡγεμόνας δὲ καὶ βασιλεῖς ἀχθήσεσθε ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν – Not only will Jesus' disciples find opposition and hostility to the gospel among their fellow Jews, but they will be treated like Jesus in that they will be brought before the Romans as criminals for execution. But this is all so that they have the opportunity to “preach” the gospel of mercy and compassion as Jesus will definitely do so during his trial before the Sanhedrin, Pilate, and King Herod. It is as though he is saying that the only way the government leaders can actually hear the gospel is if his Jewish disciples are falsely accused of being criminals and by their fellow Jews who then bring before them.

And whatever Jesus says about his disciples in their own cultural and political environment certainly applies to Christians down through the centuries. In Acts 23-26, Paul appears before the governor Felix, then Festus, then King Agrippa, and then in Acts 28 he appears before his fellow Jews before his audience with Emperor Nero, which latter event we unfortunately have no written record of what was said. Another example is Martin Luther who was made to appear before the religious authorities of the Roman Catholic Church and government leaders of the Holy Roman Empire.

²⁹² ὅταν δὲ παραδώσιν ὑμᾶς, μὴ μεριμνήσητε πῶς ἢ τί λαλήσητε ὁδοθήσεται γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τί λαλήσητε – Why would the disciples be concerned about what they are going to say when put on trial as criminals? Wouldn't they be more concerned about their lives? But Jesus is implying that God will grant them such a Kingdom oriented perspective in the midst of possibly being put to death that they will be more concerned about communicating truth than they will about preserving their lives. What a remarkable condition to be in. This can and will come from only the Spirit of God's work within them. Therefore, Jesus is saying that the message is more important than their lives. Their lives will result in eternal life for them. This is a settled issue for them. The message will result in eternal life for others, and God will use the message in this way even if these disciples lose their lives in the process of proclaiming the message.

In addition, they will not have to be concerned about whether they have said too little or too much. They will say enough and it will be clear enough that God will use it as He wishes. They (and we) are not responsible for the effect on people of what we tell them about the gospel of Jesus. God alone is. God can take our feeble attempts to communicate the truth and use them to rescue people from eternal destruction. We are less than perfect providers of God's message, while He is the perfect and transcendent creator of its effect on sinners. We can trust Him implicitly for what He will do with us as His human instruments, whether bringing salvation to repentant sinners or merely offending them.

²⁹³ οὐ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ἐστε οἱ λαλοῦντες ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τὸ λαλοῦν ἐν ὑμῖν – God has scripted what these disciples will say and will make sure that His message is proclaimed even in their darkest hours. This is what God has been doing with Jesus and will do it also with his apostles. They are not the ultimate source of either what they say or its effect on people. God is. He is always bringing about the history of the gospel message through first Jesus, then the apostles, and then those who learn the message from the apostles and their writings. This will happen all the way to the time when Jesus returns. And really even then afterwards during the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

²⁹⁴ Παραδώσει δὲ ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφὸν εἰς θάνατον καὶ πατὴρ τέκνον, καὶ ἐπαναστήσονται τέκνα ἐπὶ γονεῖς καὶ θανατώσουσιν αὐτούς – The situation in Israel among the Jews will be even worse than Jews mistreating their fellow Jews. There will be such a rebellious spiritual climate in Israel and among the Jews that individual members of the same family will find themselves at odds on what to do about God. Parents will save their own lives by handing their children over to be executed for their Christian faith, and vice versa. This is hard to fathom, but Jesus is describing the harsh reality of our fundamental rebellion against God and him. This speaks to the incredible evil within all of us?

Cf. below in Matthew 10:34-36 from Micah [7:5](#) Do not trust in your friend. Do not trust in your close friend. From the one who lies in your bosom, guard the opening of your mouth. [7:6](#) For a son treats his father as a fool, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies are the men of his own household.

²⁹⁵ καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται – Again, the disciples (and by extrapolation any Jew who lives through the rest of the history of Israel until the millennial kingdom) should expect to be

treated in a hostile manner by “all,” i.e., the majority of, his fellow Jews. This implies that the Jews’ embracing God as they should from changed hearts will not occur until the end, i.e., the end to which any believer should aspire with the constant choice to persevere in his faith for the sake of obtaining eternal mercy and life. For this is God’s requirement for any sinner of genuine belief, that he never give up being committed to God and His promise of life and mercy through Jesus. Thus, these words can be applied to Christians in any culture, even a “Christian” culture if and when that culture turns more religious (like that of the medieval church up to the Reformation) than genuine (like the Jesus Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s where authentic believers exhibited true faith through moral and loving pursuits instead of focusing on religious rituals).

And it is the person who perseveres in belief until they no longer participate in this time leading up to the return of Jesus who will find salvation from God’s judgment and destruction so as to obtain eternal life.

²⁹⁶ Ὅταν δὲ διώκωσιν ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, φεύγετε εἰς τὴν ἑτέραν· ἡ ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ τελέσητε τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου – The level of unbelief among the Jews will remain high until Jesus returns.

The Jews for the most part will continue to reject him as the Messiah until the very end of this time period when God brings a final judgment on them through the Man of Lawlessness and the invading armies of the surrounding Gentile nations (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 19,20; Ezekiel 38,39; Joel 2:1-11; 3:9-16, 19-21; Amos 5:18-27; Zephaniah 2,3; Zechariah 12,14).

The Jews’ rebellion against God until He fulfills His promise to make of them a great nation will result in believing Jews’ basically having to flee from their unbelieving kinsmen, because certainly in the end the latter will follow the beast of Revelation and join forces with him in eliminating believers from the land of Israel (and even other parts of the world). And this will be until Jesus returns, i.e., until he “comes” (ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ), but this is his coming again. So Jesus is stating a very simple principle for his listening Jews—that authentic believers among them will experience persecution from the rest of the unbelieving Jewish community until Jesus comes.

Or Jesus is just referring first to the time between his ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, that the disciples will continue to have to flee for their lives throughout Israel. Then after they are expelled from the land for a long time, there will still be opposition to Christian Jews from unbelieving Jews. Of course, this will be the case, too, in the latter days with the appearance of the beast and his government to be followed by Jesus’ return. So it is more likely that Jesus is talking about the whole rest of history for the Jews and the land of Israel, even though they mostly left the land between A.D. 135 and the late 1800s. Now they are back so that authentic believers can flee from unbelievers while God also protects the 144,000 of Revelation until Jesus returns.

²⁹⁷ Οὐκ ἔστιν μαθητῆς ὑπὲρ τὸν διδάσκαλον· οὐδὲ δούλος ὑπὲρ τὸν κύριον αὐτοῦ – Jesus warns his disciples that they should not expect to be treated any differently from how he is and will be by their fellow Jews. He is their teacher, and they are his students who are adhering to his teachings and instructions. He is the master, and they are his slaves who are obeying him—in the same manner as he is obeying the Father.

²⁹⁸ ἄρκετὸν τῷ μαθητῇ ἵνα γένηται ὡς ὁ διδάσκαλος αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁ δούλος ὡς ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ. εἰ ἴτον οἰκοδεσπότην Ἰβελζεβούλ ἔπεκάλεσαν, πόσῳ μᾶλλον τοὺς οἰκιακοὺς αὐτοῦ – Indeed, how much more will the disciples be treated as followers of Satan and pursuers of evil by those who are actually the ones doing so, because his disciples are willing to reveal that they are committed to being associated with him. If the Jewish leadership consider Jesus to be a follower of Satan and label him as the ruler of the demons, so that he derives his authority and power from Satan, then how much more the group who follow Jesus.

Cf. 2 Kings 1:2 And Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber which was in Samaria, and became ill. So he sent messengers and said to them, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub (בַּלְזְבוּב = Lord of the flies (filth?)) (Βααλ μυϊαν), the god of Ekron, whether I will recover from this sickness.” Is Βελζεβούλ merely Jesus’ epithet for Satan, or was it a common name for him among the Jews?

²⁹⁹ Μὴ οὖν φοβηθῆτε αὐτούς· οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον ὃ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται καὶ κρυπτόν ὃ οὐ γνωσθήσεται – Option #1) Unbelieving Jews will try to hide their rebellion against God—probably by their supposed obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. But eventually God will unmask their hypocrisy, and He will not let them get away with it. Therefore, the disciples should not be afraid that their suffering will go for nothing.

Option #2) Jesus is encouraging the disciples that the unbelieving Jews cannot keep the light of the gospel from shining in their culture? So they should take heart and continue to proclaim the gospel in line with what God is going to make happen anyway. In the context of the next verse, this seems to be the better option.

³⁰⁰ ὁ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ εἶπατε ἐν τῷ φωτί, καὶ ὃ εἰς τὸ οὐδὲν ἀκούετε ἵκηρύξατε ἐπὶ τῶν δωματίων – In accordance with the second interpretation above, Jesus encourages his disciples to keep proclaiming the message which he has been and continues to teach them throughout his first appearance in private settings. This is in line with God’s sovereign activity so that they can take heart that they are truly cooperating with God.

The housetops of ANE homes were their living rooms. So Jesus is simply saying, “Don’t stop proclaiming the gospel in as many public settings as possible.”

³⁰¹ Καὶ μὴ φοβείσθε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτενόντων τὸ σῶμα, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ δυναμένων ἀποκτείνειν· φοβείσθε δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν δυνάμενον καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι ἐν γεέννῃ – Gehenna was the garbage dump in Jerusalem where refuse was burned in order to destroy it. Therefore, to translate the word as Hell and imply according to the modern understanding that Jesus is talking about eternal torment is incorrect. Instead, he is referring to eternal destruction by virtue of God’s removing an individual from His story. They “burn up” by no longer being a character in the rest of history when the Kingdom of God is in existence on the new earth of Revelation 21.

If we understand ψυχή to refer to a person’s actual existence that is the combination of his spirit (who he is in the mind of God) and his body, then Jesus is saying that another human being’s killing my body does not erase the possibility of my being a

person, a ψυχή, because God can always take my spirit and resurrect me if He wants (and He will in the first resurrection of Revelation 20 to make me and other authentic believers eternal and immortal beings).

Thus, the disciples need to put their physical existences on this earth in perspective. Being a character in this part of God's story is not the goal. It is existing in the eternal Kingdom of God. And therefore the disciples' proclaiming the message of Jesus as the Messiah in conjunction with what God has given them authority to do and therefore commands them to do is to surrender to God's sovereign authority rather than to fear whatever level of opposition human beings want to demonstrate against God—even if this opposition is expressed to its greatest limit by killing those who speak the truth about Him and Jesus the Messiah.

³⁰² οὐχὶ δύο στρουθία ἀσσαρίου πωλεῖται; καὶ ἐν ἐξ αὐτῶν οὐ πεσεῖται ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἄνευ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν – In this verse and the next, Jesus is teaching his disciples that God is in control of the minutest details of created reality, of sparrows who seem worthless and their deaths as well as the number of individual hairs on the disciples' heads. A disciple might say, "Who cares about my hair. What about my life?" And Jesus is saying that God cares about both, but the disciples need to realize that God cares most about their eternal existence in the Kingdom of God, and so should they. Therefore, even if other human beings kill them and put an end to their existence in the present time and realm, God still cares for them so much more than sparrows. According to the EBC, sparrows were common food for the very poor in Israel, and the price of two was a small copper coin. Thus, their monetary value was practically nothing compared to, for example, gold. Yet, in spite of being close to worthless in their cost, not one of them dies and falls out of the sky without God's causing it to. God not only sovereignly rules over the vast universe so that it is has the exact composition He wants at any moment. He also sovereignly rules over the minutest details within the universe just as much as He does over the universe as a whole. This is practically unfathomable when we try to think of all the possible details that make up this universe, because we can reduce the extent of them to even the smallest sub-atomic particle—a quark. God is in control of every quark at every moment.

³⁰³ ὅμων δὲ καὶ αἱ τρίχες τῆς κεφαλῆς ἑκάστη ἀριθμημένα εἰσὶν – Just as God knows the details of every sparrow alive or dying, He knows every detail of every human being. Indeed, He is in control of all these details at every moment.

³⁰⁴ μὴ οὖν φοβεῖσθε πολλῶν στρουθίων διαφέρετε ὑμεῖς – If sparrows and their deaths are "valuable" to God because they are a detail of His creation which He has brought into existence and over which He has complete control, how much more valuable and important are the disciples as human beings who are wonderously made (cf. Psalm 169), designed for eternal life, and for whom the Messiah suffered death by crucifixion—if God so chooses for them to obtain eternal life (since this group includes Judas Iscariot who is a committed rebel against God). And how much more God is cares about their deaths, even at the hands of other human beings.

³⁰⁵ Πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ὁμολογήσει ἐν ἐμοὶ ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὁμολογήσω ἐκὰθ' ἐν αὐτῷ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς – A disciple of Jesus is worth more than a sparrow, but the demonstration of that worth may not become entirely obvious until his return when he intercedes for the disciples and he is raised from the dead or lifted off the earth and given Jesus' glory as an immortal and morally perfect being. In other words, the value of a human being is found in Jesus' providing him with God's eternal mercy through his role as high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. Hebrews). People may mistreat a disciple of Jesus which makes one wonder if God really values him. It will be at the end of this time when Jesus returns that this value is clearly demonstrated. Are we willing to wait for God to exalt us then while leaving us in relative obscurity now (cf. 1 Peter 5:6 – Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time)? Because of God's valuing the disciples so much, Jesus is teaching them that they should value their commitment to him above anything else in this world. This is the crux of what it means to be a human being—a person's response to God and to Jesus as the central feature of the creation. Does a person embrace God and His truth about Jesus, or does he reject it? Does a person understand the vital importance of humility, repentance, and pursuit of morality and goodness in the light of the truth? This determines on a human level whether or not Jesus fulfills the role of advocate for God's mercy on behalf of a person at the final judgment when he returns.

³⁰⁶ ὅστις δ' ἀν' ἀρνήσῃται με ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀρνήσομαι ἐκὰθ' αὐτὸν ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς – If a person rejects Jesus as the Messiah, then Jesus will not intercede for him before the Father. Instead, Jesus will remain silent on his behalf at the Great White Throne Judgment, resulting in God's punishing and destroying him for all eternity. This person will demonstrate that he did not care about God's valuing him above sparrows by providing him with Jesus' intercession at the judgment.

³⁰⁷ Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν· οὐκ ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἀλλὰ μάχαιραν – Jesus warns his Jewish disciples that his first appearance is not intended to fulfill the prophetic predictions of the Messiah's bringing shalom to Israel—even though his is probably the way most of the Jews are thinking. He is implying that this will come later, i.e., when he "comes" (cf. 10:23). Instead, Jesus' role during his first appearance will divide the Jews, causing great conflict ("a sword") between Jewish believers and unbelievers, thus pushing most of the Jews away from God such that it will eventually result in His judgment on them before Jesus' return as described in the OT prophets and Revelation.

³⁰⁸ ἦλθον γὰρ διχάσαι ἄνθρωπον κατὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ θυγατέρα κατὰ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτῆς καὶ νύμφην κατὰ τῆς πενθερᾶς αὐτῆς – see notes for 10:21. The spiritual climate in Israel amongst the Jews will be one of hostility towards not only God but also towards other Jews of authentic belief even in one's own family until Jesus restores the Davidic kingdom at the end of the present time, i.e., when he returns.

Cf. Micah 7:5 Do not trust in your friend. Do not trust in your close friend. From the one who lies in your bosom, guard the opening of your mouth. 7:6 For a son treats his father as a fool, a daughter rises up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies are the men of his own household.

³⁰⁹ καὶ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οἱ οἰκιακοὶ αὐτοῦ – see above.

³¹⁰ Ὁ φιλῶν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος, ἢ καὶ ὁ φιλῶν υἱὸν ἢ θυγατέρα ὑπὲρ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος – In the light of what Jesus just said by quoting Micah, the choice of allegiance will be a difficult one. Will the disciples (and all other followers of Jesus) love Jesus or their families, if their families are opposed to Jesus? This is the flip side of the coin regarding hostile Jews mistreating Christian Jews as of vital importance for Jesus' Jewish disciples relativizing their familial relationships in comparison to their relationship with him. The family is supposed to be the safest and most loving place for any human being. However, it can turn into the most dangerous place when we are talking about Christian faith. People can be estranged for whatever reason from their family members, including because of their faith, but they dare not be estranged from Jesus. It will cost them their eternal destiny in the Kingdom of God. Indeed, it is better to be estranged from family members if it means that a person remains committed to Jesus.

The child who does not love Jesus more than his parents cannot obtain eternal life. The parent who does not love Jesus more than his children cannot obtain eternal life. This is sobering language that can also be disturbing unless we grasp the profundity of God's mercy and gift of eternal life.

³¹¹ καὶ ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος – The same is true of what kind of life I live. If my choice is between an easy life, being affirmed and accepted by people who oppose God, and a hard life of being persecuted for my faith, then Jesus is saying I must choose the latter.

He knows that crucifixion is the means by which he is going to die (cf. Isaiah 53:5). Or this was a common idiom, i.e., to take up one's cross was to be willing to suffer rejection from others as though he was a criminal in their eyes, when in actuality he was not at all. In either case, Jesus is teaching his disciples that they must be willing to suffer rejection—as he will, i.e., to go through whatever God brings about in a person's life that is painful and hard from those who oppose God, which is very much different from what the Jews must have been thinking as a result of their study of the Old Testament where they could easily see that God promised the restored Kingdom of Israel when the Messiah came. This is all for the sake of obeying Him and obtaining God's promised outcome of fulfilling the condition of genuine belief, which is eternal life.

³¹² ὁ εὐρῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολέσει αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ ἀπολέσας τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ εὐρήσει αὐτήν – I can find my niche in this world and blend in with all the opposition and hostility to God, but this will result in my losing my existence through God's judgment and destruction. Or I can forget about fitting in with society and all the other people who ignore and reject the truth of the gospel per se, which will result in my obtaining an eternal existence from God's mercy through Jesus' propitiatory offering and intercession.

Thus, another enigmatic pairing of statements. The disciple who “finds himself” by thinking that he must protect himself from all hurt, pain, and suffering—even denying Jesus as his Lord and Savior, will not be able to protect himself from God's judgment, condemnation, and destruction. On the other hand, the disciple who gives up self-protection when it involves God's plan for him to suffer at the hands of those who reject God will find himself protected in his faith by God for the sake of obtaining eternal life. Cf. **1 Peter 1:5** who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

³¹³ Ὁ δεχόμενος ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ δέχεται, καὶ ὁ ἐμὲ δεχόμενος δέχεται τὸν ἀποστείλαντά με – By being on exactly the same page as Jesus, his Jewish disciples, who are in the process of becoming his apostles, can know that there is a definite correlation between what people think of God and what they think of him and what they think of his apostles such that to be willing to listen and embrace one of these parties' message is to embrace the others' as well.

The same is true of us on a lesser scale, because we are not Jesus' authoritative spokesmen. Nevertheless, we are so closely associated with Jesus that people who embrace all that we are and represent as Christians will logically and naturally embrace Jesus and the Father who is the creator and author of this whole story. Jesus goes on to say this about believers other than his apostles in the next verse.

cf. **John 13:20** - **Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.**

³¹⁴ ὁ δεχόμενος προφήτην εἰς ὄνομα προφήτου μισθὸν προφήτου λήμψεται, ἢ καὶ ὁ δεχόμενος δίκαιον εἰς ὄνομα δικαίου μισθὸν δικαίου λήμψεται. – To welcome a prophet or righteous man is to be open to and embrace the truth of God as presented by one of this people—since God has communicated through human beings, by means of the OT prophets and obscure people not mentioned in the OT who also simply spoke the truth from the position of their changed hearts—they believed, repented, and pursued obedience to God's moral commandments. In other words, God surely used not only known people of the OT to proclaim His truth, but also unknown people of changed hearts to teach, encourage, and warn in OT Israel. But we only know the ones referred to in the OT.

The “wage” (μισθὸν, but obviously is not earned but simply given through God's grace) of a prophet or righteous man is eternal life. The prophet and righteous man are simply doing what God has called them to do with genuine belief according to His eternal plan and grace. But their fulfilling their role by obeying God results in entering into the eternal Kingdom of God. In the same way, the person who embraces with authentic belief the prophet's or righteous man's message of truth will receive eternal life as his wage, too.

Another possibility is that Jesus is referring to NT prophets and righteous people as different from authoritative apostles but still characterized by proclaiming the gospel. However, in Matthew 13:17, he clearly speaks of OT prophets and righteous men who desired to see the same things his disciples are seeing. It seems here in the context of Matthew 10 and the manner in which he is speaking, that Jesus is using these two terms in a rather generic way, i.e., any prophet and any righteous man of any time in biblical and now Christian history (?).

Matthew 13:17 “For truly 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.”

³¹⁵ καὶ ὅς ἂν ποτίσῃ ἓνα τῶν ‘μικρῶν τούτων’ ποτήριον Ἑβραίου ὁμόνον εἰς ὄνομα μαθητοῦ, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσῃ τὸν μισθὸν αὐτοῦ – Are there children standing around? Or are the little ones the way Jesus refers to the Jews—as God’s chosen people and His “children?” Or are these the humble and obscure people who have embraced the message and truth of the gospel from a prophet or righteous man? Probably this last possibility is correct so that this is Jesus’ way of saying that it is vital for Christians to assist other Christians in even the basics of life as a means to demonstrate that they have authentically received the message of an apostle, prophet, or righteous man. Thus, it is this authentic Christian who has believed the gospel and is caring for other Christians who lack important things in life who acquires the wage of eternal life. In other words, kindness and compassion towards other Christians for the sake of imitating God’s own character is good evidence of a changed heart and authentic belief that results in the “wage” of eternal mercy and life from God. Thus, the person is acting “in the name of a disciple,” i.e., as a disciple and follower of Jesus ought to act. He is fulfilling the role of a genuine Christian. All this Jesus wants his disciples to know before they head out to complete this project of proclaiming the Kingdom of God with God’s credentialing them through their message and miracles as He has done so for Jesus.

³¹⁶ Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς διατάσσων τοῖς δώδεκα μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, μετέβη ἐκεῖθεν τοῦ διδάσκειν καὶ κηρύσσειν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν αὐτῶν –

³¹⁷ Ὁ δὲ Ἰωάννης ἀκούσας ἐν τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Ἐβραίου πέμψας ἑβραίων μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ – According to Josephus (Antiq. XVIII, 119 [v.2]), Herod imprisoned John the Baptist in the fortress of Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea. This must have happened fairly soon after Jesus was baptized by John. But we know from John 2&3 that Jesus went to the Passover in Jerusalem before Herod Antipas arrested John.

Cf. [Matthew 4:12](#) Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; [13](#) and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.

³¹⁸ εἶπεν αὐτῷ σὺ εἶ ὁ ἔρχόμενος ἢ ἕτερον προσδοκῶμεν – John the Baptist is revealing his humanity here. He knew that he had been chosen by God to announce the presence of the Messiah, but being thrown in prison took a toll on him. He had already taught that Jesus was bringing both blessing and judgment and assumed that his appearance certainly meant blessing for him in spite of his having figured out that Jesus was the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (cf. [Matthew 3:11-12](#) “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” and [John 1:29](#) The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”). And he must have imagined that the importance of his role meant that God would protect him from harm and cause him to finish his role up to the time of Jesus’ death. He also might have thought that Jesus would restore the Kingdom of Israel soon after his resurrection from the dead, similar to the apostles’ thinking when they ask Jesus in [Acts 1:6](#) So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” But now John has been languishing in prison for perhaps a whole year and unable to fulfill his role, all because he was trying to do the right thing and point out the sin of Herod Antipas. But it was too publicly embarrassing for Herod and his new wife, Herodias, whom he stole away from his brother Philip. Does this mean that he got it wrong and Jesus is not the Messiah? In his confusion and doubt, he is uncertain enough that he sends his own disciples to find out from Jesus exactly who he is.

“The coming one” – cf. [Psalm 118:26](#) Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD; We have blessed you from the house of the LORD. Cf. [Isaiah 59:20](#) “A Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,” declares the LORD.

This is not unlike us who wrestle with our faith and the goodness and love of God in difficult circumstances. We can imagine that God faithfully caused John to persevere in his faith, especially because he was such a great prophet. But he definitely went through a time of doubt and reflection while in prison. And then it must have been doubly difficult when he was told that he was going to be executed by beheading as described in [Matthew 14:1-12](#), [Mark 6:14-29](#), and [Luke 7:7-9](#). The same kind of struggle must have happened to the apostle Paul also with all the persecution and hardship that he went through.

³¹⁹ Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς πορευθέντες ἀπαγγεῖλατε Ἰωάννῃ ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ βλέπετε –

³²⁰ τυφλοὶ ἀναβλέπουσιν ‘καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦσιν’, λεπροὶ καθαρίζονται καὶ κωφοὶ ἀκούουσιν, καὶ ἄνεκροὶ ἐγείρονται καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται – Cf. [Isaiah 35:5-6](#) Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah. Cf. [Isaiah 61:1](#) The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; Also cf. [Isaiah 26:19](#) Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Also [Isaiah 29:18-19](#) On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the LORD, and the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

³²¹ καὶ μακάριός ἐστιν ὅς ἐάν μὴ σκανδαλισθῇ ἐν ἐμοί – Thus Jesus wants them to report to John the Baptist that the blessings of the coming Kingdom of God have begun, but the judgments are still in the future when he returns.

Cf. [Isaiah 8:13-14](#) “It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread. Then He shall become a sanctuary; but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

³²² Τούτων δὲ πορευομένων ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγειν τοῖς ὄχλοις περὶ Ἰωάννου· τί ἐξήλθατε εἰς τὴν ἔρημον θεάσασθαι; κάλαμον ὑπὸ ἀνέμου σαλευόμενον – A reed is a tall, slender kind of grass that grows in water or on marshy ground. It bends

³³¹ Τίνοι δὲ ὁμοιώσω τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην; ὁμοία ἐστὶν παιδίοις καθημένοις ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς ἃ προσφωνοῦντα τοῖς ἑτέροις – “This generation” or “this race?” Either works, but if Jesus has in mind the long future of the Jews including the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, then “this race” is more likely.

³³² λέγουσιν ἠυλῆσαμεν ὑμῖν καὶ οὐκ ὠρχήσασθε ἐθρηνήσαμεν ἧ καὶ οὐκ ἐκόψασθε – The Jews are like children who demand that other children play their game with them, either making merry when they play the flute and dance, or being sad when they want this to be their mood. In other words, they go to both extremes and expect others to follow them in sync.

³³³ ἦλθεν γὰρ ἧ Ἰωάννης μῆτε ἐσθίων μῆτε πίνων, καὶ λέγουσιν δαιμόνιον ἔχει – John was one extreme as a prophet of God, who refused to play the Jews’ game of religious obedience to God the way they thought the OT called for them to do. And they criticized John and rejected his call to repentance and his announcement that the predicted king was at hand.

³³⁴ ἦλθεν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων, καὶ λέγουσιν ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος φάγος καὶ οἰνοπότης, τελωνῶν φίλος καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν. καὶ ἐδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ ἑτῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς – Jesus was another extreme as a prophet of God, and the Messiah himself, and he too refuses to play the Jews’ game. As a result, they criticize him too.

However, God’s wisdom as displayed in the story by both Jesus and John as they fulfill their roles will eventually be demonstrated as true and right.

³³⁵ Τότε ἤρξατο ἧ ὀνειδίζειν τὰς πόλεις ἐν αἷς ἐγένοντο αἱ πλεῖσται δυνάμεις αὐτοῦ, ὅτι οὐ μετενόησαν – See notes for Matthew 10 :15.

³³⁶ οὐαὶ σοὶ, Χοραζὶν ἧ, οὐαὶ σοὶ, Βηθσαΐδα· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι ἐγένοντο αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γενόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν, πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῷ ἧ μετενόησαν – Can sinners have different degrees of hardness of heart? Jesus seems to be saying so. That in spite of gross immorality that the people of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom (and Gomorrah) committed, their hearts were actually closer to repentance than those of these Jews.

³³⁷ πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως ἢ ὑμῖν –

³³⁸ καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, ἧ μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθήσῃ; ἕως ἄβου καταβήσῃ * ὅτι εἰ ἐν Σοδόμοις ἧ ἐγενήθησαν αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γενόμεναι ἐν σοὶ, ἔμεινεν ἂν μέχρι τῆς σήμερον –

³³⁹ πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι γῆ Σοδόμων ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως ἢ ὑμῖν –

³⁴⁰ Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ἑξομολογοῦμαί σοι, πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἔκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπιῶσι – God has prevented the proud and arrogant Jewish leaders from seeing the truth that Jesus is the Messiah through his words and miracles. Instead, God has caused the humble few among the regular populace of Israel to recognize his identity and to repent of their sins in accordance with it.

³⁴¹ ναὶ ὁ πατήρ, ὅτι οὕτως εὐδοκία ἐγένετο ἔμπροσθέν σου –

³⁴² Πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἧ μου, * καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιγινώσκει τὸν υἱὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ, οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις ἐπιγινώσκει εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ὁ ἧ ἂν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι –

³⁴³ Δεῦτε πρὸς με πάντες οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι ἧ, κἀγὼ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς – In the light of Jesus’ encouraging people to take his “yoke,” i.e., his burden, on their shoulders, it makes sense that this burden has been placed on their shoulders by other human beings. In this case, it would be the Jewish leaders of his day who are misunderstanding the Mosaic Covenant and making it into a load of detailed human performance in order to earn God’s favor and remain acceptable to the leaders so that they are not socially ostracized by them.

Cf. [Matthew 23:1](#) Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, [2](#) saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; [3](#) therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. [4](#) “They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.”

³⁴⁴ ἄρατε τὸν ζυγὸν μου ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς καὶ μάθετε ἧ ἐμοῦ, ὅτι πραῦς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ, καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν – Jeremiah 6:16, “Thus says Yahweh, Stand on My ways, and see and ask for the perpetual paths, where there is this—the good way, and walk in it. And you will find rest for your souls (καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀγνισμὸν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν). But they will say, We will not walk in it.”

³⁴⁵ ὁ γὰρ ζυγὸς μου χρηστὸς καὶ τὸ φορτίον μου ἐλαφρὸν ἐστίν – Jesus’ yoke is kind and his burden is light because it is based upon God’s grace and not human performance which expects to earn God’s blessing. The latter is impossible, making it so difficult and heavy that it is unbearable.

³⁴⁶ Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἐπορεύθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἧ τοῖς σάββασιν διὰ τῶν σπορίμων· οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπεινάσαν καὶ ἤρξαντο τίλλειν ἧ στάχους καὶ ἐσθίειν –

³⁴⁷ οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἰδόντες ἧ εἶπαν αὐτῷ ἰδοὺ οἱ μαθηταὶ σου ποιοῦσιν ὃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ποιεῖν ἧ ἐν σαββάτῳ –

³⁴⁸ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε ἐπεινάσεν καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτοῦ –

³⁴⁹ πῶς εἰσηλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως ἧ ἔφαγον, ἧ οὐκ ἔξον ἦν αὐτῷ φαγεῖν οὐδὲ τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν μόνοις –

³⁵⁰ ἧ οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι ἧ τοῖς σάββασιν οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τὸ σάββατον βεβηλοῦσιν καὶ ἀναίτιοι εἰσιν –

³⁵¹ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἧ μείζον ἐστίν ἧδε –

³⁵² εἰ δὲ ἐγνώκετε τί ἐστίν ἧ ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, οὐκ ἂν κατεδικάσατε τοὺς ἀναίτιους – Hosea 6:6, “Because I delight in loyalty (ἧ) and not sacrifice, and in knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings (διότι ἧ ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν θεοῦ ἧ ὀλοκαυτώματα).”

³⁵³ κύριος γὰρ ἐστὶν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου – The Son of God/Man is that to which the Sabbath ultimately points. Indeed, Jesus is the most important piece of the puzzle of reality. The Jews thought that Moses and the Mosaic Covenant were the most important piece of the puzzle and that the Messiah would affirm them in this. When Jesus did not and even “broke” the MC in their opinion, he clearly nullified any claim that he made to being the Messiah. Thus, he is even greater than the temple (v. 6)

and is the focus of both the temple and the Sabbath, not keeping the Sabbath commandment in the Mosaic Covenant to the extreme which the Pharisees have made of it. One can “break” the Sabbath commandment, indeed the entire Mosaic Covenant if he is focused on Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, King, and Priest through whom a person acquires eternal mercy and life from God. The MC points to the Messiah and not the other way around.

³⁵⁴ Καὶ μεταβάς ἐκείθεν ἤλθεν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν αὐτῶν –

³⁵⁵ καὶ ἰδοὺ ἄνθρωπος ἔχει χεῖρα ξηράν. καὶ ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· εἰ ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασις ἰθευαπεῦσαι; ἵνα κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ –

³⁵⁶ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τίς ἔσται ἐξ ὑμῶν ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἔξει πρόβατον ἐν καὶ ἔάν ἐμπέσῃ οὗτο τοῖς σάββασις εἰς βόθυνον, οὐχὶ ἰκρατήσῃ αὐτὸ καὶ ἐγερεῖ –

³⁵⁷ πῶσῳ οὖν διαφέρει ἄνθρωπος προβάτου. ὥστε ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασις καλῶς ποιεῖν –

³⁵⁸ τότε λέγει τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ· ἔκτεινόν σου τὴν χεῖρα. καὶ ἐξέτεινεν καὶ ἀπεκατεστάθη ὑγιής ὡς ἡ ἄλλη –

³⁵⁹ ἐξεληθόντες δὲ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συμβούλιον ἔλαβον κατ’ αὐτοῦ ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν –

³⁶⁰ Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς γνοὺς ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκείθεν. * καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ [ὄχλοι] πολλοί, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτοὺς πάντας –

³⁶¹ καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ φανερὸν αὐτὸν ποιήσωσιν –

³⁶² ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος –

³⁶³ ἰδοὺ ὁ παῖς μου ὃν ἠρέτισα ἀγαπητός μου· εἰς ὃν ἐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπ’ αὐτόν καὶ κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ –

³⁶⁴ οὐκ ἐρίσει οὐδὲ κραυγάζει οὐδὲ ἀκούσει τις ἐν ταῖς πλατείαις τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ –

³⁶⁵ Ἐκάλυτον συντετριμένον οὐ κατεάξει καὶ λίνον τυφόμενον οὐ σβέσει ἕως ἂν ἐκβάλῃ εἰς νίκος τὴν κρίσιν –

³⁶⁶ καὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν – Cf. Isaiah 51:5 ἐγγίζει ταχὺ ἡ δικαιοσύνη μου, καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ὡς φῶς τὸ σωτήριόν μου, καὶ εἰς τὸν βραχίονά μου ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν· ἐμὲ νῆσοι ὑπομενοῦσιν καὶ εἰς τὸν βραχίονά μου ἐλπιούσιν ()

³⁶⁷ Τότε ἠροσηρέθη αὐτῷ δαμονιζόμενος τυφλὸς καὶ κωφός, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτόν, ὥστε τὸν κωφὸν λαλεῖν καὶ βλέπειν –

³⁶⁸ καὶ ἐξίσταντο πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι καὶ ἔλεγον· μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ – The crowds are on the right track, deducing from the miracle which Jesus as performed that he is the Son of God and Messiah. Now, the need to keep going and firmly embrace this fact with genuine belief.

³⁶⁹ οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες εἶπον· οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβούλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων – Of course, the religious leaders offer an alternative explanation for how Jesus was able to heal the demoniac and cast out the demon, because they simply are unwilling to believe that he is the Messiah. Therefore, they rationalize his miracle by coming up with a rather crazy explanation that they actually think is plausible. Jesus is an evil man who is obviously in league with the leader of the demons, Beelzebul (= probably “Prince of Baal” or a take off from *baalzebub*, which means Lord of the Flies), so that the prince of the demons is defeating the demons. This really makes sense to them? Yes, on a particular level it does, again because of the hardness of their hearts.

Jesus will respond and tell them that they are not using abductive reasoning, inference to the best explanation, because it simply does not make sense that a strong leader would act against himself in order to strengthen his position.

³⁷⁰ εἰδὼς δὲ τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πᾶσα βασιλεία μερισθεῖσα καθ’ ἑαυτῆς ἐρημοῦται καὶ πᾶσα πόλις ἢ οἰκία μερισθεῖσα καθ’ ἑαυτῆς οὐ σταθήσεται – As a result of what the Pharisees propose, Jesus provides a different explanation, starting with the parable about a kingdom and a city/house. Does it really make sense that Satan is working against his intended purposes when we think of a kingdom that wants to defend itself against its enemies would seek to diminish its power, authority, and status among its own people whom it desires to have such power, authority, and status and whom it wants to be as powerful as possible to ward off its enemies? And does it make sense that a city (or household (=tribe in ANE?)) that wants to defend itself against its enemies would reduce its people’s ability to do so? No, absolutely not.

Thus, Jesus presents a correct assessment of the leaders’ public conclusion and is showing how silly it is.

JC – Healing of blind and mute man leads Pharisees to make up something false about Jesus to avoid having to admit that he is the Messiah. He heals by ruler of demons in order to command the demon and order him out of the man. But any organization that has infighting cannot last. So it does not make sense that Satan’s followers are working at cross purposes to one another and to his goals. Instead, Jesus is casting out demons by God. Therefore, Jesus is the king and the Messiah. Their “sons” are members of Pharisaical organization—if they actually are casting out demons, which most likely they are not. He is being quite sarcastic towards them. The context of Mark 3 shows that this is a parable, because Mark actually expresses that this is a parable. But it is probably a proverb, a well-known saying that Jesus is exploiting for his own purposes. Using language in an unusual way as an analog for something else.

³⁷¹ καὶ εἰ ὁ σατανᾶς τὸν σατανᾶν ἐκβάλλει, ἐφ’ ἑαυτὸν ἐμερίσθη· πῶς οὖν σταθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ – Likewise, does it make sense that Satan would reduce his hold on people as that which is the best strategy for him to conquer humanity and turn everyone against God? No. Obviously, the more he would do so, the less likelihood that he will be able to accomplish his own evil purposes among sinful human beings whom God has created. Indeed, he is only acting to destroy his kingdom that is opposed to God instead of working to sustain it and even increase its hold on mankind.

³⁷² καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν ἐν τίνι ἐκβάλλουσιν; διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοὶ κριταὶ ἔσονται ὑμῶν – Jesus tacitly is claiming to be the Messiah. And if he, the Messiah, is acting on behalf of Satan and reducing his hold on the Jewish people, then what about those among the Pharisees who are less important than the Messiah, their “sons” who are their proteges who band together to encourage each other in obeying the Mosaic Covenant? In other words, if the most important person within the creation is acting on behalf of Satan, then it stands to reason that those less important, the Pharisees and their students, are also doing the same.

But if the Pharisees' students are actually doing what Jesus is doing out of authentic belief and from biblically changed hearts, then these students will become judges (or perhaps he means rulers) of their teachers, much to the embarrassment of the proud Pharisees. The inference is that the teachers taught the students to think one way (the wrong way!) about biblical theology, and God has caused them to think differently (the right way!) and actually believe that Jesus is the Messiah, relativizing the importance of Moses and the Mosaic Covenant in their worship of God—again, much to the embarrassment and consternation of their teachers.

Or, very simply, Jesus is being sarcastic and saying that neither the Pharisees' nor their students have the authority to cast out demons. But I am inclined to interpret him as wanting to turn the Pharisees' thinking about God upside down and grant them authority, if God were to work among them in such a way. Imagine if ardent students of the Pharisees with the wrong theology were to become ardent students of Jesus with the right theology. How earthshattering would that be for the Pharisees who have come up with such a lame explanation for Jesus' performing this miracle—his doing good is because he is in league with the most evil person of the created reality.

³⁷³ εἰ δὲ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ ἐγὼ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια, ἄρα ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ – Jesus proposes a better (the best!) explanation for his casting out demons. He is the Messiah and the Spirit of God is ultimately the one who is performing his miracles. A much more plausible explanation for what is happening when the demon-possessed man is freed from the demon. God is at work through Jesus because he is the Messiah and Son of God!

“By the Spirit of God” = by the activity of the transcendent creator to do good within the creation—like His changing people's hearts so that they become authentic believers in Jesus as the Messiah for them!

The “Kingdom of God” as that which is front of them is Jesus himself who will inaugurate this kingdom when he returns and establishes its first stage as the ruler of the restored Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel in Revelation 20, which will eventually segue into the eternal earth of Revelation 21-22.

³⁷⁴ ἢ πῶς δύναται τις εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἰσχυροῦ καὶ τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ ἄρπάσαι, ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον δῆσῃ τὸν ἰσχυρόν; καὶ τότε τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ ἄρπάσει – Another parable. Jesus contends that the Spirit of God is at work in and through him and his actions, so that Jesus is part of a stronger power, God, to subdue and conquer a weaker power, Satan, who is nevertheless a strong power by virtue of how much he has captured the lives of certain human beings.

³⁷⁵ ὁ μὴ ὦν μετ' ἐμοῦ κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐστίν. καὶ ὁ μὴ συνάγων μετ' ἐμοῦ σκορπίζει – Therefore, how a sinful human being, indeed any Jew who is privy to it directly there in the presence of God, responds to this miracle is critical to his eternal destiny. It is vital to be “with” Jesus and “gather” with him as one who is supportive of what God is doing through His Spirit within the creation, thereby becoming and being a disciple and student of Jesus—not of the Pharisees who are so off the mark on their explanation of what happened to the demon-possessed man.

And there is no such thing as being neutral on this issue. One is either for or against God and Jesus.

³⁷⁶ Διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, πᾶσα ἁμαρτία καὶ βλασφημία ἀφεθήσεται ἢ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, ἢ δὲ τοῦ πνεύματος βλασφημία οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται – In this context especially, “blasphemy of the Spirit” is the denial that God is at work through Jesus and providing evidence that Jesus is the Messiah by these kinds of miracles. This denial of God is obviously unforgivable. Instead, other levels so to speak of sin, i.e., that comes short of abject rejection of God, “shall be forgiven men,” because Jesus is assuming that the person is appealing to God for all his other sins in the midst of authentically repenting of them.

Jesus is addressing someone's inwardness, coherent with 12:33-37.

³⁷⁷ καὶ ὅς ἐὰν εἶπῃ λόγον κατὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἢ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ ὅς δ' ἂν εἶπῃ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ οὔτε ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι – We can certainly not “see” Jesus clearly and deny that he is important to our eternal destiny and forgiveness by God. We can even bad mouth him of sorts, which is forgivable when a person's heart and mind is opened by God to reveal to him that Jesus really is the Messiah and the person repents of his sin and original “rejection” of Jesus. But if the person (theoretically) rejects what God has revealed so clearly to him by the Holy Spirit (for example, the miracles), then this is to reject God and commit a sin that is unforgivable.

Thus, to question or doubt Jesus' when he says he is the Messiah is forgivable, because he is just a man who is saying, “I am the Messiah,” which anyone could do. But to reject God's work of miracles and signs that are verifying that Jesus is the Messiah and are credentially his correct identity is to commit the unpardonable sin. What can be clearer than healing people, raising them from the dead, casting out demons, etc. that God is truly working through this man and affirming and credentialing him as the Messiah? Consequently, to make the willful choice to deny the clear and obvious evidence of God's supernatural work is to rebel against God in the greatest way.

In addition, to reject what God has written in the OT, even a part of it and especially that the Messiah must suffer death in order to qualify to be Israel's High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, is to reject God altogether and is obviously unforgivable.

The point of all this is to look at how God has credentialed Jesus as the Messiah and embrace the evidence for the sake of one's eternal salvation.

³⁷⁸ Ἡ ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον καλὸν καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ καλόν. ἢ ποιήσατε τὸ δένδρον σαπρὸν καὶ τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ σαπρὸν ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ καρποῦ τὸ δένδρον γινώσκειται – Jesus is telling the Pharisees to make up their minds. Is he good or evil? They cannot say that he is evil and also admit that he is doing good. This does not make any sense.

³⁷⁹ γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν. πῶς δύνασθε ἀγαθὰ λαλεῖν πονηροὶ ὄντες; ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ περισσεύματος τῆς καρδίας τὸ στόμα λαλεῖ – Jesus is explicitly saying that the Pharisees are just plain evil and cannot offer anyone good teaching about God and him.

³⁸⁰ ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ ἔκβάλλει ἢ ἀγαθὰ, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ θησαυροῦ ἔκβάλλει ἢ πονηρά –

³⁸¹ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶν ῥῆμα ἀργὸν ὃ ἑλάλησουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀποδώσουσιν περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγον ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως – The Pharisees will be judged for what they say.

³⁸² ἐκ γὰρ τῶν λόγων σου δικαιοθήσῃ, καὶ ἐκ τῶν λόγων σου καταδικασθήσῃ – So the Pharisees need to be careful about what they are saying about the nature of reality. Are they correct—coming from changed hearts and genuine humility? Or are they wrong—coming from hearts that are hard with respect to God?

³⁸³ Τότε ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ τινες τῶν γραμματέων ἠκαὶ Φαρισαίων λέγοντες διδάσκαλε, θέλομεν ἀπὸ σοῦ σημεῖον ἰδεῖν – These Jewish leaders just saw a miraculous sign. And now they want another one. Why? Because they are unwilling to examine the original one and come to the correct conclusion about it—that Jesus is the Messiah. Again, this is demonstrating just how hard their hearts are.

³⁸⁴ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς: γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ, καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ τοῦ προφήτου – Jesus is not going to give them another sign except his death and resurrection, because the more signs he gives them in their particular spiritual condition, the more they will have to steel themselves against the evidence and the truth of his being the Messiah. So he is protecting them, while also implying that God has sent him to reveal the truth of his identity and God’s purposes for the nation of Israel and him. It is just that they are unwilling to look at the truth and believe it.

³⁸⁵ ὡσπερ γὰρ ἦν Ἰωνᾶς ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ τοῦ κήτους τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας, οὕτως ἔσται ἡ οὐσία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ τῆς γῆς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ τρεῖς νύκτας –

³⁸⁶ Ἄνδρες Νινευῖται ἀναστήσονται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτήν, ὅτι μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλείον Ἰωνᾶ ὧδε – The Jewish leaders now are worse than the Gentiles in the past—the Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba, who heard the message of God and embraced it when they did. Therefore, they will be able to say rightly at the judgment that these Jewish men are rebels against God, especially since someone and something greater than either Jonah or Solomon is standing right in front of them!

