

**>>>>>> Matthew – Lesson 37 <<<<<<<**

- 1) Last time we looked at the transfiguration and Jesus, Peter, James, and John are coming down the mountain.
- 2) Jesus has told them that they must not tell anyone what they had seen.
- 3) To complete this passage, let's look at verses 10 through 13...

**Matthew 17:10–13(ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” <sup>11</sup> He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. <sup>12</sup> But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

- a) When we consider the fact that they had just seen Elijah they must have been confused.
  - i) As the Messiah, how could Jesus be going to die when they were looking for Elijah first.
  - b) Perhaps Olmstead in the BHGNT has hit on the correct understanding.
  - c) To summarize quickly, he says basically that the fact that Jesus just told them that they were not to mention this until after his resurrection trips the switch in their mind.

“Oh, wait a minute, we just saw Eliajah – he hasn't come yet so how can this signal the end of the age.”
  - d) Jesus' talk of the Son of Man's resurrection reference to the resurrection at the end of the age is the cause of the question.
  - e) Their problem was – wait a minute how can this be?
- 4) Of course, when Jesus explains they connect the dots back to John and realize how it all fits together.
- 5) One thing that has always struck me about this passage is that it must have been very hard for Peter, James, and John not to tell the others about what they had just seen.
- 6) I would be remiss if I did not point out the obvious tension that exists in verses 11 and 12.
  - a) We see here Jesus saying that “Elijah will come” and in the same passage, “Elijah has come.”
  - b) The majority view is that Jesus is saying that the scribes are correct in what they said however, he adds that he has come pointing of course to John.
  - c) The other facet of this is that John actually did not fulfill all things.
  - d) One source explains this this way:
    - i) Jesus is not saying literal Elijah returned from heaven.
    - ii) John fulfilled the Elijah-role prophetically.
    - iii) Verse 11 (“Elijah does come and will restore all things”) is understood either:
      - (1) generically (“Elijah's role is restorative”), or

(2) as a present/future statement describing John’s ministry from the disciples’ perspective before they understood it.

- 1) We come down from the mountain of transfiguration to a situation that should not have existed – a failed healing and a disappointed father.

**Matthew 17:14–20(ESV)**

**Jesus Heals a Boy with a Demon**

<sup>14</sup> And when they came to the crowd, a man came up to him and, kneeling before him, <sup>15</sup> said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he has seizures and he suffers terribly. For often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. <sup>16</sup> And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered, “**O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me.**” <sup>18</sup> And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed instantly. <sup>19</sup> Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” <sup>20</sup> He said to them, “**Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.**”

- 2) Ok, let’s begin with a question:

**Who is Jesus calling “a faithless and twisted generation”?**

- a) Bruce Barton sums it up this way:

Jesus’ frustration was with the unbelieving and unresponsive generation, including the crowd, the teachers of the law (scribes), the man, and the nine disciples. His disciples merely reflected that attitude of unbelief so prevalent in the society.<sup>39</sup>

- 3) Jesus casts out the demon and this obviously confuses the disciples and, my guess would be somewhat embarrasses them as well.
- 4) If you are thinking that there is a different response to this elsewhere, you are correct.

**Mark 9:28–29 (NASB 2020)**

<sup>28</sup> When He came into *the* house, His disciples *began* asking Him privately, “*Why is it that we could not cast it out?*” <sup>29</sup> And He said to them, “**This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer.**”

- a) And, even in Mark’s parallel, there is a textual difference. Some of your translations may add “and fasting.”
- b) Luke, on the other hand, completely skips the question and response.
- 5) So, why is there a difference? There are varying scholarly opinions on this.
  - a) First, some offer the explanation that Luke is focused on the “mission” and therefore simply leaves out the question and answer and moves on to the restatement of the mission.

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<sup>39</sup> Bruce B. Barton, *Matthew*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 346.

- b) Some indicate that Matthew’s emphasis throughout the gospel is faith so the question and answer is reframed in that context.
  - c) In Mark’s case, what may at first glance be considered a question of technique is really an emphasis on spiritual dependence.
  - d) As to Matthew and Mark, as I considered these opinions it occurred to me that both are really a matter of faith.
    - i) That idea lines up somewhat with the fact that some scholars have concluded that there may have actually been two answers given.
    - ii) The mustard seed comment being one and the prayer (or spiritual dependence) being the other.
- 6) Hope this was not too confusing. I just felt that we should look at the differences and at least attempt to come to a proper conclusion.

1) Continuing on ...

**Matthew 17:22–23 (ESV)**

**Jesus Again Foretells Death, Resurrection**

<sup>22</sup> As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “**The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men,** <sup>23</sup> **and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.**” And they were greatly distressed.

2) Now, this is where Luke picks up but he expands on Matthew’s statement “and they were greatly distressed.”

**Luke 9:43b–45 (ESV)**

**Jesus Again Foretells His Death**

<sup>43b</sup> ... But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, <sup>44</sup> “**Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.**” <sup>45</sup> But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

- 3) It is one thing to talk about things that are off in the future. However, when the time is at hand, the reality sinks in a bit more.
- a) I can totally understand how these guys must have felt distressed.
  - b) We know that Jesus answered the question about Elijah.
  - c) We know he has told them about what must happen to him before.
  - d) But they must be feeling like “what is supposed to come after this if he is killed?”
  - e) One theory is that Judas betrayed Christ because he was trying to force Him to become the Knight on the White horse.
    - i) His idea was that if Jesus was crucified, He would come down from the cross and amass the army Judas expected to go out and conquer the world, specifically the Romans.

4) Moving on to the last passage of chapter 17 ...

- a) This is the last time Jesus will be in Capernaum before his crucifixion.

**Matthew 17:24–27(ESV)**

**The Temple Tax**

<sup>24</sup> When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the tax?” <sup>25</sup> He said, “Yes.” And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, **“What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?”** <sup>26</sup> And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, **“Then the sons are free. <sup>27</sup> However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.”**

- 5) As the added title to this passage in many translations says, this is a temple tax that is being discussed – not a Roman tax.
- a) This two-drachma tax was to be paid annually by all Jewish males from the age of 20 on.
- b) It was equal to approx. two days wages for the average person.
- c) It was collected in all areas where Jews lived, even outside of Israel.
- d) To be clear, these were not the taxes that Matthew collected. Matthew was a tax collector for the Romans.
- 6) Simon answers without really knowing the answer.
- 7) When he brings this up to Jesus, Jesus asks him the question:

**From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?”**

- a) Jesus generalizes the question “kings of the earth” to make a point.
- b) Peter then answers correctly – “others.”
- c) So, key to this is another question.

**Is Jesus liable to pay the Temple Tax?**

**d) No Why?**

- e) Because the Temple is God’s house and Jesus is God’s Son.

- 8) The bottom line here is that this is a subtle but emphatic statement of Jesus’ Sonship.

**But what is the other message we get from this passage?**

- a) Even though, in human terms, Jesus is not required to pay the tax because he is the son, he makes the choice to pay it anyway.
- b) The lesson then is that sometimes we need to go along and not force our rights if it does not go against God’s law and keeps the peace.