³⁸⁷ βασιλίσσα νότου ἐγερθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτήν, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλείον Σολομῶνος ὧδε –

³⁸⁸ Ὅταν δὲ τὸ ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα ἐξέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, διέρχεται δι’ ἀνύδρων τόπων ζητοῦν ἀνάπαυσιν· καὶ οὐχ εὐρίσκει – This “story” makes no sense as describing a real life situation that is supposed to be analogous to a biblical principle or reality. It would be an analogy if it did. Instead, this is an allegory where the parts of the story are symbolic of other realities that need to be decoded.

For example, Ezekiel 17 where a great eagle takes away the top of a cedar tree, and he takes seed and plants it near water. The eagle is symbolic of Babylon, who will take the leaders of Judah and leave behind a weak person as a puppet ruler who will dependent on Babylon. The other eagle is Egypt to whom Judah would appeal for help, but their help will fail them and Babylon will prevail.

With this allegory in Matthew 12:43-45, Jesus is probably alluding to Leviticus 14:33-57 where the priest is required to inspect a house in which mold has been found. Before he enters, the priest orders that everyone empty the house so that nothing else becomes unclean. If he finds mold, then he quarantines the house for seven days and then returns to inspect it. If there is more, then the stones in which it resides must be removed and the house scraped on the inside. If the mold breaks out again, then they have to tear down the house. If there is no mold, then they can reoccupy the house, and it is clean.

Thus, the “unclean spirit” is the spirit of unbelief in the Pharisees.

It “goes out of a man,” meaning that the Pharisees’ unbelief is confronted with compelling evidence to believe that Jesus is the Messiah so as to relax a little bit (cf. v. 23).

The “waterless places” are where the Pharisees can escape God’s condemnation by embracing the truth of the evidence, but instead they rationalize Jesus’ actions as coming from Beelzebul.

As a result, they do not find “rest” in their crazy conclusion and rationalization that Satan is casting out Satan.

³⁸⁹ τότε λέγει εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου ἐπιστρέψω ὅθεν ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἔλθω εὐρίσκει ἡ σχολάζοντα ἡ σεσαρωμένον καὶ κεκοσμημένον – Consequently, the unbelief of the Pharisees “return” to their “house,” i.e., to themselves, while having been on the threshold of belief, cleanness, and acceptance by God (“unoccupied, swept, and put in order”).

³⁹⁰ τότε πορεύεται καὶ παραλαμβάνει μεθ’ ἑαυτοῦ ἑπτὰ ἕτερα πνεύματα πονηρότερα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ εἰσελθόντα κατοικεῖ ἐκεῖ καὶ γίνεται τὰ ἔσχατα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκείνου χεῖρονα τῶν πρώτων. οὕτως ἔσται καὶ τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ πονηρᾷ – What now happens when the spirit of unbelief returns to the person, it is even stronger than before and continues to harden itself against the truth of God that Jesus is the Messiah. Thus, the Pharisees become even more irrational in their explanation of the reality of Jesus. And this will happen to the Jewish people the more that they reject God’s miracles that confirm Jesus’ identity as the Messiah—until Rome destroys Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and then the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord occurs later just before Jesus’ return.

By his presence in Israel, Jesus is cleaning house so that the evil “spirit” of the Jews is being expelled. He has brought near the Kingdom of God, which will eventually come about. It is only a matter of time because now everything is in place with his first appearance that includes his death, resurrection, and ascension. All he will have to do is return, destroy Israel’s enemies, and set up his kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem. This is why he keeps saying that it will be worse for those who have heard his message of good news through either him or his disciples. But once Jesus leaves after his death, resurrection, and ascension, this same evil “spirit” will return to Israel. They will not repent of their sin of rejecting him, the Messiah, so that their national and individual condition will be even worse. Implied is that the result will be the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and expulsion from the land in A.D. 132-135, which will lead eventually to the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord just before he returns.

Therefore, three things going on in this allegory –

1) Jesus is describing this particular generation of Jews with the preponderance of unbelief.

2) He is exploring the dynamics of spiritual hardness that manifests itself in unbelief.

3) He is telling the specific group that he is not going to give them more signs and miracles because they would harden themselves even more to their eternal detriment. Thus, he is still holding out hope that they will change their hearts and minds and become authentic believers.

³⁹¹ Ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος, τοῖς ὄχλοις ἰδοῦ ἢ μήτηρ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ εἰστήκεισαν ἕξω «ζητοῦντες αὐτῷ λαλήσαι» –

³⁹² «εἶπεν δέ τις ἄνθρωπος ἰδοῦ ἢ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου ἕξω ἐστήκασιν ζητοῦντές σοι λαλήσαι.» –

³⁹³ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν ἄνθρωπος λέγοντι αὐτῷ· τίς ἐστίν ἢ μήτηρ μου καὶ τίνας ὀείσιν οἱ ἀδελφοί μου –

³⁹⁴ καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἑαυτοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν ἰδοῦ ἢ μήτηρ μου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί μου –

³⁹⁵ ὅστις γὰρ ἂν ποιῆσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς αὐτός μου ἢ ἀδελφός καὶ ἀδελφή καὶ μήτηρ ἐστίν –

³⁹⁶ Ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκεῖνη ἐξεληθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῆς οἰκίας ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν –

³⁹⁷ καὶ συνήχθησαν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄχλοι πολλοί, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἐμβάντα καθῆσθαι, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν εἰστήκει –

³⁹⁸ Καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς πολλὰ ἐν παραβολαῖς λέγων ἰδοῦ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπείρων τοῦ ἁγροῦ –

³⁹⁹ καὶ ἐν τῷ σπείρειν αὐτὸν ἃ μὲν ἔπεσεν παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν, καὶ ἔλθόντα τὰ πετεινὰ τὰ κατέφαγεν αὐτά –

⁴⁰⁰ ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὰ πετρώδη ὅπου οὐκ εἶχεν γῆν πολλήν, καὶ εὐθέως ἐξανέτειλεν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν βάθος γῆς –

⁴⁰¹ ἢ ἡλίου δὲ ἀνατείλαντος ἐκαυματίσθη καὶ διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ῥίζαν ἐξηράνθη –

⁴⁰² ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀκάνθας, καὶ ἀνέβησαν αὐτὰς ἀκανθῶν καὶ ἐπιξάνθη αὐτά –

⁴⁰³ ἄλλα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν τὴν καλὴν καὶ ἐδίδου καρπὸν, ὁ μὲν ἑκατόν, ὁ δὲ ἐξήκοντα, ὁ δὲ τριάκοντα –

⁴⁰⁴ ὁ ἔχων ὄρα τὸ ἀκούετω –

⁴⁰⁵ Καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς – We can imagine a pause in Jesus' teaching as he lets the parable of the sower have its intended effect on the crowds, so that the disciples take advantage of this pause and ask him privately to explain what he is doing.

⁴⁰⁶ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν ἑαυτοῖς ὅτι ὑμῖν δέδοται γινῶσθαι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἐκείνοις δὲ οὐ δέδοται – God has planned for Jesus' disciples to be willing to understand and pursue understanding that which the OT (and now Jesus) speaks in regard to His plans to bring about the eternal Kingdom of God. These concepts are not mysteries in the sense that they are difficult to understand or great secrets that are not revealed publicly, because they are all right there in the OT and in what Jesus himself is saying. Instead, they are mysteries in that they require the Spirit of God to open one's heart to be willing and desirous to know them and embrace as the only accurate truth of reality. As John says in his gospel, they are the Light which enlightens people as to the exact nature of reality.

In contrast to the few disciples, the many that constitute the crowds are not being given a heart to understand the truth of Jesus. The Jews believed that all descendants of Abraham would enter the Kingdom of God. The disobedient were simply delaying the Messiah's appearance. Jesus' teaching is revolutionary, because he is saying that only one kind of Jew will enter—the one who embraces his truth fully and wholeheartedly.

⁴⁰⁷ ὅστις γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ καὶ περισσευθήσεται ὅστις δὲ οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὁ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ – Those who like the disciples actually understand because of God's inner work the truths of God will be granted by God even more truth as they pursue it because of their desire to grow in their understanding, while those who think that have grasped the OT by studying it within the Jewish culture of the synagogues, etc. will have whatever they think is true taken away from them because it will eventually be demonstrated as false knowledge of God.

⁴⁰⁸ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παραβολαῖς ἑαυτοῖς λαλῶ, ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν – The above includes the Jewish crowds to whom he is speaking. The parables make it more obvious that the majority of the crowds do not have the God-given desire to understand the truth, because not only they rather difficult to understand, but they also require that someone have a genuine, heartfelt desire to understand them. God is giving to only a few, i.e., Jesus' disciples, but not even all of them, a heart to understand and believe the truth about him.

⁴⁰⁹ καὶ ἄναπληροῦται αὐτοῖς ἡ προφητεία Ἠσαΐου ἢ λέγουσα Ἀκοῆ ἀκούσατε, καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε· καὶ βλέποντες βλέπετε, καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε –

⁴¹⁰ ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν βαρέως ἤκουσαν, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμυσαν μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν ἀκούσωσιν, καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνώσιν, καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἰάσωμαι αὐτούς – God had planned during Isaiah's day around 740 B.C. to keep the Jewish people of his day from grasping the truth, because God was focused on bringing about the judgments by the Assyrians and Babylonians on both the northern and southern kingdoms. In the same manner, God is keeping the Jews of Jesus' day from embracing his message and him as the Messiah.

This is the issue—the heart! That determines one's future destiny, either in the Kingdom of God or not.

⁴¹¹ ὁμῶν δὲ μακάριοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ὅτι βλέπουσιν καὶ τὰ ὄρα ὁμῶν ὅτι ἀκούουσιν – In contrast to the Jews of Isaiah's day, Jesus' disciples have the gift of God within them of hearts that are curious and pursue understanding Jesus' message and God's plans and purposes. God intends the disciples, except Judah (?), to embrace the truth and enter the Kingdom of God.

⁴¹² ἀμὴν ὁ γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ προφῆται καὶ δίκαιοι ἐπεθύμησαν ἰδεῖν ἃ βλέπετε καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν, καὶ ἀκούσαι ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσαν – Indeed, OT spokesmen for God such as Isaiah and OT regular believers whose names no one knows had grasped enough of God's message in the OT that they had a yearning to live during the time when the Messiah would appear to Israel and fulfill his role. And they longed to hear from the Messiah himself what the message of God is vis-à-vis him.

⁴¹³ Ὑμεῖς οὖν ἀκούσατε τὴν παραβολὴν τοῦ ἁγροῦ –

⁴¹⁴ παντὸς ἀκούοντος τὸν λόγον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ μὴ συνιέντος ἔρχεται ὁ πονηρὸς καὶ ἀρπάζει τὸ ἐσπαρμένον ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν σπαρεῖς – People who hear what Jesus is saying but immediately do not realize that it is the message of the Messiah, thus rejecting it right away. And the enemy, Satan, assists in convincing them that what

Jesus is saying is worthless information.

Unwilling to believe and enter the Kingdom of God.

⁴¹⁵ ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὰ πετρῶδη σπαρεῖς, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων καὶ εὐθὺς μετὰ χαρᾶς λαμβάνων αὐτόν –

⁴¹⁶ οὐκ ἔχει δὲ ῥίζαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἀλλὰ πρόσκαιρός ἐστιν. γενομένης δὲ θλίψεως ἢ διωγμοῦ διὰ τὸν λόγον εὐθὺς σκανδαλίζεται – People who hear what Jesus says, recognize it as good information to believe, even as the information predicted by the OT regarding the Messiah, but when it becomes difficult to believe it in the midst of persecution from unbelievers, they abandon the faith for a less painful life.

Their belief lacks the inwardness of a changed heart by the Spirit of God.

Initially excited about the truth, but shallow interest so that eventually discards it. Unbeliever who does not enter the Kingdom of God.

⁴¹⁷ ὁ δὲ εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας σπαρεῖς, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων, καὶ ἡ μέριμνα τοῦ αἰῶνος ἤ ἀπάτη τοῦ πλούτου συμπνίγει τὸν λόγον καὶ ἄκαρπος γίνεται – People who find it impossible to continue to be more attracted to the things of this world, even worrying to the depth of their core about whether or not they will have enough of what this world offers to make life worth living, and eventually their worry and their attraction to material wealth overwhelms their faith. As a result, they abandon their faith. Doubleminded and too attracted to the stuff of this world to care ultimately about the future Kingdom of God.

They, too, lack authentic Spirit caused inwardness.

⁴¹⁸ ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν καλὴν γῆν σπαρεῖς, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων καὶ ἴσυνιεις, ὅς δὴ καρποφορεῖ καὶ ποιεῖ ὁ μὲν ἑκατόν, ὁ δὲ ἐξήκοντα, ὁ δὲ τριάκοντα – People, the only people in this parable who gain eternal life, who take Jesus' message and live it in such a manner that they 1) recognize his message as the truth of God, 2) endure in their faith through persecution, affliction, and suffering, 3) endure in their faith through the anxieties of this life as to whether or not they will acquire enough to make life worth living, and 4) produce in their lives other elements of authentic Christianity, such as repentance, kindness, forgiveness, etc.

And each Christian will produce what appears to be different quantities of these in his life. Varying degrees of responses to the truth as determined by the author of reality, God. Thus, the issue is not the quantity but the resolve and commitment to live a life commensurate with authentic faith and the message which Jesus has taught.

⁴¹⁹ Ἄλλην παραβολὴν παρέθηκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων ὁμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ ἵσπειραντι καλὸν σπέρμα ἐν τῷ ἄγρῳ αὐτοῦ –

JC – could tell the weeds' difference only at the harvest after sprouting and bearing fruit. In Judaism, two kinds of Jews, those who enter Kingdom of God and those who follow Satan and follow his lies. Both will exist among one another up until Jesus' return. Good seed = truth that enters in a person and he embraces it with authentic belief. Present age precedes the Kingdom of God and the millennial kingdom. Angels could be either conventional angels or theophanies, some kind of messengers of God. Some Jews are destined for destruction as stumbling blocks who influence others towards evil by going beyond the boundaries of God's moral commandments. Jesus is not talking about hell per se but metaphorical for destruction with weeping and gnashing of teeth. Grief from being excluded from the Kingdom of God—when the Jews thought every Jew would be admitted.

⁴²⁰ ἐν δὲ τῷ καθεῦδεν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ὁ ἐχθρὸς καὶ ἑπέσπειρεν ζιζάνια ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σίτου καὶ ἀπῆλθεν –

⁴²¹ ὅτε δὲ ἐβλάστησεν ὁ χόρτος καὶ καρπὸν ἐποίησεν, τότε ἐφάνη ὁ καὶ τὰ ζιζάνια –

⁴²² προσελθόντες δὲ οἱ δούλοι τοῦ οἰκοδεσπότου εἶπον αὐτῷ· κύριε, οὐχὶ καλὸν σπέρμα ἔσπειρας ἐν τῷ σῷ ἄγρῳ; πόθεν οὖν ἔχει ἡ ζιζάνια –

⁴²³ ὁ δὲ εἶπε αὐτοῖς· ἐχθρὸς ἀνθρώπου τοῦτο ἐποίησεν. ὁ δὲ δούλοι λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· θέλεις οὖν ἀπελθόντες συλλέξωμεν αὐτά –

⁴²⁴ ὁ δὲ ἑφῆσιν· οὐ, μήποτε συλλέγοντες τὰ ζιζάνια ἐκριζώσητε ἅμα αὐτοῖς τὸν σίτον –

⁴²⁵ ἄφετε συναυξάνεσθαι ἀμφοτέρα ἕως τοῦ θερισμοῦ, καὶ ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ θερισμοῦ ἐρῶ τοῖς θερισταῖς· συλλέξατε πρῶτον τὰ ζιζάνια καὶ δήσατε ἑαυτὰ εἰς δέσμας πρὸς τὸ κατακαῦσαι αὐτά, τὸν δὲ σίτον ἵσυναγάγετε εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην μου –

⁴²⁶ Ἄλλην παραβολὴν παρέθηκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν κόκκῳ σινάπewς, ὃν λαβὼν ἄνθρωπος ἑσπειρεν ἐν τῷ ἄγρῳ αὐτοῦ –

JC – Even though a mustard tree begins as a very tiny and inconspicuous little seed, it nevertheless, over time, becomes the biggest and most prominent tree in the garden. By analogy, even though the beginning of the kingdom of God is small and inconspicuous, it will nevertheless, over time, develop into the world-dominant kingdom that the prophets predicted.

⁴²⁷ ὁ μικρότερον μὲν ἐστὶν πάντων τῶν σπερμάτων, ὅταν δὲ αὐξηθῆ μείζον τῶν λαχάνων ἐστὶν καὶ γίνεται δένδρον, ὥστε ἐλθεῖν τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατασκηνοῦν ἐν τοῖς κλάδοις αὐτοῦ –

⁴²⁸ Ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἑλάλησεν αὐτοῖς· ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ζύμῃ, ἣν λαβοῦσα γυνὴ ἐνέκρυπεν εἰς ἀλεύρου σάτα τρία ἕως οὗ ἐξυμῶθη ὅλον –

JC – God's Messiah was not brought into history to establish the kingdom of God in one dramatic, climactic event. (Contrary to the expectations of Jesus's culture.) God will bring about his kingdom slowly and gradually over time, through forces and processes that are not within the Messiah's control. The Messiah (and, hence, Jesus) is like a woman leavening a lump of dough who puts a small piece of leaven in a batch of dough and then waits for forces and processes that she does not understand and cannot control to slowly over time leaven the entire lump. Just as the woman must wait patiently until the entire lump of dough is leavened, so must the Messiah wait patiently until history and circumstances reach a point where it is time for the kingdom of God to be actualized. These parables are not about Christianity and Christians (the Gentiles). The focus is on the OT prophets and their predictions of the coming restoration of the Kingdom of Israel, the 1st promise to Abraham. Spreading the gospel to the Gentiles is different.

⁴²⁹ ταῦτα πάντα ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν παραβολαῖς τοῖς ὄχλοις καὶ χωρὶς παραβολῆς ἑοὐδὲν ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς –

⁴³⁰ ὅπως πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου, λέγοντος, Ἔνοιξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὸ στόμα μου, ἐρεῦξομαι κεκρυμμένα ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου – This is an editorial comment by Matthew. The first line is exactly like that of the first line of Psalm 78:2. The second line does not exist in the OT LXX.

In Psalm 78, the parables to which the author refers are the stories of Israel's past that are intended to instruct the Jewish reader in the truths of God's relationship with the nation of Israel.

Here in Matthew 13, the parables are the stories of what is possible in the everyday lives of Jesus' contemporaries on the land of Israel that also are intended to instruct them in the truths of God's relationship with them. Thus, a parable is a story from human existence that communicates certain elements of God's plans and purposes for Israel, whether unbelievers or believers (and for Gentiles by careful extrapolation).

Thus, the things hidden are concepts that escape the attention of sinners who are not rightly oriented towards God and His eternal plans and purposes.

⁴³¹ Τότε ἀφείς τοὺς ὄχλους ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν ἑ. καὶ προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες Ἔδιασάφησον ἡμῖν τὴν παραβολὴν τῶν ζιζανίων τοῦ ἀγροῦ –

⁴³² ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν ἑ. ὁ σπείρων τὸ καλὸν σπέρμα ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου – The seed are authentic believers in the world, i.e., specifically within the nation of Israel.

⁴³³ ὁ δὲ ἀγρὸς ἐστὶν ὁ κόσμος, τὸ δὲ καλὸν σπέρμα οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας· τὰ δὲ ζιζανία εἰσιν οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ – The world is Jesus' kingdom. It is just that he has not taken full possession of it yet. This will occur at his return as described in Revelation 19 & 20, when the Kingdom of Israel during the millennium is restored. Thus, standing on the land of Israel, it could seem that the unbelieving Jews constitute the world just as much as unbelieving Gentiles. But I think Jesus is speaking expansively here even though he has been speaking to the Jewish people to whom he proclaims himself as the king of the coming Kingdom of God. Some people are followers of Jesus, the Son of Man and God, and some are followers of Satan, who influences people and cultures to rebel against God. He takes advantage of their inherent rebellion against God and pushes them to reject the truth with even more passion and vehemence.

But, as said above, eventually the whole world does become Jesus' kingdom when he rules over it during the millennial period of Revelation 20. Therefore, it is more likely that he is referring to the entire earth as his kingdom where both Jews and Gentiles will comprise both the righteous (v. 43) and the stumbling blocks (v. 41), depending on whether they are authentic believers or unbelievers respectively.

⁴³⁴ ὁ δὲ ἐχθρὸς ὁ σπείρας αὐτὰ ἐστὶν ὁ διάβολος. Ἡ δὲ θερισμὸς συντέλεια ἑ αἰῶνος ἐστὶν, ὅτι οἱ δὲ θερισταὶ ἄγγελοι εἰσιν – Here it would make sense that the completion of the age is at the end of the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 when the Great White Throne Judgment takes place, thus truly bringing the end of the temporary realm and the start of the eternal realm of the new heavens and the new earth of Revelation 21,22. The harvest is the gathering of both believers, which begins when Jesus returns before the millennial kingdom, and unbelievers, which occurs at the 2nd resurrection just before the GWTJ.

cf. what may be a vision of the gathering of both Jewish believers and unbelievers just before the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, [Rev. 14:14](#) Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. [15](#) And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." [16](#) Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

[Rev. 14:17](#) And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. [18](#) Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." [19](#) So the angel swung his sickle to the earth and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. [20](#) And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

⁴³⁵ ὡς περ οὖν συλλέγεται τὰ ζιζάνια καὶ πυρὶ ἑ [κατα]καίεται, οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος – Jesus repeats the phrase "completion of the age" to refer to the time when there will be an analogous gathering and burning of weeds.

⁴³⁶ ἀποστελεῖ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ, καὶ συλλέξουσιν ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα καὶ τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν – Jesus could be referring to "his kingdom" in a less precise manner, so that he is referring to any unbeliever during human history who would obviously disqualify for the 1st resurrection and participating in the millennial kingdom. But perhaps he is being more specific and saying that his angels will gather the living unbelievers out of the millennial kingdom (and all unbelievers of all human history by extrapolation) for judgment, condemnation, and destruction. In other words, even though he speaks of his kingdom, which officially begins when he returns and restores the Kingdom of Israel, the implication is that all unbelievers of all time will be gathered at this time.

Or he may be focusing on the Jews on the land of Israel, which will become his kingdom at his return, and referring to them only (and then to Gentiles by extrapolation). Thus, "those who perform lawlessness" would be those Jews who neither believe in him nor abide by the Mosaic Covenant properly before the millennial kingdom comes into existence. Thus, this is a gathering of Jews out of his potential kingdom.

But with the phrase "the completion of the age" and in the light of the parable of 13:47-50, the final judgment and destruction of unbelievers seems more in view here. In addition, the whole world does become Jesus' kingdom during the millennial period, and at the end of it, believers will be the "righteous" who obtain life on the new earth of Revelation 21, while unbelievers will be the "stumbling blocks" who incur God's condemnation and destruction of the GWTJ. Either a person obtains entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God or is destroyed.

⁴³⁷ καὶ ἵβαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων – The fiery furnace refers to eventual destruction, while the weeping and grinding of teeth refers to God’s measured punishment according to each individual’s rebellious and evil deeds.

Cf. **2 Thessalonians 1:3** We are obligated always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; **4** therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. **5** This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. **6** For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, **7** and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, **10** when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed.

⁴³⁸ τότε οἱ δίκαιοι ἐκλάμψουσιν ὡς ὁ ἥλιος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν· ὁ ἔχων ὅσα ἴακουέτω – This kingdom ultimately is the new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21-22, the eternal Kingdom of God after the completion of the millennial kingdom. Jesus calls it the kingdom “of their Father,” meaning that God has been the source of their existence, their salvation, and their entering into and participating in the eternal Kingdom of God.

And Jesus encourages those who understand what he is saying to grab onto it and embrace it as that which they hold dear for the rest of their lives, making choices that correspond to the message of God’s kingdom.

⁴³⁹ Ὅμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὐρὼν ἄνθρωπος ἔκρυψε, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτοῦ ὑπάγει καὶ πωλεῖ ὅσα ἔχει καὶ ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον – The two parables in vs. 44-46 make the same two points—

- 1) The Kingdom of God is so valuable that it is worth giving up everything that a person has in this life in order to obtain it.
- 2) A person will make the choice to give up everything he has in order to gain the Kingdom of God. Nothing in this life is worth having if doing so would mean that a person would have to give up the Kingdom of God. This would include giving up any sin that is so attractive that a person is considering pursuing it at the cost of not entering into the Kingdom of God. But his desire for the kingdom is greater than his desire for sin, so that he foregoes the sin and is willing to give up everything else if it means that he will gain the Kingdom of God. And only this kind of person will be able to obtain the Kingdom of God.

We can possibly infer that other people who do not see the Kingdom of God as attractive as this will think the person crazy who gives up everything, including the pleasures of sin, in order to obtain something that he cannot see and that is out there in the future.

In this parable, it is certainly strange that a man finds a “hidden treasure” in a field that does not belong to him. What is he doing in this field that he does not own? And how is it that he ends up finding this hidden treasure? Was he actually looking for treasure in the field, or did he just happen upon it somehow? Jesus does not answer these questions, so that we have to conclude that this parable has an allegory-like quality to it, that it includes elements that are outside the boundaries of normal, human life and experience. Nevertheless, the fact that the man goes and sells all that he has in order to buy this field (assuming that it really is for sale) is certainly plausible.

⁴⁴⁰ Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἄνθρωπῳ ἐμπόρῳ ζητοῦντι καλοὺς μαργαρίτας – This parable is more real life-like, a merchant seeking pearls to purchase in order that he might resell them at a higher price. However, he finds one that is so valuable that he intentionally sells everything that he has in order to buy this pearl and keep it for himself.

But this will be all that he has, and he will have to find a way to survive without any money. He has his expertise and ability to work. So hopefully he will be resourceful enough in his relationships with others that he can sustain himself physically while still holding on to the most valuable pearl. Again, this is a little allegory-like similarly to the previous parable in v. 44—a little outside the boundaries of normal, expected life in 1st century Jewish society.

⁴⁴¹ εὐρὼν δὲ ἓνα πολῦτιμον μαργαρίτην ἀπελθὼν πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν καὶ ἠγόρασεν αὐτόν –

⁴⁴² Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν σαγήνη βληθεῖση εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἐκ παντὸς γένους συναγαγούση – JC – Judaism includes some Jews who are acceptable to God and some who are not. Grieving over missing out on the Kingdom of God. The wicked to destruction, while the righteous are accepted by God and enter His kingdom.

⁴⁴³ ἦν ὅτε ἔπληρώθη ἡ ἀναβιβάσαντες ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν καὶ καθίσαντες συνέλεξαν τὰ ἱκαλὰ εἰς ἄγγη, τὰ δὲ σαπρὰ ἔξω ἔβαλον –

⁴⁴⁴ οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος· ἐξελεύσονται οἱ ἄγγελοι καὶ ἀφοριοῦσιν τοὺς πονηροὺς ἐκ μέσου τῶν δικαίων –

⁴⁴⁵ καὶ ἵβαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων –

⁴⁴⁶ Συνήκατε ταῦτα πάντα; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· ναί –

⁴⁴⁷ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· αὐτοῖς· διὰ τοῦτο πᾶς γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν ὁμοίος ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότη, ὅστις ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ καινὰ καὶ παλαιὰ – This parable is obviously related to all the previous parables in chapter 13.

The scribe is a scholar of the OT who has properly learned the nature of God’s purposes regarding the Kingdom of God for the Jews—according to His promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, both that God will make the Jews the most powerful nation in human history and that they will gain eternal life through their belief that imitates Abraham’s.

Here, the Kingdom of the Heavens is the Kingdom of God over the Jews by the Messiah on the land of Israel and over the world. The father of a family is responsible for not only his blood family, but also the servants, i.e., for the whole household.

His treasure is all that in his storeroom that is necessary for the continued sustenance of the whole household. It is here that he keeps all the valuable possessions of the family, both old possessions and new ones.

Here the “old things” are all that the OT teaches correctly understood about Israel, their land, and the great nation which God is going to make them eventually.

The “new things” are all that Jesus is teaching his disciples that may correct some of their misperceptions of the OT message and certainly enhances them. Thus, the new things are also that which he has been teaching the parables of Matthew 13 about the Kingdom of God and Israel.

The profound point that Jesus is communicating is that some of his teaching is actually old. It is not different from the OT. Instead, it builds upon it and even emphasizes it. Therefore, if a “scribe” correctly interprets the OT, then he will also recognize how Jesus’ teaching is right in line with it, so that he will embrace it just as much as he has embraced the OT.

Summary of the points of the Matthew 13 parables —

1) Not every Jew will enter the Kingdom of God. In fact, most will not.

2) A place in the Kingdom of God is more valuable than anything else in this world and life—especially earthly valuables and approval by our fellow human beings.

3) Whether I am a part of the people of “Israel” as a Jew will get sorted out at the end according to the final judgment.

4) The Kingdom of God enters quietly into the world and then grows imperceptibly but definitely. Its entrance is Jesus’ first appearance along with his death, resurrection, and ascension. He does not amass a large Jewish army to fight against and destroy the occupying army of the Romans. Indeed, he will be crucified by them only to destroy the future armies of the Beast of Revelation when he returns.

⁴⁴⁸ Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς παραβολὰς ταύτας, μετήρην ἐκεῖθεν —

⁴⁴⁹ καὶ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὴν πατρίδα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ αὐτῶν, ὥστε ἐκπλήσσεσθαι αὐτοὺς καὶ λέγειν πόθεν τοῦτω ἢ τῇ σοφίᾳ αὐτῆ καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις —

⁴⁵⁰ οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ τέκτονος υἱός; ἢ οὐχ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ λέγεται Μαριάμ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωσήφ καὶ Σίμων καὶ Ἰούδας —

⁴⁵¹ καὶ αἱ ἀδελφαὶ αὐτοῦ οὐχὶ πᾶσαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἰσιν; πόθεν οὖν τοῦτω ταῦτα πάντα —

⁴⁵² καὶ ἐσκανδαλίζοντο ἐν αὐτῷ. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐκ ἔστιν προφήτης ἄτιμος εἰ μὴ ἐν τῇ πατρίδι καὶ ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ —

⁴⁵³ καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἐκεῖ δυνάμεις πολλὰς διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν —

⁴⁵⁴ Ἐν ἐκείνῳ ἡμερῶν ἤκουσεν Ἡρώδης ὁ τετραάρχης τὴν ἀκοὴν Ἰησοῦ —

EBC — Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great (see on 2:1), was tetrarch (v.1; see on 2:22), not king—though doubtless “king” was used popularly (Mark 6:14). His tetrarchy included Galilee (4:12) and Perea (19:1). Because John the Baptist’s ministry had been exercised in Perea (John 1:28), he had come under Herod’s power. Herod had been ruling more than thirty years, and at this time he lived primarily at Tiberias on the southwest shore of Galilee. Thus Jesus’ ministry was taking place largely within Herod’s jurisdiction. How the reports of Jesus’ ministry reached Herod is unknown; it may have been through Cuza (Luke 8:3). So extensive a ministry could not have been kept from Herod for long. His conclusion, that this was John the Baptist risen from the dead (v.2), is of great interest. It reflects an eclectic set of beliefs, one of them the Pharisaic understanding of resurrection. During his ministry John had performed no miracles (John 10:41); therefore Herod ascribes the miracles in Jesus’ ministry, not to John, but to John “risen from the dead.” Herod’s guilty conscience apparently combined with a superstitious view of miracles to generate this theory.

⁴⁵⁵ καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς παισὶν αὐτοῦ· οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστής ἢ αὐτὸς ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αἱ δυνάμεις ἐνεργοῦσιν ἐν αὐτῷ —

⁴⁵⁶ Ὁ γὰρ Ἡρώδης ἡ κρατήσας τὸν Ἰωάννην ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν ἐν φυλακῇ ἀπέθετο διὰ Ἡρωδιάδα τὴν γυναῖκα

Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ —

⁴⁵⁷ ἔλεγε γὰρ ὁ Ἰωάννης αὐτῷ· οὐκ ἔξεστίν σοι ἔχειν αὐτήν —

⁴⁵⁸ καὶ θέλων αὐτὸν ἀποκτείνειν ἐφοβήθη τὸν ὄχλον, ὅτι ὡς προφήτην αὐτὸν εἶχον —

⁴⁵⁹ Ἐνεστίσι δὲ γενομένοις τοῦ Ἡρώδου ὠρχήσατο ἡ θυγάτηρ τῆς Ἡρωδιάδος ἐν τῷ μέσῳ καὶ ἤρесе τῷ Ἡρώδῃ —

⁴⁶⁰ ὅθεν μεθ’ ὄρκου ὠμολόγησεν αὐτῇ δοῦναι ὃ ἐὰν αἰτήσῃται —

⁴⁶¹ ἡ δὲ προβιβασθεῖσα ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτῆς ἔειπεν· δός μοι, ὦ φησίν, ὡς ἐπὶ πίνακι τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ —

⁴⁶² καὶ ἄλυσον αὐτὸν ἀποκτείνειν διὰ τοὺς ὄρκους καὶ τοὺς συνανακειμένους ἐκέλευσεν δοθῆναι —

⁴⁶³ καὶ πέμψας ἀπεκεφάλισεν αὐτὸν Ἰωάννην ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ —

⁴⁶⁴ καὶ ἠνέχθη ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πίνακι καὶ ἐδόθη τῷ κορασίῳ, καὶ ἠνεγκεν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῆς —

⁴⁶⁵ καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἦραν τὸ πτῶμα ἢ καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπήγγειλαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ —

⁴⁶⁶ Ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνεχώρησεν ἐκεῖθεν ἐν πλοίῳ εἰς ἔρημον τόπον κατ’ ἰδίαν καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ ὄχλοι

ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ἐκ τῶν πόλεων —

⁴⁶⁷ Καὶ ἐξελθὼν εἶδεν πολὺν ὄχλον καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἠρώρεσεν τοὺς ἀρρώστους αὐτῶν —

⁴⁶⁸ Ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ λέγοντες· ἔρημός ἐστιν ὁ τόπος καὶ ἡ ὥρα ἤδη παρήλθεν· ἀπόλυσον ἡμᾶς ὅτις οὐκ ἔχομεν ἄλλο τι φαγεῖν —

⁴⁶⁹ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐ χρειᾶν ἔχομεν ἀπελθεῖν, δότε ἡμῖν φαγεῖν —

⁴⁷⁰ οἱ δὲ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· οὐκ ἔχομεν ὧδε εἰ μὴ πέντε ἄρτους καὶ δύο ἰχθύας —

⁴⁷¹ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· φέρετέ μοι ὧδε αὐτούς —

⁴⁷² καὶ κελεύσας τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνακλιθῆναι ἐπὶ τοῦ χόρτου, λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας, ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἔδωκεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς τοὺς ἄρτους, οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τοῖς ὄχλοις —

⁴⁷³ καὶ ἔφαγον πάντες καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν, καὶ ἦσαν τὸ περισσεῦον τῶν κλασμάτων δώδεκα κοφίνους πλήρεις –
⁴⁷⁴ οἱ δὲ ἐσθίοντες ἦσαν ἄνδρες ὡσεὶ πεντακισχίλιοι χωρὶς ἑσθίοντων καὶ παιδίων –
⁴⁷⁵ Καὶ ἑυθέως ἠνάγκασεν τοὺς μαθητὰς ἵνα ἐμβῆναι εἰς ὁρὸν τὸ πλοῖον καὶ προάγειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πέραν, ἕως οὗ ἀπολύσει
τοὺς ὄχλους –
⁴⁷⁶ καὶ ἀπολύσας τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος κατ' ἰδίαν προσεύξασθαι. ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης μόνος ἦν ἐκεῖ –
⁴⁷⁷ Τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ἦδη ἵσταδιους πολλοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀπέειχεν βασιανίζομενον ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἦν γὰρ ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος
–
⁴⁷⁸ τετάρτη δὲ φυλακῆ τῆς νυκτὸς ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τῆν θάλασσαν –
⁴⁷⁹ οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης περιπατοῦντα ἐταράχθησαν λέγοντες ὅτι φάντασμα ἐστίν, καὶ ἀπὸ
τοῦ φόβου ἔκραξαν –
⁴⁸⁰ εὐθὺς δὲ ἐλάλησεν ἰσοῦς αὐτοῖς λέγων θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε –
⁴⁸¹ Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν· κύριε, εἰ σὺ εἶ, κέλευσόν με ἵνα ἔλθω πρὸς σε ἐπὶ τὰ ὕδατα –
⁴⁸² ὁ δὲ εἶπεν ἔλθέ. καὶ καταβάς ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου ἰσοῦς ἐπεπάτησεν ἐπὶ τὰ ὕδατα καὶ ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν ἰσοῦν –
⁴⁸³ βλέπων δὲ τὸν ἄνεμον ἰσοῦς ἐφοβήθη, καὶ ἄρξάμενος καταποντίζεσθαι ἔκραξεν λέγων· κύριε, σῶσόν με –
⁴⁸⁴ εὐθέως δὲ ὁ ἰσοῦς ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἐπέλαβεν αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ὀλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας –
⁴⁸⁵ καὶ ἀναβάντων αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος –
⁴⁸⁶ οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες· ἄληθώς θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ –
⁴⁸⁷ Καὶ διαπεράσαντες ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν εἰς τὴν Γεννησαρέτ· – Gennesaret is the fertile plain on the northwest shore of the Sea
of Galilee, near Capernaum.
⁴⁸⁸ καὶ ἐπιγνόντες αὐτὸν οἱ ἄνδρες τοῦ τόπου ἐκείνου ἀπέστειλαν εἰς ὅλην τὴν περίχωρον ἐκείνην καὶ προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ
πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας –
⁴⁸⁹ καὶ παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν ἵνα μόνον ἄψωνται τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ· καὶ ὅσοι ἦσαν διεσώθησαν – Many
more miracles of healing that Jesus performs!
⁴⁹⁰ Τότε προσέρχονται τῷ ἰσοῦ ἰεροσολύμων Φαρισαῖοι καὶ γραμματεῖς λέγοντες – These Jewish leaders come all
the way from the center of Judaism, Jerusalem, to question Jesus about his religious practices—or lack thereof. This is how much
attention he was attracting from all the Jews. These are the experts in the OT and both written (in the Mosaic Covenant) and oral
(derived by later Jewish teachers from the Mosaic Covenant) commandments of the Jews. Thus, the Jews, even before the time of
these Pharisees and scribes, had derived rules of life from the commandments of the Mosaic Covenant. The Pharisees (but not the
Sadducees) considered the oral commandments to be as authoritative as the written commandments. The combination of biblical
commandments and their interpretation for daily life is called the Halakah (הלכה) = walking, living.
EBC – [The oral law] was later codified under Rabbi Judah the Prince (c. A.D. 135–200) to form the **Mishnah** (cf. SBK, 1:691-
95); TDNT, 6:661f.; Moore, Judaism, 1:251-62). One entire tractate, Yadaim, deals with “hands” (i.e., yadayim), specifying such
details as how much water must be used for effective ceremonial purification: e.g., “If a man poured water over the one hand
with a single rinsing, his hand is clean; but if over both hands with a single rinsing, R. Meir declares them unclean unless he
pours over them a quarter-log or more” (M Yadaim 2:1).
⁴⁹¹ διὰ τί οἱ μαθηταὶ σου παραβαίνουσιν τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων; οὐ γὰρ νίπτονται τὰς χεῖρας ὁ αὐτῶν ὅταν
ἄρτον ἐσθίωσιν –
⁴⁹² ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· διὰ τί καὶ ὑμεῖς παραβαίνετε τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ὑμῶν –
⁴⁹³ ὁ γὰρ θεὸς εἶπεν· τίμα τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα, καὶ ὁ καταλογὸν πατέρα ἢ μητέρα θανάτῳ τελευτάτω –
⁴⁹⁴ ὑμεῖς δὲ λέγετε· ὅς ἂν εἴπῃ τῷ πατρὶ ἢ τῇ μητρὶ δῶρον ὃ ἐὰν ἐξ ἐμοῦ ὠφελῆθῃς –
⁴⁹⁵ οὐ μὴ τιμῆσαι τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα· καὶ ἠκυρώσατε τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ὑμῶν –
⁴⁹⁶ ὑποκριταί, καλῶς ἐπροφήτευσεν περὶ ὑμῶν Ἡσαΐας λέγων –
⁴⁹⁷ ὁ λαὸς οὗτος τοῖς χεῖλεσίν με τιμᾷ ἢ δὲ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν πόρρω ἀπέχει ἀπ' ἐμοῦ –
⁴⁹⁸ μάτην δὲ σέβονται με διδάσκοντες διδασκαλίας ἐντάλματα ἀνθρώπων –
⁴⁹⁹ καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν ὄχλον εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀκούετε καὶ συνίετε –
⁵⁰⁰ οὐ τὸ εἰσερχόμενον εἰς τὸ στόμα κοινὸν τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦτο κοινὸν τὸν
ἄνθρωπον – Here is another parable.
Jesus is saying that there is nothing outside a person, such as food, etc., that can make a person sinful, evil, unrighteous, and
morally dirty inside him. Instead, it is the attitudes, commitments, and unstoppable desires within a person that makes him sinful.
Thus, this is a parable that teaches the contrast between the Pharisees' understanding of righteousness and that of Jesus.
⁵⁰¹ Τότε προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· οἶδας ὅτι οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον ἐσκανδαλίσθησαν –
⁵⁰² ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· πᾶσα φυτεία ἣν οὐκ ἐφύτευσεν ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ οὐράνιος ἐκρίζωθήσεται –
⁵⁰³ ἄφετε αὐτοὺς· τυφλοὶ εἰσὶν ὁδοῦ [τυφλῶν] τυφλὸς δὲ τυφλῶν ἕνα ὁδοῦ ἄγει· ἀμφοτέρω εἰς βόθυνον πεσοῦνται –
⁵⁰⁴ Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· φράσον ἡμῖν τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην –
⁵⁰⁵ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ἀκμὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀσύνετοί ἐστε –
⁵⁰⁶ οὐ νοεῖτε ὅτι πᾶν τὸ εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς τὸ στόμα εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν χωρεῖ καὶ εἰς ἀφεδρῶνα ἐκβάλλεται –
⁵⁰⁷ τὰ δὲ ἐκπορευόμενα ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ἐκ τῆς καρδίας ἐξέρχεται, κάκεῖνα κοινὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον –
⁵⁰⁸ ἐκ γὰρ τῆς καρδίας ἐξέρχονται διαλογισμοὶ πονηροί, φόνος, μοιχευαί, πορνείαι, κλοπαί, ψευδομαρτυρίαι, βλασφημίαι –
⁵⁰⁹ ταῦτά ἐστιν τὰ κοινὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τὸ δὲ ἀνίπτους χερσίν φαγεῖν οὐ κοινὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον – The Mosaic Covenant
speaks about the kinds of food that God prescribed for the Jews, the nation of Israel, to eat. According to the Pharisees, the food

itself is a moral issue. But to God and Jesus, the kind of food is a parable that points to the need to get rid of the moral sin within the Israelites. The food is not itself immoral and evil.

At the same time, Jesus' comments do not mean that the Jews no longer have a covenant obligation to eat kosher. It is just that their doing so is not such that taking the right food from the outside is making them morally righteous on the inside. Again, food is morally neutral, but the kind of food the Jews are supposed to eat points to the need for internal moral righteousness, which they do not have.

⁵¹⁰ Καὶ ἐξελθὼν ἐκείθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὰ μέρη Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος – Tyre and Sidon are in a Gentile area outside of the land of Israel proper. The question is, why does Jesus decide to go into a primarily Gentile area northwest of Israel? Was he revealing that he is both the Jewish Messiah and the Gentile Messiah? Or was he showing that Gentiles are not really his people? Or was he testing his disciples as to what they thought of his going among Gentiles as the Jewish Messiah? The answer is in how one translates and interprets vs. 23 & 24.

EBC – Jesus “withdraws” (as in 2:12, 22; 4:12; 12:15; 14:13) to the region of Tyre and Sidon, cities on the Mediterranean coast lying about thirty and fifty miles respectively from Galilee. Kilpatrick (Origins, pp. 130ff.) notes Matthew's interest in them (cf. 11:21-24) and suggests that Matthew and his church were there—a possibility, but without much supporting evidence. “The vicinity of Tyre” (Mark 7:24) leads us to ask whether Jesus actually entered the region of Tyre and Sidon or went only to the border—which would mean the woman came out to meet him. But v.21 and Mark 7:31 make it clear that Jesus left Galilee and entered pagan territory. According to Mark 3:8 and Luke 6:17, some crowds had come from Tyre and Sidon to be helped by him; but there he would hardly be known.

⁵¹¹ καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ Χαναναία ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων ἐκείνων ἐξεληθοῦσα ἔκραζεν ἑλέγουσα: ἐλέησόν με, κύριε Ἰσραὴλ ἢ θυγάτηρ μου κακῶς δαμονίζεται – Clearly this woman is a Gentile and lived in the area of Tyre and Sidon. If the imperfect tense is correct, and it would seem in a situation like this for a mother that it is, she is making repeated appeals to Jesus to heal her daughter.

And she correctly identifies him as the Messiah by addressing him as the “Son of David.” Obviously she has learned the OT to the extent that she understands and embraces more than most Jews, because she sees in Jesus' miracles that God is confirming his identity as the Messiah and the king of Israel. Probably, too, she has heard of previous miracles that he had been performing and was convinced that he could heal her daughter.

How in the world did a Gentile girl become demon-possessed? And we wonder what exactly were the symptoms, although maybe it was better that these were not revealed.

Cf. [Deuteronomy 18:15](#) “Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.” This means that this new prophet will perform miracles as Moses did.

⁵¹² ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῇ λόγον. καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἠρώτουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες: ἀπόλυσον αὐτήν, ὅτι κράζει ὅπισθεν ἡμῶν – The fact that Jesus does not answer her would make it seem as though this is some sort of test—for either her or his disciples or for both. I think that is for both.

The disciples see her as crying out not only to Jesus, but also to them as his disciples. This is a group of Jewish men in a Gentile region. Thus I would imagine that they are all easily recognizable, and somehow the woman has discovered that one of them is Jesus, the man who claims to be the Jewish Messiah.

Two options – 1) the disciples are upset that Jesus is not responding to her because they are feeling such compassion towards her for the condition of her daughter, and they want him to heal her so that the suffering of both her and her mom will go away; 2) the disciples are annoyed that this Gentile woman keeps bugging them all when Jesus is obviously the Jewish Messiah and not the Gentile Messiah as far as they are concerned, unless of course a Gentile wants to follow the Mosaic Covenant.

But it is not as though Jesus has not healed Gentiles before. So we might think that the disciples would readily think that Jesus should heal her, and they are annoyed with him. But we also know from the rest of the gospel stories that they are slow to embrace all the truth that they should—

cf. [Matthew 4:24](#) The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. [25](#) Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

cf. [Matthew 8:5](#) And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, [6](#) and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.” [7](#) Jesus said to him, “**I will come and heal him.**” [8](#) But the centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my ³servant will be healed.” [9](#) “For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” [10](#) Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “**Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.** [11](#) “**I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; [12](#) but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**” [13](#) And Jesus said to the centurion, “**Go; ¹it shall be done for you as you have believed.**” And the servant was healed that very moment.

EBC – Jesus' silence does not quiet the woman; so his disciples beg him to stop her persistent cries (v.23). If they mean “Send her away without helping her,” either they suppose she is annoying him or they themselves are being annoyed. But their words could also be taken to mean “Send her away with her request granted” (so Meyer, Benoit). Indeed only this interpretation makes sense, because v.24 gives a reason for Jesus' not helping her rather than for not sending her away.

⁵¹³ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα ἑαυτοῦ Ἰσραὴλ – Two possibilities for translation and interpretation – 1) Jesus as the thoroughly Jewish Messiah is saying that his primary and perhaps exclusive goal is to bring salvation to the Jewish people, and if the Gentiles happen to take advantage of his salvific effects, then, ok. Thus

translating this the way the NAS95 does is correct—as if he is addressing the woman if she is annoying or the disciples if they are being overly compassionate towards her (indeed, more compassionate than he is, “Send her away with her granted request”; but does this really make sense?); 2) Jesus is saying that he has not come exclusively to save the Jewish people, but also to save Gentiles, thus translating it the way I do—as if he is addressing the disciples who are annoyed with her. This would also mean that she is out of earshot.

#2 seems more coherent with the passage and the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12, “In you all the families of the earth will be blessed,” but why would he use the long phrase “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” when all he had to say was “Israel”? Because he is emphasizing to the disciples that there is a huge problem with the nation of Israel, that they are lost for the most part, and this will get played out later when they crucify him and then are judged by God when they are expelled from the land by the Romans in A.D. 70 and A.D. 132-135 once again.

So the disciples failed the test and demonstrated their impatience and lack of understanding of Jesus as the Messiah and his mission.

⁵¹⁴ ἡ δὲ ἐλθοῦσα προσεκύνη αὐτῷ λέγουσα· κύριε, βοήθει μοι – The woman is persistent and is in the process of passing the test, so that she is correct in seeking help from Jesus, even as he ignores her at first. Also, she demonstrates how serious and sincere she is by bowing down before him in a humble and supplicatory manner.

⁵¹⁵ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· οὐκ ἔστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ βαλεῖν τοῖς κυναρίοις – Metaphorically Jesus is referring to the Jews as God’s children and to Gentiles as dogs. He is using the common designation by Jews of Gentiles. This does not sound as though he is saying that the Jews should get the gospel first, but that the Gentiles should not get it all! However, again, this is a test for her and the disciples. Does she think that Jesus really should help her? And she is going to say, Yes.

⁵¹⁶ ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· ναὶ κύριε, καὶ ὅτι τὰ κυνάρια ἐσθίει ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν – She understands the metaphor and rightly admits some kind of primacy in regard to the Jews in comparison to the Gentiles, not that they should hear the gospel first, but that they as an ethnic group are the chosen people of God on this earth during this realm. Yet, as a fellow human being, she also understands God’s love and mercy to be international and still appeals to the Jesus as the Jewish Messiah for help with her very Gentile daughter.

⁵¹⁷ τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῇ· ὦ γύναι, μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις· γεννηθῆτω σοι ὡς θέλεις· καὶ ἰάθη ἡ θυγάτηρ αὐτῆς ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης – Jesus acknowledges that she passes the test, understands biblical theology better than his Jewish disciples, and believes correctly that he is not only the Messiah but also the one through the transcendent God will heal her daughter.

Her belief being great = her understanding and belief together being great. This is not a blind or uninformed belief. It is an educated and settled belief, which all belief should be as much as possible.

⁵¹⁸ Καὶ μεταβάς ἐκεῖθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ ἀναβάς εἰς τὸ ὄρος ἐκάθητο ἐκεῖ –

⁵¹⁹ καὶ προσήλθον αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοὶ ἔχοντες μεθ’ αὐτῶν χωλοὺς, τυφλοὺς, κυλλοὺς, κωφοὺς, καὶ ἑτέροισιν πολλοὺς καὶ ἔρριψαν αὐτοὺς παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς –

⁵²⁰ ὥστε τὸν ὄχλον θαυμάσαι βλέποντας κωφοὺς ἁλαλοῦντας, κυλλοὺς ὑγιεῖν καὶ χωλοὺς περιπατοῦντας καὶ τυφλοὺς βλέποντας· καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν Ἰσραὴλ –

⁵²¹ Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ εἶπεν· σπλαγχνίζομαι ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον, ὅτι ἤδη ἡμέραι τρεῖς προσμένουσίν μοι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν τί φάγωσιν καὶ ἀπολύσαι αὐτοὺς νήστευσι οὐ θέλω, μήποτε ἐκλυθῶσιν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ· –

⁵²² καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ· πόθεν ἡμῖν ἐν ἐρημίᾳ ἄρτοι τοσοῦτοι ὥστε χορτάσαι ὄχλον τοσοῦτον –

⁵²³ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· πόσους ἄρτους ἔχετε; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀλίγα ἰχθῦδια –

⁵²⁴ καὶ παραγγείλας τῷ ὄχλῳ ἀναπεσεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν –

⁵²⁵ ἔλαβεν τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς ἰχθῦδας ὁ καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς, οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τοῖς ὄχλοις –

⁵²⁶ καὶ ἔφαγον πάντες καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν. καὶ τὸ περισσεῦον τῶν κλασμάτων ἦσαν ἑπτὰ σπυρίδας πλήρεις –

⁵²⁷ οἱ δὲ ἐσθίοντες ἦσαν τετρακισχίλιοι ἄνδρες χωρὶς γυναικῶν καὶ παιδίων –

⁵²⁸ Καὶ ἀπολύσας τοὺς ὄχλους ἐνέβη εἰς τὸ πλοῖον καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὰ ὄρια Μαγαδάν –

⁵²⁹ Καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ Σαδδουκαῖοι πειράζοντες ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν σημεῖον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπιδειξάιν αὐτοῖς –

⁵³⁰ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁψίας γενομένης λέγετε· εὐδία, πυρράζει γὰρ ὁ οὐρανός –

⁵³¹ καὶ πρωὶ σήμερον χειμών, πυρράζει γὰρ στυγνάζων ὁ οὐρανός. τὸ μὲν πρόσωπον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ γινώσκετε διακρίνειν, τὰ δὲ σημεῖα τῶν καιρῶν οὐ δύνασθε· – The people are careful to observe the signs and indicators in the sky that reveal what is going on with the weather. But they are unwilling to take into account the indicators of the miracles of Jesus that reveal to them that God is at work in him as the Messiah, bringing about the Kingdom of God.

⁵³² γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς· σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ, καὶ σημεῖον οὐ δοθήσεται αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ τὸ σημεῖον Ἰωνᾶ· καὶ καταλιπὼν αὐτοὺς ἀπῆλθεν – Here, Jesus mentions rather cryptically that his death and resurrection will be the most important indicator that God is at work in him and using him as His Messiah. He will die and three days later rise from the dead. This they must pay attention to—or die, both nationally and individually.

Matthew 12:40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

⁵³³ Καὶ ἐλθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἰς τὸ πέραν ἐπελάθοντο ἄρτους λαβεῖν –

⁵³⁴ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁράτε καὶ προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῆς ζύμης τῶν Φαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων – Jesus is warning his disciples not to embrace the teaching of the Jewish leaders, who have turned the Mosaic Covenant into a script that any actor can

follow so as to look religious before his fellow Jews. However, their script is just play acting and not pleasing to God. Plus, our desire as human beings to find approval among our fellow human beings motivates us to find an easy script to follow that is promoted by the kind of people we want to imitate and then follow their script with their approval.

⁵³⁵ ῥοὶ δὲ διελογίζοντο ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λέγοντες ὅτι ἄρτους οὐκ ἐλάβομεν –

⁵³⁶ γνοῦς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τί διαλογίζεσθε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, ὀλιγόπιστοι, ὅτι ἄρτους οὐκ ἔχετε –

⁵³⁷ οὐπω νοεῖτε, οὐδὲ μνημονεύετε τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους τῶν πεντακισχιλίων καὶ πόσους κοφίνους ἐλάβετε –

⁵³⁸ οὐδὲ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἄρτους τῶν τετρακισχιλίων καὶ πόσας σπυρίδας ἐλάβετε –

⁵³⁹ πῶς οὐ νοεῖτε ὅτι οὐ περὶ ῥἄρτων εἶπον ὑμῖν; προσέχετε δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ζύμης τῶν ῥΦαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων – The teaching of a script from the Mosaic Covenant by the Pharisees and Sadducees is very contagious, because of our natural desire and need to receive other people’s approval and affirmation.

⁵⁴⁰ τότε συνήκαν ὅτι οὐκ εἶπεν προσέχειν ἀπὸ τῆς ζύμης ῥτων ἄρτων ἄλλ’ ἀπὸ τῆς διδαχῆς τῶν ῥΦαρισαίων καὶ Σαδδουκαίων¹ –

⁵⁴¹ Ἐλθὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὰ μέρη Καισαρείας τῆς Φιλίππου ἠρώτα τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ λέγων τίνα ῥ λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι² ῥ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου –

EBC – Caesarea Philippi was built by Herod Philip the tetrarch (cf. 2:20, 22), who enlarged a small town on a plane 1150 feet above sea level at the base of Mount Hermon, renaming it in honor of Caesar, “Philippi” being added to distinguish it from the coastal city of the same name. It lies twenty-five miles north of Galilee snow-capped Mount Hermon can be seen on a clear day from as far away as Nazareth, where Jesus grew up. The inhabitants were largely Gentile. Though Jesus exercised some broader ministry here (17:14; cf. Mark 8:34), primarily he gave himself to the Twelve. Matthew omits Mark’s casual details (Mark 8:27). Anchor BD – After Zenodorus’ death in 20 B.C.E., Augustus gave the district of Paneas to Herod the Great, who subsequently built a magnificent marble temple near the cave in honor of the emperor (called both Paneas and Panium by Josephus, Ant 15.10.3 §360–61, 363–64; JW 1.21.3 §404–5). The district then passed from Herod to his son Philip, the tetrarch of Trachonitis (Ant 17.8.1 §189), who enlarged the city and named it Kaisereia to complete the honor to Caesar Augustus (Ant 18.2.1 §28; JW 2.9.1 §168). The name Caesarea Philippi came to be used in the 1st century C.E. to distinguish it from the other cities named Caesarea. Agrippa II (ca. 53 C.E.) enlarged the city again and gave it the name Neronias (Gk Neroœnias) in honor of Nero (Ant 20.9.4 §211; JW 3.10.7 §514); however, this use is rare according to numismatic evidence (Benzinger in PW 3: 1291). During the First Jewish War, Vespasian and his troops rested at Caesarea Philippi (JW 3.9.7 §443–44). After the fall of Jerusalem (ca. 70 C.E.), Titus went to the city, where it is reported by Josephus that some of the Jewish captives were thrown to wild beasts (JW 7.2.1 §23–24). In later Roman and Byzantine times, the name Caesarea Philippi was superseded by the old name Paneas (e.g., Eusebius Onomast. 215.82; 217.40; 275.36; see HJP² 2: 171 n.465 for its use in rabbinic literature). This ancient frontier city is survived today by the village of Banias (the Arabic form of the name).

⁵⁴² οἱ δὲ εἶπαν ῥοὶ μὲν Ἰωάννην τὸν βαπτιστὴν, ἄλλοι δὲ Ἡλίαν, ἔτεροι δὲ Ἰερεμίαν ἢ ἓνα τῶν προφητῶν –

⁵⁴³ λέγει αὐτοῖς ῥ ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι –

⁵⁴⁴ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος εἶπεν ῥ σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ῥ τοῦ ζῶντος³ –

⁵⁴⁵ ῥ Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ μακάριος εἶ, Σίμων ῥ Βαριωνᾶ, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα οὐκ ἀπεκάλυψέν σοι ἀλλ’ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς⁴ –

⁵⁴⁶ κἀγὼ δὲ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ πύλαι ἄδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς –

⁵⁴⁷ ῥ δώσω σοι τὰς ῥκλείδας τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν δῆσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται ῥδεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν λύσῃς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται ῥλελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς –

⁵⁴⁸ Τότε ῥδιεστειλατο τοῖς μαθηταῖς ῥ ἵνα μηδενὶ εἴπωσιν ὅτι ῥαὐτὸς ἔστιν ῥ ὁ χριστὸς –

⁵⁴⁹ ῥ Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς δεικνύειν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀπελθεῖν⁵ καὶ πολλὰ παθεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀρχιερέων καὶ γραμματέων ῥ καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ ῥτῆ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι⁶ –

⁵⁵⁰ καὶ προσλαβόμενος αὐτὸν ὁ Πέτρος ῥ ἤρξατο ἐπιτιμᾶν αὐτῷ λέγων ῥ ἰλεῶς σοι, κύριε οὐ μὴ ἔσται ῥσοι τοῦτο⁷ –

⁵⁵¹ ὁ δὲ ῥστραφεὶς εἶπεν τῷ Πέτρῳ ῥπαγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ σκάνδαλον εἶ ἐμοῦ⁸, ὅτι οὐ φρονεῖς τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων⁹ –

⁵⁵² Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔλθειν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι –

⁵⁵³ ὅς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι ἀπολέσει αὐτήν ὅς δ’ ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ εὐρήσει αὐτήν – The soul is a person’s existence that occurs because God writes him into His story. If someone desperately holds on to life in the present realm as the most important life he can have, then he demonstrates that he is not primarily interested in the Kingdom of God and eternal life. Therefore, he is rejecting God’s perspective on reality where the latter is more important than the former and will therefore be deserving of God’s wrath, condemnation and destruction.

⁵⁵⁴ τί γὰρ ῥὠφελῆθησεται ἄνθρωπος ἐὰν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον κερδήσῃ τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ζημιωθῇ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ –

⁵⁵⁵ μέλλει γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεσθαι ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ, καὶ τότε ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ ῥτὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ – Two options – 1) This will be at the time of Jesus’ return and the first resurrection, and he will “repay” unbelieving Jews throughout the world with physical death, believing Jews with being lifted from the earth, and the 144,000 loyal Jews with transition into the millennial kingdom on the land of Israel; 2) This will begin with Jesus’ return so that believers will receive eternal life by God’s grace, even in the millennial kingdom, and unbelievers will receive His condemnation and destruction at the Great White Throne Judgment, even if they live during the millennial kingdom. Thus, either a person’s performance will be on the basis of God’s grace and will result in eternal life, or it will be on the basis of his own attempt to

make himself worthy of God's blessing and will result in destruction.

Even though Jesus is speaking to Jews who are most likely interested in the fulfillment of God's promise in Genesis 12 to make them a great nation, it makes sense that he is being comprehensive and referring to both "judgment" when he returns and "judgment" as a result of his return at the end of the millennial kingdom.

Psalm 62:12, And loyal love is Yours, Adonai, because you will repay each man according to his work (הַשְׁכָּרָה שְׂכָרָה לְכָל אִישׁ כְּעֵצוֹ) (ὅτι σὺ ἀποδώσεις ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ).

⁵⁵⁶ Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες ἑστώτων ὅδε οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἄν ἴδωσιν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ – In line with option #2 in the previous verse, this is more likely negative and not positive, especially following the statement of being paid for one's performance. Those who try to earn God's blessing will only buy themselves eternal condemnation, while those who by God's grace pursue goodness will "buy" themselves eternal life. Therefore, the death here is meant to refer to eternal destruction for those Jews who attempt to buy their eternal existence from God with their performance, i.e., apart from God's grace. Jesus is saying that there are Jews present with him whose perspectives on how to gain eternal life will not change so that they do not sense ("taste") that they are destined for eternal death and destruction until Jesus returns, the millennial kingdom takes place, which will result in their being resurrected at the end of it to be judged and condemned at the Great White Throne Judgment.

This also makes better sense of this verse as it follows Jesus' speaking of his coming the glory of the Father, which more likely refers to his return than to anything else. His return will mean life for those who perform according to God's grace and death, indeed eternal death, for those who perform according to their own attempts to make themselves worthy of God's blessings.

⁵⁵⁷ Καὶ τὴν μεθ' ἡμέρας ἕξ παραλαμβάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τὸν Ἰάκωβον καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναφέρει αὐτοὺς εἰς ὄρος ὑψηλὸν ἑκατὸ ἰδίαν – Jesus is preparing for his death, and he takes these three men with him to pray.

⁵⁵⁸ καὶ μετεμορφώθη ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔλαμψεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, τὰ δὲ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο λευκὰ ὡς ἑστὸς φῶς – These changes are demonstrating that God is with him in a truly significant way, similar to God's being with Moses in Exodus 34 when his face shone after meeting with God. Just as Moses was revealed as an important person by the shine on his face, Jesus is being revealed as an even more important person and leader of the Jews by how God is causing his face and garments to glow.

⁵⁵⁹ καὶ ἰδοὺ ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Μωϋσῆς καὶ Ἠλίας συλλαλοῦντες μετ' αὐτοῦ – Are Moses and Elijah helping Jesus, or his Jesus assuring them that he will be their advocate before God? Perhaps both.

⁵⁶⁰ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ κύριε, καλὸν ἐστὶν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι ἑστῶτος, ποιήσω ὧδε τρεῖς σκηνάς, σοὶ μίαν καὶ Μωϋσεὶ μίαν καὶ Ἠλίᾳ μίαν – Is this Peter's way of referencing either the tabernacle of the wilderness (cf. Exodus 25:9ff.) or the tents in which the Israelites lived during their journey through the wilderness along with the tents in which they were to live during the Feast of Tents (cf. Leviticus 23:42,43)? Or is it Peter's way of wanting to serve all three men by providing them with shelter for the night, because he assumed that they would remain on the top of the mountain at least this long? This last option makes more sense in the context where there are no other clues to point to the first two options.

⁵⁶¹ ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ἰδοὺ νεφέλη φωτεινὴ ἐπεσκίασεν αὐτούς, καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα· ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. – When the cloud appears and God speaks, this is a frightening experience for the disciples. God calls Jesus His "Son," the Davidic King. Indeed, he is the final king of Israel. God declares that He loves Him, probably because of his role and his obedience. And He exhorts the three disciples to pay most attention to Jesus, and it would make sense for them to do so because he is the very center of human history from the beginning into eternity. There simply is no other person about whom we should gather information and know and understand.

⁵⁶² καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ μαθηταὶ ἔπεσαν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτῶν καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα – Fear has overwhelmed them.

⁵⁶³ καὶ προσῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἀψάμενος αὐτῶν εἶπεν· ἐγέρθητε καὶ μὴ φοβεῖσθε – Always the healer of sorts, Jesus helps the disciples to overcome their fear by touching them and encouraging them to get up off the ground and follow him off the mountain.

⁵⁶⁴ ἐπάραντες δὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν οὐδένα εἶδον εἰ μὴ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον – Moses and Elijah have disappeared.

⁵⁶⁵ Καὶ καταβαινόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους ἐνετείλατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων μηδενὶ εἰπῆτε τὸ ὄραμα ἕως οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγερθῆ – Probably to prevent any kind of sensationalism that could derail (humanly speaking) his goal of dying on a cross, Jesus wants the three disciples to wait until after this major event in his process of qualifying for his role as Messiah and priest. Cf. 2 Peter 1:16ff.

⁵⁶⁶ Καὶ ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ λέγοντες· τί οὖν οἱ γραμματεῖς λέγουσιν ὅτι Ἠλίαν δεῖ ἐλθεῖν πρῶτον – As the disciples are gaining more understanding of Jesus as the Messiah, they are having to fit his presence into their previously learned theology. They are wondering why the Bible teachers of their day are saying that Elijah must precede the Messiah's appearance when the clearly just saw that the Messiah is present on earth and Elijah only appeared to him on the mountain? Jesus will say in the next verse that John the Baptist was "Elijah," so that he has already come, while also saying in this verse that he will come. By calling someone Elijah whose name is clearly not Elijah, Jesus is revealing that he is using the name symbolically. It means "Yahweh is my God." Certainly, John the Baptist could claim that Yahweh was his God. And so can Jesus. Therefore, it seems best to interpret Jesus here as referring to himself. He is the ultimate "Yahweh is my God" who will fulfill Malachi 4:5-6 and restore the hearts of the Jews through the inward work of the Holy Spirit to that of the "fathers" of authentic faith and belief such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Cf. Malachi 4:5,6 – (NAS95) **Malachi 4:5** "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before (ἐμπροσθέν) (πρὶν) the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. **6** "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

I would translate both the $\alpha\tau$ and $\pi\alpha\tau$ as “at”. In other words, at the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord and before it reaches its conclusion, God will restore the hearts of the Jews, i.e., the 144,000 who become the first generation of the millennial kingdom.

⁵⁶⁷ ὁ δὲ τ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν Ἡλίας μὲν ἔρχεται τ ‘καὶ ἀποκαταστήσει’ πάντα – Two options – 1) Just as John the Baptist is described in Luke 1:17 and in the next verse in Matthew as coming in the spirit of Elijah, there will be another important individual prior to the 2nd coming of Jesus who will be instrumental in evangelizing the Jews and restoring their hearts to a genuine worship of God and His Messiah; 2) Jesus is this “Elijah” in that he will be the one who can say, “Yahweh is my God,” which is the meaning of Elijah, and he will definitely restore the Kingdom of Israel.

#2 makes a lot of sense in the light of the Bible’s not speaking of another person like John the Baptist who immediately precedes Jesus’ return. Thus, Jesus is not saying that there really be someone who comes “first” just before he returns. He is saying that there is someone who will “restore all things,” meaning the Kingdom of Israel.

⁵⁶⁸ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι Ἡλίας ἤδη ἦλθεν, καὶ οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτὸν ἀλλ’ ἐποίησαν ὅσα ἠθέλησαν ὡς αὐτῶν ὅσα ἠθέλησαν ὡς αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μέλλει πάσχειν ὑπ’ αὐτῶν – As the following verse shows, Jesus here is referring to John the Baptist who was mistreated by the Jewish leadership and put to death by Herod Antipas. He helped many Jews and Gentiles repent and turn to God appropriately, so that Jesus can speak of him in an Elijah-like way. Jesus says that he will be mistreated similarly, and he will suffer, which we now know to refer specifically to his crucifixion. Yet, if I am right about the interpretation of the previous verse, he will as a result of his suffering “restore all things,” i.e., the Kingdom of Israel.

⁵⁶⁹ τότε συνῆκαν οἱ μαθηταὶ ὅτι περὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς. τ –

⁵⁷⁰ Καὶ ἔλθόντων πρὸς τὸν ὄχλον προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἄνθρωπος γονυπετῶν αὐτὸν –

⁵⁷¹ καὶ λέγων κύριε, ἐλέησόν μου τὸν υἱόν, ὅτι σεληνιάζεται καὶ κακῶς τ πάσχειν πολλάκις γὰρ πίπτει εἰς τὸ πῦρ καὶ τ πολλάκις εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ –

⁵⁷² καὶ προσήνεγκα αὐτὸν τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου, καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν αὐτὸν θεραπεῦσαι –

⁵⁷³ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν ὦ γενεὰ ἄπιστος καὶ διεστραμμένη, ἕως πότε μεθ’ ὑμῶν ἔσομαι; ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν; φέρετέ μοι αὐτὸν ὧδε –

⁵⁷⁴ καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ τὸ δαιμόνιον καὶ ἐθεραπεύθη ὁ παῖς ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης –

⁵⁷⁵ Τότε προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ κατ’ ἰδίαν εἶπον διὰ τί ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτό –

⁵⁷⁶ ὁ δὲ τ λέγει αὐτοῖς: διὰ τὴν ὀλιγοπιστίαν ὑμῶν ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν ἔχητε πίστιν ὡς κόκκον σινάπεως, ἐρεῖτε τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ: μεταβάβα ἔνθεν ἐκεῖ, καὶ μεταβήσεται καὶ οὐδὲν ἀδυνατήσῃ ὑμῖν –

⁵⁷⁷ ΜΤ – τοῦτο δὲ τὸ γένος οὐκ ἐκπορεύεται εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ καὶ νηστείᾳ –

⁵⁷⁸ Ὑστρεφομένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς μέλλει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοσθαι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων –

⁵⁷⁹ καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἔγερθήσεται. τ καὶ ἐλυπήθησαν σφόδρα. –

⁵⁸⁰ Ἐλθόντων δὲ αὐτῶν εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ προσῆλθον οἱ τὰ δίδραγμα λαμβάνοντες τῷ Πέτρῳ καὶ εἶπαν ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν οὐ τελεῖ τὰ δίδραγμα –

⁵⁸¹ λέγει ναί, καὶ ἔλθόντα εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν προέφθασεν αὐτὸν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων τί σοι δοκεῖ, Σίμων; οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς ἀπὸ τῶν λαμβάνουσιν τέλη ἢ κῆνσον; ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτῶν ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλοτρίων –

⁵⁸² εἰπόντος δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλοτρίων, ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρα γε ἐλεύθεροί εἰσιν οἱ υἱοί –

⁵⁸³ ἵνα δὲ μὴ σκανδαλίσωμεν αὐτούς, πορευθεὶς εἰς τ θάλασσαν βάλε ἄγκιστρον καὶ τὸν ἀναβάνα πρῶτον ἰχθὺν ἄρον, καὶ ἀνοιξάς τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εὐρήσεις τ στατήρα: ἐκείνον λαβὼν δὸς αὐτοῖς ἀντὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ. –

⁵⁸⁴ Ἐν ἐκείνῃ τ τῇ ὄρᾳ προσῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγοντες τίς ἄρα μείζων ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν –

Based on Jesus’ response, this question is most likely coming from a place of pride, arrogance, and a spirit of competition leaning to envy in the disciples that reveals not only their sinful human nature but also their Jewish culture which is focused on obeying the Mosaic Covenant and keeping score of how many outward acts of obedience a person is performing.

This is the same kind of pride and competition which easily arises within and dominates any religious culture and system, even within churches and Christian denominations where the tendency is to construct what Kierkegaard calls an established order that is more concerned about looking successful and perpetuating itself than in the biblical truth.

The phrase “of the heavens” once again refers to the qualities of permanence and indestructibility. And the entire phrase “kingdom of the heavens” in the disciples’ minds probably refers to the restored Kingdom of Israel and not to “heaven” and eternal life the way we tend to think of the kingdom of heaven in the modern church. They are asking about what they understand the prophets to be speaking of when the Messiah appears and destroys all the Jews’ enemies and reestablishes the Davidic Kingdom on the land of Israel for as long as God wants it to exist.

This is a generic note for the parables regarding children in Matthew 18:1-4; 19:13-15; Mark 9:36-37; 10:13-15; Luke 9:46-48; 18:15-17 – Sometimes Jesus is responding to an argument among his disciples about who is the greatest. He tells them that the “least” is the one who is like a child, and therefore is the greatest. The one who humbles himself like a child, who adopts the lowliness and humility of a child is the one who will be in the Kingdom of God.

The one who receives a child in Jesus’ name is also the one who receives Jesus and God the Father. This is the one who is not put off by the humility of a child, who then is not put off by Jesus’ humility as the Messiah, because he is humble and lowly in contrast to how people expect the Messiah who will destroy Israel’s enemies. This is also the person who is not put off by God who has sent Jesus to be the humble and lowly Messiah during this first appearance since God’s plan is for him to suffer at the hands of his own people and die on the cross.

Two main points—

1) Only the sinner who is willing to be lowly and humble like a child will enter into the Kingdom of God and be great. This is the

person who recognizes that he is unimportant in and of himself as a creature of God and, therefore, will be meek and mild within the world.

2) Only the person who is willing to receive “children,” i.e., meek, gentle, and quiet people who understand their creatureliness and, in turn, receive Jesus who was meek and the God who sent him will enter into the Kingdom of God. Human beings tend to be attracted to people who promote themselves and are not meek, quiet, and gentle.

While children are definitely not pure morally (cf. Romans 1), and they tend to be gullible and believe even lies, Jesus is not talking about being children like this.

While children are not intellectually sophisticated and are simple thinkers, Jesus is not talking about being children like this, because God wants us to have deep wisdom and grow in our understanding of God.

While children are honest, frank, and direct, even to a fault, Jesus is not talking about being children like this, since wisdom sometimes calls for not being direct but simply walking away from bullies. There is no sense getting in the cage with the gorilla. Instead, in the ANE, children were not important because of the high mortality rate. This is why the disciples block the mothers from bringing their children to Jesus. But, fortunately, Jesus disagrees AGAIN with the culture and welcomes the children as bona fide human beings who need God’s blessing just as much as adults.

Therefore, it is important that we view ourselves as unimportant before God in the sense that we are merely clay pots and creatures whose existence, breaths, thoughts, feelings, and even choices are completely dependent on the constant and ongoing creating activity of the transcendent God and author of the story of human history. I’m not better than other human beings and should never adopt a perspective of entitlement. God and people owe me nothing. Just as Jesus says in the beatitudes, the meek inherit the land. But this is not the same as self-hatred and self-denigrate

God certainly created us to be marvelous creatures as rational, moral human beings, but because of our sin we lack meekness and humility but we tend to think that people owe us respect because of our intrinsic greatness and capabilities, in other words, because of what we have done and who we are apart from God’s making us who we are. As a result, we demand respect and special treatment.

Likewise, to despise myself and to be unwilling to accept God’s love, grace, and mercy is evil, i.e., when we do not accept who God made us as HIS creatures for HIS purposes, plan, and desires.

⁵⁸⁵ καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸ παιδίον ἔστησεν αὐτὸ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν – Whose child? Probably does not matter. But it is interesting that are children around. Jesus puts this child on display.

The word παιδίον probably refers to a child who is old enough to be instructed and understand certain important elements of the nature of reality and even to make his own moral choices, but knows his place in the family unit, i.e., of being submissive to his parents, as Jesus goes on to imply in his description of the child.

⁵⁸⁶ καὶ εἶπεν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε ὡς τὰ παιδιά, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν – The passive of στρέφω can have an active meaning as shown by Matthew 9:22 below. It probably is active here, emphasizing the need for the disciples to turn from their cultural, religious pride and “become like children,” which Jesus will go on to explain. And without this vital characteristic, they will not “enter into the kingdom of the heavens.”

This is an inward turning of one’s will and a change in one’s primary desires which Jesus is talking about. It is to turn away from pride and being competitive and envious.

Matthew 9:22 But Jesus turning (στραφεῖς) and seeing her said, “**Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.**” At once the woman was made well.

⁵⁸⁷ ὅστις οὖν ταπεινώσει ἑαυτὸν ὡς τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μείζων ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν – In this verse Jesus explains what he means in the previous verse by becoming like children. It is to adopt a humble attitude towards God and, as the rest of chapter 18 indicates by Jesus’ discussion of sin and forgiveness, to repent of one’s sin and even be forgiving towards one’s fellow Christians while pursuing moral goodness as the person’s primary desire.

True repentance (turning – στραφῆτε) is not a religious act but a moral act of the will that comes from deep within a person and his facing into the evil that resides within him, within his natural born sinful humanity and heart, and bringing it before God to seek His forgiveness and mercy.

Children recognize that they have a legitimate authority in their lives before whom they must submit—their parents, and that they are morally obligated to obey their parents and even desire their strong, loving, and wise guidance. This is the same kind of humble submission to God which Jesus means. He is also implying that the Jews of his day in Israel have not properly recognized all that it means to the revealed God of the OT and Mosaic Covenant as their authority, because they have not sufficiently faced into the depth of their sin when repenting before God. They have not adequately humbled themselves in order to obtain His eternal mercy, which will dispel their pride, envy, and competitive spirit.

Jesus also says that it is a humble sinner “like this child,” i.e., with humility like this child before his parents, who “is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens.” But if every Christian is humble like this, then is every Christian “the greatest...”? Yes, meaning that Jesus is implying that there is no one “greatest” person in the kingdom of God. All are of equal greatness because all have been appropriately humble in their sinfulness before God. The point is not to be above others in the kingdom of God. The point is to enter into the kingdom of God and be a permanent resident of it by being humbly repentant of one’s sin and forgiving towards others.

Jesus is not talking about become children who know very little in comparison to adults, as though a lack of biblical theology is virtuous. He is talking about the quality of humility. And certainly the rest of the Bible indicates that the more theology which a sinner knows, the better.

⁵⁸⁸ καὶ ὃς ἐὰν δέξηται ἐν παιδίον τοιοῦτο ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐμὲ δέχεται – Like 1 John and Paul’s exhortations to love one’s fellow Christians, Jesus is pointing out the absolute necessity of humble and repentant sinners who accept into their circle of

friends who will acquire eternal life in the kingdom of God other humble and repentant sinners—and who are willing to forgive them if they mistreat them and are unloving towards them. A person can then be said to be accepting Jesus as his closest friend and associate, which is to embrace all that he is a king and priest along with his moral commandments, especially to love one's fellow Christians.

Thus, “one such child” does not refer to an actual child, but to one who is “like a child” and therefore a knowledgeable sinner who has turned from his pride and envy and chosen to repent before God and become a forgiving sinner who pursues morality in his life.

⁵⁸⁹ Ὅς δ' ἂν σκανδαλίση ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ, συμφέρει αὐτῷ ἵνα κρεμασθῆ μύλος ὀνίκος ἔπερι τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ καταποντισθῆ ἐν τῷ πελάγει τῆς θαλάσσης – Again, as in the previous verse, “one of these little ones who believes in me” is one of the adult disciples who has humbled himself before God like a child and repented of his sin while also becoming most interested in morality and forgiving others.

And σκανδαλίση which I have translated “scandalizes” means to turn a person away from God in his heart and mind in the same manner that Jesus spoke of the necessity of turning towards God in mind and heart in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Thus, Jesus warns against dissuading and turning humble and repentant sinners from properly approaching God through belief in Jesus as their king and priest by trying to lead them down some other path to being in relationship with God, e.g., following the Mosaic Covenant where the thinking is that one's external obedience is necessary and sufficient to make oneself worthy and gain God's approval and mercy. Or, by extrapolation, completely away from God and the Bible as in our modern world and culture.

Jesus means by the last part of the verse that it would be better for the person who leads people away from God not even to exist, because I think what is implied is that he will eventually incur God's wrath, condemnation, and destruction. Jesus is not denying God's sovereign right to cause people like this to exist. He is simply pointing out that there are consequences to rebelling against God and to persuading others to do the same. On an existential level, it is better not to exist than to rebel against God. On a theological level, it is necessary for people like this to exist in order to carry out God's eternal plans and purposes, which is yet difficult to grasp and accept. But it is still true and must be accepted as part of the definition of genuine belief and faith.

⁵⁹⁰ Οὐαὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπὸ τῶν σκανδάλων ἀνάγκη γάρ ἵ ἐλθεῖν τὰ σκάνδαλα, πλὴν οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὅτι οὐδὲ τὸ σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται – Translating ἀπὸ with because does seem to make the most sense. Again, the flexibility of language where words are simply symbols.

I translate τῶν σκανδάλων with “its scandalizings,” meaning the world's tendency with its lies and false ideas to want to lead people away from God and to entice people to rebel against God for the purpose of gaining solidarity with as many rebels as possible.

The world here, τῷ κόσμῳ, starts with the proponents of erroneous Judaism of Jesus' day and ends with all other people who embrace false ideologies and pursuits which are contrary to the Bible in the Gentile nations and cultures, and most specifically here in the 1st century Roman Empire.

Jesus is saying that this scandalizing tendency of unbelievers among Jews and Gentiles to turn people away from God must exist as part of God's sovereign plans and purposes. Yet, he is warning the person who chooses to rebel against God and encourage others to do the same that he will incur His condemnation and destruction (cf. “eternal fire,” etc. in the rest of chapter 18).

⁵⁹¹ Εἰ δὲ ἡ χεὶρ σου ἢ ὁ πούς σου σκανδαλίζει σε, ἔκκοπον αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ· καλὸν σοὶ ἐστὶν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν ἢ κυλλὸν ἢ χωλὸν ἢ ἡ δύο χεῖρας ἢ δύο πόδας ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον – As in the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew 5:30, it certainly makes no sense to think that Jesus is people to cut off or pluck out parts of their bodies as a means to solve the problem of their sin and thus create the direction of their eternal destiny, either life or destruction. Therefore, he is speaking in hyperbole and encouraging his disciples to do all they can do prevent their own natural born sinful humanity (as distinct from the world's tendency to lead them in this direction) from turning them away from God and giving up their belief. Thus, they should notice all their inner tendencies to do such and resist them with every fiber of their being—that if actually worked for them to remove body parts to hold on to their faith, that they should do so. But the issue is not their external members, or even their eyes. It is their hearts and wills which constitute their spiritual orientation—either towards God and committed to being humble and submissive before Him, or away from God and arrogantly rebellious against Him.

By extrapolation, Jesus' disciples should embrace the losses of this world's experience due to the immoral condition of the present realm as an important part of the journey towards eternal life, because they demonstrate the radical contrast between living now and living in the eternal realm, i.e., how much better the latter is going to be. It is not that someone will remain without one hand or one foot in eternity, but that its “loss” so to speak by squarely facing into one's sin and doing whatever one can to avoid abandoning true faith in the present realm is vitally necessary as a bona fide disciple of Jesus who will enter into the kingdom of God.

And if a person allows himself to be scandalized by himself and turns away from God permanently, then he will end up being “thrown into the eternal fire,” which is being used by Jesus to refer to being destroyed as a result of the final judgment as described in Revelation 20. So either “throw” one's self-tendency (as distinct here from the world's tendency, meaning that each sinful human being is capable in and of himself of abandoning his faith in God—for this is how powerful our sin is) to turn away from God from you, or God will “throw” you into His justice that results in eternal destruction.

⁵⁹² καὶ εἰ ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου σκανδαλίζει σε, ἔξελε αὐτὸν καὶ βάλε ἀπὸ σοῦ· καλὸν σοὶ ἐστὶν μονόφθαλμον εἰς τὴν ζωὴν εἰσελθεῖν ἢ δύο ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός – Jesus repeats the lesson from the previous verse with simply a new body part, the eye which looks and can lead a person towards envy, lust, hatred, self-righteousness, etc. and encourages his disciples to avoid sin that comes through looking and observing reality around them and could result in turning away in their hearts and minds from God.

The “Gehenna of fire” is a reference to the trash dump in Jerusalem where they constantly burned and destroyed their trash. The

idea is the same as the “eternal fire” of the previous verse and symbolizes passing out of existence as a human being permanently as the effect of God’s justice towards those who are unwilling to humble themselves like children before God and repent of their sin.

⁵⁹³ Ὁρᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἑνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων Ἦ λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσιν τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. – Again, I think that “one of these little ones” does not refer to a child per se, but to an adult (in this context, one of his disciples) who has become “like a child” with humility, repentance, and obedience towards God from a changed heart and mind. Jesus is saying that his disciples, who I think have become “one of these little ones” who has properly humbled himself before God, should treat other humble sinners in a way that is opposite to hating or looking down on them with contempt (with self-righteousness), which religious people who measure their spirituality by their outward performance will do in their pride and arrogance. In other words, do not act like the kind of people whom you are actually demonstrating yourselves to be by even asking the question of greatness the way that you are. As humble disciples of mine, welcome other humble disciples of mine.

Jesus is saying that religious people do not truly appreciate the humility of genuine believers who have faced into the depth of their sin and sought God’s mercy from the standpoint that they deserve nothing from God but His wrath, condemnation, and destruction. Religious people look down on genuinely humble sinners as missing the whole point, which is to obey religious commandments and follow man-made religious traditions as Jesus talked about with the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 15. By “their angels in the heavens continually see the face of My Father in the heavens,” I think that Jesus is using familiar language to the Jews, even in their erroneous Judaism, to refer the eternal destiny of “these little ones,” that it will be permanent and in the presence of God by virtue of the fact that He will cause them to exist for all eternity. In other words, “their angels” are they themselves who have transitioned as sinners embedded in the present realm to morally perfect and immortal beings in the future realm of the kingdom of God.

⁵⁹⁴ ἦλθε γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός – The TR contains this verse. It contributes to Jesus’ argument by declaring that he as the Son of God from the human race has been given the responsibility within God’s story and as the character placed there by God to rescue from destruction those who deserve it and bring them eternal life.

Thus, τὸ ἀπολωλός (“the lost”) is being used as a metonymy. These people are not in a condition of having been destroyed. They are in a condition of deserving destruction from which Jesus saves them. And in this context, those who are saved are those who become humble like children and repent of their sin so that they are not concerned about competing with others for greatness in the kingdom of God, but are concerned about being like everybody else—in the kingdom of God!

⁵⁹⁵ Τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ; ἐὰν γένηται τινὶ ἀνθρώπῳ ἑκατὸν πρόβατα καὶ πλανηθῇ ἓν ἐξ αὐτῶν, οὐχὶ ῥάφήσει τὰ ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα ἢ ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη ἢ καὶ πορευθεὶς ἕζηται τὸ πλανώμενον – And just how committed is God to those who grasp this concept of humility like a child and who have turned to Him? If this person “wanders” like a planet away from God, even while he has a gazillion other firm believers in Him who are remaining constant in their faith, He will certainly “search” for the wanderer and bring him back.

Thus, Jesus uses the analogy of a shepherd and his sheep. Each one individually is previous and valuable to him to the extent that he will leave ninety-nine (a whole huge flock) with his fellow shepherds (certainly they are not left alone with the risk of their being attacked by wolves or other wild animals) and go in search of the one who has wandered away from the flock.

JC – receiving a child-like, i.e., meek, person in vs. 2ff., not self-important. Then, v. 6, talking about literal children, who need to become meek and a horrible evil to mislead a child who otherwise is inclined to believe in Jesus. Culture did not hold children in high regard. Vs. 8-9, how big a deal scandalizing is—rid oneself of any and all scandalizing that a person may tend to possess in order to avoid eternal death. V. 10 – literal children from v. 6 and the importance of seeking to help them become believers in Jesus—counter-cultural. Parable of v. 12ff. is straightforward analogy. God places value on a lost soul just as a shepherd values a lost sheep. V. 14 is ambiguous. “Will” = either purpose, plan, choice or desire. “Desire” is correct meaning according to the analogy. The shepherd cannot “purpose” that all the sheep remain with him. Instead, it is his “desire” that they all remain and is why he goes in search of the lost one. 1 Timothy 2:1ff. – God desires that all men be saved, not plans that this happens and causes it to happen. The “flock of sheep” = either 1) chosen believers from predestination, or 2) nation of Israel, the Jews, or 3) all humanity. #1 makes sense if talking about the “plan” of God. The heart of God is that He “desires” things that He does not “plan,” so that He sees and knows the tragedy of this story that people incur His wrath and destruction. He does not delight in destroying people. Either #2 or #3 works. Focus on his audience as Jews works well. #3 is in view in 2 Peter 3:9. V. 14 – “little ones” = children as members of nation of Israel and by extension to the rest of the Jews and the rest of humanity. V. 10 – “angels in heaven” = either theophanies or messengers/messages, meaning the desire of the child and his heart in appealing to God, “seeing the face of the Father” = means that God’s face is towards a person so that he is in favor with God and His grace. Thus, God does regard the cries of a child for His help and mercy, when the culture does not.

⁵⁹⁶ καὶ ἐὰν γένηται εὐρεῖν αὐτό, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι χαίρει ἐπ’ αὐτῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα τοῖς μὴ πεπλανημένοις – If the shepherd finds the wandered away sheep (and he will in analogy to God who “searches” for a wandered believer), he rejoices more than because of the fact that the ninety-nine are still all together. This means that God finds great joy in preserving the belief of His “sheep,” including those who struggle to remain humble, repentant, and obedient, so that their weakness is not a hindrance to His making sure they will “enter into the kingdom of the heavens.”

⁵⁹⁷ οὕτως οὐκ ἔστιν θέλημα ἑμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἵνα ἀπόληται ἓν τῶν μικρῶν τούτων – Again, “one of these little ones” refers to adult believers who are humble like children.

Here Jesus explains the analogy as I already have in the previous notes. God’s “will” is that any sinner who genuinely becomes like a child and humbles himself before Him will find that his tendency to “wander” from God in his heart and mind and turn away from Him will not prevent him from obtaining eternal mercy and life. God will go in search of him and bring him back so

that he remains a bona fide member of the community of authentic “great” ones in the kingdom of God. This identifies God’s faithfulness to the ones whom He has chosen before the creation of the world as described by other NT documents.

⁵⁹⁸ Ἐάν δὲ ἀμαρτήσῃ [εἰς σὲ] ὁ ἀδελφός σου, ὑπάγε ἐλεγξον αὐτὸν μεταξύ σου καὶ αὐτοῦ μόνου. ἔάν σου ἀκούσῃ, ἐκέρδῃσας τὸν ἀδελφόν σου – Like God, who as a shepherd of His flock of humble ones pursues those who have turned to Him and yet who wander from Him as though they are going to turn away from Him, the sheep should do what they can to assist their fellow sheep in avoiding permanent wandering that could result from their sin.

Jesus’ disciples who have become bona fide Christians should assist their fellow Christians in repenting of their sin if they observe that repentance is not occurring.

The first step, as Jesus is describing here, is to provide this assistance one on one and in private. If the encouragement succeeds and repentance occurs, then the “wandering” sinner has returned to the sheep fold of the many who are not currently wandering.

⁵⁹⁹ ἔάν δὲ μὴ ἀκούσῃ, παράλαβε ‘μετὰ σοῦ ἔτι ἓνα ἢ δύο’, ἵνα ἐπὶ στόματος ἑδύο μαρτύρων ἢ τριῶν σταθῇ πᾶν ῥήμα – Deuteronomy 19:15, One witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any act of evil or any sin in the midst of every sin which he has committed. On the basis of two or three witnesses a matter shall stand (רַב־דָּבָר יִקְרָא עַל-כִּי שְׁנַיִם אֲדָרִיבִי אֶת-עַל-כִּי שְׁנַיִם אֲדָרִיבִי) (ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων καὶ ἐπὶ στόματος τριῶν μαρτύρων σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥήμα).

Jesus now uses the Mosaic Covenant to teach his disciples that, if one person’s assisting a sinner in the community of believers in repenting does not succeed, then adding one or two more to the process of assistance is wise and the next step—because the goal is for everyone within the group, who says that he wants to enter into the kingdom of God and become “great,” to do so.

Hopefully, these two additional people showing that they care about his being humble “like a child” and being a genuinely repentant sinner will persuade him to do so.

⁶⁰⁰ ἔάν δὲ παρακούσῃ αὐτῶν, εἰπὲ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ: ἔάν δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας παρακούσῃ, ἔστω σοι ὡσπερ ὁ ἐθνικός καὶ ὁ τελώνης – I think that this next step of speaking to the ἐκκλησία (church, assembly, gathering) assumes that everyone already knows that this wandering person is not currently willing to be humble and repentant, so that it is no surprise to them all that this person is sinning. Now, though, in as gentle and loving a way as possible, they all can encourage him to repent and thereby demonstrate that he truly desires to be a fellow “greatest” one in the eternal kingdom of the heavens.

But if the encouragement of them all does not succeed in persuading him to do so, then the only option left at this point is to consider him someone who is not genuinely interested in God’s mercy and eternal life. Jesus uses for this kind of person two labels that would be familiar to his Jewish disciples.

The first is ὁ ἐθνικός, a Gentile who is ethnically different from the Jews and thereby means in this context someone who is outside the community of the people of God, thereby being subject to His eternal condemnation and destruction. The other label is ὁ τελώνης, a tax-collector, thereby a Jew who has placed himself outside the community of God’s people and who also is subject to His eternal condemnation and destruction. Thus, with both labels, Jesus is referring to proud people who are unwilling to become like humble children before God. And he is also referring specifically to Jewish Christians.

⁶⁰¹ Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅσα ἔάν δήσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὅσα ἔάν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἐν οὐρανῷ – In this context, Jesus is speaking of properly responding to his teaching here about achieving the status of being the greatest in the kingdom of God through humility and assisting one’s fellow humble sinners in remaining humble. If the community of Jewish believers and disciples of Jesus respond properly to his instructions, then this is because God “in heaven” has predestined and foreordained them to do so. And they all need to recognize this as the ultimate dynamic of what is going on. It will obviously be important for the wandering believer to do so as he hopefully responds to the assistance of his fellow humble sheep.

⁶⁰² Πάλιν [ἀμὴν] λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἔάν δύο ἑσμεν συμφωνήσωσιν ἐξ ὕμων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς περὶ παντὸς πράγματος οὗ ἔάν αἰτήσωνται, γενήσεται αὐτοῖς παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς – In addition, if two good sheep of God agree that they should help another sheep who is wandering from the fold through his sin with the potential to turn completely away from God, and they solicit God’s help in the matter, then He will definitely help them—not that this guarantees that the person who is sinning without repentance will repent, but at least that they will be doing the right thing as it pertains to the potential of his eternal destiny.

⁶⁰³ Ὅσον γὰρ εἰσὶν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἔμὸν ὄνομα, ἕκαστος ἐμὲ ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν – The above is true because a gathering of sinners “in [Jesus’] name” is a gathering of humble sinners, not the proud sinners that the disciples demonstrated themselves to be by their question of who is the greatest in the kingdom of God. In other words, “in my name” means with authentic belief and a genuine desire to be obedient to God and Jesus.

And for Jesus to be “in their midst” is for his teachings to be primary in their minds as that which they should obey.

⁶⁰⁴ Τότε προσελθὼν ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ: κύριε, ποσάκις ἀμαρτήσῃ ἕως ἐμὲ ὁ ἀδελφός μου καὶ ἀφήσω αὐτῷ; ἕως ἐπτάκις – It is as though Peter is saying, “As long as we are talking about your Jewish disciples’ sinning, what about one of them sinning against me and my forgiving him? Would I be required to forgive him only seven times?”

So the question here is how did Peter arrive at the number seven as that which he puts in his question? And another question is what does he mean by forgive?

According to the EBC, the Jewish rabbis placed a limit of three times on the maximum that someone has to forgive his fellow Jew for the same offense which he is committed against him. Then, the fourth time (or I guess any number of times beyond three) does not require forgiveness. Perhaps, Peter thinks that Jesus as the Messiah would require more than three as the maximum and picks the number seven as appropriate and even biblical (cf. Leviticus 26:21; Deuteronomy 28:25, etc.).

As to the second question about the exact meaning of forgiveness, it is hard to say what the answer is.

⁶⁰⁵ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς: οὐ λέγω σοι ἕως ἐπτάκις ἀλλ’ ἕως ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἐπτά – Jesus responds with the phrase “up to seventy times seven,” which equals 490. But his use of sevens in his response that produce a much larger number than the seven which Peter first suggested must mean that there is no limit to the number of times that Peter must forgive his Jewish brother.

- 1) I don't have to forget and wipe out of my mind the wrong and harm that someone has done to me.
- 2) I cannot demand that God condemn them eternally.
- 3) I am not gullible so as to think that I can and should trust the person from now on. This would be stupid and irrational.
- 4) I do not have to like them and be around them or their friend.
- 5) I do not have to and probably should not respect them.
- 6) I do not have to forego seeking appropriate human justice against, even by starting with bringing charges against them.
- 7) I do not have to be in denial in regard to their offense. And it is up to God to grant the person mercy or to exact justice and vengeance.

⁶¹⁹ Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἔτελεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους, μετῆρεν ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὰ ὄρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου – This is the first mention by Matthew (also see Mark 10:1-12) of Jesus' traveling south from Galilee instead traveling around the area of the Sea of Galilee, including Tyre and Caesarii Philippi. He is now on his way to Jerusalem to die, having visited the city 4x before as described by John.

- 1) the first time for Passover in John 2:13ff,
- 2) the second time for Succoth in John 5:1ff,
- 3) the third time for Succoth again in John 7:1-10:21, and
- 4) the fourth time for the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) in John 10:22-39.

As I said, Jesus is now making his final trip to Jerusalem to die on the cross. And the fact that he has journeyed “to the other side of the Jordan” indicates that he is in what would be modern Jordan, on the east side of the Jordan River.

⁶²⁰ καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς ἑκάε – Jesus continues to perform miracles of healing in the midst of “large crowds” of Jews as an important way of God's confirming his identity as the Messiah.

John 5:19 Therefore, Jesus responded and was saying to them, “Truly, truly I say to you, the Son cannot do anything of himself, except what he sees the Father doing, for whatever things That One does, the Son also does these things likewise. **5:20** For the Father loves the Son, and He reveals to him everything that He Himself does, and He will reveal to him greater works than these, so that you may be extraordinarily impressed. **5:21** For just as the Father raises the dead and makes them live, thus also the Son makes alive whomever he desires.”

⁶²¹ Καὶ προσῆλθον αὐτῷ Ἁρισσαῖοι πειράζοντες αὐτὸν καὶ λέγοντες Ἵ ἐἴξεστιν ἄνθρωπῳ ἀπολῦσαι τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν – Where did these Pharisees come from? Probably from Jerusalem, the hub of Judaism.

Matthew indicates that the Pharisees are “testing” (πειράζοντες) Jesus, to establish among themselves just how biblical he is in their opinion, whether or not he is willing to submit to God and, in their case because they are Jewish leaders, to the Mosaic Covenant—at least as they understood it, which we know from the rest of the NT was not correctly.

There are three parties of note in this discussion—

- 1) the Pharisees, who would claim to be experts in understanding and teaching the OT, from Genesis to Malachi, and probably especially the Mosaic Covenant of Exodus through Deuteronomy, but who misunderstand so much of the OT as they believed (it would seem) that the Messiah would come to destroy their enemies as he renews and restores the Davidic Kingdom and that he would point the Jews to Moses as their primary teacher with the Mosaic Covenant being their primary texts (It is this latter part where they were completely wrong, to the extent that they reject Jesus and end up executing him for blasphemy, i.e., false claiming to be the Messiah),
- 2) Jesus, who is the only one in Israel to understand the OT correctly since he is the Messiah and icon of God, and
- 3) Jesus' disciples, who are in the process of understanding the OT better, but who still lack complete and accurate understanding. Therefore, the interpretation of this passage (and any one like it in the gospels) requires trying to get into the heads of each of these three parties and understand their presuppositions and their current grasp of the biblical theology from their study of the OT.

I assume that the Pharisees' question comes from a place of general agreement among themselves, and that the way they pose the question to Jesus, if their view is not completely that divorce is allowed “for any reason at all” (κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν = according to every cause), it is probably close—that husbands have the right to end their marriage with their wives almost at will. In other words, the cause does not have to be all that grave or serious—as will become clearer in v. 7. It just needs to be obvious.

EBC – In mainstream Palestinian Judaism, opinion was divided roughly into two opposing camps: both the school of Hillel and the school of Shammai permitted divorce (of the woman by the man: the reverse was not considered) on the grounds of *erwat dabar* (“something indecent,” Deut 24:1), but they disagreed on what “indecent” might include. Shammai and his followers interpreted the expression to refer to gross indecency, though not necessarily adultery; Hillel extended the meaning beyond sin to all kinds of real or imagined offenses, including an improperly cooked meal. The Hillelite R. Akiba permitted divorce in the case of a roving eye for prettier women (M *Gittin* 9:10) [I guess this means that “indecency” of the wife is that she is not as beautiful as another woman.].

Here, the Pharisees' hope seems to be that Jesus will directly contradict them (by supposedly contradicting Moses and Deuteronomy 24) so that they can conspire against him as someone who is violating the Mosaic Covenant (at least according to them—like the leaders of a particular denomination or church who arrogantly believe that their biblical theology is entirely accurate while all other so-called Christians are heretics). We can understand their mindset by their question in v. 7, that they hold to a view whereby they are allowed to divorce their wives for probably any kind of unpleasant behavior (even losing their physical beauty). If this is the case, they are hoping Jesus will deny this so that they can conspire against him by accusing him of violating the Mosaic Covenant, something that deserves death as the penalty.

⁶²² ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν Ἵ οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ὅτι ὁ ῥαββίς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς – Jesus' answer is neither a direct yes nor a direct no. Instead, he presents the Pharisees with theological and biblical answer by pointing them to the stories

in Genesis 1 & 2 of the creation of mankind, and specifically Adam and Eve, the first two human beings, in Genesis 2. Jesus also does not simply say, “God made Adam and Eve...” He starts by saying, “Have you not read (οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε) ...?” I assume that Jesus’ question, by using the word οὐκ means that he knows that they have “read” the passage in Genesis 2. Of course they have read the OT, including Genesis 1 & 2, during their synagogue meetings week after week throughout their lives. But have they really understood it? That is the real question. And he also knows that they have not.

Jesus also calls God “The One Who Creates” (ὁ ἑκτίσας). I think that it makes more sense to interpret the aorist tense as simply stating an ongoing fact rather than referring to a single event in the past. God is the person who brings into existence anything that does not already exist and cannot exist apart from the transcendent creator. In other words, only God Himself exists without “The One Who Creates” bringing Him into existence. And Jesus is saying this in the context of the rest of the verse that quotes the Septuagint of Genesis 1:27, that God is the creator *ex nihilo* so that He has the right to require and mandate exactly how all rational and moral creatures should behave, especially in this case in regard to those who are either male or female.

The next words in the Greek text are “from the beginning” (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς). Two options –

- 1) Jesus is saying that God is “to One who Creates from the beginning” to emphasize that nothing came into the existence at the beginning of the creation and nothing has ever existed, does exist, or will exist apart from God’s causing it to do so, or
- 2) Jesus is saying that God made human beings male and female from the beginning” to emphasize that no other genders and all other human beings as either male or female have existed as created by God along with His purpose for individual men and individual women to become married to one another as stated in v. 5.

These basically mean that same thing, and I am inclined to think #2 is correct so that the emphasis includes that God as the creator of each human being, whether male or female, has the exclusive right to mandate how each one should act—in this case, as a potential or actual partner in relationship to someone of the opposite sex in order to be on the same page with one another with respect to God’s moral commandments and with the understanding that their priority is to obey Him and His commandments. And whether or not Jesus intends to imply it, an inference is that men and women are the only genders with their only role with respect to one another being to unite in marriage if they are going to commit themselves to each other such that their lives truly “become one flesh” that involves not only moral intimacy but also physical intimacy.

And finally in this verse Jesus says that the One Who Creates “made them male and female” (ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς), which is a direct quote from the last verse of the Septuagint’s translation of Genesis 1:27, “He made them male and female.”

Genesis 1:26 Then God [Elohim] said, “Let Us make man (אָדָם) (ἄνθρωπον) in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” **1:27** God created man (אָדָם) (τὸν ἄνθρωπον) in His own image, in the image of God He created him. Male (זָכָר) (ἄρσεν) and female (אִשָּׁה) (θῆλυ) He created them. **1:28** God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” **1:29** Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; **1:30** and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so. **1:31** God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

So here Jesus looks to the entire account in Genesis 1:1-2:3 for the first part of his response to the Pharisees on the subject of divorce.

Again, his point is that God made human beings to be men and women who fulfill their purpose of being together as existent mates intent on obeying God’s moral commandments, and, by implication, to continue the existence of human beings by having children.

⁶²³ καὶ εἶπεν ἕνεκα τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ ἑκολληθήσεται τῇ γυναίκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν – The subject of εἶπεν is most likely “it,” i.e., the Bible, the scriptures, and specifically **Genesis 2:24** “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined [glued] to his wife; and they shall become one flesh (ἕνεκεν τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν).” Jesus’ rendering is slightly but not substantially different from the Septuagint.

“For this reason” (ἕνεκα τούτου) in the Genesis text is referring to the statement by Adam when he recognized that Eve was taken from him, literally from “one of his ribs,” and God “built” her into a woman from the rib—whatever this process must have looked like. In any event, she was literally a “part” of him. And the author of Genesis is saying that “for this reason, a man [i.e., any man/husband] shall leave...”, even though Eve was the only woman/wife who was created in this fashion from her own husband. After her, women came into existence through the normal birth process. It seems like a fairly weird argument, but the author of Genesis, Moses, is drawing an inference from what God did to create Eve and what Adam concluded about the process—that she was inextricably tied to him in such a way that they were “glued” together and “one flesh” as he continues to say. In other words, even though no other wife has been made in the same manner as Eve, nevertheless every other husband is intended to think of himself as Adam did (and should have continued to do so) and every other wife is intended to think of herself as Eve did (and should have continued to do so).

A “man shall leave his father and his mother” (καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα) indicates probably not so much a physical separation from his parents but a personal, spiritual, and moral separation in the sense of his individuating and becoming his own person accountable to God for his thoughts and actions. As a result, he will be judged apart from his parents and from all other human beings. In other words, he must choose to submit to and follow God’s instructions for what it means to

be human and a rational and moral choice-making organic being. By doing so, he makes himself ready and available to enter into a marriage relationship with a woman, who is also a human and a rational and moral choice-making organic being.

The fact that the man “shall be glued to his wife” (*καὶ κολληθήσεται τῇ γυναίκὶ αὐτοῦ*) is the context here in Genesis and in Jesus’ response in which the man’s rational and moral individuation takes place, so that God’s design of the two genders means that he glues his rational and moral understanding to that of his wife’s, which should be the same as his, i.e., totally biblical per se when it comes to submitting and obeying God morally. This is the conclusion that Adam drew about Eve when God made her from a part of him so that she became a part of him. The Greek text uses the term *κολλάω* which means to join or glue two things together. Thus, God’s intent is for a man and a woman to glue themselves together in such a way that their “one flesh”-like lives portray two sinful human beings who are exactly on the same page in regard to their moral understanding and obedience to God. This last point is summed up in the statement “the two shall become one flesh” (*καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν*), where *εἰς σάρκα μίαν* is *וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד* in the Hebrew text. Again, I think that the Genesis author, Moses, is stating the purpose of marriage as a result of the manner in which God brought the first wife, Eve, into existence—that it is the opportunity for two sinful human beings, a man and a woman, to display together their grasp of the importance and significance of acknowledging God as their creator and of obeying His moral commandments in their lives. I think that this is the same point that the apostle Paul makes in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 where the husband has the primary responsibility to make good, moral choices in their marriage and before God and where the husband and wife are likened to Jesus and his followers respectively. This means that a husband must view his wife as valuable to his existence as Jesus views his followers, and vice versa. That is a lot of granting of respect, love, and importance to another sinful human being.

Therefore, the marital relationship is a mutual commitment to relating to a person of the opposite sex with the greatest intimacy possible for sinful human beings—intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually.

⁶²⁴ ὥστε οὐκέτι εἰσὶν δύο ἀλλὰ ἓ σὰρξ μία. ὁ οὖν ὁ θεὸς συνέζευξεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον μὴ χωριζέτω – These comments in vs. 4-6 are not presented in the same manner as in Mark 10:1-12. But the point is certainly the same.

From the truths that Jesus reminds the Pharisees of in Genesis 1 & 2 about men, women, and marriage, he himself draws a conclusion by using the word ὥστε that I have translated “Consequently.”

He says that “they are no longer two but one flesh” (*οὐκέτι εἰσὶν δύο ἀλλὰ ἓ σὰρξ μία*). I think he means that “they,” i.e., a man and a woman who have entered into marriage, are no longer completely independent, rational and moral sinful human beings. Instead, in their one fleshness, they are intended to communicate so intimately with one another that they pursue together God’s moral commandments for sinful human beings, even if they are making different choices according to the immediate circumstances in their lives. Again, they are on exactly the same page when it comes to what God requires and instructs us sinful human beings to think and to do from a moral standpoint. This is their intellectual, emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual oneness with each other.

- 1) Intellectually they know and understand the same ideas about the nature of reality, the biblical truth by God and of God.
- 2) Emotionally, they respond at least quite similarly to the same circumstances in their experiences as intellectually understanding sinful human beings, because they care about the same things that are most important in their lives, especially truth and God’s promise of eternal salvation.
- 3) Psychologically, they grasp the significance of all their experiences as human beings, including how the biblical truth affects them.
- 4) Physically, they know that they are to keep their bodies separate from other people and for only their spouses where one of the important goals of doing so is to have children.
- 5) Spiritually, they encourage each other to believe and obey God according to the truth which they have learned about God, which in our day has its source in the Bible.

Jesus then draws another conclusion from the oneness of flesh, that “what God has joined together” (*ὁ οὖν ὁ θεὸς συνέζευξεν*), no one should “separate” (*ἄνθρωπος μὴ χωριζέτω*) or break apart.

The question is, to what is Jesus referring when he says, *ὁ οὖν ὁ θεὸς συνέζευξεν*? A couple of options—

1) Each marriage between a man and a woman regardless of the place, the mindset, the historical context, or the religious context in which it takes place, so that if any man and any woman decide to get married, then God is the one who is joining them together into one flesh. (Therefore, for any married man and woman to break up their marriage is to destroy what God had created in that individual and specific marriage.)

2) Marriage is an institution that involves one man and one woman, so that God is the one who has created the institution.

Therefore, it should not be taken lightly and thought of as something we human beings can either take or leave depending on our whims and desires. What God has put together as an institution, let no one remove in the sense of ignoring God’s teaching about it in Genesis 1 & 2, for example, and changing it into merely a convenience or something that they think they can take for a while and then leave later. It is to be considered as seriously as God considers it. Thus, it is not individual marriages per se of which Jesus is speaking. It is the institution which people do not think carefully about by fully taking God into account when they get married. If they do not think carefully about it properly, even if they go through a marriage ceremony which refers to God and thereby become “married,” they are already “breaking apart” and separating that which “God has joined together.” They are considering as trivial (or at least as less important than they should) the institution which God created. (Therefore, according to the biblical definition of marriage, they are already “divorced,” because they are not properly taking God properly into account). I am inclined to think that #2 is correct, so that the problem is not that two sinful human beings make a commitment to conduct their moral choices within the context of marriage (and what must be implied is the physical and sexual aspect that is to be confined to a married couple consisting of a man and woman), and then they split up and go their separate ways. The problem is that people choose to ignore seeking out God’s teaching on marriage so that they can know exactly that to which they are morally

obligated to preserve as such.

I am also inclined to think that the second option is correct because of the neuter δ and the context involving the Pharisees who unfortunately have already trivialized everything truly important, including Jesus as the Messiah. Their understanding of the Mosaic Covenant is nothing close to what God intended. It is only a religious system that the Pharisees are using for their existential convenience, in spite of their “zeal for God” as Paul says in Romans 10:2. Their zeal is “not in accordance with knowledge” that is like that of Jesus and Paul.

Certainly, the Mosaic Covenant is explicit about the problem of acting in a manner that breaks up an individual marriage. For example, **Leviticus 18:20** ‘You shall not have intercourse with your neighbor’s wife, to be defiled with her.’ Also the entire chapter of Leviticus 18 seems to assume married people as its audience while prohibiting sexual immorality between all other people, i.e., those who are not married in accordance with the teaching of Genesis 1 & 2 confining marriage to one man and one woman who fully understand God’s intent and purpose for marriage.

Here is another NT context involving the word for “break apart” and marriage – **1 Corinthians 7:10** Nevertheless, I command those who have married (not I but the Lord) that a wife not be separated from her husband ($\gamma\upsilon\nu\alpha\iota\kappa\alpha$ ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς μὴ $\chi\omega\rho\iota\sigma\theta\eta\eta\alpha\iota$). **7:11** And if she indeed is separated ($\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ δὲ καὶ $\chi\omega\rho\iota\sigma\theta\eta\eta$), let her remain unmarried, or let her be reconciled to her husband. Thus, a wife should not abandon her husband.

Jesus’ point in these verses is to demonstrate that God has made marriage to be a permanent union of a man and a woman so that they live in harmony with God’s purpose for marriage. This purpose is to be inwardly oriented towards God (in their hearts and minds), to choose to live together with mutual caring for each other’s intellectual, spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical well-being according to God’s moral commandments for the ultimate purpose of gaining permanent and eternal life (as born out by the teaching of the rest of the Bible). Again, by inference, this purpose by God includes the production of children for the propagation of the human race (even though this results in more sinful human beings) and the enjoyment of sexual and physical intimacy.

Thus, Jesus camps on the concept of “one flesh” and identifies it as something which “God has joined together” (δ οὖν $\acute{\omicron}$ $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\zeta\upsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu$). This verse and its correlative in Mark 10:9 are the only places in the NT where $\sigma\upsilon\zeta\epsilon\upsilon\gamma\upsilon\mu\iota$ is used.

I am inclined to think that the second option is correct because of the neuter δ and the context involving the Pharisees who unfortunately have already trivialized everything truly important, including Jesus as the Messiah. Their understanding of the Mosaic Covenant is nothing close to what God intended. It is only a religious system that the Pharisees are using for their existential convenience, in spite of their “zeal for God” as Paul says in Romans 10:2. Their zeal is “not in accordance with knowledge” that is like that of Jesus and Paul.

Ezekiel 1:11 Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each had two touching (נִרְיָבָה) ($\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\zeta\epsilon\upsilon\gamma\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\iota$) another being, and two covering their bodies.

⁶²⁵ Λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· τί οὖν Μωϋσῆς ἐνετείλατο δοῦναι βιβλίον ἀποστασίου καὶ ἀπολῦσαι ὁ[αὐτήν] – Now the Pharisees have the opportunity for which they have been waiting in order to “test” Jesus. And they must be referring to the all important passage in Deuteronomy 24—

Deuteronomy 24:1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor ($\text{לֹא־נָצְתָה$ נְזֻתָה) ($\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ μὴ εὖρη χάριν ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ) in his eyes because he has found some indecency (נֶגְעָה נֶגְעָה = nakedness (metonymy) of word, matter, thing) ($\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\eta\mu\omicron\nu$ $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\gamma\mu\alpha$ = shameful, indecent (=not conforming to God’s moral standards) thing, deed, matter) in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, **24:2** and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man’s wife, **24:3** and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, **24:4** then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled ($\text{הִטְמָאָה$) ($\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}$ τὸ $\mu\alpha\nu\theta\eta\eta\alpha\iota$ αὐτήν); for that is an abomination before Yahweh, and you shall not bring sin on the land which Yahweh your God gives you as an inheritance.”

We notice first that the Pharisees refer to Moses and not to God, even though He made the Mosaic Covenant with the nation of Israel through Moses. They do not say, “Why then did God command...?” But instead, “Why then did Moses...” And I think that reason they say “Moses” is because they regard him as their primary teacher of theology and biblical understanding. This also is striking because Jesus has been indicating for three years that he is taking over for Moses as teacher of Israel. But the Jewish leaders have refused to acknowledge his claim as either the Messiah or their primary teacher.

The verb $\epsilon\acute{\nu}\epsilon\tau\epsilon\iota\lambda\alpha\tau\omicron$ (from $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\omega$) could mean simply “instruct” and not the stronger “command.” But either way, the Pharisees are asking Jesus to comment on the fact that Moses, their primary teacher, provided teaching in the Mosaic Covenant on marriages breaking up—as if the breaking up of marriages is an actual morally good act as part of the covenant. They are wondering (while testing him) how he explains the fact that the Mosaic Covenant certainly seems to condone (even endorse!) divorce and the dissolution of marriages (within the nation of Israel and among the Jews!) while they have no problem with what he has said about what God initially did and apparently required in regard to the nature of marriage.

Plus, the instruction in Deuteronomy is given to husbands, that they have the right (?) “to give [their wife] a written document of divorce and to send her away.” What exactly are the Pharisees asking? I think that we have to try to climb inside their minds as unbelievers and religious adherents to the Bible and specifically the Mosaic Covenant, so that we can assume that they tend to look for justification to do what they want to do that is actually contrary to God’s purposes even though they think that they have biblical and moral grounds to obey Him according to the what they think obedience is. In other words, religious unbelievers like the Pharisees are not fundamentally committed to accurate, biblical morality. Instead, they are committed maybe only to

appearing as though they are committed to obeying God. They are committed to themselves and what they want to do as sinful human beings and not to God and what He commands and instructs.

⁶²⁶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὅτι Μωϋσῆς πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν ἐπέτρεπεν ὑμῖν ἀπολύσαι τὰς γυναῖκας ὑμῶν· ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς δὲ οὐ γέγονεν οὕτως – Jesus responds with a different word from theirs that is probably a very important part of understanding the difference between their belief system and his. He says that “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives” (ἐπέτρεπεν ὑμῖν ἀπολύσαι τὰς γυναῖκας ὑμῶν). In other words, the passage in Deuteronomy is not a moral commandment per se—as the Pharisees seem to understand it. Instead, it is an accommodation to the immoral nature of the Jews. And this Jesus makes even clearer by stating that Moses (and therefore God since Moses was acting as a prophet when he spoke these words to the Israelites) was presenting these instructions to the people (and by extension to all Jews who are required to live under the authority of the Mosaic Covenant) “because of the hardness of [their, and by extension “your,” these Pharisees standing in front of him] hearts” (πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν).

But what exactly does Jesus mean by “because [literally, “towards”] the hardness of your hearts. Two options -

1) God changed His mind from what He originally did and required in Genesis 1 & 2 so that divorce is permissible and not a violation of His moral commandments in a world (and among the Jews) where people are simply sinful.

2) God has stipulated that, if a sinful husband, is bound and determined to break up his (Jewish!) marriage, then he must do so in the most advantageous way for his wife, by providing her with written proof of the hardness of his heart so that another man who would want to interact with her in a married way has the most public evidence available to be permitted by God and the Mosaic Covenant to do so.

#1 does not make sense to me, while #2 not only makes sense but also points out that the Mosaic Covenant was in a sense God’s way of accommodating the nation of Israel in the midst of their sinfulness. In other words, it is not a prescription for moral perfection. Instead, it is a set of requirements intended to demonstrate God’s choice of the Jews in the midst of their sinfulness and their willingness to submit to Him as teachers of truth to the rest of the world, to the Gentiles—so that both they and the Gentiles might experience His grace, mercy, and promise of eternal life while passing through the phase of the “great nation” of the people of Israel according to the promises of Genesis 12:1-3. In other words, the “permission” to break apart the institution of marriage which God brought into existence as described in Genesis 1 & 2 is to preserve as loving and stable an environment for the Jews while they carry out their national responsibility within human history.

The second part of this verse could be either a question or a statement. Either way, Jesus is indicating that “from the beginning” (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς), which is probably the same beginning as that in v. 4, the beginning of God’s creating the reality in which we exist, the “hardness of your [and our] hearts” has been the way of life. In other words, the Jews, starting with Moses, have not been the first to have hard hearts and need help from God in how to navigate them in the midst of their relationships with others, including the husband’s relationships with their wives, and vice versa. This problem of sin has been around (and, by inference, will continue to be around) until the new earth of the Kingdom of God when all living, existing human beings will be both morally perfect and eternal.

⁶²⁷ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι ὅς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην μοιχᾶται – Here Jesus interprets in the most negative way (for the sake of highlighting the most positive way) the Genesis account of the creation of Adam and Eve as a married couple and, by implication, any married couple of a man and woman who truly understand the meaning of biblical marriage. The goal is to remain faithful to one’s wife, so that the husband is most relationally intimate with his wife—intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually. To relate more intimately with another woman in any of these five categories. The exception may be intellectual, because another woman may be more intellectually capable than one’s wife, but if the intellectual intimacy leads to more emotional, etc. intimacy, then this will very likely lead to a problem and even a breaking apart of the marriage.

Thus, Jesus says that “whoever sends away his wife (ὅς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ) ...and marries another woman is being unfaithful” (καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην μοιχᾶται). Again, this makes the most sense when both a husband and wife have grasped the truths of Genesis 1 & 2 that instruct them to commit themselves to one another in an unbreakable marriage, not that people’s lack of understanding the Bible lets them off the hook so that their divorcing one another is not divorce per se. Instead, it is incumbent on each and every sinful human being to do their best to seek out, know, and understand biblical theology in order to appreciate the gravity and importance of their moral choices.

Therefore, Jesus is saying that two people’s (a man and a woman, to be clear again) choice to commit themselves to one another in accordance with God’s design for sinful human beings needs to be a choice to remain faithful to this choice and to one another. Otherwise, their choice to be faithful to the divine design of marriage is not a bona fide choice to do so.

As a result, the middle part of this verse, “except for sexual immorality” (ἢ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ), refers to a wife’s (but also to a husband’s, by extrapolation) decision to break her (his) commitment to the previously chosen spouse and become committed and faithful to a different spouse. I do not think that Jesus is talking about a single event (or even multiple events) of sexual immorality. This is to say that he is not talking about the act or acts per se. He is talking about the same thing as in v. 8, a person’s hardness of heart, whereby a spouse has clearly chosen interminably and finally to break her/his commitment to be faithful (intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually) to her/his spouse in order to become unbreakably committed (supposedly?) to another spouse. In the context, it is the woman’s saying to her husband, “I repudiate completely my previous decision to be on the same page morally with you, and I am going to get on the same page morally with another person” (as if this is even actually possible). But thank God He is gracious, merciful, and forgiving towards authentically repentant sinners. And on the basis of His grace and mercy, God through Moses here in Deuteronomy 24 is being very accommodating to the sinfulness of the Jews in the midst of their responsibility to demonstrate biblical righteousness to the rest of the world. But God does put a limit on His accommodation by preventing the first husband within the nation of Israel and under the Mosaic

Covenant to remarry his previously divorced wife who married another man. This God in Deuteronomy 24:4 makes implicit by calling the remarriage to the first husband an “abomination” (ἁβὸμῶν) (βδέλυγμα). I assume that the remarriage is intrinsically more evil than the women’s previous repudiation of her first husband, but God is simply saying, “Enough” of the changing of spouses within the nation of Israel.

But this whole discussion with Jewish religious leaders who are most likely completely unbelieving and unrepentant could very well leave room for sinners’ committing sin and still being genuinely repentant as authentic believers in the midst of their choice to be unfaithful to God’s moral design for marital relationships and any other kind of relationships besides.

Romans 7:1 Or do you not know, brothers, for I am speaking to those who are familiar with the Covenant, that the Covenant has jurisdiction over a man as long as he is alive. **7:2** For example, a married woman has been bound by the Covenant to her living husband. But if her husband dies, she is released from the husband commandment. **7:3** Therefore, while her husband is alive, she shall be called an adulteress (μοιχαλῖς) if she marries another man. However, if her husband dies, she is free from the husband commandment, so that she is not an adulteress (μοιχαλίδα) when she marries another man.

⁶²⁸ Λέγουσιν ὁ αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ ὁ αὐτοῦ· εἰ οὕτως ἐστὶν ἡ αἰτία τοῦ ἄνθρώπου μετὰ τῆς γυναίκος, οὐ συμφέρει γαμήσαι – The question for us here is, what exactly has sounded so negative to Jesus’ disciples, who have been tracking with him as best they can for approximately the last three years, that they decide that it is just not worth it to get married—I assume they mean, if a person truly wants to do the right thing before God?

Maybe they have had enough experience in their relationships with women, including some of them being married or at least friends with men who are married, that they have an appreciation for how difficult marriage can be—in the light of their own sinfulness and the sinfulness of women. They may be thinking, if someone has to work this hard at marriage that it is biblically vital to remain committed to the one woman to whom he is married, then the rest of life is hard enough that it is just not worth it to get married. Remaining single and dealing with only one’s own sin is enough of a problem when trying to stay the course and persevere in faith in God.

Plus, the disciples have been living in a Jewish, religious environment of erroneous Judaism that has looked for all the loopholes they can find to get around the restrictions of biblical morality so that they can do whatever they want while still convincing themselves that they are being completely obedient to God. Thus, the religious-system mentality, and the disciples probably had bought into it to a certain degree. Now Jesus is teaching biblical morality correctly and pointing out the proper restrictions, even within the context of human sinfulness, and the disciples are saying, “No. We would rather restrict our lifestyles than wrestle with the restrictions of biblical morality if that wrestle is most likely going to arise—even within the supposed pleasures of biblical marriage.”

⁶²⁹ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐ πάντες χωροῦσιν τὸν λόγον ὁ[τοῦτον] ἀλλ’ οἷς δέδοται – Jesus does not deny the difficulty of this issue and the whole idea of biblical marriage as instructed by God in Genesis 1 & 2 and Deuteronomy 24 to sinful human beings. Indeed, he says that “not everyone makes it all the way to this message” (οὐ πάντες χωροῦσιν τὸν λόγον ὁ[τοῦτον]), which is to say that not all sinful human beings grow in their understanding of reality and their wisdom for how to live life that they fully grasp intellectually and become willfully committed to the truth of biblical marriage (or, by extrapolation, of any other biblical element of human existence).

Then Jesus says, “but to whom it has been given” (ἀλλ’ οἷς δέδοται). The passive voice indicates that understanding along with biblical wisdom and the willingness to live according to it is not something that a sinful human acquires in and of himself. It must be given to a person (and, again by extrapolation, even to Jesus as a morally perfect human being and the most important character in the story of God) by God—I assume. No one else can give understanding, wisdom, and the willingness to follow it except God. As a result, Jesus is intimating that his disciples (and all other authentic believers) should not be surprised that there are people out there who either shun biblical truth altogether without being curious enough to care about understanding it or hear it, in order to grasp it to a certain degree, and then end up not following it as God has required that they do so. This is the way reality works since God is the author of this story which He is telling and we are the characters in the story who are completely dependent on Him for exactly how our stories unfold. Some sinful human beings will make it all the way to the truth, grasp it, and live it as God requires. Some will say, “No way! I refuse to believe it, embrace it, and live it.”

⁶³⁰ εἰσὶν γὰρ εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς ἐγεννήθησαν οὕτως, καὶ εἰσὶν εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες εὐνουχίσθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ εἰσὶν εὐνοῦχοι οἵτινες εὐνούχισαν ἑαυτοὺς διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. ὁ δυνάμενος χωρεῖν χωρεῖτω – Here Jesus provides a real life human example of a “message” that is hard to hear intellectually and probably even harder to live in accordance with the nature of reality as it is—God’s telling His story and rather strange things happening differently from what might either think ought to be the case or would prefer, especially when we understand God to be good and loving. Therefore, he chooses an example, eunuchs, that we would say is rather out there and is also something that his disciples in the 1st century Roman Empire (or we in the 21st century) would not necessarily bump in to, unless they lived several hundred years earlier in the Assyrian Empire or the Babylonian Empire.

The example that Jesus explains is that eunuch-ness can arise in one of three ways –

1) God in His sovereignty causes a man to be born without testicles (or maybe even without a penis?) – “there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb” (οἵτινες ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς ἐγεννήθησαν οὕτως).

2) God in His sovereignty causes other people to remove forcibly (and therefore against their will) the testicles (and perhaps the penis also?) of a man – “there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men” (οἵτινες εὐνούχισθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων). These men are forcibly eunuchized by other men.

3) God in His sovereignty causes men to do a really strange thing to themselves (if Jesus is talking about an actual physical act), i.e., to remove forcibly their own testicles (and perhaps their penis too) – “who made themselves eunuchs because of the Kingdom of the Heavens” (οἵτινες εὐνούχισαν ἑαυτοὺς διὰ τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν). There is also the possibility that

Jesus is referring to metaphorical removing by a man of his own testicles by his committing himself to remaining single in spite of his strong physical, sexual desire to express this desire within the context of marriage (or outside it, too)—perhaps for the sake of devoting himself more completely to serving God by his less distracted proclamation of the gospel (as the apostle Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 7).

Certainly, each one of these three ways of male, sinful human beings' becoming eunuchs is not easy to embrace as actual events that occur within this reality which God has created and continues to create (according to v. 4 – ὁ κτίσας = “The One Who Creates”). We all want life to be pain and embarrassment free, and being a man without part of what we all consider to be important for someone to be a man is hard to accept—especially while we firmly believe that God is loving, kind, gracious, and merciful. Therefore, no wonder people resist and even reject the whole idea of God's absolute sovereignty over all reality that includes sinful human beings' choices such as the ones in the 2nd and 3rd examples of eunuchs.

Based on the verses listed below and the information below from the NIDOTTE, I think that Jesus is simply saying, life is strange, and any good disciple of his always needs to be ready to encounter and live with strange events while paying most attention to his own spiritual well-being for the sake of his own eternal destiny which he is counting on God to grant him—life in the eternal Kingdom of God.

And if the concept of marriage as God has defined it is one of these strange things (as Jesus' disciples are personally experiencing because of their culture which saw women more as objects to be used by men for their own convenience), then what choice is a person going to make? He has basically two choices—

1) He is going to live in accordance with the truth about marriage we find in the Bible, and specifically in Genesis 1 & 2, which reveals a heart of authentic belief—but does not guarantee that a person will always choose to do moral goodness instead of sin, which is just part of life even for believers, or

2) He is going to reject altogether God's truth, which reveals a heart of unbelief—perhaps, if the person really is an abject unbeliever, or perhaps not, if the person is an authentic believer and simply experiencing a stage of his life where some sin has just got a hold of him and he seems powerless to resist it. Ultimately, only God knows, and all Jesus' disciples should do is to continue to encourage themselves and everyone else to commit themselves to following and obeying God and His moral commandments—while patiently waiting for Jesus' return and his bringing about the eternal Kingdom of God in the midst of God's transforming previous believers into eternal and morally perfect human beings.

Deuteronomy 23:1 “No one who is emasculated (אֲנָשׁוֹתֵי כַפְּיָא = bruised of crushing/castrating) (θλαδίας = castrated or crushed testicles) or has his male organ cut off (שָׁפְכוּת וְכַרְוֹת = cut of the penis) (καὶ ἀποκεκομμένος = has been cut off) shall enter the assembly of Yahweh.”

Leviticus 22:24 “Also anything [with its testicles] bruised or crushed or torn or cut (וְכִנְיֹוֹת וְכַרְוֹת וְנִתְיָוֶק וְכַרְוֹת) (θλαδیان και ἐκτεθλιμμένον και ἐκτομίαν και ἀπεσπασμένον), you shall not offer to Yahweh, or sacrifice in your land.”

עֲרִיב – 45x in OT; εὐνούχος – 38x in OT

Genesis 37:36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer (עֲרִיב) (τῷ σπάρδοντι = eunuch; σπάρδων), the captain of the bodyguard.

Genesis 40:2 Pharaoh was furious with his two officials (עֲרִיבֵי וְעֹלֵי) (ἐπὶ τοῖς δουσὶν εὐνούχοις αὐτοῦ), the chief cupbearer and the chief baker.

Isaiah 39:7 “And some of your [Hezekiah's] sons who will issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away, and they will become officials (עֲרִיבֵי, eunuchs in KJV & NIV) (σπάρδοντας) in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

Isaiah 56:3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to Yahweh say, “Yahweh will surely separate me from His people.”

Nor let the eunuch (עֲרִיב) (ὁ εὐνούχος) say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” **56:4** For thus says Yahweh, “To the eunuchs (עֲרִיבֵי) (τοῖς εὐνούχοις) who keep My sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant,

1 Chronicles 28:1 Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the commanders of the divisions that served the king, and the commanders of thousands, and the commanders of hundreds, and the overseers of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, with the officials (עֲרִיבֵי הַמְּלָכִים) (καὶ τοὺς δυνάστας) and the mighty men, even all the valiant men.

Daniel 1:3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials (רֹבֵב עֲרִיבֵי) (τῷ ἐάντοῦ ἀρχιευνούχῳ), to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles.

Daniel 1:7 Then the commander of the officials (עֲרִיבֵי הַמְּלָכִים) (ὁ ἀρχιευνούχος) assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned the name Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego.

עֲרִיב (עֲרִיב + עֲרִיב? – at least in sound and derived from the Akkadian phrase that means “the one at the head.”)

NIDOTTE – All the related Semitic roots are derived from the original Akkadian title – *ša rēši / rīši (šarri)*, the one at the head (of king), he who is the head > *ša-riš*, nom. high-ranking court official, royal attendant, palace steward, chief manager, chamberlain (early: Middle-Neo Assyrian/Babylonian); eunuch, harem guard, court official, royal attendant, chamberlain (late: Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian). The title *ša rēši* exhibits a twofold range of meaning that developed historically.

Throughout the early and late periods, it designated a court official, while in the later period the technical meaning of eunuch arose with the development of the practice of utilizing castrated men within the royal court. Beginning in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods, kings of the eastern empires began to employ eunuchs for certain tasks, such as the supervision of the

royal harem or the royal children. Because these tasks had previously been assigned to “normal” palace attendants, the title *ša rēši* acquired the technical meaning eunuch, as several cuneiform inscriptions show. Thus, the meaning eunuch arose with the practice of utilizing castrated men in key positions in Assyria, Babylon, and Persia (*TWOT* 2:635). A major institution in the Assyrian court was the harem, which consisted of a number of wives, concubines, serving maids, and eunuch harem guards. There was a strict order of precedence within the harem, with the queen mother at the top. Immediately under her in authority was the chief wife of the reigning king, her status being determined by the fact that she was the first wife to give the king a male offspring. Princes normally spent their early years in the harem. There was much rivalry and jealousy within the Assyrian harem, and since the heir to the throne spent his early years there, harem plots to overthrow the king were not uncommon (Grayson, 749–50). The Neo-Babylonian official Ashpenaz, whom Nebuchadnezzar II charged with the care of the Judean royal family and nobility, is entitled **רַב־בְּרִיָּוֹ**, chief of his court officials (Dan 1:3) and **שַׂר־הַבְּרִיָּוֹ**, the chief official (1:7–11, 18). These parallel titles reflect Akkadian *rabû ša rēši* (lit., chief who is the head), which designated a royal official throughout all periods, but had developed a technical meaning designating the chief eunuch by this period (AHw, 974; MSL 8:1:74; Zimmermann, 116). The latter is reflected in Phoenician *rb srsrm* chief of eunuchs (RES 1206. 1–3), and Imperial Aramaic **רַב־סַרְסַר**, chief eunuch (*CIS* 2:38. 6; *DISO*, 271). (On this, see ANE, sec. 4–5.) During this period, **רַב־בְּרִיָּוֹ** could denote chief eunuch (Kitchen, 165–66). While the general nuance (non-castrated) royal attendant is acceptable, it would make sense that eunuchs were used to attend the personal needs of the royal family in their daily contact in their personal apartments. In Esther the term **בְּרִיָּוִי** has a polysemantic range of meaning and referents, designating four kinds of Persian royal officials who were eunuchs: eunuchs in charge of the harem (Esth 2:3, 14–15), eunuch attendants of the queen (4:4–5), eunuch guards of the king’s private apartment (2:21; 6:2), and eunuch attendants of the king (1:10, 12, 15; 6:14; 7:9) (Bardtke, 284). Consistent with the fact that the nuance eunuch developed later, **בְּרִיָּוִי** is not used in the lawcodes that excluded those who were castrated from the assembly (Lev 21:20; Deut 23:2).

Although neither text clearly indicates the cause of the castrations, the most common view is that their physical defects were not due to simple accidents but rather to pagan rites. **Such physical mutilation was contrary to the design of God’s creation and destroyed the procreative power of the Israelites.** Apart from the apostate [Vol. 3, p. 293] policies of Jezebel, it is unlikely that eunuchs were employed in the royal court of Israel or Judah. **Rabbinic literature discusses the three ways a male could become a eunuch: deformity at birth, involuntary castration (of a slave by his owner), and voluntary castration (forbidden) (*Y’bamoth* 8:4, 80). Christ states that some are born eunuchs, others are made eunuchs by men, and others make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (*Matt 19:12*) (see P-B sec. 2, above). Just as some males submitted to castration to become eunuchs so that they could serve without distraction as the personal attendants of ANE kings, some believers make themselves eunuchs (by renouncing marriage?) to more effectively serve the kingdom of heaven without sexual distraction (*Matt 19:12*). This might be behind Paul’s advice to singles to remain unmarried, if possible, to secure undistracted devotion to the service of Christ (1 Cor 7:25–35).**

⁶³¹ Τότε προσηγάθησαν αὐτῷ παῖδια ἵνα τὰς χεῖρας ἐπιθῇ αὐτοῖς καὶ προσεύξῃται· οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἐπετίμησαν αὐτοῖς – This is a generic note for the parables regarding children in Matthew 18:1-4; 19:13-15; Mark 9:36-37; 10:13-15; Luke 9:46-48; 18:15-17 – Sometimes Jesus is responding to an argument among his disciples about who is the greatest. He tells them that the “least” is the one who is like a child, and therefore is the greatest. The one who humbles himself like a child, who adopts the lowliness and humility of a child is the one who will be in the Kingdom of God.

The one who receives a child in Jesus’ name is also the one who receives Jesus and God the Father. This is the one who is not put off by the humility of a child, who then is not put off by Jesus’ humility as the Messiah, because he is humble and lowly in contrast to how people expect the Messiah who will destroy Israel’s enemies. This is also the person who is not put off by God who has sent Jesus to be the humble and lowly Messiah during this first appearance since God’s plan is for him to suffer at the hands of his own people and die on the cross.

Two main points—

1) Only the sinner who is willing to be lowly and humble like a child will enter into the Kingdom of God and be great. This is the person who recognizes that he is unimportant in and of himself as a creature of God and, therefore, will be meek and mild within the world.

2) Only the person who is willing to receive “children,” i.e., meek, gentle, and quiet people who understand their creatureliness and, in turn, receive Jesus who was meek and the God who sent him will enter into the Kingdom of God. Human beings tend to be attracted to people who promote themselves and are not meek, quiet, and gentle.

While children are definitely not pure morally (cf. Romans 1), and they tend to be gullible and believe even lies, Jesus is not talking about being children like this.

While children are not intellectually sophisticated and are simple thinkers, Jesus is not talking about being children like this, because God wants us to have deep wisdom and grow in our understanding of God.

While children are honest, frank, and direct, even to a fault, Jesus is not talking about being children like this, since wisdom sometimes calls for not being direct but simply walking away from bullies. There is no sense getting in the cage with the gorilla. Instead, in the ANE, children were not important because of the high mortality rate. This is why the disciples block the mothers from bringing their children to Jesus. But, fortunately, Jesus disagrees AGAIN with the culture and welcomes the children as bona fide human beings who need God’s blessing just as much as adults.

Therefore, it is important that we view ourselves as unimportant before God in the sense that we are merely clay pots and creatures whose existence, breaths, thoughts, feelings, and even choices are completely dependent on the constant and ongoing creating activity of the transcendent God and author of the story of human history. I’m not better than other human beings and

should never adopt a perspective of entitlement. God and people owe me nothing. Just as Jesus says in the beatitudes, the meek inherit the land. But this is not the same as self-hatred and self-denigrate

God certainly created us to be marvelous creatures as rational, moral human beings, but because of our sin we lack meekness and humility but we tend to think that people owe us respect because of our intrinsic greatness and capabilities, in other words, because of what we have done and who we are apart from God's making us who we are. As a result, we demand respect and special treatment.

Likewise, to despise myself and to be unwilling to accept God's love, grace, and mercy is evil, i.e., when we do not accept who God made us as HIS creatures for HIS purposes, plan, and desires.

⁶³² ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν Ἵψετε τὰ παιδία καὶ μὴ κωλύετε αὐτὰ ἔλθειν πρὸς ἡμεῖς, τῶν γὰρ τοιούτων ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν – As in 18:1ff., Jesus means that people who have a humility like a child to approach God with all the depth of their sin in mind in order to obtain His mercy and forgiveness are those who will obtain eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

Children recognize that they have a legitimate authority in their lives—their parents, and that they are morally obligated to, indeed, they desire the strong, loving, and wise guidance of their parents. Jesus is implying that the people of his day in Israel have not properly recognized all that it means to have God as their authority, because they have not sufficiently faced into the depth of their sin when repenting before God. They have not adequately humbled themselves in order to obtain His eternal mercy.

cf. Mark 10:13ff. and Luke 18:15ff.

⁶³³ καὶ ἐπιθείς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς ἐπορεύθη ἐκεῖθεν –

⁶³⁴ Καὶ ἰδοὺ εἰς προσελθόν ἄνθρωπον εἶπεν· διδάσκαλε Ἵ, τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω ἵνα σχῶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον – This is the first mention of eternal life (ζωὴν αἰώνιον) in the NT.

Here “good” = that which is adequate on a sinful human being's part to please God enough that He responds by providing the person with eternal life. In other words, he is not thinking of goodness as moral perfection or even what follows from proper inwardness and faith, which Jesus will indirectly address in a moment. He probably also has an underlying expectation that, because of his doing the right thing as a Jew who is following the Mosaic Covenant, he already deserves eternal life and that Jesus is only going to confirm this for him. Included in his perspective is probably also thinking that he is wealthy because he has pleased God through his obedience to the Mosaic Covenant so that He has blessed him in this life with his wealth. Indeed, if Jesus only knew how wealthy he was, he thinks, he would say that it is obvious that he has done what is adequate to acquire eternal life. God has credentialed him as someone who deserves eternal life by blessing him with wealth.

Genesis 12:2 “And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; **3** And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

Isaiah 26:19 Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Daniel 12:1 “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. **2** “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.”

⁶³⁵ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἵτι με ἐρωτᾷς περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ; εἰς ἐστὶν ὁ ἀγαθός Ἵ. εἰ δὲ θέλεις εἰς τὴν ζωὴν εἰσελθεῖν, Ἵτήρησον τὰς ἐντολάς – Rather than initially exegeting the young man's question correctly, which certainly Jesus could do by hearing the tone of his voice and looking at his body language, Jesus uses his use of the word “good” to make an important point about God. The young man only wants to know that he has adequately obeyed the Mosaic Covenant which God gave to the Jews. But Jesus says something about the covenant and God. First, the covenant addresses sinful human beings do that whatever goodness they perform is within the context of their sinfulness. Second, if we take the word “good” to its moral extreme, it means moral perfection, and there is only one who is such. And Jesus obviously must mean God by this “one.” Therefore, it is important for a human being, and specifically a Jew, who wants to fulfill the condition for eternal life, to take these points into account.

Next Jesus starts his answer with what he assumes is the case with this young man, that he is serious about asking him specifically about how to gain eternal life. If he genuinely desires it, and if he genuinely wants to learn the answer from Jesus and is not just looking for a pat on the back, then here is the condition—a person must guard with his heart, mind, and body the commandments which God has revealed to the Jews. And Jesus will make it clear that it is the moral commandments and not the ritual ones that are essential. Jesus is not referring to moral perfection. Because the Mosaic Covenant includes the offerings and sacrifices for sin, it clearly is not calling for the Jews to be morally perfect. Instead, as shown by a verse such as Deuteronomy 10:16 where God commands the Israelites to acquire changed hearts, it is with this that they guard the covenant's commandments and fulfill the condition for eternal life that is the same even for Christians—that with a changed heart they must believe in Jesus and guard his commandments which are no different from the moral commandments of the Mosaic Covenant.

⁶³⁶ Ἵλέγει αὐτῷ ποίας; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς Ἵεἶπεν τὸ οὐ φονεύσεις. οὐ μοιχεύσεις. οὐ κλέψεις. οὐ ψευδομαρτυρήσεις – One would think that the young man would assume that Jesus means the Mosaic Covenant and its commandments, in other words, that it is a no brainer what Jesus means. Maybe the young man does not grasp yet the full significance of the word “keep” and of the word “commandments.” He is actually going to reveal that he does not understand at least the former.

In this verse, Jesus lists only four moral commandments that are found in the Ten Commandments, all of which can be interpreted as referring to only a person's external actions and not to his inwardness and changed heart.

⁶³⁷ τίμα τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα. καὶ ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτὸν – In this verse, Jesus continues with one more moral commandment from the Ten Commandments and then adds Leviticus 19:18, that he should love his neighbor (his fellow Jew) as he loves himself.

⁶³⁸ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ νεανίσκος· ἴπαντα ταῦτα ἔφυλαξα ἵνα τί ἔτι ὑστερῶ – Matthew may be trying to emphasize how convinced the young man is that he has obeyed these commandments properly by switching to φυλάσσω from Jesus' τηρέω. But the young man still probably does not understand the entirety of what it means to “keep” the moral commandments of the Mosaic Covenant. And one would think that he would say, “Great. Thank you. I now know that I have eternal life.” Instead, he asks Jesus what he is lacking. But this may be only so that Jesus may confirm that there is nothing more that he lacks. He has fulfilled God’s condition for eternal life, and now he simply needs to keep doing what he has been doing.

⁶³⁹ ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι, ὑπάγε πώλησον σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα καὶ δός ὧς [τοῖς] πτωχοῖς, καὶ ἔξεις θησαυρὸν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καὶ δεῦρο ἀκολούθει μοι – We might expect Jesus to respond, “Nothing, because as I said, this is all that is required.” But Jesus detects something that is going on within this young man that warrants a different response. What he detects is that this wealthy person has not grasped what it means to have a changed heart that longs to be loving while recognizing his sinfulness and need to repent of his sin before God.

Jesus cannot mean “perfect” by τέλειος. Giving away all his possessions will not make the young man morally perfect. In this context, it will only reveal that he recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah and is willing to do anything to have him be his rabbi and Savior. This is why I have translated the word “a complete person.” But it would seem that he has not yet come to the realization that Jesus is the Son of God and his means to eternal life in the midst of his heart’s longing for the morality described by the above commandments. He does not value Jesus as much as he should. Thus, Jesus is showing him how much more important he is than all his wealth.

⁶⁴⁰ ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ νεανίσκος τὸν λόγον ἀπήλθεν λυπούμενος· ἦν γὰρ ἔχων ἱκτῆματα πολλά – The man’s response reveals that he does not know who Jesus is, because if he ascribed to Jesus all that he deserves as the Messiah, then one would think that he would be willing to do whatever he said to gain the most important blessing from God, i.e., eternal life. But it seems that all Jesus is for this young man is a good rabbi whose approval he seeks for his own pride.

Certainly it would be hard for anything to give up all his possessions, especially for anyone who is wealthy. But Jesus is not asking him to do only this. He is also saying that he must come with him and the rest of this disciples and trek around Israel with all them. If this man knew much about Jesus, he would realize that Jesus has probably not gone without a meal or been entirely homeless, because there have been people taking care of him and his disciples wherever they have gone. So Jesus is not asking him to starve to death or die of exposure. He is asking him to take him seriously for exactly who he is—the Messiah from God who will be the means by which God fulfills all His promises to Abraham and Israel, including eternal life.

This is also why this passage should not be used to teach that all Christians should be poor in order to demonstrate the authenticity of their faith. Jesus’ command is specific to this young man in order to reveal to himself that he lacks understanding of both biblical inwardness and Jesus.

⁶⁴¹ Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πλούσιος δυσκόλως εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν –

⁶⁴² πάλιν δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἵνα εὐκοπώτερόν ἐστιν ἱκάμηλον διὰ τρυπήματος ῥαφίδος διελθεῖν ἢ πλούσιον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ –

⁶⁴³ ἀκούσαντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ ἔξεπλήσοντο ἵνα σφόδρα λέγοντες· τίς ἄρα δύναται σωθῆναι –

⁶⁴⁴ ἐμβλέψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· παρὰ ἀνθρώποις τοῦτο ἀδύνατόν ἐστιν, παρὰ δὲ θεῷ ἴπαντα δυνατά –

⁶⁴⁵ Τότε ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι· τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν –

⁶⁴⁶ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὑμεῖς οἱ ἀκολουθήσαντές μοι ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ, ὅταν καθίσῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ, ἱκαθήσεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐπὶ δώδεκα θρόνους κρίνοντες τὰς δώδεκα φυλάς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ – This renewal (παλιγγενεσία) is the renovation of Jews in the millennial kingdom vs. The brand new and different cosmos of Revelation 21.

Also, the ‘judging’ is probably not actually judging but guiding, instructing, teaching, and even ruling over the people. Therefore, the twelve tribes of Israel will be first the 144,000 Jews of Revelation who are regenerated at the beginning of the millennial kingdom and then other generations of Jews during this same period of time until the final battle and destruction of the present realm, after which God creates a completely new universe.

In this context of the Jews of the millennial kingdom, the resurrected apostles will guide, instruct, teach, and rule them while they all become authentic believers who are the “great nation” of Genesis 12:2 (cf. Deuteronomy 30). This will also involve the apostle’s teaching and ruling over the rest of the world with Jesus, which will be the same for all believers resurrected from the dead or raised off the earth at Jesus’ return. Cf. [Revelation 20:4](#) Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment [κρίμα, ruling] was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

⁶⁴⁷ καὶ πᾶς ὅστις ἀφήκεν οἰκίαν ἢ ἀδελφούς ἢ ἀδελφὰς ἢ πατέρα ἢ μητέρα ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγροὺς ἔνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός μου, ἱέκατονταπλασίονα λήμψεται καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσει – Then the end result for all authentic Jewish believers who have chosen to be more loyal to Jesus than to their families is aionic, i.e., eternal, life in the brand new cosmos.

⁶⁴⁸ πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι – Many Jews who think that they are accepted by God because of their diligent, yet fleshly, obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, will find themselves left out of the eternal Kingdom of God. In contrast, those who are considered abject sinners by the Jewish leadership will become acceptable to God through their humble faith and obedience to God that is punctuated by constant repentance.

According to the following parallel, those who think they are accepted by God believe that they have earned this standing, while those who are truly accepted understand correctly that God is simply granted them acceptance and forgiveness through His grace at work in their inwardness by the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁴⁹ Ὁμοία γάρ ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότῃ, ὅστις ἐξῆλθεν ἅμα πρῶτῷ μισθώσασθαι ἐργάτας εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα αὐτοῦ –

JC – what are sacrifices that Peter and the apostles will have to endure and then be rewarded for in following Jesus. Briefly, eternal life. God has to grant whatever blessing to sinners He wants as a landowner has the right to pay his laborers exactly what he wants—even not being equitable or fair. He does not have to pay them proportionately to their “labor.” Is God evil for not being proportionate or fair per se? Instead, He chooses to be incredibly generous to all of them. Not evil in the good that anyone, e.g., God, extends to anyone. But evil if reward people beyond what they deserve for their evil. That is being unjust. God is not unjust for giving eternal life to any sinner. God can do whatever He wants to do for His creatures as long as He is not unjust. This is His sovereign right as the transcendent creator of all reality.

⁶⁵⁰ συμφωνήσας δὲ μετὰ τῶν ἐργατῶν ἐκ δηναρίου τὴν ἡμέραν ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα αὐτοῦ –

⁶⁵¹ καὶ ἐξελθὼν περὶ τρίτην ὥραν ἑίδεν ἄλλους ἐστῶτας ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἀργοὺς –

⁶⁵² καὶ ἐκείνοις εἶπεν ὑπάγετε καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἵ, καὶ ὁ ἐὰν ἦ δίκαιον δώσω ὑμῖν –

⁶⁵³ οἱ δὲ ἀπήλθον. πάλιν ὁ[δὲ] ἐξελθὼν περὶ ἑκτὴν καὶ ἐνάτην ὥραν ἔποίησεν ὡσαύτως –

⁶⁵⁴ περὶ δὲ τὴν ἑνδεκάτην ἵ ἐξελθὼν εὗρεν ἄλλους ἐστῶτας ἵ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τί ὧδε ἐστήκατε ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἀργοί –

⁶⁵⁵ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἡμᾶς ἐμισθώσατο. λέγει αὐτοῖς· ὑπάγετε καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα –

⁶⁵⁶ Ὁσίας δὲ γενομένης λέγει ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος τῷ ἐπιτρόπῳ αὐτοῦ· κάλεσον τοὺς ἐργάτας καὶ ἀπόδος ὁ αὐτοῖς τὸν μισθὸν ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῶν ἐσχάτων ἕως τῶν πρώτων –

⁶⁵⁷ καὶ ἐλθόντες ὁ περὶ τὴν ἑνδεκάτην ὥραν ἔλαβον ἀνά δηνάριον –

⁶⁵⁸ καὶ ἐλθόντες ὁ πρώτοι ἐνόμισαν ὅτι πλεονομήσονται· καὶ ἔλαβον ἑ[τὸ] ἀνά δηνάριον καὶ αὐτοῖ ἵ –

⁶⁵⁹ λαβόντες δὲ ἐγόγγυζον κατὰ τοῦ οἰκοδεσπότου –

⁶⁶⁰ λέγοντες· οὗτοι οἱ ἔσχατοι μίαν ὥραν ἔποίησαν, καὶ ἴσους ἑ[μῶν] αὐτοῦς ἵ ἐποίησας τοῖς βαστάσασιν τὸ βάρος τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τὸν καύσωνα –

⁶⁶¹ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς ἑ[νὲν] αὐτῶν εἶπεν· ἑταίρε, οὐκ ἀδικῶ σε· οὐχὶ δηναρίου ἑ[συνεφώνησάς μοι] –

⁶⁶² ἄρῶν τὸ σὸν καὶ ὑπάγε. θέλω ἑ[δὲ] τούτῳ τῷ ἐσχάτῳ δοῦναι ὡς καὶ σοί –

⁶⁶³ ὁ[ἦ] οὐκ ἔξεστιν μοι ἑ[δὲ] θέλω ποιῆσαι ἑ[ν] τοῖς ἐμοῖς; ἦ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς σου πονηρὸς ἐστίν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἀγαθὸς εἰμι –

⁶⁶⁴ οὕτως ἔσονται οἱ ἔσχατοι πρώτοι καὶ οἱ πρώτοι ἔσχατοι –

⁶⁶⁵ Καὶ ἀναβαίνων ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα παρέλαβεν τοὺς δώδεκα ἑ[μαθητὰς] κατ' ἰδίαν καὶ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁶⁶ ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν καὶ γραμματεῦσιν, καὶ κατακρινούσιν αὐτὸν ἑ[θανάτῳ] – This is the second time in Matthew that Jesus mentions his destiny to die and rise from the dead. The first time was in Caesarea Philippi in Matthew 16:21.

Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show 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 up on the third day.

⁶⁶⁷ καὶ παραδώσουσιν αὐτὸν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν εἰς τὸ ἐμπαῖξαι καὶ μαστιγῶσαι καὶ σταυρῶσαι, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἑ[γερθήσεται]

⁶⁶⁸ Τότε προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἡ μήτηρ τῶν υἱῶν Ζεβεδαίου μετὰ τῶν υἱῶν αὐτῆς προσκυνούσα καὶ αἰτοῦσα τι ἑ[ἀπ' αὐτοῦ] –

⁶⁶⁹ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· τί θέλεις; λέγει αὐτῷ· εἰπέ ἵνα καθίσωσιν οὗτοι οἱ δύο υἱοὶ μου εἰς ἐκ δεξιῶν ὁ σου καὶ εἰς ἐξ εὐωνύμων ὁ σου ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου –

⁶⁷⁰ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· οὐκ οἶδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε. δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὁ ἐγὼ μέλλω πίνειν ἵ; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· δυνάμεθα –

⁶⁷¹ λέγει αὐτοῖς ἵ· τὸ μὲν ποτήριόν μου πίεσθε ἵ, τὸ δὲ καθίσει ἐκ δεξιῶν μου καὶ ἐξ εὐωνύμων ἵ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν ὁ[τοῦτο] δοῦναι, ἀλλ' οἷς ἠτοίμασται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου –

⁶⁷² Καὶ ἀκούσαντες ὁ δέκα ἠγανάκτησαν περὶ τῶν δύο ἀδελφῶν –

⁶⁷³ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτοὺς εἶπεν· οἶδατε ὅτι οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι κατεξουσιάζουσιν αὐτῶν –

⁶⁷⁴ οὐχ οὕτως ἑ[ἔσται] ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ὁς ἐὰν θέλη ἑ[ἐν ὑμῖν] μέγας γενέσθαι ἑ[ἔσται] ὑμῶν διάκονος –

⁶⁷⁵ καὶ ὁς ἂν θέλη ἑ[ἐν ὑμῖν] εἶναι πρῶτος ἑ[ἔσται] ὑμῶν δοῦλος –

⁶⁷⁶ ὡς περὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν

⁶⁷⁷ Καὶ ἐκπορευομένων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Ἱεριχῶ ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁷⁸ καὶ ἰδοὺ δύο τυφλοὶ καθήμενοι παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ἰησοῦς παράγει, ἔκραξαν λέγοντες· ἑ[λέησον] ἡμᾶς, [κύριε,] ἑ[υἱὸς] Δαυίδ ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁷⁹ ὁ δὲ ὄχλος ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς ἵνα σιωπήσωσιν· οἱ δὲ μείζον ἑ[κράξαν] λέγοντες· ἑ[λέησον] ἡμᾶς, κύριε, ἑ[υἱὸς] Δαυίδ ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁸⁰ καὶ στάς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐφώνησεν αὐτοὺς καὶ εἶπεν· τί θέλετε ποιῆσω ὑμῖν ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁸¹ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· κύριε, ἵνα ἀνοιγῶσιν ἑ[οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ] ἡμῶν ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁸² σπλαγχνισθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἤψατο ἑ[τῶν ὀμμάτων αὐτῶν], καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέβλεψαν ἵ καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁸³ Καὶ ὅτε ἤγγισαν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ ἤλθον εἰς Βηθφαγή ἑ[εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν], τότε Ἰησοῦς ἀπέστειλεν δύο μαθητὰς ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁸⁴ λέγων αὐτοῖς· ἑ[πορεύεσθε] εἰς τὴν κώμην τὴν ἑ[κατέναντι] ὑμῶν, καὶ εὐθέως εὐρήσετε ὄνον δεδεμένην καὶ πῶλον μετ' αὐτῆς· λύσαντες ἑ[ἀγάγετέ μοι] ἑ[ν] –

⁶⁸⁵ καὶ ἕαν τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ τι, ἐρεῖτε ὅτι ὁ κύριος ἡ αὐτῶν χρεῖαν ἔχει· ἐυθύς δὲ ἡ ἀποστελεῖ αὐτούς –

⁶⁸⁶ τοῦτο δὲ ἡ γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ἡ διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος –

⁶⁸⁷ εἶπατε τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται σοι· πραῦς καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὸς ἐπὶ ὄνον καὶ ὡ ἐπὶ πῶλον ὡ υἱὸν ὑποζυγίου – In Zechariah 9:1-8, the Jews have returned to Israel and Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, and it is around 520 B.C. The Persians are ruling them. God predicts that other prosperous cities will be destroyed, but a day is coming when He will camp around Jerusalem, so that never again will they be under the rule of Gentiles. We know that this is when Jesus returns, restores the Kingdom of Israel, and rules the whole earth. This will be the end of the present age as history heads into the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20. Then in Zechariah 9:9-10, God connects the exaltation of Israel to the appearance of their king. He will “cut off” and eliminate their enemies’ chariots and horses, meaning their armies and military gear. He also provides a vision of Israel’s king. His nature will be like one who sits on a donkey, which is a symbol of lowliness, when he first appears to Jerusalem and the Jews. This is the unremarkable Jesus, the peasant laborer from Nazareth in Galilee, the son of a mason and bricklayer.

This may not be an actual prediction by God in Zechariah, but only a symbolic vision. Then Jesus takes the vision with its symbol and acts it out for the benefit of the people of Jerusalem and for his disciples. He is creating his own parable and saying, “I am your king,” who will eventually destroy your enemies. But first, I have to go through death on the cross.

⁶⁸⁸ πορευθέντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ καὶ ποιήσαντες καθὼς ἡ συνέταξεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς –

⁶⁸⁹ ἤγαγον τὴν ὄνον καὶ τὸν πῶλον καὶ ἐπέθηκον ἡ ἐπ’ ἡ αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἡ, καὶ ἐπεκάθισεν ἐπάνω αὐτῶν –

⁶⁹⁰ ὁ δὲ πλείστος ὄχλος ἔστρωσαν ἡ ἑαυτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, ἄλλοι δὲ ἔκοπτον κλάδους ἀπὸ τῶν δένδρων καὶ ἡ ἔστρώνον ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ –

⁶⁹¹ οἱ δὲ ὄχλοι οἱ προάγοντες ἡ αὐτὸν καὶ οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες ἔκραζον λέγοντες ἡ ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυὶδ ἡ εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου ὡσαννὰ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις –

⁶⁹² Καὶ εἰσελθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς ἡ Ἱερουσόλυμα ἐσείσθη πᾶσα ἡ πόλις λέγουσα· τίς ἐστιν οὗτος –

⁶⁹³ οἱ δὲ ὄχλοι ἔλεγον οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ ὁ προφήτης Ἰησοῦς ἡ ὁ ἀπὸ Ναζαρεθ τῆς Γαλιλαίας –

⁶⁹⁴ Καὶ εἰσηλθὼν ἡ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν ἡ καὶ ἐξέβαλεν πάντας τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ ἀγοράζοντας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, καὶ τὰς τραπέζας τῶν κολλυβιστῶν κατέστρεψεν καὶ τὰς καθέδρας τῶν πωλοῦντων τὰς περιστερὰς –

⁶⁹⁵ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ἡ γέγραπται ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται ἡ ὑμεῖς δὲ αὐτὸν ἡ ποιεῖτε σπήλαιον ληστῶν – cf.

Jeremiah 7:1-28 – **Jeremiah 7:1** The word that came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying, **2** “Stand in the gate of Yahweh’s house and proclaim there this word and say, ‘Hear the word of Yahweh, all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship Yahweh!’” **3** Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, “Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. **4** “Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, ‘This is the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh, the temple of Yahweh.’” **5** “For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, **6** if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin, **7** then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.”

Jeremiah 7:8 “Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. **9** “Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and swear falsely, and offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known, **10** then come and stand before Me in ^bthis house, which is called by My name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’ — that you may do all these abominations? **11** “Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your sight? Behold, I, even I, have seen *it*,” declares Yahweh.

Jeremiah 7:12 “But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I made My name dwell at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. **13** “And now, because you have done all these things,” declares Yahweh, “and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you but you did not answer, **14** therefore, I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to the place which I gave you and your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. **15** “I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brothers, all the offspring of Ephraim.”

Jeremiah 7:16 “As for you, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with Me; for I do not hear you. **17** “Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? **18** “The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and *they* pour out drink offerings to other gods in order to spite Me. **19** “Do they spite Me?” declares Yahweh. “Is it not themselves *they* spite, to their own shame?” **20** Therefore thus says Adonai Yahweh, “Behold, My anger and My wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and on beast and on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground; and it will burn and not be quenched.”

Jeremiah 7:21 Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, “Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat flesh. **22** “For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. **23** “But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.’” **24** “Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in *their own* counsels *and* in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward. **25** “Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending *them*. **26** “Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers.”

Jeremiah 7:27 “You shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you; and you shall call to them, but they will not answer you. **28** “You shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of Yahweh their God or accept correction; truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth.’”

In the above passage of Jeremiah 7, the phrase “robbers’ den” is an interesting one in the context. Two things typically are true of a robbers’ den. The first is that it is as place to hide from the law, and the second is that it is a place to plan the next heist.

Therefore, God is saying that the temple is where the Israelites are hiding from Him and where they plan their next moves of

stealing from both Him and their fellow Jews. In other words, the Israelites are using the very place where they know they come into the presence of God actually to hide from the presence of God—ironic. In addition, they are using the time spent performing the actions of worship of God to plan their next actions of cheating their fellow Israelites—ironic. But “robbers’ den” does not mean only unfair and selfish economic transactions on the part of the Israelites. Instead, the entire context points towards a meaning of first, a stubborn and evil (uncircumcised or changed) heart so that people are operating strictly on the basis of the moral depravity at the level of their defining moral essence, and second, actions that in some cases are probably economic (not practicing “justice between a man and his neighbor” – 7:5) and in other cases are religious (making “cakes for the queen of heaven”, etc. – 7:18). They think that they are hiding their rebellion against God by showing up at the temple and going through the motions of presenting offerings to Him according to the Mosaic Covenant, when they are also using the time and place to plan their next immoral and unjust move towards God and their fellow Jews.

Therefore, the last comment in this verse in Mark that the merchants have made the temple a robbers’ den indicates primarily the lack of a changed heart and authentic faith on the part all these merchants who are selling, i.e., that they have injected their own unbelief and false religion into the proper place of worship of Yahweh. Thus, they may be engaging in fair and natural commerce, but they also may be exploiting the opportunity to sell their animals, birds, and money by using it in an unfair and selfish way. But it also may be the case that the Levitical, temple leadership, and especially the high priest, are being so meticulous in the inspection of animal sacrifices brought to them that only the merchants’ animals and birds end up being acceptable to them, thus requiring the people to buy their sacrifices from the merchants. Or they are taking advantage of the fact that some people from far away do not want to go to the trouble of bringing their own sacrifices and are selling them what they need at an exorbitant price. Regardless of the leaders’ and the merchants’ motivation, the primary problem is their unchanged and stubborn hearts. And it would ultimately be the high priest who would authorize all the activities in the temple area where they all are hiding from God by being in the very place where God requires they worship Him and they also are planning their next heist of stealing from God and the people for their own economic gain.

cf. Isaiah 56:1-8 – **Is. 56:1** Thus says the LORD, “Preserve justice and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come and My righteousness to be revealed. **2** “How blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who takes hold of it; Who keeps from profaning the sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.” **3** Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely separate me from His people.” Nor let the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” **4** For thus says the LORD, “To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, **5** to them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off. **Is. 56:6** “Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and holds fast My covenant; **7** Even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples (בְּיַדְּךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִבְרָא׃ הַלְלָתְךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ׃) (οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν).” **8** The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, “Yet *others* I will gather to them, to those *already* gathered.”

Because the context concerns Gentiles to a great degree, Jesus’ quote from Isaiah 56:7 probably indicates that all this business activity is taking place in the Court of the Gentiles (nations/peoples), which is the outer area of the temple. Therefore, the first comment pertains to the atmosphere of humility that is involved in prayer that should pervade the entire temple and allow Gentiles (non-Jews) to come and use the temple for their own worship of God. The offering of sacrifices with bleating sheep and cutting their throats to drain their blood is noisy enough without the hawking of these same animals and birds by greedy, evil at heart merchants in the same area and making it difficult for the “nations” to worship God properly. How can a person (Gentile) pray thoughtfully and humbly before God with so much noise and commotion? And what would a visitor really be taught about God in such a situation? Certainly not that God is merciful and gracious to sinners who do humble themselves before Him. Instead, they would learn that this is how the Jews engage in great business activity and achieve great wealth, while merely putting on a show for God. There may even be in the Jewish leadership’s mind using the merchants and moneychangers from preventing Gentiles from accessing the temple, i.e., using them to keep out the riffraff.

We should notice also that Isaiah 56 speaks of Gentiles’ bringing their sacrifices to be offered on the temple altar in addition to the Jewish offerings. Thus, the Mosaic Covenant becomes something that the Gentiles will enjoy keeping on the land of Israel during the millennial kingdom.

EBC – When Jesus entered the temple area (v.15), the smell of the animals entered his nostrils; and the noise from the moneychangers’ tables beat on his ears. For the convenience of pilgrims, the cattlemen and the moneychangers had set up businesses in the Court of the Gentiles. The animals were sold for sacrifices. It was far easier for a pilgrim in Jerusalem to purchase one that was guaranteed kosher than to have to bring an animal with him and have it inspected for meeting the kosher requirements. The Roman money the pilgrims brought to Jerusalem had to be changed into the Tyrian currency (the closest thing to the old Hebrew shekel), since the annual temple tax had to be paid in that currency [cf. Exodus 30]. Exorbitant prices were often charged for changing the currency. By overturning the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those selling doves, Jesus was directly challenging the authority of the high priest, because they were there by his authorization. In John’s account Jesus drove them out with a whip made from pieces of rope. Mark does not mention a whip. Nevertheless, the words “driving out” and “overturned the tables” suggest that Jesus used force [at least on the animals and the tables, not on the people].

⁶⁹⁶ καὶ προσῆλθον αὐτῷ ἑτυφλοὶ καὶ χωλοὶ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτούς –

⁶⁹⁷ ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς τὰ θαυμάσια ἃ ἐποίησεν καὶ τοὺς παῖδας ὁ τοὺς κρίζοντας ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ λέγοντας ὡσαννὰ τῷ υἱῷ Δαυὶδ, ἠγανάκτησαν –

⁶⁹⁸ καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· ἀκούεις τί οὗτοι λέγουσιν; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς· ναί. οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε ὅτι ἐκ στόματος νηπίων καὶ θηλαζόντων κατηρτίσω αἶνον –

⁶⁹⁹ καὶ καταλιπὼν αὐτοὺς ἐξῆλθεν ἕξω τῆς πόλεως εἰς Βηθανίαν καὶ ἠύλισθη ἐκεῖ –

⁷⁰⁰ Ἐπιβὰς δὲ ἔβη εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἐπεινάσεν –

⁷⁰¹ καὶ ἰδὼν συκὴν μίαν ἐπὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἦλθεν ἐπ’ αὐτήν καὶ οὐδὲν εὔρεν ἐν αὐτῇ εἰ μὴ φύλλα μόνον, καὶ λέγει αὐτῇ· Ἦ μὲν οὖν ἐκ σοῦ καρπὸς γένηται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. καὶ ἐξηράνθη παραχρῆμα ἡ συκὴ – Jesus states that the fig tree without fruit will no longer produce fruit, analogous to the destruction of the nation of Israel in A.D. 70 and A.D. 132-135 because of their unbelief. The present nation of Israel will lose their place in the world and the Roman Empire on the land of Israel.

⁷⁰² Καὶ ἰδόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· πῶς παραχρῆμα ἐξηράνθη ἡ συκὴ –

⁷⁰³ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν ἔχητε πίστιν καὶ μὴ διακριθῆτε, οὐ μόνον τὸ τῆς συκῆς ποιήσετε, ἀλλὰ κὰν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ εἴπητε· ἄρθητι καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, γενήσεται –

⁷⁰⁴ καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἂν αἰτήσητε ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ πιστεύοντες λήμψεσθε –

⁷⁰⁵ Καὶ ἔλθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ διδάσκοντι οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ λέγοντες· ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιεῖς; καὶ τίς σοι ἔδωκεν τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην – The chief priests and elders are different from the Pharisees and scribes in certain beliefs. But their understanding on how to obey and please God is the same. A person needs to promote the Mosaic Covenant and demonstrate serious obedience to it by following all the religious and ritual instructions, and God will consider him worthy of His blessings. And if the person is not completely moral in his behavior, this is not as much of a problem as not aggressively and publicly talking about, advocating, and championing adherence to the Mosaic Covenant. Therefore, if Jesus comes along and requires that the Jews shift their focus from Moses to him and his rather simple instructions of loving and caring for one another, thus stripping the Jewish leaders of all the outward, ritual practices that they consider most important in the Jews’ lives, then they can only conclude that he is a false Messiah and deserves to die.

⁷⁰⁶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἐρωτήσω ὑμᾶς κἀγὼ ἑνὸς λόγου ἕνα, ὃν ἐὰν εἴπητέ μοι κἀγὼ ὑμῖν ἐρῶ ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιῶ – Is Jesus requiring the Jewish leaders to get this question correct, or simply answer it, regardless of their answer? He probably knows that they will not answer it, so that he will not have to answer theirs. In other words, if they are not willing to be forthright and honest about their beliefs, being the bullies that they are, then they do not deserve an honest and forthright answer from him (or from anyone!).

⁷⁰⁷ τὸ βάπτισμα τὸ Ἰωάννου πόθεν ἦν; ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ἢ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων; οἱ δὲ διελογίζοντο ἕν ἐαυτοῖς λέγοντες· ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, ἐρεῖ ἡμῖν διὰ τί ὁ οὖν οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ – Jesus is shifting the Jewish leaders’ attention from himself to John the Baptist, in order to trap them in their own game, because John had become so popular among the Jewish people for his simple instructions of repentance and water baptism, thus undermining the authority of the leaders in his own way. Interesting that they are allowing Jesus’ understanding of John and (in the next verse) the social ramifications of their answering, rather than the truth and being people who care more about the truth than anything else to determine how they respond to Jesus. They certainly do not want to appear as though they agree with Jesus about anything, because that would be a slippery slope down the path to losing their status and authority within the Jewish community. But they also do not want to disagree with him publicly in regard to John the Baptist, because the people would become angry with them, and likewise they would lose their status and authority in Israel. It’s better just to play dumb and lose the opportunity to confront Jesus about his unrighteousness, i.e., his falsely claiming to be the Messiah.

⁷⁰⁸ ἐὰν δὲ εἴπωμεν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, φοβούμεθα τὸν ὄχλον, πάντες γὰρ ὡς προφήτην ἔχουσιν τὸν Ἰωάννην –

⁷⁰⁹ καὶ ἀποκριθέντες τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἶπαν· οὐκ οἶδαμεν. ἔφη αὐτοῖς· καὶ αὐτός· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιῶ – Again, a lack of honesty and forthrightness does not deserve an honest conversation. Nevertheless, Jesus will provide them with truth that they were not expecting in regard to their spiritual condition and lack of acceptance by God.

⁷¹⁰ Τί δὲ ὑμῖν δοκεῖ; ἄνθρωπος ἢ εἶχεν τέκνα δύο; ὁ καὶ προσελθὼν τῷ πρώτῳ εἶπεν· τέκνον, ὕπαγε σήμερον ἐργάζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι – Classic description of a righteous penitent sinner, someone who initially says no to God because of their fundamental immortal nature, so that there may be times when he hears the call of God to repent and believe in His grace and mercy, but he strongly says no. And then, later, he humbles himself and genuinely repents and becomes an authentic believer.

⁷¹¹ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· οὐ θέλω, ὕστερον ὁ δὲ μεταμεληθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν –

⁷¹² προσελθὼν δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ εἶπεν ὡσαύτως, ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· ἐγώ, κύριε, καὶ οὐκ ἀπῆλθεν – Clearly, this is the sinner who corresponds to the chief priests and elders with whom Jesus is conversing. They, at some level of their psyche, firmly believe that they are being correctly obedient to God, and yet they are not. But they are not explicit like the second son who seems to know exactly what he is doing with a conscious choice in both his initial disobedience and his obedience afterwards. Instead, they are suppressing their disobedience towards God to the extent that their disobedience in neither clear to themselves nor clear to others.

Promoting obedience is meaningless if someone is not doing genuine obedience.

⁷¹³ τίς ἐκ τῶν δύο ἐποίησεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς; λέγουσιν· ὁ πρῶτος· λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι προάγουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ – At least the chief priests and elders are willing to answer this question. Plus, they are analyzing it correctly.

And Jesus tells them directly that the outcasts of Jewish society, the tax-collectors and prostitutes, will qualify for the Kingdom of God ahead of them, if the former are like the first son who initially rebelled against his father and then obeyed him. If the tax-collectors and the prostitutes changed their hearts and minds and genuinely repent of their sin, then they will acquire the restored Kingdom of Israel in place of the Jewish leaders, because they claim to obey God, but they do not.

The penitent sinners of Jewish society are making no pretense of obeying God. And they have responded positively to God and are now obeying Him correctly. They have changed from being disobedient to being obedient, which is exactly what the Jewish

leaders need to do—even though they are convinced that they are genuinely obedient to God.

It is so easy with Christianity to be like the Jewish leaders, to think that, by calling oneself a pastor and teaching the Bible Sunday after Sunday and Bible studies during the week, he is properly obedient to God—even if he slips up every once in a while morally and cheats on his wife, steals from the church kitty, and acts arrogantly towards others when he lets it be known for his own selfish purposes that he is a pastor. Instead, those who teach the Bible must obey it just as much as they encourage those whom they teach.

⁷¹⁴ ἦλθεν γὰρ Ἰωάννης πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης, καὶ οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ, οἱ δὲ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι ἐπίστευσαν αὐτῷ ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰδόντες οὐδὲ μετεμελήθητε ὕστερον τοῦ πιστεῦσαι αὐτῷ – Jesus is answering his own question to them in v. 25 and which they refused to answer. This is part of his encouraging them to do the right thing and believe both John and himself instead of holding on to their current understanding of the OT and God, which is completely wrong.

⁷¹⁵ Ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε. ἄνθρωπος ἦν οἰκοδεσπότης ὅστις ἐφύτευσεν ἀμπελῶνα καὶ φραγμὸν αὐτῷ περιέθηκεν καὶ ὄρυξεν ἐν αὐτῷ ληνὸν καὶ ἠκοδόμησεν πύργον καὶ ἐξέδετο αὐτὸν γεωργοῖς καὶ ἀπεδήμησεν – Jesus is still speaking to the chief priests and elders of v. 23. The tactic he is using with this parable is the same as that of Nathan with David in 2 Samuel 12—tell him a story, get him to react to it, and tell him he is the bad guy in the story.

Isaiah 5 has the imagery of God’s vineyard, i.e., Jerusalem and its inhabitants as representatives of all Israel, who are disobedient towards God who will destroy their city and the people of the land, with Babylon carrying them off into exile.

The tenant-farmers here are past and current Jews on the land of Israel who are supposed to be giving to God His due worship through their changed of heart obedience to the Mosaic Covenant and now their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

⁷¹⁶ ὅτε δὲ ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν, ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς γεωργοὺς λαβεῖν τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτοῦ – Over the course of time, God has sent His prophets to the people of Israel, rebuking them for their not providing Him with what they owe Him, humble and heart-changed worship and obedience, the fruit of appropriate righteousness.

⁷¹⁷ καὶ λαβόντες οἱ γεωργοὶ τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ ὃν μὲν ἔδειραν, ὃν δὲ ἀπέκτειναν, ὃν δὲ ἐλιθοβόλησα – But the Jews mistreated God’s prophets, even killing some of them.

⁷¹⁸ Ἐπάλιν ἀπέστειλεν ἄλλους δούλους πλείονας τῶν πρώτων, καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτοῖς ὡσαύτως –

⁷¹⁹ ὕστερον δὲ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων ἔντραπήσονταί τὸν υἱὸν μου – The son is Jesus himself whom God sends to Israel to correct the people again and to exhort them to worship Him properly.

⁷²⁰ οἱ δὲ γεωργοὶ ἰδόντες τὸν υἱὸν εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ κληρονόμος· δεῦτε ἀποκτείνωμεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἰσχωρήσωμεν τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ –

⁷²¹ καὶ λαβόντες αὐτὸν ἐξέβαλον ἔξω τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος καὶ ἀπέκτειναν – But the chief priests and the rest of the Sanhedrin put Jesus to death also.

⁷²² ὅταν οὖν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος, τί ποιήσει τοῖς γεωργοῖς ἐκείνοις – And Jesus poses this question to the very people who are going to execute him on the cross.

⁷²³ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτοὺς καὶ τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἐκδώσεται ἄλλοις γεωργοῖς, οἵτινες ἀποδώσουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς καρποὺς ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν – So they pronounce their own judgment by God and predict exactly what Go is going to do—grant Israel and the land of Israel to Jews who obey Him properly.

⁷²⁴ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς, Λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες, οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας· παρὰ Κυρίου ἐγένετο αὕτη, καὶ ἔστιν θαυμαστὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν – Psalm 118 was written probably by Ezra when the exiles returned from Babylon and reinstated the Feast of Booths in Jerusalem. He is reflecting on God’s hesed and loyal love to the nation of Israel. In v. 17, the “I” is Israel.

In v. 19, the people of Israel enter into the Kingdom of God through the gates of righteousness and appropriate obedience to God. In v. 22, the rejected stone is the Davidic Covenant and line of David that culminates in Jesus as the final king of the Kingdom of God of Israel. The people basically rejected David and his descendants as their king because they lacked authentic belief from changed hearts.

Thus, the rejecting of David by their forefathers turned into the rejection of Jesus by the chief priests and Sanhedrin, along with the rest of the people of Israel.

⁷²⁵ διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἀρθήσεται ἀφ’ ὑμῶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ δοθήσεται ἔθνει ποιοῦντι τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς – The present generation of Jews and their leaders will not enter into the Kingdom of God. Instead, it will be a future generation who do.

Jesus is not referring to the church but to an actual generation of Jews that will all have circumcised hearts when he returns at the end of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

If you = Jews and future people = Gentiles, then God and the prophets were lying about what He will do with Israel. If you = present Jews and future people = Jews, then the promises are still intact. The remnant of Jews who survive the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord will obtain the great nation of Genesis 12:1-3.

ἔθνει = to a people, but this word does not have to exclude Jews. Indeed, it may refer to only them. Cf. John 11:48 where the Jewish leaders talk about the Romans coming and taking away their nation, i.e., their τὸ ἔθνος.

John 11:48 “If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.”

In Matthew 21:19, Jesus stated that a fig tree without fruit would no longer produce fruit, analogous to the destruction of the nation of Israel in A.D. 70 and A.D. 132-135 because of their unbelief. The present nation of Israel will lose their place on the land of Israel.

⁷²⁶ [καὶ ὁ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὸν λίθον τοῦτον συνθλασθήσεται· ἐφ’ ὃν δ’ ἂν πέσῃ λικμήσει αὐτόν.] – If someone rejects Jesus, then it will lead to his own destruction. Both parts of Isaiah 8.

⁷²⁷ Ἐκαὶ ἀκούσαντες ἡ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τὰς παραβολὰς αὐτοῦ ἔγνωσαν ὅτι περὶ αὐτῶν λέγει –

⁷²⁸ καὶ ζητοῦντες αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι ἐφοβήθησαν τοὺς ὄχλους, ἔπει ἐῖς προφήτην αὐτὸν εἶχον –

⁷²⁹ Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν εἶπεν ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λέγων – This is during Jesus' last week on earth and in Jerusalem.

⁷³⁰ ὁμοιωθῆ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ, ὅστις ἔποίησεν γάμους τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ – This is like Luke 14:16-24, but a different genre. Jesus uses something from his audience's everyday reality and teaches them about the Kingdom of God that is analogous to the story which he tells. But some of these events, like those in Luke 14,

⁷³¹ ὁμοιωθῆ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ, ὅστις ἔποίησεν γάμους, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελον ἔλθειν – Here, these events are not realistic, like those in Luke 14:18ff., that people in the towns and villages of 1st century Israel would actually refuse to come to a wedding feast. So the truth is governing this story, not the everyday reality as Jesus is telling the story. But the generation of Jews, especially those who should know better, the educated leaders, in Jesus' day are unwilling to enter into the Kingdom of God the way that God is requiring—by embracing Jesus as the Messiah.

⁷³² πάλιν ἀπέστειλεν ἄλλους δούλους λέγων εἶπατε τοῖς κεκλημένοις· ἰδοὺ ἡ ἀριστόν μου ἡτοίμακα, οἱ ταῦροί μου καὶ τὰ σιτιστὰ τεθυμένα καὶ πάντα ἔτοιμα· δεῦτε εἰς τοὺς γάμους – Of course everything is prepared. Who would invite guests to a wedding feast and then not prepare for them?

⁷³³ οἱ δὲ ἀμελήσαντες ἀπήλθον, ὃς μὲν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον ἀγρόν, ὃς δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμπορίαν αὐτοῦ –

⁷³⁴ οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ κρατήσαντες τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ ὕβρισαν καὶ ἀπέκτειναν – The Jews have mistreated God's prophets and even killed some of them and killed His Son, the Messiah.

⁷³⁵ ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ὠργίσθη καὶ πέμψας τὰ στρατεύματα αὐτοῦ ἀπόλεσεν τοὺς φονεῖς ἐκείνους καὶ τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν ἐνέπρησεν –

⁷³⁶ τότε λέγει τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ· ὁ μὲν γάμος ἔτοιμός ἐστιν, οἱ δὲ κεκλημένοι οὐκ ἦσαν ἄξιοι – Not that the Jews had to earn their entrance into the Kingdom of God. But they had not met the condition that God had placed on them to do so.

⁷³⁷ πορεύεσθε οὖν ἐπὶ τὰς διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν καὶ ὅσους ἐὰν εὔρητε καλέσατε εἰς τοὺς γάμους – Probably not realistic for the story. But God will bring in uninvited guests, those whom the invited guests would be very surprised if they gain the Kingdom of God, and the educated leaders do not, i.e., the uneducated Jews (outcast Jews in the eyes of the leaders) and pagan Gentiles who convert and embrace Jesus as their Messiah.

⁷³⁸ καὶ ἐξελεθόντες οἱ δούλοι ἐκείνοι εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς συνήγαγον πάντας τοὺς εὐδρον, πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς· καὶ ἐπλήσθη ὁ γάμος τῶν ἀνακειμένων –

⁷³⁹ Εἰσελθόν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς θεάσασθαι τοὺς ἀνακειμένους εἶδεν ἐκεῖ ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἐνδεδυμένον ἔνδυμα γάμου – Again, this is probably not going to happen in real life.

⁷⁴⁰ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἔταίρε, πῶς εἰσηλθεις ὧδε μὴ ἔχων ἔνδυμα γάμου; ὁ δὲ ἐφίμωθη – Good question. Why is someone not in appropriate clothing? Clearly, because they do not care about respecting the king and the celebratory nature of the event.

⁷⁴¹ τότε ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶπεν τοῖς διακόνοις· ἰδοὺ ἔτι πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ἐκβάλετε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων – Only God can do this in real life—destroy another human being.

This in reality is the blank nothingness of the creation before God brought it into existence, when there was only God in His uncreatedness.

⁷⁴² πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσιν τῶν κλητοῦ, ὀλίγοι δὲ τῶν ἐκλεκτοῦ – All Jewish sinners as the chosen ethnic people of God are invited to the Kingdom of God, but only certain ones will enter, those who actually meet His condition of a circumcised heart that manifests itself with authentic belief and the pursuit of biblical righteousness and morality. This is the same message as Romans 9-11—that some Jews (and some Gentiles) will enter the Kingdom of God.

⁷⁴³ Τότε πορευθέντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συμβούλιον ἔλαβον ὅπως αὐτὸν παγιδεύσωσιν ἐν λόγῳ –

⁷⁴⁴ καὶ ἀποστέλλουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτῶν μετὰ τῶν Ἑρωδιανῶν λέγοντες· διδάσκαλε, οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς εἶ καὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ διδάσκεις καὶ οὐ μέλει σοι περὶ οὐδενός· οὐ γὰρ βλέπεις εἰς πρόσωπον ἀνθρώπων –

⁷⁴⁵ εἰπέ οὖν ἡμῖν τί σοι δοκεῖ· ἔξεστιν δοῦναι κῆνον Καίσαρι ἢ οὐ –

⁷⁴⁶ γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πονηρίαν αὐτῶν εἶπεν· τί με πειράζετε, ὑποκριταῖ –

⁷⁴⁷ ἐπιδείξατέ μοι τὸ νόμισμα τοῦ κήνου. οἱ δὲ προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δηνάριον –

⁷⁴⁸ καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τίνας ἢ εἰκὼν αὕτη καὶ ἡ ἐπιγραφή –

⁷⁴⁹ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· Καίσαρος. τότε λέγει αὐτοῖς· ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος τῷ Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ –

⁷⁵⁰ καὶ ἀκούσαντες ἐθαύμασαν, καὶ ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἀπήλθον –

⁷⁵¹ Ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ προσήλθον αὐτῷ Σαδδουκαῖοι, λέγοντες μὴ εἶναι ἀνάστασιν, καὶ ἐπηρώτησαν αὐτὸν –

⁷⁵² λέγοντες· διδάσκαλε, Μωϋσῆς εἶπεν· ἐάν τις ἀποθάνῃ μὴ ἔχων τέκνα, ἐπιγαμβρεύσει ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναστήσει σπέρμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ –

⁷⁵³ ἦσαν δὲ παρ' ἡμῖν ἑπτὰ ἀδελφοί· καὶ ὁ πρῶτος γήμας ἐτελεύτησεν, καὶ μὴ ἔχων σπέρμα ἀφῆκεν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ –

⁷⁵⁴ ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ δεύτερος καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἕως τῶν ἑπτὰ –

⁷⁵⁵ ὕστερον δὲ πάντων ἀπέθανον ἡ γυνή –

⁷⁵⁶ ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει οὖν τίνας ἑπτὰ ἔσται γυνή; πάντες γὰρ ἔσχον αὐτήν –

⁷⁵⁷ Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πλανᾶσθε μὴ εἰδότες τὰς γραφὰς μηδὲ τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ θεοῦ –

⁷⁵⁸ ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἀναστάσει οὔτε γαμοὺσιν οὔτε γαμίζονται, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄγγελοι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ εἰσιν –

⁷⁵⁹ περὶ δὲ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε τὸ ρῆθὲν ὑμῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ λέγοντος –

⁷⁶⁰ ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραάμ καὶ ὁ θεὸς Ἰσαάκ καὶ ὁ θεὸς Ἰακώβ; οὐκ ἔστιν [ὁ] θεὸς νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ ζώντων –

⁷⁶¹ καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ ὄχλοι ἐξεπλήσσοντο ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ –

⁷⁶² Οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ἐφίμωσεν τοὺς Σαδδουκαίους συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό –
⁷⁶³ καὶ ἐπρωτότησεν εἰς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὁ [νομικὸς] πειράζων αὐτόν –
⁷⁶⁴ διδάσκαλε, ποία ἐντολὴ μεγάλη ἐν τῷ νόμῳ –
⁷⁶⁵ ὁ δὲ ἐφῆ αὐτῷ· ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐν ὅλῃ ὁτῆ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ ὁτῆ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου –
⁷⁶⁶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μεγάλη καὶ πρώτη ἐντολὴ –
⁷⁶⁷ δευτέρα ὁδὲ ὁμοία αὐτῇ· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν –
⁷⁶⁸ ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυσὶν ἐντολαῖς ὁ ὅλος ὁ νόμος κρέμαται καὶ οἱ προφῆται –
⁷⁶⁹ Συνηγμένων δὲ τῶν Φαρισαίων ἐπρωτότησεν αὐτοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς –
⁷⁷⁰ λέγων τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ περὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ; τίνος υἱὸς ἐστίν; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ τοῦ Δαυὶδ –
⁷⁷¹ λέγει αὐτοῖς ἄρα· πῶς οὖν Δαυὶδ ἐν πνεύματι ἔκαλε αὐτὸν κύριον λέγων –
⁷⁷² εἶπεν ἄρα κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν σου –
⁷⁷³ εἰ οὖν Δαυὶδ ἔκαλε αὐτὸν κύριον, πῶς υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἐστίν –
⁷⁷⁴ καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο ἀποκριθῆναι αὐτῷ λόγον οὐδὲ ἐτόλμησεν τις ἀπ’ ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας ἐπερωτῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐκέτι –
⁷⁷⁵ Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν τοῖς ὄχλοις καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ –
⁷⁷⁶ λέγων ἐπὶ τῆς Μωϋσέως καθέδρας ἔκαθισαν οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι –
⁷⁷⁷ πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν εἴπωσιν ὑμῖν ἢ ποιήσατε καὶ τηρεῖτε, κατὰ δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν μὴ ποιεῖτε· λέγουσιν γὰρ καὶ οὐ ποιοῦσιν –
⁷⁷⁸ δεσμεύουσιν δὲ φορτία βαρέα [καὶ δυσβάστακτα] καὶ ἐπιτιθέασιν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὤμους τῶν ἀνθρώπων, αὐτοὶ δὲ τῷ δακτύλῳ αὐτῶν οὐ θέλουσιν κινήσαι αὐτά –
⁷⁷⁹ πάντα δὲ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν ποιοῦσιν πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· πλατύνουσιν γὰρ τὰ φυλακτήρια αὐτῶν καὶ μεγαλύνουσιν τὰ κράσπεδα –
⁷⁸⁰ φιλοῦσιν δὲ τὴν πρωτοκλισίαν ἐν τοῖς δείπνοις καὶ τὰς πρωτοκαθεδρίας ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς –
⁷⁸¹ καὶ τοὺς ἀσπασμοὺς ἐν ταῖς ἀγοραῖς καὶ καλεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ῥαββί –
⁷⁸² Ὑμεῖς δὲ μὴ κληθῆτε ῥαββί· εἰς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὑμῶν ὁ διδάσκαλος ἄρα, πάντες δὲ ὑμεῖς ἀδελφοὶ ἐστε –
⁷⁸³ καὶ πατέρα μὴ καλέσητε ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἰς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὑμῶν ὁ πατήρ ὁ οὐράνιος –
⁷⁸⁴ μηδὲ κληθῆτε καθηγηταί, ὅτι καθηγητῆς ὑμῶν ἐστὶν εἰς ὁ Χριστός –
⁷⁸⁵ ὁ δὲ μείζων ὑμῶν ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος –
⁷⁸⁶ ὅστις δὲ ὑψώσει ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται καὶ ὅστις ταπεινώσει ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται –
⁷⁸⁷ Οὐαὶ ὁδὲ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, ὅτι κλείετε τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων· ὑμεῖς γὰρ οὐκ εἰσέρχεσθε οὐδὲ τοὺς εἰσερχομένους ἀφίετε εἰσελθεῖν –
⁷⁸⁸ Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι κατεσθίετε τὰς οἰκίας τῶν χηρῶν, καὶ προφάσει μακρὰ προσευχόμενοι διὰ τοῦτο λήψασθε περισσώτερον κρίμα –
⁷⁸⁹ Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, ὅτι περιάγετε τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν ποιῆσαι ἕνα προσήλυτον, καὶ ὅταν γένηται ποιεῖτε αὐτὸν υἱὸν γεέννης διπλότερον ὑμῶν –
⁷⁹⁰ Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, ὀδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ οἱ λέγοντες ὅς ἂν ὁμότης ἐν τῷ ναῷ, οὐδὲν ἐστίν· ὅς δ’ ἂν ὁμότης ἐν τῷ χρυσῷ τοῦ ναοῦ, ὀφείλει –
⁷⁹¹ μοροὶ καὶ τυφλοὶ, τίς γὰρ μείζων ἐστίν, ὁ χρυσὸς ἢ ὁ ναὸς ὁ ἁγιάσας τὸν χρυσόν –
⁷⁹² καὶ ὅς ἂν ὁμότης ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ, οὐδὲν ἐστίν· ὅς δ’ ἂν ὁμότης ἐν τῷ δώρῳ τῷ ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, ὀφείλει –
⁷⁹³ τυφλοὶ, τί γὰρ μείζων, τὸ δῶρον ἢ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ ἁγιάζον τὸ δῶρον –
⁷⁹⁴ ὁ οὖν ὁμότης ἐν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ ὁμνυεῖ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ –
⁷⁹⁵ καὶ ὁ ὁμότης ἐν τῷ ναῷ ὁμνυεῖ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ κατοικοῦντι αὐτόν –
⁷⁹⁶ καὶ ὁ ὁμότης ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὁμνυεῖ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ –
⁷⁹⁷ Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, ὅτι ἀποδεκατοῦτε τὸ ἥδύοσμον καὶ τὸ ἄνηθον καὶ τὸ κύμινον καὶ ἀφήκατε τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου, τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὸ ἔλεος καὶ τὴν πίστιν ταῦτα [δὲ] ἔδει ποιῆσαι κἀκεῖνα μὴ ἀφίεναι –
⁷⁹⁸ ὀδηγοὶ τυφλοὶ, ὅτι διυλίζοντες τὸν κώνωπα, τὴν δὲ κάμηλον καταπίνοντες –
⁷⁹⁹ Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, ὅτι καθαρίζετε τὸ ἔξωθεν τοῦ ποτηρίου καὶ τῆς παροψίδος, ἔσωθεν δὲ γέμουσιν ἐξ ἀρπαγῆς καὶ ἄκρασίας –
⁸⁰⁰ Φαρισαῖοι τυφλοί, καθάρισον πρῶτον τὸ ἐντὸς τοῦ ποτηρίου, ἵνα γένηται καὶ τὸ ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ καθαρὸν –
⁸⁰¹ Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, ὅτι παρομοιάζετε τάφοις κεκονιαμένοις, οἵτινες ἔξωθεν μὲν φαίνονται ὡραῖοι, ἔσωθεν δὲ γέμουσιν ὀστέων νεκρῶν καὶ πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας –
⁸⁰² οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔξωθεν μὲν φαίνεσθε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δίκαιοι, ἔσωθεν δὲ ἐστε μεστοὶ ὑποκρίσεως καὶ ἀνομίας –
⁸⁰³ Οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί, ὅτι οἰκοδομεῖτε τοὺς τάφους τῶν προφητῶν καὶ κοσμεῖτε τὰ μνημεῖα τῶν δικαίων –
⁸⁰⁴ καὶ λέγετε· εἰ ἡμεθα ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, οὐκ ἂν ἡμεθα αὐτῶν κοινωνοὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι τῶν προφητῶν –
cf. Jeremiah 20-24 – **20** Indeed, there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim; and he prophesied against this city and against this land words similar to all those of Jeremiah. **21** When King Jehoiakim and all his mighty men and all the officials heard his words, then the king sought to put him to death; but Uriah heard it, and he was afraid and fled and went to Egypt. **22** Then King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor and certain men with him went into Egypt. **23** And they brought Uriah from Egypt and led him to King Jehoiakim, who slew him with a sword and cast his dead body into the burial place of the common people. **24** But the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that he was not given into the hands of the people to put him to death.

⁸⁰⁵ ὥστε μαρτυρεῖτε ἑαυτοῖς ὅτι υἱοὶ ἐστε τῶν φονευσάντων τοὺς προφῆτας –

⁸⁰⁶ καὶ ὑμεῖς πληρώσατε τὸ μέτρον τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν –

⁸⁰⁷ ὄφεις, γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν, πῶς φύγητε ἀπὸ τῆς κρίσεως τῆς γεέννης –

⁸⁰⁸ Διὰ τοῦτο ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω πρὸς ὑμᾶς προφῆτας καὶ σοφοὺς καὶ γραμματεῖς· ἵνα ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀποκτενεῖτε καὶ σταυρώσατε ἵνα ἐξ αὐτῶν μαστιγώσατε ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς ὑμῶν· καὶ διώξετε ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν –

⁸⁰⁹ ὅπως ἔλθῃ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς πᾶν αἷμα δίκαιον ἐκχυννόμενον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος Ἰβελ τοῦ δικαίου ἕως τοῦ αἵματος Ζαχαρίου υἱοῦ Βαραχίου, ὃν ἐφονεύσατε μεταξύ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου –

⁸¹⁰ ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἥξει ἅπαντα ἐπὶ τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην –

⁸¹¹ Ἰερουσαλὴμ Ἰερουσαλὴμ, ἡ ἀποκτείνουσα τοὺς προφῆτας καὶ λιθοβολοῦσα τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους πρὸς ἑαυτήν, ποσάκις ἠθέλησα ἐπισυναγαγεῖν τὰ τέκνα σου, ὃν τρόπον ὄρνις ἐπισυνάγει τὰ νοσσία αὐτῆς ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας, καὶ οὐκ ἠθελήσατε – cf. Jeremiah 20-24 – **20** Indeed, there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim; and he prophesied against this city and against this land words similar to all those of Jeremiah. **21** When King Jehoiakim and all his mighty men and all the officials heard his words, then the king sought to put him to death; but Uriah heard it, and he was afraid and fled and went to Egypt. **22** Then King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor and certain men with him went into Egypt. **23** And they brought Uriah from Egypt and led him to King Jehoiakim, who slew him with a sword and cast his dead body into the burial place of the common people. **24** But the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that he was not given into the hands of the people to put him to death.

⁸¹² ἰδοὺ ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ὄρημος –

⁸¹³ λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ με ἴδητε ἀπ' ἄρτι ἕως ἃν εἴπητε εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου –

⁸¹⁴ Καὶ ἐξεληθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐπορεύετο, καὶ προσῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπιδειξάμενοι αὐτῷ τὰς οἰκοδομὰς τοῦ ἱεροῦ – When studying this passage of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 along with Mark 13, Luke 21, and Luke 17, it is preferable to pursue understanding the event of this discussion between Jesus and his disciples as opposed to simply the text of each individual account. This means using the other parallel passages to help understand the meaning of the passage in any one of the individual accounts. And Jesus' comment in Matthew 24:36, "Regarding that day and hour, no one knows, not even the *angeloi* of the heavens, nor the Son, but the Father alone" (cf. Mark 13:32), is key to realizing that Jesus knows that Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed and that he will return to restore the Kingdom of Israel, but he does not know the exact time of any of these events or even who will destroy Jerusalem and the temple. Maybe it will be the Romans, but it could be a nation later in history which follows Rome and its empire.

This temple was a pet project of King Herod the Great who as an Edomite wanted to ingratiate himself to the Jews. Its construction as a replacement for the one built by Zerubbabel after the return of the exiles from Babylon 500 years earlier was begun over forty years before this event and was still not yet complete. It became one of the seven wonders of the world so that it obviously was a beautiful building, and it is no surprise that the disciples would comment on this fact.

See the notes for my translation of Mark 13 for a more detailed explanation of portions of the Olivet Discourse. The notes for my translation of Luke 21 will also help.

⁸¹⁵ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς: οὐ βλέπετε ταῦτα πάντα; ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὁδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ καταλυθήσεται – While Jesus is certain that the temple is going to be destroyed, he probably does not know exactly when or by whom, i.e., that it is less than forty years away in A.D. 70 when Titus and his Roman army decimate the entirety of Jerusalem. Just as he does not know the time of the temple's destruction, neither does he know when is his return and establishing the Kingdom of Israel (the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20). Cf. Mark 13:32, And of that day and hour no one knows, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father; and Matthew 24:36 Regarding that day and hour, no one knows, not even the *angeloi* of the heavens, nor the Son, but the Father alone; and Acts 1:7, And he said to them, "It is not to know the times or the seasons which the Father has established by His own authority."

The destruction of the temple indicates another judgment on Israel by God as He brought about in 722 B.C. and 586 B.C. on the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah respectively. Thus, one more judgment of the Jews is going to occur before Jesus the Messiah establishes the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel, i.e., all Israel (cf. Acts 1). This also means one more exile of the Jews before they are restored to the land in prosperity, success, and with their permanent king, the Messiah. The exile mostly takes place in A.D. 132-135 as a result of the Bar Kochba revolt, when the Jews are scattered by the Romans never to return until the 19th century with the Zionist Movement which culminates in the state of Israel coming into existence in 1948. However, this should not yet be considered the restoration of the Jews to the land, because it will later include God's changing the hearts of all the Jews worldwide after the invasion and destruction caused by the Man of Lawlessness and his army (cf. 2 Thessalonians and Daniel 11,12). Thus, present day Israel is the arena in which God's last judgment of the Jews will take place before the return of Jesus and before he restores the Kingdom of Israel.

⁸¹⁶ Καθήμενον δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους τῶν ἐλαιῶν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ κατ' ἰδίαν λέγοντες: εἰπὲ ἡμῖν, πότε ταῦτα ἔσται καὶ τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ ἵνα συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος – The Mount of Olives is east of the temple mount and the Kidron Valley and overlooks them with a clear view of the temple and other buildings. From this vantage point, the disciples ask Jesus when his prediction will come true, i.e., when the temple will be destroyed. Matthew demonstrates by the way he states the question that he understands the disciples to be asking about these other two elements also. This is to say that they connect the destruction of the temple with either his coming into his kingdom which they believe will occur soon (if they have not yet grasped that he is going to die and rise from the dead, which seems likely; cf. Mark 9:32; Luke 9:45; Acts 1), or his return (assuming that they have grasped to some degree the fact that he will leave and come back to set up his kingdom, which does not seem likely). They also connect the destruction of the temple with "the finalization" of the present age, meaning the end of the period of time when Israel is still at the mercy of their enemies (the age of the Gentiles when they have hegemony over the

world) and before the Messiah returns to destroy their enemies and set up his kingdom as the final Davidic king so that he and the Jews have hegemony over the world. Therefore, the disciples are assuming that these three events are contemporaneous, or at least they are asking how the destruction of the temple fits with these other two events, which will be contemporaneous.

cf. **Matthew 10:23** “But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes (ἕως ἄν ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου).

cf. **Matthew 13:39** and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age (ὁ δὲ θερισμὸς συντέλεια ἰαῖωνός ἐστιν); and the reapers are angels.

cf. **Matthew 13:49** “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous.

cf. **Matthew 16:21** From that time Jesus began to show 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 up on the third day.

cf. **Matthew 16:27** “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS. 28 Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

cf. **Matthew 17:9** As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.

The above verses demonstrate that Jesus disciples were already familiar with his return and the end of the present age because of his having talked to them about them prior to this event in Matthew 24. The new information was the destruction of the temple, and they chose to connect it with his return and establishing the Kingdom of Israel at the end of the present age.

παρουσία = an emperor’s blessing his people with his presence, thus Jesus’ coming into his kingdom and truly being present as the king and acting completely with the authority and role of the king, which he is not currently doing completely. This is why I have translated it “blessed appearance.”

cf. **Philippians 2:12 – 12** So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence (ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου) only, but now much more in my absence (ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου), work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Cf. **1 Thessalonians 4:15 – 15** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord (εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου), will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

⁸¹⁷ Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· βλέπετε μὴ τις ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ – Here Jesus is addressing the third question about the finalization of the present age along with his indicating that it does coincide with his “coming,” because he relates the “end” (τὸ τέλος, v. 7) with other people who claim to be the Messiah, meaning that the Messiah has “come” (cf. v. 3).

Two options for the “you” – 1) Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and their peers only; 2) anyone who lives through the long time that Jesus implies in vs. 7 & 8, so that Peter, Andrew, James and John are representatives of them. Because of the long time implied in vs. 7 & 8, #2 makes more sense than #1.

⁸¹⁸ πολλοὶ γὰρ ἐλεύσονται ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου λέγοντες· ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ χριστός, καὶ πολλοὺς πλανήσουσιν – A certain result of other Jewish men claiming to be the Messiah is that some Jews (and Gentiles) will believe them and be led astray from Jesus, the true Messiah.

Because vs. 6-8 indicate that his establishing the Kingdom of Israel is still a long way off, Jesus wants to encourage his disciples to persevere in their belief in spite of the difficulty of waiting for God to end the present realm. The longer the time that people have to wait for the kingdom to arrive, the more they prone they will be to believe false information and in false Messiahs.

Therefore, the “you” of these statements must include those who will be followers of Jesus after the disciples, depending on just how long God plans to wait for Jesus to restore the Davidic kingdom on the land of Israel. Because this has not yet happened, the “you” obviously includes Gentile believers around the world down through the centuries, but it mainly concerns the Jews of the Middle East (see note below).

“In my name” in this context means that they will say, “I am the Messiah,” or it could be like the preterist view of claiming that Jesus came in A.D. 70 so that Bible teachers will claim that he has already come, thus leading people away from God’s promises to the Jews to make of them a great nation and restoring them to the land, which becomes a kind of anti-Semitism.

And Jesus does say that many will become deceived by the claims of false Messiahs, whether by the false Messiahs themselves or by those who promote them (cf. Revelation and the Beast and his false prophet).

⁸¹⁹ μελλήσετε δὲ ἀκοῦειν πολέμους καὶ ἀκοὰς πολέμων· ὁράτε μὴ θροεῖσθε· δεῖ γὰρ ἵ γενέσθαι, ἀλλ’ οὐπω ἐστὶν τὸ τέλος – Assuming that history is Israel-centric and Jewish-centric and that Jesus is talking to Jews whose scriptures predict their becoming the greatest nation in human history (cf. Genesis 12:1-3), he could be talking about only Israel’s enemies declaring that they are going to attack the Jews on the land of Israel, which of course will obviously frighten them. However, the next verse indicates that these wars are between multiple “ethnic groups” and therefore much more widespread than just Israel and probably even the Middle East. In addition, these attacks on the Jews and wars between other ethnic groups will not indicate that the finalization of the age is occurring and that the Messiah is about to appear. In other words, there will be lots of global conflicts which will occur before his return. It is not that global “non-violence” is an immoral goal, but it is certainly unrealistic in the light of God’s plans and purposes. Jesus’ point is that between his death, resurrection, ascension and his establishing the Kingdom of Israel there will be a long time, indeed long enough that some people will weary of having to wait and thereby become susceptible to being deceived by false Messiahs who precede Jesus’ parousia. The deception will also occur because the Jews (and others) will simply become afraid of being attacked and the possibility of violence towards them so that they will grab on to anyone who promises to protect them from harm. Jesus encourages his disciples to work through their fear with genuine belief in order to gain the eternal Kingdom of God. Indeed, violence among nations throughout the times of the Gentiles will be a necessary part of God’s story before Jesus establishes his kingdom on the land of Israel.

⁸²⁰ ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν καὶ ἔσονται ἴλιμοι καὶ σεισμοὶ κατὰ τόπους – Jesus is saying that there will be global ethnic conflicts between different people groups, i.e., “nations,” plus plenty of natural disasters caused by the weather and the earth’s internal structure. Mankind will not be able to avoid or eliminate violence between people and catastrophic events caused by the natural world.

Jesus is saying that his establishing the Kingdom of Israel is a long way off. These kinds of catastrophes of vs. 6 & 7 are simply the “beginning of birth pangs,” which in line with the analogy would still mean that the “birth” of Jesus’ parousia, his establishing the Kingdom of Israel, would not occur for a long time.

While it is possible that Jesus is talking about wars, earthquakes, and famines around the entire globe, his purview is more likely the boundaries of the Roman Empire and its neighbors in the Ancient Near East where there have been plenty of these catastrophic events which have occurred. Nevertheless, the longer God waits for Jesus to return, the more events in the rest of the world combine with those in the Middle East to point towards Jesus’ return.

⁸²¹ ἵπαντα δὲ ταῦτα ἄρχῃ ὠδίνων – Jesus uses the analogy of a mother in labor. Yes, his appearance and the finalization of the present age is on its way, but just as the beginning of birth pangs for a mother do not necessarily mean that the baby is about to arrive in the next few moments, neither will all these global disasters mean that Jesus is setting up his kingdom anytime really soon.

⁸²² Τότε παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς θλίψιν καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου – Not only will there be global and middle eastern conflicts involving even the Jews along with plenty of natural disasters, but Christians, including and maybe especially Jewish Christians, will be hated, rejected, and mistreated by non-believers. Because of their association with Jesus as the Messiah, they will even be killed.

⁸²³ καὶ τότε σκανδαλισθήσονται πολλοὶ καὶ ἀλλήλους παραδώσουσιν καὶ μισήσουσιν ἀλλήλους – The whole situation of there even being a Jewish Messiah will lead many people to pursue immorality with more vigor than if the Messiah were not an important element in reality. First option – It will lead to people acting in a hostile manner towards other people, probably because this will simply be a way that they demonstrate their unwillingness to acknowledge God at all.

Or second option – Jesus is saying that people who have claimed to believe in him will succumb to the temptation to abandon their belief and instead turn against each other as Christians in order to save their own lives. This second option seems more coherent in the context and goes along with the use of “betray” in Jesus’ statement.

⁸²⁴ καὶ πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφήται ἐγερθήσονται καὶ πλανήσουσιν πολλοὺς – Not only will false Messiahs arise in the interim, but also people who claim to speak for God in regard to the Messiah but who are actually rebelling against God will arise too. They will come up with clever ideas and schemes with the express purpose of leading others away from God and the Messiah, even saying that the Messiah has already come, as the preterists do. As a result, people will take their focus off God’s promises to the Jews and His making of them a great nation, which in turn can easily produce a kind of anti-Semitism, which is a rejection of God instead of obeying Him.

⁸²⁵ καὶ διὰ τὸ πληθυνθῆναι τὴν ἀνομίαν ψυγήσεται ἡ ἀγάπη τῶν πολλῶν – Jesus is saying that as immorality increases as the end of the times of the Gentiles draws closer (cf. Romans 11), people’s love for God will likewise wane, indeed turning cold and non-existent. They will love this world, immorality, and themselves with their sinful and selfish pursuits more than they love God—but in despair (cf. Kierkegaard).

⁸²⁶ ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται –

⁸²⁷ καὶ κηρυχθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἰσχυρῶς βασιλείας ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καὶ τότε ἔξει τὸ τέλος – The whole world (ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ) here could mean the entire globe, but more likely even Jesus’ perspective is the Roman Empire and its contiguous nations and people groups in the Ancient Near East. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the longer God waits for Jesus’ return, the more the rest of the world becomes a part of this whole process. And once the gospel goes out to the Gentiles as much as God has planned for it to do so, He will inaugurate the time of establishing the earthly Kingdom of Israel through the Messiah.

⁸²⁸ Ὅταν οὖν ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου ἑστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ, ὁ ἀναγιώσκων νοεῖτω – See the quote at the end of this footnote of the entire note from the Expositor’s Bible Commentary regarding this verse for a comparison of what I am arguing for regarding this verse and this section of Matthew 24:15-20.

Here through v. 20 Jesus is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Jews from the land of Israel that occurred from A.D. 70-135, even though, because of his comment to the effect that he does not know exactly when his return will occur, he does not know either when Jerusalem’s destruction will occur and what Gentile army will perform it. There is always the possibility that another Gentile nation will conquer the Romans and be the destroying force of Jerusalem, or even another Gentile nation much later. The point is that God will bring about vengeance on the Jews for their executing their Messiah, Jesus, by using some Gentile army as His tool of vengeance, but not even Jesus knows exactly when and which army.

In the latter time period of A.D. 132-135, 580,000 Jews were killed by the Romans, 50 fortified towns and 985 villages were destroyed, and the rest of the Jews were exiled from the land, never to return in any great number until the 19th century and the Zionist Movement.

In Luke 21:20, the author substitutes “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies” for Mark’s and Matthew’s “When you see the abomination of desolation standing where it must not be (let the reader understand).” In this way, Luke tells us what the “let the reader understand” means. In line with Daniel 9, it means that the great sin which has displeased God of crucifying the Messiah is leading to the destruction of Jerusalem by the (Roman) army which is in place where it should not be, i.e., a Gentile army dominating the Jews and their capital city on their land in contrast to what God has promised the Jews in Deuteronomy 28 of their having hegemony over the Gentiles. Thus, “abomination of desolation” is a metonymy of effect where the cause (the Jews’ crucifying their Messiah) is put for the effect, the arrival of the Roman army on the land of Israel and its destroying

Jerusalem and the temple. In other words, the Jews have committed the sin of abomination by crucifying Jesus which leads to the desolation and destruction of their land, starting with Titus' destroying Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70 and Sextus Severus' finishing the job when 580,000 Jews were killed and the rest sent off into exile between A.D. 132-135.

And Jesus warns the Jews that once the Roman army has laid siege to Jerusalem, or even before it does as it is arriving on the land of Israel, every Jew who can should flee from it and find safety in the mountains, which are probably the Judean and Jordanian mountains east of Jerusalem and even on the other side of the Dead Sea.

Mark the author of his gospel had realized how cryptic Jesus is being in regard to the appearance of the (Roman) army on the land of Israel and laying siege to Jerusalem, and so he adds "let the reader understand," which Matthew adopts also as a good way of pointing the reader to the right interpretation.

Matthew also points the reader towards the correct OT book for interpreting the phrase "abomination of desolation." And Daniel 9:27 is the correct passage of the three in Daniel because the first of the other two refers to Antiochus Ephphanes IV, who set up a statue of Zeus in the Jerusalem temple in December, 168 B.C., and the second refers to either the same thing or something having to do with the Man of Lawlessness just before Jesus' returns.

Here is a quote from the Expositor's Bible Commentary regarding Daniel 11:31 – This verse gives further details about the momentous events of December 168 B.C. The desecration was, as already described, the rifling of the sanctuary and temple treasury and the removal of all the sacred vessels. The abolition of the daily sacrifices to the Lord was now made binding by the erection in the temple of Yahweh of "the abomination that causes desolation" (*siqqus mesomem*). Apparently, this was a statue of Jupiter or Zeus Olympius, if we may judge from the statement of 2 Macc 6:2 that the temple itself was to be renamed the Temple of Zeus Olympius. Pagans invariably installed an image in the inner sanctuary of any temple dedicated to the worship of that deity. Even if the actual statue was not installed in the Jerusalem temple as early as 16 December (25 Chislev) 168 B.C., we may be sure that an idolatrous altar was formally consecrated there at that time. Thus the same type of desecration overtook the second temple as befell the first temple in the evil days of Ahaz (735–715) and Manasseh (695–642), when they too had set up an idolatrous altar (by Ahaz—2 Kings 16:10-16) and images of heathen gods (by Manasseh—2 Kings 21:3-5).

[Expositor's Bible Commentary regarding Matthew 24:15 – *Oun* ("so") can serve as either an inferential or merely a transitional conjunction (cf. BAGD, pp. 592-93; BDF, par. 451.1 plus app.; RHG, pp. 119–192; Turner, *Syntax*, pp. 337-38), which can sometimes be left untranslated; it does not introduce something *temporally* new. If it retains any inferential force in this passage, it is very light—"accordingly, when you see then flee." Having characterized the entire age during which the gospel of the kingdom is preached as a time of *thlipsis* ("distress"), Jesus goes on to talk about one part of it when there will be particularly "great distress.

To bdelygma tes eremoseos means "the abomination characterized by desolation," leaving it unclear whether the abomination "causes" desolation (NIV; cf. McNeile, "the abominable thing that layeth waste"; RSV, "the desolating sacrilege") or is simply a token of it. The former is more likely. The expression occurs four times in Daniel (8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). Daniel 11:31 clearly refers to the desecration under Antiochus Epiphanes (168 B.C.; cf. 1Macc 1:54-61), who erected an altar to Zeus over the altar of burned offering, sacrificed a swine on it, and made the practice of Judaism a capital offense. The other references in Daniel are more disputed. Matthew and Mark agree with the LXX of Daniel 12:11 only; and, "[despite] the primary importance of Dan 9:27 for the meaning of the expression, 12:11 is contextually the more suitable reference so far as the gospels are concerned, because allusions to Dan 11:40-12:13 surround this reference to the abomination of desolation" (Gundry, *Use of OT*, p. 48).

Jesus, then, is identifying Daniel 9:27 and 12:11 with certain events about to take place; and the parenthetical "let the reader understand" is designed to draw the attention of the *reader of Daniel* to the passages' true meaning. This parenthetical aside is not a Matthean addition (unless one holds to Matthew's priority), for it is already in Mark. Matthew clearly understood it, not as an aside by Mark to draw the attention of his readers to the importance of this Gospel text, but as an aside by Jesus to draw the attention of his hearers who read Daniel to the importance of Daniel's words; hence Jesus' mention of "the prophet Daniel." Whether the identification Jesus makes is a prediction fulfillment or a typological fulfillment largely depends on how one understands the various "abomination of desolation" passages in Daniel.

But to what event does Jesus make this text from Daniel refer? Some have suggested Caligula's plan to set up a pagan altar and standards in the temple precincts (A.D. 40), a plan never carried out; but the description in the following verses cannot apply to that. The obvious occasion, in general terms, is A.D. 70, though certain difficulties must be faced. Although *topos* ("place") can refer to the city of Jerusalem (cf. BAGD, p. 822), the normal meaning of *hagios topos* ("holy place") is the temple complex (cf. BAGD; Isa 60:13; 2Macc 1:29; 2:18; Acts 6:13; 21:28). But by the time the Romans had actually desecrated the temple in A.D. 70, it was too late for anyone in the city to flee.

Mark's language is less explicit: "standing where it does not belong" (Mark 13:14), instead of "standing in the holy place." Luke resolves the matter: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near" (Luke 21:20)—but now there is no explicit mention of "the abomination of desolation." Possibly Jesus said something ambiguous, such as Mark reports. Luke, writing for a Gentile audience less concerned with Daniel, emphasizes the aspect of warning. Matthew, believing the allusions to Daniel important for his Jewish audience because Jesus drew attention to them, makes explicit reference to "the abomination of desolation" and to "the holy place," since the setting up of the abomination in the holy place is the inevitable result of the pagan attack.

By the time the Roman military standards (an eagle in silver or bronze over the imperial bust, to which soldiers paid homage far removed from worship) surrounded Jerusalem, the city was defiled. Some have held that though Luke refers to the approaching armies, Matthew and Mark refer to the Zealot excesses that polluted the temple before A.D. 70 (including murder and the installation of a false high priest; cf. Jos. War IV, 147-57 [iii.6-8], 162-92 [iii.10], 334-44 [v.4]), when there was still time

to flee (e.g., Lane, Mark, p. 469; Gaston, *No Stone*, pp. 458ff.). In any case, there is reasonably good tradition that Christians abandoned the city, perhaps in A.D. 68, about halfway through the siege.]

⁸²⁹ τότε οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη – And Jesus warns the Jews that once the (Roman) army has laid siege to Jerusalem, or even before it does as it is arriving on the land of Israel, every Jew who can should flee from it and find safety in the mountains, which are probably the Judean and Jordanian mountains east of Jerusalem and even on the other side of the Dead Sea. Luke includes “and those who are in the midst of the city must leave, and those who are in the country must not enter the city” (21:21), indicating that Jesus is speaking of all Jews in and around Jerusalem when its demise comes from this Gentile army. Luke also includes “because these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled” (21:22), indicating that the destruction of Jerusalem and what follows in the lives of the Jews (probably right up to the time of Jesus’ return) is because of God’s anger being poured out on them for all their rebellion against Him, including and especially because of their rejecting and executing their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

⁸³⁰ ὁ ἐπὶ τοῦ δώματος μὴ καταβάτω ἄραι – People of the ANE used their roofs as living rooms in the evenings and nights where they could enjoy the family’s company and also that of friends. There were probably outside stairs that led up to the roof. Thus, Jesus is describing how quickly the Jews in Jerusalem and its surrounding area should leave when they see the Gentile army approaching the city to destroy it. They will not be able to adequately prepare themselves and their families for their journey if they want to save their lives.

⁸³¹ καὶ ὁ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ μὴ ἐπιστρεψάτω ὀπίσω ἄραι – This is like the previous verse, simply a way that Jesus is saying, it is best for all Jews to get out of the way of the invading Gentile army because its destruction of their villages and them will be massive and complete.

⁸³² οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἐχούσαις καὶ ταῖς ἠθλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις – Jesus is not condemning pregnant and nursing mothers. He is simply stating that the Gentile army’s destruction of the land of Israel is going to be so extensive and complete that it will be a very difficult time for everybody, especially for those who are “burdened” to a degree by pregnancy and nursing children that already makes it hard to travel quickly, which is exactly what the Jews will need to do in order to escape this army.

⁸³³ προσεύχεσθε δὲ ἵνα μὴ γένηται ἡ φυγὴ ὑμῶν χειμῶνος μηδὲ σαββάτω – The same as above will be true if the Jews have to flee from the approaching army when the weather is cold and rainy, that it will add that much more difficulty to a situation that is already hard enough. In addition, if they are truly interested in obeying God properly, then they will not want to have to violate the Sabbath commandment.

⁸³⁴ ἔσται γὰρ τότε θλίψις μεγάλη οἷα οὐ γέγονεν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς κόσμου ἕως τοῦ νῦν οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ γένηται – See the quote at the end of this footnote of the entire note from the Expositor’s Bible Commentary regarding this verse for a comparison of what I am arguing regarding this verse and this section of Matthew 24:21-22.

Matthew adds the adjective “great” before tribulation which Mark does not. And in light of Jesus’ lack of knowledge of when and exactly how long will be the time period between his first and second coming, it makes the most sense to interpret “that time” as referring to this entire time period. Therefore, because of the Jews’ many acts of rebellion against God, especially the execution of their Messiah, there will be many times in between Jesus’ first and second comings when the Jews will experience tremendous suffering as a result of God’s justice towards them, such suffering that cannot be compared with anything they previously experienced during their entire history. In other words, even the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions and exiles will be considered a cakewalk in comparison to what the Jews will suffer when the (Roman) army destroys Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the Jews are expelled from the land in A.D. 132-135, and even afterwards until Jesus returns. For example, there have been the pogroms in eastern Europe and Russia, the Holocaust in Germany, and the general dominance of Gentile culture over the Jews throughout the world, requiring them to live in enclaves if they are not willing to adopt the surrounding cultures.

[Expositor’s Bible Commentary – “For” introduces the reason for flight in vv.17-20: *thlipsis* (“distress,” “tribulation”) and unprecedented suffering (cf. Dan 12:1; 1Macc 9:27; Rev 7:14; Gundry, *Use of OT*, pp. 49f.). The savagery, slaughter, disease, and famine (mothers eating their own children) were monstrous (cf. Jos. War V, 424-38 [x.2-3]), “unequaled from the beginning of the world until now,” and, according to Jesus, “never to be equaled again.” There have been greater numbers of deaths—six million in the Nazi death camps, mostly Jews, and an estimated twenty million under Stalin—but never so high a percentage of a great city’s population so thoroughly and painfully exterminated and enslaved as during the Fall of Jerusalem.

From this “great distress” Jesus’ followers were to flee. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.2-3) says that during the siege under Titus (who did not replace his father Vespasian as commanding officer till A.D. 69, after the death of Galba), many were permitted to leave (cf. Jos. War V, 420-23 [x.1]). Others hold that the Christians left in 66 or 68.

That Jesus in v.21 promises that such “great distress” is never to be equaled implies that it cannot refer to the Tribulation at the end of the age; for if what happens next is the Millennium or the new heaven and the new earth, it seems inane to say that such “great distress” will not take place again. At the same time, by these remarks Jesus finishes his description of Jerusalem in Matthew and Mark (Luke goes to 21:24).]

⁸³⁵ καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐκολοβώθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκείναι, οὐκ ἂν ἐσώθη πᾶσα σὰρξ· διὰ δὲ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς κολοβώθησονται αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκείναι – See the quote at the end of this footnote of the entire note from the Expositor’s Bible Commentary regarding this verse for a comparison of what I am arguing regarding this verse and this section of Matthew 24:21-22.

Here “those days” refer to the individual circumstances throughout the last 2,000 years when the persecution of Jews has been so intense as to almost wipe them out completely, and “all flesh” refers to the Jews only as in Joel 2:28. In both cases of here and Joel 2:28, it would be easy to interpret “all flesh” as “all mankind” and make this tribulation something that occurs worldwide towards both Jews and Gentiles. However, in this context, it makes more sense to hear Jesus referring to the Jews. Thus, God has promised that Abraham’s physical descendants through Isaac and Jacob will eventually become a “great nation” (Genesis 12:1-

3). Therefore, He has also promised to preserve them through any attempts by Gentile nations to eliminate them, including those which He brings upon them through His wrath during this entire time period between Jesus' first and second comings. As a result, God is putting boundaries on His own response to the Jews' rebellion by not annihilating them, just as He puts boundaries on His justice towards sinners when He chooses to regenerate them and grant them His eternal mercy and even though the eternal destruction of non-believers will be something He performs at the final judgment. In this latter case, there will be no eternal boundaries to His justice. Their destruction will be complete and total.

[Expositor's Bible Commentary – Many problems in interpreting the Olivet Discourse relate to the assumption that “those days” refers to the period described in vv.15-21 and also to v.29. But there are excellent reasons for concluding that vv.22-28 refer to the general period of distress introduced by vv.4-14 and that therefore “those days” refers to the entire period of which vv.15-21 are only one part—the “great distress” (v.21).

1. The term “elect” (in Matthew only at 22:14; 24:22, 24, 31; plus the variant at 20:16) most naturally refers to all true believers, chosen by God; so it is reasonable to assume that it does so here.

2. Similarly, *pasa sarx* (lit., all flesh; NIV, no one; cf. Notes) normally refers to all mankind and is more sweeping than “no one in Jerusalem.”

3. The themes of the ensuing verses have already been taken up as characteristics of the entire age (vv.4-14), especially the warning against false Christs (cf. vv.4-5).

4. It has already been shown that v.21 makes a suitable ending to vv.15-21.

5. Wenham, in his forthcoming work (see at v.21), posits a neat presynoptic tradition that embraces the content of all three Gospels and suggests reasons for individual selection of materials. That tradition (slightly modified from Wenham) runs approximately as follows: Matthew 24:15-20 = Mark 13:14-18 = Luke 21:20-23a; Luke 21:23b-24; Matthew 24:20 = Mark 13:19; Matthew 24:22-28 = Mark 13:20-23; Matthew 24:29-42 = Mark 13:24-37 = Luke 21:25-36. Right or wrong as to source-critical details, this reconstruction at least makes sense of the relationship among the Synoptics at this point and supports a logical break between v.21 and v.22 of Matthew 24.

6. Further literary and structural arguments suggest that vv.4-28 must be taken as one time period, with vv.15-21 a critical part of it (see on v.29).

While none of these arguments is decisive, all are reasonable and help us understand the whole discourse. If they are correct, then v.22 tells us that this age of evangelism and distress—wars, famines, persecution, hatred, false prophets—will become so bad that, if not checked, no one would survive. In a century that has seen two world wars, now lives under the threat of extinction by nuclear holocaust, and has had more Christian martyrs than in all the previous nineteen centuries put together, Jesus' prediction does not seem farfetched. But the age will not run its course; it will be cut short (For a somewhat similar idea, see the Jewish apocalypse 2 Baruch 20:12; 83:1.) This promise enables believers to look for God's sovereign, climactic intervention without predicting dates.]

⁸³⁶ Τότε εάν τις υμιν ειπη ιδου ωδε ο χριστος, η ωδε, μη πιστευσητε – This will be during the entire time between Jesus' first and second comings that certain Jews will falsely claim to be the Messiah and there will be certain Jews (and Gentiles?) who will falsely claim that the Messiah has arrived.

⁸³⁷ εγερθησονται γαρ ψευδοχριστοι και ψευδοπροφηται και δωσουσιν σημεια ‘μεγала και τερατα’ ωστε ‘πλανησαι, ει δυνατον, και τους εκλεκτους – Because God uses miracles to affirm the truth of His prophets and Jesus as the Messiah, the logical conclusion from what Jesus is describing about the “signs and wonders” of the false messiahs and false prophets is that their miracles are also false (while the Expositor's Bible Commentary interprets the miracles of these false messiahs and prophets as genuine). They are deceptive slights of hand to appear real and possibly deceive even those who are bona fide Jewish believers, but fortunately true believers will be able to detect the lack of authenticity in these people and their miracles in order to avoid being led astray from their faith in God and Jesus as the Messiah. These are like the 144,000 of Revelation 7:4-8 and 14:1-3, who it is assumed are not deceived by the “signs” of the second beast of Revelation 13:11ff.

⁸³⁸ ιδου προειρηκα υμιν – Jesus now urges his disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John, to heed his warning, thus urging any future disciples during the long period of time between his first and second comings to guard carefully their own faith and hope in God for His eternal mercy and life.

⁸³⁹ εάν ουν ειπωσιν υμιν ιδου εν τη ερημω εστιν, μη εξελθητε: ιδου εν τοις ταμειοις, μη πιστευσητε – Like v. 23, Jesus urges his disciples not to be deceived by the false reports of the appearance of the Jewish Messiah.

⁸⁴⁰ ωσπερ γαρ η αστραπη εξερχεται απο ανατολων και φαίνεται εως δυσμων, ουτως εσται η παρουσία του υιου του ανθρωπου – Instead, Jesus assures his disciples that it will be as obvious as lightening flashing in the sky when he appears to restore the Kingdom of Israel and destroy his enemies. Here “Son of Man” is Jesus' favorite term for the Messiah and comes from David's Psalm 8 after God has made the Davidic Covenant with him. It means the Son of God, i.e., God's representative king of Israel, who comes from the human race, i.e., who is flesh and blood just like his brethren whom he rescues from God's eternal wrath and condemnation (cf. Hebrews 2).

⁸⁴¹ οπου τ εάν η το πτωμα, εκει συναρθησονται οι αετοι – See at the end of this footnote the comments on this verse by the Expositor's Bible Commentary for comparison purposes.

Jesus has been describing the effects of the Jews' rejecting him as their Messiah which has brought God's judgment on them that has extended in time from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple to his second coming and restoring the Kingdom of Israel. In this verse Jesus indicates that the devastation brought upon the Jews will be so great that it will just about destroy them as a people, making them like a corpse (or at least dying body) lying on the ground with vultures circling over it and looking to pick at the body and consume it as soon as it is assuredly dead (cf. Luke 17:37). The vultures will be Gentile nations who want nothing more than to see the Jews exterminated so that they can inhabit their land. And it will look as though this is very possibly

what is going to happen—until the actual return of Jesus the Messiah who will destroy these vulturous and predatory Gentiles who will have invaded the land of Israel under the leadership of the Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians. [Expositor’s Bible Commentary – Here Jesus quotes a proverb (cf. Job 39:30; Luke 17:37). “Eagle” (KJV) is wrong: “vulture” (NIV) is correct. *Aetos* can mean eagle, kite, or vulture; but eagles are not normally carrion eaters. The proverb itself is a difficult one.

1. Calvin, following some of the Fathers, sees it portraying God’s children, gathering to feed on Christ. But identifying carrion with Christ is strange indeed!

2. Others see an allusion to Roman military eagles, with the Roman forces swarming over corrupt Jerusalem. But eagles are not vultures; and the preceding verse relates to the Parousia, not the Fall of Jerusalem.

3. Hill and others think that the vultures’ gathering indicates that the Parousia is near. But there must be carrion before the vultures gather; so the symbolism breaks down, because the “signs” attest the reality only after the fact.

4. Manson (*Sayings*, p. 147) emphasizes the swiftness of the coming of the Son of Man: the carrion is no sooner there than the vultures swoop down (Ezek 17:3, 7; Rev 4:7; 8:13; 12:4). But in passages where the *aetos* (“eagle” or “vulture”) symbolizes speed, it is understood to mean an “eagle.” Why then assign it to a setting where it must be taken as a vulture?

5. The proverb may be a colorful way of saying that things come to pass at just the right time (Broadus); so the proverb applies here and in Luke 17:37 to the Parousia of the Son of Man. Concluding this broader section (vv.4-28) is this thought: Do not be too eager for Christ’s coming, or you will be deceived by false claimants (vv.23-26). When he comes, his coming will be unmistakable (v.27), in God’s own time (v.28)—a time when the world will be ripe for judgment (Zahn; see on v.6).

6. Or this enigmatic proverb may simply mean that it will be as impossible for humanity not to see the coming of the Son of Man (cf. v.27) as it is for vultures to miss seeing carrion (Klostermann).]

⁸⁴² Εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθήσεται καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες πεσοῦνται ἄπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται – The key to understanding the time of these next events is the phrase “after that tribulation,” meaning at the end of the judgment of God on the Jews that takes place between the first coming and the second coming of Jesus the Messiah. As stated in 24:21, this will have been a time of judgment and suffering for the Jews greater than any which they had experienced from God before, including for example the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions of the 8th and 6th centuries B.C. respectively. The phrase “in those days” could make it seem that Jesus is talking about the same time as the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. 24:19), but we must remember that he does not know the exact timing of any of these events and has already said that the end of the age of the Gentiles will come only after a long time (cf. 24:6-8).

Matthew and Mark use the same wording for 24:29 (cf. Mark 13:24,25), while Luke changes the wording. Probably Mark and Matthew are very closely quoting Jesus verbatim, while Luke is providing an explanation of what he means, “21:25 Then there will be signs with the sun, moon, and stars, and distress of the Gentiles on the earth in perplexity at the roaring sound of the sea and the waves, 21:26 while men faint from fear and the expectation of things which are coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” Thus, even though it may appear as though Jesus is quoting the various OT passages I have listed, he is simply saying that natural, catastrophic events will occur, affecting all the Gentile nations of the earth, i.e., probably global events and not just confined to the Middle East, and they will be so disturbing to unbelieving Gentiles that they will faint from fear and the possibility that more catastrophic events are soon to envelop them.

Another option is that Jesus is saying in an ANE manner that God will take the forces which Gentiles worship and manipulate to make their lives stable and secure and prevent them from using them this way, thus making life incredibly frightening for the Gentiles. However, the first option is more coherent with both Mark/Matthew’s wording and Luke’s. Therefore, something will happen to the cosmic elements of the universe and even the ocean on the earth that will frighten people out of their minds, all as a means to introduce a time of judgment on people on the earth by God through the Messiah.

⁸⁴³ καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἑκείνη ὥρα πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς – See the comments from the Expositor’s Bible Commentary at the end of this footnote for comparison purposes.

Here Jesus alludes to Daniel 7:13,14 where Daniel sees a vision/dream of a man approaching God on a throne, and God gives this man a kingdom that will last forever. The phrase “Son of Man” in Daniel’s text means a human being, and Jesus exploits its use there to mean the Messiah and king of Israel, so that he is saying that he is the human being in Daniel’s vision who comes on the clouds of heaven, and he as Israel’s king will receive from God the eternal Kingdom of God when he returns as if he is riding on the clouds of the earth’s sky. As a result, there will be great power and glory associated with his return unlike the power and glory that he displayed at his first coming. This new power and glory will be so much greater than before, because Jesus will come into the final position and role that God has planned for him. At his first coming, he willingly subjected himself in a powerless way to his enemies who killed him. At his second coming, he will subject himself to no one but God the Father, and he will crush his enemies so that no one will exercise power over him or demonstrate any kind of greatness over him. Jesus will be the most glorious person who has ever existed in the creation, and it will be obvious to everyone who is still alive when he returns.

The sign of the Son of Man will be Jesus himself as he returns to restore the Kingdom of Israel. Matthew adds that Jesus comments on how “all the tribes of the earth will mourn,” meaning that this will not be a joyous occasion for Gentile unbelievers, because it spells judgment and destruction for them, i.e., the end of their ability to rebel against God on earth with impunity.

Now, they will experience something similar to what the nation of Israel has experienced for their disobedience to God.

Daniel 7:13,14 – 13 “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming (וַיָּבֹאוּ אִתּוֹ אֲנָשִׁים אֲתֵּנָהּ הַרְוֵהוּ), and he came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him (ἐθεώρου

ἐν ὄραματι τῆς νυκτὸς καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἦρχετο, καὶ ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν παρήν, καὶ οἱ παρεστηκότες παρήσαν αὐτῷ). 14 And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language could serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which will not pass away; and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

[Expositor’s Bible Commentary – The sign of the Son of Man” has been interpreted in three principal ways –

1. Some of the Fathers after the Constantinian settlement thought it referred to Constantine’s vision of a cross in the sky, with the words “In this sign, conquer”—an interpretation both anachronistic and fanciful.

2. More commonly “the sign” is assumed to be Jesus’ coming, with “of the Son of Man in the sky” being taken as standing in exegetical relation to “the sign.” The Jews had repeatedly asked for a sign (12:38; 16:1; cf. John 2:18), and the disciples had just asked for the sign of his coming (v.3). The supreme “sign” is his parousia at the end of the age. This interpretation is possible, though perhaps a bit forced. When the Jews asked for a sign, Jesus referred them to “the sign of Jonah” (12:39-41), not to his parousia. His disciples’ more specific question (v.3) was partially answered by vv.4-28, with a fuller answer in vv.32-35.

3. T.F. Glasson (*The Ensign of the Son of Man* (Matt. xxiv, 30), JTS [1964]: 299f.) offers the best explanation. He points out that careful comparison of vv. 30-31 with the synoptic parallels shows Matthew has added mention of both “sign” and “trumpet.” But *semeion* (“sign”) commonly meant “ensign” or “standard,” both in pagan Greek literature and in the LXX; and “standard” and “trumpet” are both regularly associated with the eschatological gathering of the people of God (cf. v.31; Isa 11:12; 18:3; 27:13; 49:22; Jer 4:21; 6:1; 51:27; 1QM 3:14:2). Therefore, *semeion* has two different meanings in this chapter (vv.3, 30)—a phenomenon common enough in the NT. Theologically this means that the kingdom is being consummated. The standard, the banner of the Son of Man, unfurls in the heavens, as he himself returns in splendor and power.]

⁸⁴⁴ καὶ ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ μετὰ σάλπιγγος ἑ μεγάλης, καὶ ἐπισυνάξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων ἀπ’ ἄκρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἕως τοῦ ἄκρων αὐτῶν – There are two options for what Jesus means, 1) that God will gather the Jews from around the world and bring them to the land of Israel as the Messiah Jesus restores the Kingdom of Israel; or 2) God will gather all the Gentile and Jewish believers from all history so that they meet Jesus in the air as he returns to restore the Kingdom of Israel (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15 that also mentions the trumpet).

Another helpful passage is Malachi 4:1, “For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,” says the LORD of hosts, “so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.” Is God speaking of 1) the destruction of all unbelieving Jews around the world when He brings about the final, earthly judgment on them just before the return of the Messiah; or 2) the destruction of all unbelieving Jews on the land of Israel just before the return of the Messiah? I lean towards #1 for interpreting Malachi 4:1 and #2 for interpreting the verses in Mark and Matthew, so that the other Jews who are left on the earth will be those whom God will inwardly change and gather to the land once Israel’s enemies are destroyed by the Messiah. Thus, the 144,000 of Revelation will be Jews throughout the world who remain interested in God and being loyal to Him, but who are not changed inwardly until Jesus returns. In this way, they become the ones who return to the land and help constitute the seedbed of Jews who go on to live in the millennial kingdom as genuine believers.

Consequently, the chosen who are gathered by the angels of God will be all the followers of God in history because of their authentic belief in God by means of His having changed their hearts. Therefore, some will be resurrected from the dead, and some will be raptured off the earth.

⁸⁴⁵ Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς συκῆς μάθετε τὴν παραβολὴν ὅταν ἦδη ὁ κλάδος αὐτῆς γένηται ἀπαλὸς καὶ τὰ φύλλα ἐκφύη, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος – Matthew’s wording is the same as Mark’s. Therefore, I simply copy my notes here from Mark 13:28.

Jesus provides a very simple analogy. Every year in the spring leaves begin to appear on fig trees. And every year after the leaves appear summer follows spring shortly thereafter. Thus, the emphasis here is on the nearness of summer to spring when leaves appear on fig trees and other deciduous trees (cf. Luke 21:29, “Behold the fig tree and all trees, as soon as they put forth leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is now near (ἦδη ἐγγὺς τὸ θέρος ἐστίν).”) Thus, the analogy is emphasizing the short time between two events, the appearance of leaves on trees and summer.

JC – Just as one knows that summer is near when (and only when) the fig tree buds, likewise one can know that Jesus’s return is near when (and only when) the appropriate signs begin to appear.

⁸⁴⁶ οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὅταν ἴδητε ἅπαντα ταῦτα, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγὺς ἐστὶν ἐπὶ θύραις – This wording in Matthew is also the same as in Mark 13:29, and I copy my notes here from it with slight modifications to reference certain verses in Matthew.

Jesus uses the leaves on the fig tree with summer following right afterwards to say that when his disciples, whoever they are in the distant future as per previous verses in the Olivet Discourse, observe the sun and moon being darkened along with the stars falling and the heavenly powers being shaken, they can know that he will return very soon. It will be as though he is standing at the gates of a city, that close, and will enter the city soon afterwards just as anyone would expect a person to do who has traveled to the city and has arrived at its gates. Therefore, the point is that, just as someone does not remain long at the gates of an ANE city because he most likely has business to conduct within its walls or he wants to get to his home as soon as possible, Jesus will return very soon after the above signs begin to occur. While the great tribulation for the Jews will be a lengthy period of time from Jesus’ first coming to his second coming, the time between the signs of vs. 29-31 to his second coming will be quite short in comparison.

It is possible that Jesus is referring to the gates of the actual city Jerusalem. However, it seems more likely that he is using the analogy of a person standing at the gates of any ANE city with the result that this person will enter very soon into the city.

Consequently, Jesus is referring simply to the short time between the signs described in vs. 29-31 and his return.

Luke 21:31 changes the wording to say that “the Kingdom of God is near (ἐγγὺς ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ).” So while Mark and Matthew probably quote Jesus verbatim, Luke provides the interpretative aspect that Jesus’ return will result in the

establishing of the Kingdom of God, by which Jesus would mean in this context the restoring of the Kingdom of Israel in accordance with the disciples' question at the beginning of the Olivet Discourse (cf. Matthew 24:3, "Tell us, when will these things happen [the destruction of the temple], and what will be the sign of your coming (τῆς σῆς παρουσίας = of your blessed appearance when you will restore the Kingdom of Israel; cf. Acts 1:6, "Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel (εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ)?"). In other words, Jesus is not talking about the eternal Kingdom of God, which in a sense begins with the Kingdom of Israel and culminates in the kingdom of the new heavens and the new earth. He is talking about only the Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel, i.e., the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

⁸⁴⁷ ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ὅταν ἅπαντα ταῦτα γένηται – Matthew's wording is the same as Mark's so that I will copy here my notes from Mark 13:30.

There are two possibilities for how to translate ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη – 1) "this generation," as though Jesus is speaking of either a) the generation of Jews who are listening to him speak about all these things, or b) the generation of Jews who will be alive when the signs of vs. 29-31 take place in the distant future, or 2) "this race" or "ethnic group," i.e., the Jews.

There are also two options for understanding what Jesus means – I. he is making a temporal point (a point regarding time) that once the signs of vs. 29-31 begin, it will be less than a generation of years, approximately 30-40 years in the ANE because of their life expectancy, before he returns to restore the Kingdom of Israel, or II. he is making a point about the absolute certainty of God's fulfilling His promises to the Jews to make of them a great nation according to Genesis 12:1-3. If I. is the correct interpretation, then this verse should be tied to the previous two verses, so that v. 31, which seems to be making the point of the absolute certainty of the events occurring, especially his return to restore the Kingdom of Israel, would stand alone. If II. is the correct interpretation, then this verse should be tied to the next verse, v. 31, which as I said seems most likely to be making the point that God will surely fulfill His promises to the Jewish people and make them a great nation.

In the light of the disciples' ongoing concern about the fulfillment of God's promise to transform the Jews into a great nation, II. makes more sense along with the correct interpretation of ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη being 2) above, i.e., "this race" or "this ethnic group." Therefore, Jesus is saying that God will ensure that the Jews play their divine and biblical role right up to the end of the history of the present realm. As a result, Jesus will definitely return and restore the kingdom to Israel so that the Jews will not disappear as an ethnic group in spite of the great tribulation which they will experience and the many times that it will look as though they are about to get wiped out, e.g., during the holocaust of World War II.

In addition, this verse should be linked to the next, v. 35, because both are talking about the certainty of Jesus' return and the establishment of his kingdom over the Jews.

⁸⁴⁸ Ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσεται, οἱ δὲ λόγοι μου οὐ μὴ παρέλθωσιν – Again, Matthew's wording is the same as Mark's, and I will copy here my notes from Mark 13:31.

There are two options for what Jesus means in this verse – 1) at the end of the present realm, God will destroy the current creation and make a new one in which the second stage of the Kingdom of God will exist; but before God brings this about, He will fulfill His promises to the Jews of which Jesus has just spoken in answer to the disciples' question, or 2) the likelihood of God's not fulfilling His promises to the Jews of which Jesus has just spoken is the same as the likelihood of the universe all of a sudden disappearing when it is not supposed to, i.e., the chances are absolutely nil, as if Jesus were using the modern idiom and expression, "Hell will freeze over before God does not fulfill His promises to the Jews."

The second option fits better with the context and v. 34, that Jesus is assuring his disciples that there is absolutely no way that what they anticipate and are hoping for in regard to their people, the Jews, and God's fulfilling His promises, is NOT going to happen. Heaven and earth will pass away (which is completely out of the question like hell's freezing over) before what Jesus has stated about his return and setting up the Kingdom of Israel does not actually occur.

In addition, it makes more sense to connect vs. 34 and 35 together because of the use of παρέρχομαι in both of them, so that Jesus is making the same point in them—there is nothing but an absolute definiteness in regard to the Kingdom of Israel and its being restored at the end of the current age of the Gentiles by virtue of God's remaining faithful to His promises.

⁸⁴⁹ Περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ ὥρας οὐδεὶς οἶδεν, οὐδὲ οἱ ἄγγελοι τῶν οὐρανῶν οὐδὲ ὁ υἱὸς, εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ ἁ μόνος – Here are my notes for Mark 13:32 where the wording of the verse is the same.

Jesus is saying that there is no created being, whether we are talking about earthly human beings including the Son of God, Jesus himself, or we are talking about heavenly beings such as conventional angels, who knows when the end of the age will occur with its signs and the appearance of Jesus to restore the kingdom to Israel. He has said that the end is a long way off and that it definitely will occur, but even he does not know exactly when it will happen. The implication is that, despite the details Jesus has presented in answer to the disciples' question, everyone simply needs to be alert and wait for his return to come about.

If in v. 34 Jesus meant that his return would occur before the present generation of Jews, who are listening to him speak, dies off, then the statement in v. 36 would contradict this. Therefore, Jesus cannot mean this, which simply disproves the position that the preterists take that Jesus returned in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Indeed, everything in the Olivet Discourse taken together in their context contradicts this position.

cf. Acts 1:7, And he said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has established by His own authority."

[Interesting comments from the Expositor's Bible Commentary – Jesus' self-confessed ignorance on this point has generated not a little debate. In fact, it is part of the NT pattern of his humiliation and incarnation (e.g., 20:23; Luke 2:52; Acts 1:7; Philippians 2:7). John's Gospel, the one of the four Gospels most clearly insisting on Jesus' deity, also insists with equal vigor on Jesus' dependence on and obedience to his Father—a dependence reaching even to his knowledge of the divine. How NT insistence on Jesus' deity is to be combined with NT insistence on his ignorance and dependence is a matter of profound importance to the

church; and attempts to jettison one truth for the sake of preserving the other must be avoided. (For an attempt to work some of these things out, cf. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty*, pp. 146-60.)]

However, if Jesus is ontologically a created being like all other created human beings, which is the only rational way to understand his ontology, then it stands to reason that according to Jesus the transcendent Creator God has not provided him with the information of the exact time of his return, even though Jesus is God's proxy within the creation as is meant by the title Son of God going back to the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7 with Psalm 2, 8, and 89 to assist in grasping its meaning.

⁸⁵⁰ Ὡσπερ γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ Νῶε, οὕτως ἔσται ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου – Jesus continues here in the same manner as above of offering analogies. This time it is to illustrate the attitude of unbelievers during the time of his appearance (ἡ παρουσία = blessed appearance for the purpose of restoring the Kingdom of Israel). He is saying that the unbelievers who are alive at the time of his return will be like the unbelievers in Noah's day.

⁸⁵¹ Ὡς γὰρ ἦσαν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις [ἐκεῖναις] ταῖς πρὸ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ τρώγοντες καὶ πίνοντες, γαμοῦντες καὶ γαμιζόντες, ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας εἰσηλθεν Νῶε εἰς τὴν κιβωτόν – During the time of Noah before God brought the flood on the earth, unbelievers were under the distinct impression that life as they knew it would continue uninterrupted. Therefore, they lived life as any normal person would who basically did not have a care in the world right up to the day when Noah and his family boarded the ark and before the rains began. Therefore, even the sign that Noah was offering them of building the ark and entering it was irrelevant as far as the unbelievers were concerned. They simply continued on their merry way, living life as if no cataclysm or judgment from God was coming upon them.

⁸⁵² καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν ἕως ἦλθεν ὁ κατακλυσμὸς καὶ ἦεν ἅπαντας, οὕτως ἔσται [καὶ] ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου – Because the unbelievers of Noah's day were taking no heed of what he was doing by building and then boarding the ark, they were oblivious to the danger of God's imminent judgment and physical destruction. It was only on the very day the rains began and the flooding started that they realized they were going to die. However, by then it was too late to avoid God's judgment, and the flood took them all away, i.e., removed their existences from the earth by destroying their lives. Jesus says that his return to establish the millennial kingdom (cf. Revelation 20) will be similar. All the signs of the sun's and moon's darkening, etc. will frighten unbelievers but still seem theologically irrelevant to them so that when they are destroyed by cataclysmic and natural events, they will not have had time to repent and be saved from the destruction that is overtaking them. Therefore, they, like the unbelievers of Noah's day, will be taken away and removed from the earth.

All of this sounds like the breaking of the 6th seal in Revelation 6:12-17, which also corresponds to the 7th bowl of wrath of Revelation 16:17-20 (The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord), when God finishes His judgment of the Jews mainly on the land of Israel – **Rev. 6:12** I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; **13** and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. **14** The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. **15** Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; **16** and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; **17** for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Rev. 16:17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done." **18** And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. **19** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. **20** And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **21** And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

There is the question, though, as to whether Jesus is speaking of 1) global judgment of both unbelieving Jews and Gentiles or of 2) local judgment of unbelieving Jews on only the land of Israel? If we correlate this judgment with the 7th bowl of wrath in Revelation 16:17-21 where it is said that "the cities of the nations/Gentiles fell," then it would be a global judgment and therefore #1. However, there is the possibility that Revelation 16:19 is referring to Gentile cities on the land of Israel, but it seems more likely that the language of these passages refers to cities that are located around the world.

Thus, Jesus is not talking about eternal destruction but physical death as the next two verses confirm. Nevertheless, by virtue of these people being unbelievers, they will also experience God's eternal wrath, condemnation, and destruction at the 2nd resurrection of Revelation 20.

[Expositor's Bible Commentary – Jesus expects ceaseless vigilance of his followers, for the final climax of human history will suddenly come on ordinary life. In the human condition massive distress and normal life patterns coexist. For the believer the former point to the end; the latter warn of its unexpectedness.]

⁸⁵³ Τότε εἰς δύο ἔσονται ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, εἰς παραλαμβάνεται καὶ εἰς ἀφίεται – Even though the verb for "taken" is different (αἶρω in v. 39 in comparison to παραλαμβάνω in vs. 40 & 41), the meaning is the same for coherence sake. Unbelievers will be removed from the earth by virtue of God's judgment which comes upon them so suddenly that they have no time basically to repent. This is to say that unbelievers will die in the judgment which God brings on the earth.

There are three options for the one who will be left – 1) the person is a lucky Gentile unbeliever who is not killed yet and will survive the cataclysmic events of the 6th seal and 7th bowl of wrath of Revelation 6 and 16, resulting in his respecting Jesus when he establishes the Kingdom of Israel, so that the unbeliever probably grudgingly submits to his authority and Israel's hegemony over the world, or 2) the person is one of the "144,000" Jews of Revelation whom God protects from the invading army of the Man of Lawlessness, or 3) the person is similar to Noah who as an authentic believer was "left" after the flood of judgment, and

this person can be assumed to continue to live until Jesus' actual return when he is raptured off the earth to be transformed by God into an eternal and morally perfect person as stated in 1 Thessalonians 4 by Paul.

Because of Jesus' previous comments likening the days of Noah to the time of his return and which most likely refer to a worldwide judgment of living human beings, it is more coherent to interpret both vs. 40 & 41 as pertaining to either lucky unbelievers who survive in order to be ruled by Jesus (option #1) or authentic believers who are later raptured (option #3). Then, because Jesus mentions Noah specifically in the story to which he is likening the days of his return, it is more coherent to interpret the person who is "left" according to option #3, a believer who eventually enters into immortality and moral perfection according to 1 Thessalonians 4.

⁸⁵⁴ δύο ἀλήθουσai ἐν τῷ ἑνὶ ἡμέρῳ, μία παραλαμβάνεται καὶ μία ἀφίεται ὁ κύριος – The same is true of these women as the men in the previous verse. One person as an unbeliever is killed in the judgment of God on the earth while the other person, a believer, survives to experience the rapture and resurrection of 1 Thessalonians 4.

According to the Expositor's Bible Commentary, two women usually work together squatting opposite one another and turning the millstone in unison.

⁸⁵⁵ Γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε ποῖα ἡμέρα ὁ κύριος ὑμῶν ἔρχεται – Because of the long period of time between Jesus' first and second appearances, it would be easy for his disciples to lose their focus on the goal of being ready with true and authentic belief in order to obtain the benefit of eternal mercy and life from God through Jesus' advocacy when he returns. Therefore, Jesus is urging them (and any bona fide disciples of his in the years after them) to commit themselves to looking for his return and being on their guard with persevering belief and obedience at all times. He does not want the length of time to dissuade them from remaining solid in their belief and desire for eternal life so that they would incur God's judgment and destruction instead.

⁸⁵⁶ Ἐκεῖνο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι εἰ ἦδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποῖα φυλακὴ ἢ κλέπτῃς ἔρχεται, ἐγρηγόρησεν ἂν καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἶασεν ἱδρυθῆναι τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ – Jesus presents an analogous situation to his second coming. The owner of a house would love to know exactly when a thief is going to burglar his house, because then he would be awake and ready for him to prevent him from carrying out his evil deeds. He certainly would not fall asleep at the appointed time and permit the thief to succeed in his plans.

JC – Just as a householder would not be caught off guard by a thief that was coming to rob him if he knew when the thief was coming, so we human beings would not be caught off guard by Jesus returning in judgment if we knew when he was coming. But since we—like a householder—do not know when Jesus is coming, it is important that we be ready for his return at all times.

⁸⁵⁷ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὑμεῖς γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι, ὅτι ἢ οὐ δοκεῖτε ὥρα ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται – Like the house owner who would obviously not leave his house or fall asleep at the exact moment when a thief breaks in, if he knows when this moment is, Jesus' disciples need to be as alert and ready for Jesus' return as the house owner who would be waiting for the thief if he knew that and when he was coming. In other words, Jesus' disciples need to be as ready and alert all the time as if they actually know exactly when he is returning.

⁸⁵⁸ Τίς ἄρα ἐστὶν ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος καὶ φρόνιμος ὃν κατέστησεν ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκετείας αὐτοῦ τοῦ δοῦναι αὐτοῖς τὴν τροφήν ἐν καιρῷ – This analogy by Jesus is parallel to the one in Mark 13:34-37, but while the main point is the same, i.e., that his disciples must persevere in their belief and love of one another, there is the additional element of abusing one's fellow believers which demonstrates a lack of authentic belief and concern for God's eternal mercy and life.

Jesus introduces the analogy by speaking of a slave whose master has left the house and given him the responsibility of caring for the rest of the slaves by making sure they are properly and consistently fed.

In real life, Jesus commands all his disciples and followers to care for and love one another in such a way that their physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs are acknowledged and met as much as possible.

JC – disciples of Jesus will be held accountable for their lives when he returns; not just leaders; simple analogy of master asking all his servants to do, and therefore all of Jesus' disciples. Not all the details in a parable have an analogy. Therefore, how have Jesus' followers interacted with the truth which he has presented them? Have they believed it, practiced it, and are we pursuing living our lives according to it only. If yes, then enter into eternal life. If no, then incur God's condemnation.

⁸⁵⁹ μακάριος ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος ὃν ἐλθὼν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ εὐρήσει ὅτι οὕτως ποιοῦντα – Jesus says that certainly the slave who carries out this responsibility will feel happy when the houseowner returns and learns that he has done so.

Thus, when Jesus returns however long is the time between his first and second coming, the true disciple who has carefully and consistently sought to love his fellow believers will enjoy the response of Jesus to all his inward and outward efforts.

⁸⁶⁰ ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐπὶ πάσιν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν αὐτοῦ καταστήσει αὐτόν – As a result of the slave's proper and consistent obedience to the houseowner's instructions, the latter will give him even more responsibility, placing him in charge of not only the other slaves, but also all his property and assets.

Likewise, Jesus' response to the bona fide disciple will be to assign him the responsibility of caring for all his fellow believers in the eternal Kingdom of God and caring for all the other elements of the kingdom beyond the people in it (as opposed to interpreting "all his possessions" as all the people in the kingdom; but "other elements of the kingdom" as going beyond people seems more coherent with the "master" having first put the slave in charge of his "household," i.e., people, in v. 45).

⁸⁶¹ εἰ δὲ εἴπῃ ὁ κακὸς δοῦλος ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ χρονίζει ἵνα ὁ κύριος ἔλθῃ – However, if the slave takes advantage of the fact that the houseowner will be gone a long time...

If a disciple of Jesus chooses to look at the long time between Jesus' first and second comings as an opportunity to disobey him...

⁸⁶² καὶ ἄρξῃται τύπτειν τοὺς συνδούλους αὐτοῦ, ἐσθίῃ δὲ καὶ πίνῃ μετὰ τῶν μεθύοντων – and the slave mistreats those over whom the houseowner put him in charge and hangs out with the wrong crowd, engaging in immorality and drunkenness...

So that the poorly thinking disciple mistreats his fellow believers and does not love them properly in every way that is possible, even engaging in immoral behavior without seeking to stop himself and be repentant...

⁸⁶³ ἤξει ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἣ οὐ προσδοκᾷ καὶ ἐν ὥρᾳ ἣ οὐ γινώσκει – the houseowner will return when the slave does not expect him (because he has not considered the fact that because he does not know exactly when he is returning, he should remain vigilant at all times)...

Jesus will return when the supposed believer does not expect him, because he is not keeping himself focused on Jesus' second coming and remaining persevering in his belief and obedience for the sake of obtaining God's eternal mercy and life...

⁸⁶⁴ καὶ διχοτομήσει αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν θήσει· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων – the houseowner will destroy him—end of parable.

Then Jesus switches to speaking of himself and what he does to the alleged disciple who proves that he is not authentic in his faith and obedience to God. He will cause him to join all the other people who only acted as though they were his followers but were not authentic. And they all will experience great grief and anguish over being rejected by God. In other words, they will incur God's wrath and destruction in a measured and appropriate manner at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15.

⁸⁶⁵ Τότε ὁμοιωθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν δέκα παρθένοις, αἵτινες λαβοῦσαι τὰς λαμπάδας ἑαυτῶν ἐξῆλθον εἰς ὑπάντησιν τοῦ νυμφίου – Because the three parables of Matthew 25 do not appear in either Mark or Luke, a good question to ask is whether or not Jesus actually included them in his presentation of the material of the Olivet Discourse, or did he speak them at some other time and Matthew appropriately adds them to his account because they clearly refer to the same subject and make good points in regard to his second coming? Examination of these parables/analogies reveals that they fit so well with the overall flow of ideas of the discourse that we can safely assume that Jesus did present them to his disciples in his response to their question upon leaving the temple and that for whatever reason Mark and Luke chose not to include them.

In each of the these three analogies of Matthew 25, it is vital to pay careful attention to exactly what in the story is similar to the situation regarding Jesus' second appearance and the lives of his followers/disciples. It is also important to keep in mind what Jesus has already taught in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and as confirmed by Mark 13, Luke 21, and Luke 17. For example, Jesus has indicated that the length of time between his first and second comings will be long, which is key in the first parable of the ten virgins. In addition, he has said that no one but God the Father knows exactly when he will return, which is key in the second parable of the man who goes on a journey and leaves his possessions in the care of his slaves. And finally, he has implied and it is categorically taught in other parts of the NT (cf. Ephesians 4 & 5) that Christians must treat each other well and care for one another for the sake of encouraging each other to persevere in faith and belief until either the end of their lives or Jesus returns, whichever occurs first. As a result, other passages in the NT can contribute to arriving at a correct interpretation of these three parables.

To what does the first word of this parable, To/te = Then, refer? The most coherent answer is that it refers to Jesus' second coming as discussed and explicitly mentioned by Jesus in 24:29-51. Therefore, Jesus' use of the phrase "Kingdom of the Heavens" means the kingdom which he brings into existence, most specifically the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel in accordance with the disciples' question at the beginning of the Olivet Discourse. Jesus is saying, "When I return to set up the Kingdom of Israel, the situation with people as to whether or not they enter into this kingdom will be like this..."

Because Jesus mentions a bridegroom whom the ten virgins are meeting, the setting is a first century Jewish wedding festival. These virgins are important to the story for Jesus to make his point, while the bride and the bridegroom's attendants are not. Therefore, Jesus does not include the latter. It would seem that a fair assumption is that in first century Israel, the bridegroom and his attendants would leave his house after the sun had set and walk to a prearranged place to meet either the bride and her attendants or just the bride's attendants and then finish the procession to the location of the wedding and the wedding feast. Therefore, these ten virgins are the bride's attendants, and their responsibility is to arrive ahead of time at the staging point and wait for the bridegroom and his attendants with lighted lamps as an important part of their preparedness for the groom, which within that first century Jewish culture must have demonstrated a high level of respect for the groom. In other words, to show up with unlighted lamps or to have one's lamp go out before the entire procession arrived at the wedding location would constitute an inexcusable faux pas and social blunder on the part of any of the attendants. Thus, once the bridegroom arrived, they would all walk together with lighted lamps to the building (the bride's house or some other house?) where the wedding and the feast would take place. As a result, nothing about the analogy so far probably surprises Jesus' listeners, and they assume the bridegroom's attendants are accompanying him even though Jesus does not mention them. However, for the point that Jesus is making in the parable, the ten virgins are metaphorically the alleged Christians who know of his return and are waiting for it, while their lighted lamps represent the level of interest and desire that each one has for entering into the Kingdom of God, so that running out of this desire during the long period of time of waiting for Jesus' return would result in a person's disqualifying himself or herself from participating in Jesus' kingdom.

It may be attractive to see the oil of the lamps as representing faith or belief so running out of faith is what Jesus is concerned about for his followers. However, the better analogy is desire to enter into the Kingdom of God just as the bride's attendants ought to have a desire to participate in the wedding out of respect for both the groom and the bride and because of the simple joy of watching their friends get married and celebrating with them. In other words, the ten virgins do not have to have faith to enter into the wedding. They must have a sustained desire that motivates them to do all they need to do to be prepared for the possibility that the bridegroom may delay in arriving at the staging point. And Jesus' has already taught that there will be a long delay between his first and second comings, thus warranting a sustained desire and proper readiness for his followers to wait appropriately for him—regardless of how long they have to wait. This is the same as what other NT passages teach about being pure of heart and having a single-minded devotion to obtaining God's eternal mercy and His kingdom. Becoming cavalier and

not showing a proper concern for entering into Jesus' kingdom when he returns will result in being rejected by Jesus. In order to gain eternal life, a sinner must have a level of desire and hope which God has planted within him and which God ultimately preserves. Cf. Romans 5:5, "and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Thus, v. 13 of Matthew 25 and Jesus' exhortation to stay alert and ready governs the analogy that he is drawing between the wedding procession and his return.

JC – The foolish virgins in the story that Jesus told missed out on the wedding banquet because, ultimately, they did not care enough about their participation in the wedding to have prudently prepared for any exigency. In contrast, the other virgins were included in the wedding banquet because they, in fact, did care enough about their participation in the wedding to have prudently prepared for any exigency. By analogy, it is those who are personally invested in the event of Jesus returning into history to be joined to his "bride" (the people of God) who will be granted the right to participate in the wedding feast of the Messiah and his bride. For it is those who are so invested who will prudently and diligently prepare for Jesus's return by deciding to obediently follow his instructions.

⁸⁶⁶ πέντε δὲ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἦσαν μωραὶ καὶ πέντε φρόνιμοι – Next Jesus comments that half of the ten attendants of the bride are foolish, while half are sensible, and he will go on to explain what they are doing that makes them fit these two descriptions. Analogously, half (a major portion of?) the Christians who are waiting for Jesus' return are actually fools, which means that they are not waiting appropriately, while half (the rest of) the Christians who are waiting are wise, prudent, and sensible so that they are waiting appropriately for Jesus' return. As suggested in the previous note, this means that a major portion of Christians do not actually desire at the deepest level of their being to obtain eternal life, while the other portion do. All Christians start out with an apparent desire for God's eternal mercy and life, but not all of them finish their lives with such. Only the truly wise Christians do so and bring enough desire with them to the time when Jesus returns (if he does in their lifetimes) that their desire is truly genuine and corresponds to authentic faith and belief.

⁸⁶⁷ αἱ γὰρ μωραὶ λαβοῦσαι τὰς λαμπάδας ἑαυτῶν οὐκ ἔλαβον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν ἔλαιον – Jesus' explanation for the foolishness of five of the bride's attendants is that the only oil they have for their lamps is what is in them. But what if the groom takes longer to arrive at the staging point so that they run out of oil and their lamps go out either before he arrives or before they finish the procession with him to the building where the wedding and feast are going to take place? Then they will have committed a gross cultural blunder and probably have to relinquish their right to attend the wedding and feast (?). Thus, Jesus' disciples might have let out a subtle but obvious gasp when Jesus mentions this element of the analogy, because no one would ever think of being so disrespectful to the bridegroom (and the bride?). Or it is possible that one of the surprising elements in this analogy is that bridegroom waits until midnight to arrive at the staging point, so that Jesus is able to emphasize the idea of preparedness by saying that five of the virgins have brought an extra container of oil, which may not have been normally necessary during first century Jewish wedding processions. And this would be because the bridegroom would show up at the designated meeting place long before anyone's oil ran out, so that no one was expected to bring extra oil.

Like the five attendants with no extra oil, foolish Christians are so cavalier towards Jesus' return to set up the Kingdom of Israel, not taking it seriously enough, that they wane in their "oil" of desire for eternal life and God's mercy, thus running out of it before the kingdom arrives and disqualifying themselves from participating in it. Only an enduring desire for entering into the Kingdom of God will result in doing so.

⁸⁶⁸ αἱ δὲ φρόνιμοι ἔλαβον ἔλαιον ἐν τοῖς ἀγγείοις ἑαυτῶν – In contrast to the foolish attendants of the bride, the wise and sensible ones take extra oil with them, because they really care about being there at the wedding with their friends, the groom and the bride. They neither want to commit a social mistake, nor do they want to miss out on the festivities. They truly have a deep-seated desire that endures and motivates them to be prepared for the possibility of a long delay on the part of the bridegroom in his reaching the staging point—whether or not this was typical in regard to a first century Jewish wedding procession.

Likewise, wise Christians will keep the lamp of their desire for eternal life burning as long as is necessary until Jesus returns, which he has clearly stated is actually a long way off from his first coming. They will do whatever they need to do in order for their desire for God's eternal mercy and life to remain strong and real throughout their entire lives, whether they die first and are resurrected when Jesus returns or Jesus appears during their lifetime.

⁸⁶⁹ χρονίζοντος δὲ τοῦ νυμφίου ἐνύσταζαν πᾶσαι καὶ ἐκάθηνδον – Of course the bridegroom was taking his time in reaching the prearranged place to meet the bride's attendants. Jesus has been teaching in Matthew 24 that God will take His time in sending Jesus back to restore the Kingdom of Israel. And as it gets later and later in the night, it is only natural that the bride's attendants become drowsy and fall asleep. Indeed, there is no problem with their doing so. The problem will be that when they wake up, will they have the ability to keep their lamps burning until they all arrive with the bridegroom at the location for the wedding and the feast?

Likewise, there is no problem with all Christians encountering the natural elements of life while they wait for Jesus' return. The question is, will they remain fundamentally desirous of eternal life and entering into the Kingdom of God, doing everything they can to stoke the fires of their desire.

⁸⁷⁰ μέσης δὲ νυκτὸς κραυγὴ γέγονεν· ἰδοὺ ὁ νυμφίος, ἔξέρχεσθε εἰς ἅπαντησιν [αὐτοῦ]! – The bridegroom delays until midnight, perhaps long past when everyone would prefer him to appear, just as God will cause Jesus to delay in his return long past when all his followers probably would prefer. "Jesus, come quickly and soon," they are all saying. Yet, he delays, and some people's desire for his return will wane and disappear.

⁸⁷¹ τότε ἠγέρθησαν πᾶσαι αἱ παρθένοι ἐκείναι καὶ ἐκόσμησαν τὰς λαμπάδας ἑαυτῶν – The bride's attendants naturally wake up and trim their lamps so that they will burn for the rest of the procession and until they arrive at the location for the wedding.

Likewise, Christians are interrupted in their living normal life when Jesus actually returns, and there is the question of whether each one still has a burning desire to enter into the Kingdom of God.

⁸⁷² αἱ δὲ ἄφρονες αἰεὶ φρονιμοὺς εἶπαν· δότε ἡμῖν ἐκ τοῦ ἐλαίου ὑμῶν, ὅτι αἱ λαμπάδες ἡμῶν σβέννυνται – And just as the foolish attendants would like to find an easy way to keep their lamps burning so that they can participate in the wedding, Christians who live at the time of Jesus' return and who have not gone to the trouble of producing the necessary level of desire to qualify for obtaining eternal life will look for an easy way to prepare themselves properly once Jesus returns. Or the analogy assumes that during any time period when this kind of "Christian" lives, he will find himself unqualified for eternal life if he has not caused his desire for it to endure to the end of his life at an obvious and real level.

⁸⁷³ ἀπεκρίθησαν δὲ αἱ φρόνιμοι λέγουσαι· μήποτε ὁ οὐ μὴ ἄρκέσει ἡμῖν καὶ ὑμῖν πορεύεσθε μᾶλλον πρὸς τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ ἀγοράσατε ἑαυταῖς – In this part of the parable, Jesus indicates that the only way that the foolish Christians will be able to gather enough desire within them to qualify for eternal life will cause them to miss out on it, as demonstrated by the next verses. Would it have even been possible for first century attendants of the bride to buy extra oil at midnight?

⁸⁷⁴ ἀπερχομένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἀγοράσαι ἦλθεν ὁ νυμφίος, καὶ αἱ ἔτοιμοι εἰσῆλθον μετ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς γάμους καὶ ἐκλείσθη ἡ θύρα – Was it the case in first century Jewish weddings that when the wedding party entered the building where the marriage ceremony and feast took place, that no one would be allowed who arrived late? It is hard to say, but Jesus incorporates this element into his analogy. While the ill-prepared attendants of the bride go off to buy more oil for themselves (at midnight, no less!), they are not at the wedding location to enter with the bridegroom and the other of the bride's well-prepared attendants, thus eliminating for themselves the possibility of participating in the marriage ceremony and feast.

⁸⁷⁵ ὕστερον δὲ ἔρχονται καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ παρθένοι λέγουσαι· κύριε κύριε, ἄνοιξον ἡμῖν – In Jesus' parable, the foolish attendants do show up after the cutoff time has been reached for being prepared sufficiently in order to participate in the wedding and the feast, i.e., having burning lamps when the wedding party enters the building where the ceremony takes place. And the foolish realize their predicament, that they are excluded from the wedding feast. So they cry out to the groom, "Sir, Sir, let us in." This would be like Christians who did not nurture a sustained desire for eternal life thinking that somehow they can produce on the spot an adequate desire for the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns. Then, when they realize they will be excluded from the eternal Kingdom of God, they cry out to Jesus to let them in nevertheless. Surely, they know they do not qualify for entrance into the kingdom, just as the foolish virgins realized they had disqualified themselves from participating in the wedding and celebration afterwards. Do they really expect Jesus (the groom) to permit them to enter?

⁸⁷⁶ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς – And just as the bridegroom rejects the ill-prepared attendants, Jesus will reject so-called Christians who do not have a nurtured and sustained desire for God's eternal kingdom and His mercy. They have disqualified themselves by not having cultivated an enduring hope in eternal life.

⁸⁷⁷ Γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἶδατε τὴν ἡμέραν οὐδὲ τὴν ὥραν – As a result, Jesus exhorts his disciples to remain ready with a level of genuine desire for eternal life that they make sure has plenty of staying power through their efforts as they constantly remind themselves just how valuable participating in the Kingdom of God will be. They know neither the time when he will return nor exactly how long will be the time interval between his first and second comings, even though he has made it clear that the time interval will be greater than anyone wants and longer than anyone expects. But this is the point. Be prepared with an enduring desire and hope for God's eternal mercy and do whatever you need to do to keep this desire and hope alive and well within you (even asking God to cause this to happen—which we can assume was part of Jesus' theology as much as it was for the NT authors in the light of God's sovereign grace!).

It is important to make choices are obedient to all of God's and Jesus' instructions in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. Investing in Jesus and his instructions leads to Jesus' investing in us at the judgment.

⁸⁷⁸ Ὡς περ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἀποδημῶν ἐκάλεσεν τοὺς ἰδίους δούλους καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτοῖς τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ – The questions here are how the word γὰρ = "For" introduces this second analogy and what is the subject of the implied verb "it is"? The subject of the verb is best considered to be "the kingdom of the heavens" as in v. 1, which is the same as the return of Jesus to establish and restore the Kingdom of Israel on earth which will eventually culminate in the eternal Kingdom of God on the new earth which God will create afterwards. Thus, the "For" introduces this second analogy by referring to v. 13 and Jesus' exhortation to remain alert and ready for his return. It is this idea that governs the second analogy as it did the first—along with the added element that Jesus' absence during the long period of time must be carefully taken into account by his followers. In this analogy, there is a man who has many possessions such that when he leaves and goes on a journey, he puts his possessions in the hands of three slaves.

It was normal in the Roman Empire for owners of homes and businesses to grant substantial responsibility and authority over their property to their slaves. Consequently, this is like Jesus' handing over his "possessions" to his followers while he is absent during his first and second comings, and these possessions could be – 1) other followers who are in the care of one another so that their care of one another increases, 2) the message of the gospel that is proclaimed so that additional followers are brought into the community of believers, 3) the faith and strength of belief of each disciple so that each one becomes stronger in his belief and faith, 4) the initial knowledge and understanding of the gospel by each individual follower so that these increase during the course of his life.

#4 is the most coherent option in that the story speaks of the necessity of each slave's doing something with his master's "possessions" and causing them to increase in number. The idea of caring for each other within the Christian community and increasing this care in #1 is attractive, but the rest of the NT points more towards #4 and Christians' working to grow in their knowledge and understanding while also loving each other in a substantive manner. Since it is "possessions" themselves that increase, having the "possession" of the message of the gospel, but then it is the number of people which increases in #3 does not fit the analogy so well. Therefore, again #4 is the most coherent option.

Another question is why the man in the analogy goes on the journey? The best answer is that he is a businessman who desires to make more money just as he will expect his slaves to make more money from what he leaves them—as we find out from the rest of the parable. Thus, does Jesus leave the earth after his first coming in order to gain more knowledge and understanding as he will expect his followers to do while they remain on earth? Certainly, it is reasonable that Jesus' own growth in knowledge is desirable to him, even if it is only to find out from the Father when he is returning. But there may be more that Jesus expects to learn while he is absent. We just do not know what this extra knowledge is.

JC – rich householder, different amounts of metal to different slaves; relative to abilities of slaves; instructs them to invest and make more; hold them accountable for keeping his instructions. Jesus is about to leave, and before he does, he provides truth to his disciples, and instructs them to keep, embrace, believe the truth and ground your life in it, and they will be judged based upon their keeping his instructions; rewarded accordingly; analogous to investing money in parables.

⁸⁷⁹ καὶ ᾧ μὲν ἔδωκεν πέντε τάλαντα, ᾧ δὲ δύο, ᾧ δὲ ἓν, ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν. καὶ ἀπεδήμησεν ἑ. εὐθέως – An easy mistake to make because of the use of the word “talents” in our English translations is to think that Jesus is talking about abilities and skills that God has given people in order to enhance and grow the community of believers, whether numerically or spiritually, e.g., growth in faith. However, “talent” in first century Israel was a monetary reference to about fifteen years wages of a laborer (cf. note in NASB95 and the Expositor's Bible Commentary). So Jesus is speaking in terms of dollars and cents (in modern American terminology), not skills and abilities. And when he left initially, what possession has Jesus given to his followers that is worth fifteen years of an employee's salary (corresponding to the third slave, while five times this was given to the first slave and two times this was given to the second slave) and that he would expect them to work at increasing? Knowledge and understanding of the gospel fits the analogy well.

However, it is certainly true that Jesus has not been present to give a level of knowledge and understanding to each Christian during the last two thousand years, but this is still the best option as explained above that fits the analogy. Thus, somewhere in the course of each Christian's life, God initially exposed him to ideas about Him and Jesus as the Messiah—through just the culture as here in America, through attending church (regularly or at just weddings and funerals), through an evangelistic meeting, through conversations with parents or friends, etc. And each Christian has absorbed and understood these ideas to best of his natural ability, which seems the best way to understand the phrase “according to his own ability.” Each slave in the parable had the ability to handle the different amount of possessions which the master gave to him, with the first slave having greater ability than the second and third slaves, etc. Analogously, God has given Christians different levels of ability to process different amounts of information, knowledge, and understanding of the gospel, which the Christian can then take and add more, if he is so inclined. And each Christian has certainly given the appearance of having embraced the initial ideas of God and Jesus to which he has been exposed and which he was able to receive according to the ability which God had given him. However, the question that this analogy is posing is, what did each Christian do with this initial knowledge and understanding of God? Did he work to increase it through seeking to grow in his knowledge of the Bible, or did he consider his initial knowledge to be sufficient for the rest of his life as a Christian?

Why not interpret “talents” as skills, abilities, or even money so that Jesus is interested in spiritual profit? The analogy is regarding a man who leaves on a long journey and therefore corresponds best to Jesus who leaves and will return at his second coming. Jesus did not give money, skills, or abilities to his disciples and followers. He gave them truth—the gospel, and he instructed them to take the truth and keep it and obey it by bearing fruit with it, i.e., the Spiritual fruit of Galatians 5:22-23. Therefore, truth is the best analogy.

⁸⁸⁰ πορευθεὶς ὁ τὰ πέντε τάλαντα λαβὼν ἠργάσατο ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἔκέρδησεν ἄλλα πέντε – In the analogy, the first slave who received the possessions from his master worth five times the amount of payment for fifteen years of labor went out and doubled this amount.

This would be the Christian who has initially taken in and understood a large amount of ideas pertaining to the gospel, and he spends the time and effort to double his knowledge and understanding through study of the Bible, something that we all know is not an easy task because of the complexity and difficulty of the biblical texts. But this Christian has the internal drive to do what is necessary to grow in his faith in this way. His hope of God's eternal mercy actually makes him more curious about God and Jesus the Messiah so that he makes the consistent effort to learn more about God and what He has promised him in the eternal kingdom.

⁸⁸¹ ὡσαύτως ὁ τὰ δύο ἔκέρδησεν ἄλλα δύο – Speaking analogously, the Christian who does not have quite the intellectual capacity and ability as the first Christian still has the same internal drive to increase his knowledge and understanding as much as he can. Thus, it is not the level of theological understanding that saves a sinner, but his persistent desire that motivates him to grow in his understanding. He has a solid hope and expectation of God's eternal mercy that nourishes an intellectual curiosity about God and the gospel.

⁸⁸² ὁ δὲ τὸ ἐν λαβὼν ἀπελθὼν ὄρυξεν ἑ γῆν καὶ ἔκρυψεν τὸ ἀργύριον τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ – Again speaking analogously, the third Christian who is not as mentally gifted as the first two, instead of working to increase his understanding of the gospel, buries his understanding, meaning that whatever initial understanding he had acquired is all that he is interested in holding on to. He does no work to increase it, meaning that he does not have the same internal drive to do so as the first two Christians. He does not have the same level of hope and expectation for God's mercy. Therefore, the problem is not his intellectual ability in comparison to other Christians. It is whether or not he has the inward motivation to grow in his understanding of the gospel. Does a Christian take the level of understanding of the gospel that God initially gives him through his parents, the culture, the church, etc. and settle for only this understanding, or does he find within himself the bona fide desire to grow in his knowledge and understanding of God through the Bible? This is the question at the center of this analogy.

If the first or second slave had buried the five or two talents respectively, then he would have received the same response from

the master as he gave the third slave. Likewise, if someone with great intellectual ability and great understanding of the biblical message does not grow in his understanding with proper desire and hope of obtaining God's mercy, then he too will be rejected by God and Jesus with the result of incurring His eternal condemnation.

Certainly, in modern times there have been scholars who have made the Bible their focus of study, but they have not been particularly interested in God, His mercy, and eternal salvation. Indeed, many of them may have been complete atheists. They have had great knowledge of the Bible and even made it their life's goal to grow in their knowledge of it, but they have lacked genuine interest and desire for their "Master's" approval and entering into His joy, that of the eternal Kingdom of God. Therefore, they are no different from the third slave in the analogy, so that while growing in their knowledge of the Bible, they have actually buried their knowledge in unbelief, which will result in God's eternal rejection and condemnation. Jesus is not talking about his specific example of a so-called Christian, but the inference is the same with respect to this person's eternal destiny.

Doing nothing with the truth with which he was exposed. Just dug a hole in the ground and did not act on it. Not embracing the truth and thereby doing what Jesus instructed us to do. Condemned. One unforgivable sin.

⁸⁸³ Μετά δὲ πολὺν χρόνον ἔρχεται ὁ κύριος τῶν δούλων ἐκείνων καὶ συναίρει λόγον μετ' αὐτῶν – Jesus next says that the master of the slaves is gone a long time, which is in keeping with his teaching in the Olivet Discourse that the time period between his first and second comings will be long. And just as the master evaluates the work of the slaves, Jesus will evaluate the work of Christians with respect to their knowledge and understanding (and their internal interest in growing in their knowledge in accordance with their hope and expectation of obtaining God's mercy).

⁸⁸⁴ καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ τὰ πέντε τάλαντα λαβὼν προσήνεγκεν ἄλλα πέντε τάλαντα λέγων κύριε, πέντε τάλαντά μοι παρέδωκας ἴδε ἄλλα πέντε τάλαντα ἔκέρδησα – The first slave reports on his work, just as Christians basically will do when Jesus returns.

⁸⁸⁵ ἔφη ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ εὖ, δοῦλε ἀγαθὲ καὶ πιστέ, ἐπὶ ὀλίγα ἦς πιστός, ἐπὶ πολλῶν σε καταστήσω· εἰσελθε εἰς τὴν χαρὰν τοῦ κυρίου σου – And just as the master adds more responsibility to the first slave when he returns because he worked to increase his possessions, so also God through Jesus will add more responsibility in the Kingdom of God (even within the earthly Kingdom of Israel, such as teaching mortal believers?), to the Christian who works to increase his knowledge and understanding of the gospel as best he can.

In addition, this Christian will experience the joy of participating in the Kingdom of God just as the master had exhorted the first slave to enjoy his presence now that he has returned.

Not more "cities" as in Matthew parable. Place in the Kingdom of God instead.

⁸⁸⁶ Προσελθὼν ὁ [δὲ] καὶ ὁ τὰ δύο τάλαντα εἶπεν κύριε, δύο τάλαντά μοι παρέδωκας· ἴδε ἄλλα δύο τάλαντα ἔκέρδησα – The same is true of the second slave and other Christians who may have less ability to understand the gospel but are equally motivated to grow in their understanding.

⁸⁸⁷ ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ εὖ, δοῦλε ἀγαθὲ καὶ πιστέ, ἐπὶ ὀλίγα ἦς πιστός, ἐπὶ πολλῶν σε καταστήσω· εἰσελθε εἰς τὴν χαρὰν τοῦ κυρίου σου – God has entrusted us with various levels of understanding of the truth. The more understanding, the more I should live like it and end my life having lived righteously.

Same response as five talents servant. Life given over to obedience in proportion to the level of understanding.

⁸⁸⁸ Προσελθὼν δὲ καὶ ὁ τὸ ἐν τάλαντον εἰληφώς εἶπεν κύριε, ἔγνων ὅτι σκληρὸς εἶ ἄνθρωπος, θερίζων ὅπου οὐκ ἔσπειρας καὶ συνάγων ὅθεν οὐ διεσκόρπισας – The third slave did not dare lose what the master had given him. He was savvy enough to know that the money which his master had entrusted to him was of great value. But he also (and surprisingly) recognized that the master would want him to provide him with some amount of increase in value in his money when the master returned, which seems the best way to interpret the slave's acknowledging the characteristic of the master that he is a hard man who reaps where he does not sow and gathers where he does not scatter.

The apostle Paul teaches in Romans 1 that every human being is morally depraved and deserving of God's condemnation. But he also teaches that even in our moral depravity which enslaves us to rebelling against God that we all understand and grasp our accountability to God for our moral being and actions. And we all know that we must do something with this knowledge by increasing it to the point where we repent before God and are saved from His wrath and condemnation. However, Paul also teaches in Romans that if God's grace does not effectively operate within us, we will act strictly out of fear of His judgment, which means that we will not have any genuine and deep desire to please God by repenting and receiving His unearned mercy. Doing nothing with the truth with which he was exposed. Just dug a hole in the ground and did not act on it. Not embracing the truth and thereby doing what Jesus instructed us to do. Condemned. One unforgivable sin.

⁸⁸⁹ καὶ φοβηθεὶς ἀπελθὼν ἔκρυψε τὸ τάλαντόν σου ἐν τῇ γῇ· ἴδε ἔχεις τὸ σόν – Thus, this third slave operated out of fear alone and not out of a full desire to please his master. He was afraid of his master—that he would punish him, but he was not inwardly driven enough to please his master by doing something to increase the value of his master's possessions (cf. v. 27).

Likewise, the Christian, who might have a limited understanding of the gospel and a limited (indeed, non-existent) desire to grow in his understanding of it, buries his knowledge in his mind, meaning that he puts no real effort and work into increasing his knowledge and understanding through arduous Bible study and/or thoughtful discussion with other Christians about the Bible for the sake of his own eternal well-being (and out of simple curiosity that would be respectful towards the God who has made him and is willing to be merciful to him). Thus he, likewise, knows that God and Jesus want him to grow in his understanding of the gospel, but he is only afraid of God and not driven to please Him by working hard to increase his understanding of the biblical message and God (cf. Romans 1 & 2).

⁸⁹⁰ Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· πονηρὲ δοῦλε καὶ ὀκνηρέ, ἦδεις ὅτι θερίζω ὅπου οὐκ ἔσπειρα καὶ συνάγω ὅθεν οὐ διεσκόρπισα – The master's language towards the third slave is harsh. He calls him evil and lazy. He also confirms what the

slave knew and admitted was true about him, that he required of the slave that he do something, anything, to gain more value for the money which he had given him when he left on his journey.

Likewise, God's and Jesus' language towards the unrepentant sinner who does not act appropriately to increase his knowledge of God will be just as harsh, and Jesus will confirm that the sinner knew better (cf. Romans 1 & 2).

⁸⁹¹ ἔδει ἴσσει οὖν βαλεῖν ἑτά ἀργυρία μου τοῖς τραπεζίταις, καὶ ἐλθὼν ἐγὼ ἐκομισάμην ἂν τὸ ἐμὸν σὺν τόκῳ – The third slave could have (in modern terms) put his money in the bank where it would have earned even minimal interest and brought some increase to his master's possessions which he had entrusted to him.

Likewise, the sinner could find some minimal way to grow in his understanding of the gospel (for example, attending gatherings where the Bible is seriously and openly discussed for people's consideration) as something which is pleasing to God and His Messiah, Jesus.

⁸⁹² ἄρατε οὖν ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ τὸ τάλαντον καὶ δότε τῷ ἔχοντι τὰ ἑδέκα τάλαντα – As a result of the slave's obvious lack of concern to please his master and increase the value of what he gave him, the master punishes the slave, first by stripping him of any responsibility of caring for his possessions, and second by ordering that this slave's monetary asset be given to the first slave who doubled the five talents he was given.

⁸⁹³ Τῷ γὰρ ἔχοντι ὅπαντι δοθήσεται καὶ περισσευθήσεται, τοῦ δὲ μὴ ἔχοντος καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπὸ αὐτοῦ – Then Jesus adds a lesson to the story to the effect that when God gives something of real value to somebody, He will also cause it to grow, which in this case is a person's knowledge and understanding of the gospel. It is God who provides the inward desire and motivation for a true Christian to put time and effort into growing his understanding of the biblical message as he looks forward with hope and expectation to the eternal Kingdom of God. In contrast, even though someone may know that which is true about God and Jesus, if he lacks the motivation and desire to grow in his understanding, then whatever knowledge he has will be stripped from him because he has operated out of only rebellion against God. Here Jesus must ultimately be pointing to the final judgment where a person's knowledge of God disappears with him when God destroys him for his unwavering rebellion against Him.

In addition, those Christians who have acted properly during their lives to enhance their grasp of the Bible will find themselves with what will be even more knowledge when they enter into their immortal and morally perfect state. It will be as if God takes the quantity of the knowledge of Him that had resided in unbelievers' minds and uses it to increase the quantity of knowledge of transformed believers. In other words, genuine Christians will continue to grow in their understanding of God even after they enter into the eternal Kingdom of God.

Parallels parable in Matthew. End is condemnation like any unbeliever. Does not believe the truth and does not belong to God.

⁸⁹⁴ καὶ τὸν ἀχρεῖον δοῦλον ἐκβάλετε εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων – In this verse, Jesus uses the word "slave" and describes him as worthless because of his refusal to do what he knew was right. However, he is not referring to the slave in the analogy but to any Christian, who takes his initial knowledge of the gospel and does not work to increase such knowledge and understanding with a genuine desire to know God better. It is this Christian who will be subjected to God's painful judgment that causes weeping and gnashing of teeth (and eventual destruction, as the rest of the NT bears out). Therefore, this is a so-called or supposed Christian and not a genuine one with authentic belief and God-created inwardness, which inwardness will drive people to pursue greater knowledge of God.

Therefore, we find out from this analogy and parable that God is ruthlessly intent on our growing in our understanding of the gospel, and we should continuously work at this which the Bible as our text of study.

⁸⁹⁵ Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ – At the beginning of this third analogy Jesus states explicitly that it concerns his second coming by calling it his coming in his glory (ἐλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ). And he is the Son of Man, i.e., the Son of God who is a bona fide member of the human race according to David in Psalm 8. He also mentions that "all the angels" will be accompanying him (πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ). There are two options for who these *angeli* are—

1) Angels who will be created theophanies, manifestations of Yahweh, who will participate in the Messiah's destroying his enemies on the land of Israel, particularly the Man of Lawlessness and his army (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 19:14, "And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses."). It is as though we can imagine battalions of angels, bivouacked in heaven and ready for Jesus to lead them out and down to earth to fight with him against his enemies and to destroy them, which will all occur at his second coming.

2) Conventional angels like Gabriel whom God will manifest in order to demonstrate Jesus' glory as the final king of Israel and of the eternal Kingdom of God.

I am inclined to think that it is #1 so that Jesus is speaking of his coming to conquer Israel's and his enemies, resulting in a division of all people into those who obtain eternal life and those who obtain eternal destruction.

There are two options for understanding this event as described by Jesus when he sits "on his glorious throne" (ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ)—

1) An actual historical event with these details unfolding exactly as he states them.

2) A parable or analogy, a story that highlights the criteria necessary for obtaining eternal life by his followers and disciples.

Taken in the context of the beginning of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:1ff., #1 sounds correct, but more likely it is #2 for three reasons—

1) This follows after two parables before it in Matthew 25, and therefore is a third parable.

2) It doesn't fit the pattern of events as described by the OT prophets and Revelation for other *parousia* of the Messiah.

3) It just reads more like a parable than an historical event.

Nevertheless, Jesus will sit on a glorious throne after he returns with all the glory and wonder which God will display through

him is that from which he reigns from Jerusalem over the Kingdom of Israel with hegemony over the rest of the world. This is the throne of his ancestor David as predicted by God in the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7. However, the throne is one of judgment, where the moral evaluation of both believers and unbelievers takes place at two different times, of the former, when Jesus returns according to 1 Thessalonians 4 and Revelation 20, and for the latter, at the end of the millennial kingdom according to Revelation 20. As a result, this is more likely a parable.

⁸⁹⁶ καὶ συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, ὡσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων – As stated above, this “gathering” is parabolic of the two separate resurrections of the dead, the first for the genuine believers when Jesus returns and the second of the unbelievers at the end of the millennial kingdom. In this way, Jesus analogously separates the sheep, i.e., believers, from the goats, i.e., unbelievers, just as a shepherd does.

Two options for “all the peoples/nations” (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη)—

1) Just the Gentiles

2) Jews and Gentiles

I am thinking that it is #2 since the Jews are a “nation” or “people” also, so that Jesus is talking about his universal judgment authority from the Father, and the story is a parable that illustrates this.

⁸⁹⁷ καὶ στησίει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν ὁ αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων – Because the sheep represent believers, to be on the right of Jesus is to be favored and accepted by him, while the opposite is the case for unbelievers on his left, who are represented by goats.

⁸⁹⁸ Τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ· δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου – Analogous to participating in the first resurrection and being transformed by God into a morally perfect and immortal human being, Jesus addresses the people on his right in the parable and welcomes them into the Kingdom of God, something which God has planned to do from before He created the cosmos. As a result, they are truly “blessed by my Father” as Jesus says. They receive from God, the source of even Jesus’ own existence in the created reality and the One whom he serves as a proxy in his royal role as king of Israel, the greatest gift God bestows on sinful human beings, eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

⁸⁹⁹ ἐπεινάσα γὰρ καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην καὶ συνηγάγετέ με – Here Jesus begins stating the necessary criterion for entering into the Kingdom of God.

First, these sheep on his right qualify to be in the Kingdom of God s because they treated him well in all the difficult circumstances in which he found himself.

⁹⁰⁰ γυμνὸς καὶ περιεβάλετέ με, ἡσθένησα καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με, ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην καὶ ἤλθατε πρὸς με –

⁹⁰¹ τότε ἀποκριθεῖσιν αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες· κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν, ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν – These people are believers who have existed throughout the entire time period during Jesus’ absence, i.e., between his first and second appearances. They rightly ask when it was that they actually treated him well, because he was not bodily in the world when they lived.

⁹⁰² πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ξένον καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιεβάλομεν –

⁹⁰³ πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ἄσθενοῦντα ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ ἤλθομεν πρὸς σε –

⁹⁰⁴ καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐρεῖ αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ’ ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων ἑτῶν ἀδελφῶν μου ἡ τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε – Jesus’ response to the historical believers’ question in this parable is that he considers his followers to be so closely associated with him, even if they have never personally been in his actual presence between his first and second comings, that when they treated one another well, with great care and respect as brothers and sisters, members of the same family, it was as though they were treating him in the same manner, because he is our brother.

This is the same idea that Jesus communicated to Paul at his conversion, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5).

This is the same point as in 1 John, to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and to love his followers is what gains eternal life for sinners.

While sometimes this parable is said to teach that Christians should take care of all people’s physical needs in the world, the fact that Jesus uses the phrase “these least important brothers of mine” indicates that he is talking about Christians only. Indirectly he is exhorting his disciples who are listening to him on the Mt. of Olives and those who would follow after them in history to love and care for their fellow Christians. And when they do, they are loving and caring for him. And this is the criterion for obtaining eternal life and the Kingdom of God.

⁹⁰⁵ Τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ εὐωνύμων· πορεύεσθε ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ὅ[οι] καταραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον ἵνα ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ – In contrast to Jesus’ welcoming believers into the Kingdom of God at the first resurrection of Revelation 20, he will command unbelievers “on his left” at the second resurrection to leave him so that they will experience God’s wrath, condemnation, and destruction. Thus “eternal fire” does not mean eternal, conscious suffering, but eternal destruction instead, which follows a measured and appropriate length of time of suffering as part of their punishment from God. And this will be the same fate as that of Satan and his demonic forces who have always rebelled against God.

⁹⁰⁶ ἐπεινάσα γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἠδίψησα καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με – Similar to the believers, the reason these unbelievers incur God’s wrath and condemnation is because they mistreated Jesus in all the various circumstances in which they encountered him.

⁹⁰⁷ ξένος ἦμην καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, ἠ γυμνὸς ἦ καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἄσθενης καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με –

⁹⁰⁸ τότε ἀποκριθεῖσιν καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες· κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἄσθενη ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ καὶ οὐ διηκονησάμεν σοι – But also as with the believers, these unbelievers, who span history from Jesus’ first coming to his second, in the parable wonder when they ever mistreated specifically him, because he was obviously absent bodily from the world.

⁹⁰⁹ τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγων ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε – Jesus' response to the unbelievers is not exactly the same as that to the believers, but the point is the same. The fact that unbelievers mistreated authentic Christians means that they mistreated him, because Jesus considers his followers to be so closely associated with him. They are his brothers, from the most important of them in the world to the least important of them. Therefore, to reject Jesus' followers is to reject Jesus himself, and the result will be eternal rejection and condemnation by God.
⁹¹⁰ καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς ἑκόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον – The conclusion to the parable and analogy that Jesus provides in this verse is that those who mistreat Christians deserve and will experience God's eternal punishment and destruction, while those who care for his followers, who are rightly related to God because of their faith and obedience, will obtain eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

This is basically the same message as 1 John, e.g., 1 John 3:15, "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him," and 1 John 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

⁹¹¹ Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους, εἶπεν τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἑαυτοῦ –

⁹¹² οἶδατε ὅτι μετὰ δύο ἡμέρας τὸ πάσχα γίνεται, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς τὸ σταυρωθῆναι –

⁹¹³ Τότε συνήχθησαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ἑαυτῶν καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ εἰς τὴν αὐλὴν τοῦ ἀρχιερέως τοῦ λεγομένου Καϊάφα –

⁹¹⁴ καὶ συνεβουλεύσαντο ἵνα τὸν Ἰησοῦν δόλω κρατήσωσιν καὶ ἀποκτείνωσιν –

⁹¹⁵ ἔλεγον δὲ μὴ ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, ἵνα μὴ θόρυβος γένηται ἐν τῷ λαῷ –

⁹¹⁶ Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γενομένου ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ἐν οἰκίᾳ Σίμωνος τοῦ λεπροῦ –

⁹¹⁷ προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ γυνὴ ἑξουσα ἀλάβαστρον μύρου ἑβαρυτίμου καὶ κατέχευεν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου –

⁹¹⁸ ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ ἠγανάκτησαν λέγοντες εἰς τί ἡ ἀπόλεια αὕτη –

⁹¹⁹ ἐδύνατο γὰρ τοῦτο πρᾶξαι πολλοῦ καὶ δοθῆναι τοῖς πτωχοῖς –

⁹²⁰ Γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς τί κόπους παρέχετε τῇ γυναικί; ἔργον γὰρ καλὸν ἠργάσατο εἰς ἐμέ –

⁹²¹ πάντοτε γὰρ τοὺς πτωχοὺς ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν, ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε –

⁹²² βαλοῦσα γὰρ αὕτη τὸ μύρον τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματός μου πρὸς τὸ ἐνταφιάσαι με ἐποίησεν –

⁹²³ ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅπου ἐὰν κηρυχθῇ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτο ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, λαληθήσεται καὶ ὁ ἐποίησεν αὕτη εἰς

μνημόσυνον αὐτῆς –

⁹²⁴ Τότε πορευθεὶς εἰς τῶν δώδεκα, ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰούδας Ἰσκαριώτης, πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς –

⁹²⁵ εἶπεν τί θέλετέ μοι δοῦναι, κἀγὼ ὑμῖν παραδώσω αὐτόν; οἱ δὲ ἔστησαν αὐτῷ τριάκοντα ἄργύρια –

⁹²⁶ καὶ ἀπὸ τότε ἐξῆτει εὐκαιρίαν ἵνα αὐτὸν παραδῶ –

⁹²⁷ Τῇ δὲ πρώτῃ τῶν ἁλύμων προσῆλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγοντες ποῦ θέλεις ἐτοιμάσωμέν σοι φαγεῖν τὸ πάσχα –

⁹²⁸ ὁ δὲ εἶπεν ὑπάγετε εἰς τὴν πόλιν πρὸς τὸν δεῖνα καὶ εἶπατε αὐτῷ ὁ διδάσκαλος λέγει ὁ καιρὸς μου ἐγγύς ἐστιν, πρὸς

σὲ ποιῶ τὸ πάσχα μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν μου –

⁹²⁹ καὶ ἐποίησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ ὡς συνέταξεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἠτοίμασαν τὸ πάσχα –

⁹³⁰ Ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης ἀνέκειτο μετὰ τῶν δώδεκα –

⁹³¹ καὶ ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν εἶπεν ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με –

⁹³² καὶ λυπούμενοι σφοδρὰ ἤρξαντο λέγειν αὐτῷ εἰς ἕκαστος μῆτι ἐγὼ εἴμι, κύριε –

⁹³³ ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν ὁ ἐμβάψας ἑαυτοῦ τὴν χεῖρα ἐν τῷ τρυβλίῳ οὗτός με παραδώσει –

⁹³⁴ ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκεῖνον δι' οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου

παραδίδοται καλὸν ἢ αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος –

⁹³⁵ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Ἰούδας ὁ παραδιδούς αὐτὸν εἶπεν μῆτι ἐγὼ εἴμι, ῥαββί; λέγει αὐτῷ σὺ εἶπας –

⁹³⁶ Ἐσθιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον καὶ εὐλόγησας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκε τοῖς μαθηταῖς εἶπεν λάβετε

φάγετε, τοῦτο ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμά μου –

⁹³⁷ καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον ἑὺχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες –

⁹³⁸ τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τῆς πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν –

⁹³⁹ λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ πῖω ἄρτι ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης ὅταν αὐτὸ πίνω

μεθ' ὑμῶν καινὸν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς μου –

⁹⁴⁰ Καὶ ὑμνήσαντες ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν –

⁹⁴¹ Τότε λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάντες ὑμεῖς σκανδαλισθήσεσθε ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ, γέγραπται γὰρ πατάξω τὸν

ποιμένα καὶ διασκορπισθήσονται τὰ πρόβατα τῆς ποιμένης –

⁹⁴² μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἐγερθῆναι με προάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν –

⁹⁴³ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν αὐτῷ εἰ πάντες σκανδαλισθήσονται ἐν σοὶ, ἐγὼ οὐδέποτε σκανδαλισθήσομαι –

⁹⁴⁴ ἔφη αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄμην λέγω σοὶ ὅτι ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ πρὶν ἄλέκτορα φωνῆσαι ἑσὺ ἄπαρνήσῃ με –

⁹⁴⁵ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος κἄν δέη με σὺν σοὶ ἀποθάνειν, οὐ μὴ σε ἀπαρνήσομαι. ὁμοίως καὶ πάντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν –

⁹⁴⁶ Τότε ἔρχεται μεθ' αὐτῶν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς χωρίον λεγόμενον Γεθσημανὶ καὶ λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς καθίσατε αὐτοῦ ἕως

ἵνα ἀπελθὼν ἐκεῖ προσεύξωμαι –

⁹⁴⁷ καὶ παραλαβὼν τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τοὺς δύο υἱοὺς Ζεβεδαίου ἤρξατο λυπεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν –

⁹⁴⁸ τότε λέγει αὐτοῖς περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου μεῖνατε ὅδε καὶ γρηγορεῖτε μετ' ἐμοῦ –

⁹⁴⁹ Καὶ ἠρωγῶν μικρὸν ἔπασεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ προσευχόμενος καὶ λέγων πάτερ ὁ μου, εἰ δυνατόν ἐστίν, παρελθάτω

ἄπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ' ὡς σύ –

⁹⁵⁰ καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς τοὺς μαθητάς καὶ εὐρίσκει αὐτοὺς καθεύδοντας, καὶ λέγει τῷ Πέτρῳ οὕτως οὐκ ἰσχύσατε μίαν ὥραν

γρηγορῆσαι μετ' ἐμοῦ –

⁹⁵¹ γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε εἰς πειρασμόν τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμον ἢ δὲ σὰρξ ἀσθενής –

- ⁹⁹⁵ καὶ ἔδωκαν αὐτὰ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν τοῦ κεραμέως, καθὰ συνέταξέν μοι κύριος –
- ⁹⁹⁶ Ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἐστάθη ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ ἡγεμόνος· καὶ ἐπρώτησεν αὐτὸν ὁ ἡγεμὼν λέγων· σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἔφη σὺ λέγεις –
- ⁹⁹⁷ καὶ ἐν τῷ κατηγορεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο –
- ⁹⁹⁸ τότε λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Πιλάτος· οὐκ ἀκούεις πόσα σου καταμαρτυροῦσιν –
- ⁹⁹⁹ καὶ οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ πρὸς οὐδὲν ῥῆμα, ὥστε θαυμάζειν τὸν ἡγεμόνα λίαν –
- ¹⁰⁰⁰ Κατὰ δὲ ἑορτὴν εἰσθαι ὁ ἡγεμὼν ἀπολύειν ἕνα τῶ ὄχλου δέσμιον ὃν ἤθελον –
- ¹⁰⁰¹ εἶχον δὲ τότε δέσμιον ἐπίσημον λεγόμενον ὁ[Ἰησοῦν] Βαραββᾶν –
- ¹⁰⁰² συνηγμένων ὁὖν αὐτῶν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· τίνα θέλετε ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν, [Ἰησοῦν τὸν] Βαραββᾶν ἢ Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον χριστόν –
- ¹⁰⁰³ ἦδει γὰρ ὅτι διὰ φθόνον παρέδωκεν αὐτόν –
- ¹⁰⁰⁴ Καθημένου δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ λέγουσα· μηδὲν σοὶ καὶ τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ· πολλὰ γὰρ ἔπαθον σήμερον κατ' ὄναρ δι' αὐτόν –
- ¹⁰⁰⁵ Οἱ δὲ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεισαν τοὺς ὄχλους ἵνα αἰτήσωνται τὸν Βαραββᾶν, τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν ἀπολέσωσιν –
- ¹⁰⁰⁶ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἡγεμὼν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τίνα θέλετε ἀπὸ τῶν δύο ἀπολύσω ὑμῖν; οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· ὁ τὸν Βαραββᾶν –
- ¹⁰⁰⁷ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· τί οὖν ποιήσω Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον χριστόν; λέγουσιν ὅτι πάντες σταυρωθήτω –
- ¹⁰⁰⁸ ὁ δὲ ἔφη· τί γὰρ κακὸν ἐποίησεν; οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἔκραζον λέγοντες· σταυρωθήτω –
- ¹⁰⁰⁹ Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Πιλάτος ὅτι οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον θόρυβος γίνεται, λαβὼν ὕδωρ ἀπενίψατο τὰς χεῖρας ἑαπέναντι τοῦ ὄχλου λέγων· ἀθῶός εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος· τούτου ὑμεῖς ὄψεσθε –
- ¹⁰¹⁰ καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς πᾶς ὁ λαὸς εἶπεν· τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν –
- ¹⁰¹¹ τότε ἀπέλυσε αὐτοῖς τὸν Βαραββᾶν, τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν φραγελλώσας παρέδωκεν ὅτι ἵνα σταυρωθῇ –
- ¹⁰¹² Τότε οἱ στρατιῶται τοῦ ἡγεμόνος παραλάβόντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον συνήγαγον ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὄλην τὴν σπειραν –
- ¹⁰¹³ καὶ ἔκδύσαντες αὐτὸν ὅτι χλαμύδα κοκκίνην περιέθηκαν αὐτῷ –
- ¹⁰¹⁴ καὶ πλέξαντες στέφανον ἐξ ἀκανθῶν ἐπέθηκαν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ κάλαμον ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, καὶ γονυπετήσαντες ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ ἐνέπαιζαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες· χαίρε, βασιλεῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων –
- ¹⁰¹⁵ καὶ ἔμπτύσαντες εἰς αὐτὸν ἔλαβον τὸν κάλαμον καὶ ἔτυπον εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ –
- ¹⁰¹⁶ Καὶ ὅτε ἐνέπαιζαν αὐτῷ, ἔξεδυσαν αὐτὸν τὴν χλαμύδα ὅτι καὶ ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σταυρῶσαι –
- ¹⁰¹⁷ Ἐξερχόμενοι δὲ εὗρον ἄνθρωπον Κυρηναῖον ὅτι ὄνοματι Σίμωνα, τοῦτον ἠγγάρευσαν ἵνα ἄρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ –
- ¹⁰¹⁸ Καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὸν τόπον λεγόμενον Γολγοθᾶ, ὅ ἐστιν Ἐκρανίου Τόπος λεγόμενος –
- ¹⁰¹⁹ ἔδωκαν αὐτῷ πιεῖν οἶνον μετὰ χολῆς μεμιγμένον· καὶ γευσάμενος οὐκ ἠθέλησεν πιεῖν – One interpretation is that it was customary to offer victims of crucifixion wine with myrrh to dull the pain. But Jesus refused so that he might experience the fullness of his suffering during his role as a propitiatory offering. However, he would have known about this custom. So why taste the wine and then refuse it. He should have refused it without even tasting it. Another interpretation that is more in line with Psalm 69:20-21 is that he thought they were offering him something bona fide to help his thirst perhaps, but it was a joke on the part of the soldiers because they had mixed in gall with the wine, making it bitter and undrinkable. They then got a laugh out of Jesus' refusal, knowing this was exactly what he was going to do. Like David, Jesus hoped for some sympathy and compassion and got none. In fact, he got the opposite, mocking and derision.
- Psalm 69:20** Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. **21** They also gave me gall for my food and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.
- ¹⁰²⁰ Σταυρώσαντες δὲ αὐτὸν διμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ βάλλοντες κλῆρον –
- ¹⁰²¹ καὶ καθήμενοι ἐτήρουν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ –
- ¹⁰²² Καὶ ἐπέθηκαν ἐπάνω τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ τὴν αἰτίαν αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένην οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων –
- ¹⁰²³ Τότε σταυροῦνται σὺν αὐτῷ δύο λησταί, εἷς ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ εἷς ἐξ εὐωνύμων –
- ¹⁰²⁴ Οἱ δὲ παραπορευόμενοι ἐβλασφήμουν αὐτὸν κινεῦντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν –
- ¹⁰²⁵ καὶ λέγοντες· ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις οἰκοδομῶν, σώσον σεαυτόν, εἰ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι καὶ κατὰ βῆθι ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ –
- ¹⁰²⁶ ὁμοίως καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ἐμπαίζοντες μετὰ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων ἔλεγον –
- ¹⁰²⁷ ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι· ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐστίν, καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ πιστεύσομεν ἐπ' αὐτόν –
- ¹⁰²⁸ πέποιθεν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ῥυσάσθω ὅτι νῦν εἰ θέλει αὐτόν· εἶπεν γὰρ ὅτι θεοῦ εἰμι υἱός –
- ¹⁰²⁹ Τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ οἱ λησταί οἱ συσταυρωθέντες σὺν αὐτῷ ὠνείδιζον αὐτόν –
- ¹⁰³⁰ Ἀπὸ δὲ ἑκτης ὥρας σκότος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης –
- ¹⁰³¹ περὶ δὲ τὴν ἐνάτην ὥραν ἀνεβόησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγων· ἠὲ ἠὲ ἡλεμα σαβαχθανι; τοῦτ' ἐστίν· θεέ μου θεέ μου, ἵνα τί με ἔγκατέλιπες; –
- ¹⁰³² τινὲς δὲ τῶν ἐκεῖ ἐστήκοντες ἀκούσαντες ἔλεγον ὅτι Ἡλίας φωνεῖ οὗτος –
- ¹⁰³³ καὶ εὐθέως δραμὼν εἰς ἑξ' αὐτῶν καὶ λαβὼν σπόγγον πλήσας τε ὄξους καὶ περιθεὶς καλάμῳ ἐπότιζεν αὐτόν –
- ¹⁰³⁴ οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ ἔλεγον ἄφες ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἡλίας σώσων αὐτόν –
- ¹⁰³⁵ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν κράζας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ἀφήκεν τὸ πνεῦμα –
- ¹⁰³⁶ Καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω εἰς δύο· καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐσεισθη καὶ αἱ πέτραι ἐσχίσθησαν –

¹⁰³⁷ καὶ τὰ μνημεία ἀνεώχθησαν καὶ πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ἠγέρθησαν –
¹⁰³⁸ καὶ ἐξεληθόντες ἐκ τῶν μνημείων μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν αὐτοῦ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν πόλιν καὶ ἐνεφανίσθησαν πολλοῖς –
¹⁰³⁹ Ὁ δὲ ἑκατόνταρχος καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ τηροῦντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἰδόντες τὸν σεισμόν καὶ τὰ ἑγνόμενα ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα, λέγοντες· ἄληθώς ἑοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος –
¹⁰⁴⁰ Ἦσαν δὲ ἐκεῖ γυναῖκες πολλαὶ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι, αἵτινες ἠκολούθησαν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας διακονοῦσαι αὐτῷ –
¹⁰⁴¹ ἐν αἷς ἦν Ἡ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Ἡ Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Ἰακώβου καὶ Ἡ Ἰωσήφ μητὴρ καὶ Ἡ μητὴρ τῶν υἱῶν Ζεβεδαίου –
¹⁰⁴² Ὁσίας δὲ γενομένης ἦλθεν ἄνθρωπος πλούσιος ἀπὸ Ἀριμαθαίας, τοῦνομα Ἰωσήφ, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἑμαρτηεὺθι τῷ Ἰησοῦ –
¹⁰⁴³ οὗτος προσελθὼν τῷ Πιλάτῳ ἠτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. τότε ὁ Πιλάτος ἐκέλευσεν ἀποδοθῆναι –
¹⁰⁴⁴ Καὶ λαβὼν τὸ σῶμα ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἐνετύλιξεν αὐτὸ ἐν σινδόνι καθαρᾷ –
¹⁰⁴⁵ καὶ ἔθηκεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ καινῷ αὐτοῦ μνημείῳ ὃ ἐλατόμησεν ἐν τῇ πέτρᾳ καὶ προσκυλίσας λίθον μέγαν τῇ θύρᾳ τοῦ μνημείου ἀπήλθεν –
¹⁰⁴⁶ Ἦν δὲ ἐκεῖ Ἡ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Ἡ ἄλλη Μαρία καθήμεναι ἀπέναντι τοῦ τάφου –
¹⁰⁴⁷ Τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον, ἥτις ἐστὶν μετὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν, συνήχθησαν οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι πρὸς Πιλάτον –
¹⁰⁴⁸ λέγοντες· κύριε, ἐμνήσθημεν ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος εἶπεν ἔτι ζῶν μετὰ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἐγείρομαι –
¹⁰⁴⁹ κέλευσον οὖν ἀσφαλισθῆναι τὸν τάφον ἕως τῆς τρίτης ἡμέρας, μήποτε ἐλθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ κλέψωσιν αὐτὸν καὶ εἴπωσιν τῷ λαῷ ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἐσχάτη πλάνη χειρῶν τῆς πρώτης –
¹⁰⁵⁰ ἔφη τὸ αὐτοῖς ὁ Πιλάτος· ἔχετε κουστῳδίαν ὑπάγετε ἀσφαλίσασθε ὡς οἴδατε –
¹⁰⁵¹ οἱ δὲ πορευθέντες ἠσφαλίσαντο τὸν τάφον σφραγίσαντες τὸν λίθον μετὰ τῆς κουστῳδίας –
¹⁰⁵² Ὅψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων ἦλθεν Ἡ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Ἡ ἄλλη Ἡ Μαρία θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον –
¹⁰⁵³ καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας· ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καὶ προσελθὼν ἀπεκύλισεν τὸν λίθον καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ –
¹⁰⁵⁴ ἦν δὲ ἡ εἰδέα αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστραπὴ καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ λευκὸν ὡς χιών –
¹⁰⁵⁵ ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ φόβου αὐτοῦ ἐσείσθησαν οἱ τηροῦντες καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ὡς νεκροὶ –
¹⁰⁵⁶ Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπεν ταῖς γυναῖξιν· μὴ φοβεῖσθε ὑμεῖς, οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον ζητεῖτε –
Matthew is featuring Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, but this does not mean that some other women mentioned in Matthew 27:55-56 are not there also. Indeed, it is more likely that they are present with them, hearing the angel speak to them about Jesus' resurrection from the dead and observing that the tomb is empty.
In addition, after stating that an *angelos* of Yahweh had previously (probably several hours earlier) rolled away the stone, Matthew moves to the moment when the first group of women arrive at the tomb, find the stone rolled away, enter the tomb, and are met by a conventional angel who looks like a young man. This is why I translate ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ ἄγγελος εἶπε ταῖς γυναῖξιν at the beginning of v. 5, "Later an *angelos* responded and said to the women." This is the same angel of Mark 16:5 who is identified as "a young man."
The fact that the angel says to the women, "Come, see the place where he was lying (δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο)," indicates that they the angel invites them to look closely at where Jesus' body had been laid by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.
¹⁰⁵⁷ οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἠγέρθη γὰρ καθὼς εἶπεν δεῦτε ἴδετε τὸν τόπον ὅπου ἔκειτο –
¹⁰⁵⁸ καὶ ταχὺ πορευθεῖσαι εἶπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἠγέρθη ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ ἰδοὺ προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε· ἰδοὺ εἶπον ὑμῖν –
¹⁰⁵⁹ Καὶ ἀπελθοῦσαι ταχὺ ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου μετὰ φόβου καὶ χαρᾶς μεγάλης ἔδραμον ἀπαγγεῖλαι τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ –
¹⁰⁶⁰ καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἰησοῦς ὑπῆντησεν αὐταῖς λέγων· χαίρετε. αἱ δὲ προσελθοῦσαι ἐκράτησαν αὐτοῦ τοὺς πόδας καὶ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ –
¹⁰⁶¹ τότε λέγει αὐταῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· μὴ φοβεῖσθε· ὑπάγετε ἀπαγγεῖλατε τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου ἵνα ἀπέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, κάκει με ὄψονται –
¹⁰⁶² Πορευομένων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ τινες τῆς κουστῳδίας ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς ἀρχιερεῦσιν ἅπαντα τὰ γενόμενα –
¹⁰⁶³ καὶ συναχθέντες μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων συμβουλίον τε λαβόντες ἀργύρια ἱκανὰ ἔδωκαν τοῖς στρατιώταις –
¹⁰⁶⁴ λέγοντες· εἶπατε ὅτι οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς ἐλθόντες ἔκλεψαν αὐτὸν ἡμῶν κοιμωμένων –
¹⁰⁶⁵ καὶ ἐὰν ἀκουσθῇ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος, ἡμεῖς πείσομεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους ποιήσομεν –
¹⁰⁶⁶ οἱ δὲ λαβόντες τὰ ἀργύρια ἐποίησαν ὡς ἐδιδάχθησαν. καὶ διεφημίσθη ὁ λόγος οὗτος παρὰ Ἰουδαίους μέχρι τῆς σήμερον [ἡμέρας] –
¹⁰⁶⁷ Οἱ δὲ ἕνδεκα μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς – Luke describes Jesus' appearing to the apostles in Jerusalem. Jesus must have appeared to them in both Jerusalem and Galilee and even ascended in their presence in both places as the full story of God's causing him to interact with his apostles. John in his gospel specifics says that Jesus appeared to them in both Jerusalem and Galilee and describes these events in some detail. However, John does not even mention Jesus' ascension, which Mark does in the verses of question at the end of his account.
¹⁰⁶⁸ καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν –
¹⁰⁶⁹ καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς –
¹⁰⁷⁰ πορευθέντες οὖν μαρτυρεῖσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος –

¹⁰⁷¹ διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἔμεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι ἅ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος – “this”