"THE TRAP OF TRADITION"

Matthew 15:1-9

11/7/93

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

Many ask the question today: "Why are there so many religions?" "The Bible Plus"

The Bible teaches that there is a true religion (Ja. 1:27) and false religions (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Wherever there is the real, Satan (to confuse and distort) will always seek to introduce the unreal.

Today, the pure waters of Bible Christianity are muddied by "tradition" Christianity.

Today, some who profess Christ possess a living faith; but others - a "dead faith." Some trust the grace of God for salvation, others the works of man.

Some believe in the finished and sufficient work of Christ at Calvary; and others propose that Christ did not pay it all.

Such conflicts are not new.

v. 1

"***Scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem***" - The Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem were the ultra-orthodox, extremist, strictest sect.

Several religious Pharisees and a few, select, prestigious scribes (who no doubt carried heavy ecclesiastical weight) formed a delegation and apparently travelled from Jerusalem up north tot he galilean region so as to accuse Jesus of breaking their traditional religious rules.

V. 2

"***Why do thy disciples transgress***" = This is an indirect way of accusing Jesus. This is a way of saying: "Why didn't you indoctrinate them right?" Since a disciple would naturally be "*as his master*" (Mt. 10:25), if the disciples erred, it was because the master taught them such error.

"In making this accusation, these religious leaders were forcing Jesus to deal with the very foundation of their religious faith. If Jesus rejected the sacred traditions of the nation, then He was a heretic!" (Wiersbe, p. 53)

"The tradition of the elders" -

"Elders" = honored rabbis of the past, who passed on a vain substitute teaching in the place of the Word of God (I Pet. 1:18; Gal. 1:14)

"Tradition" = unwritten interpretations of the O.T. Law, that were passed down from generation to generation, which became the ultimate authority for scribal teachings.

This "tradition" was not good tradition or passed-on teachings from God (II Th. 2:15; 3:6), but had its source in men. From the Pharisees' own mouth, it was the ***"tradition of the elders."***

"They wash not their hands" - This does not mean they ate with dirty hands, but that they didn't continually wash their hands while eating, using finger bowls, like the Scribes and Pharisees.

The Old Testament's Law concerning hand washing had nothing to do with the common Israelite. God had a special ceremonial law only for the Aaronic priests who had to wash their hands before eating any of the holy bread used in temple worship, and to keep themselves from being unclean or defiled as they served at the temple (Lev. 22:6 - *"The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water.")*

"These traditions were originally the 'oral law' which (said the rabbis) Moses gave to the elders, and they passed down to the nation. This oral law was finally written down and became the Mishnah. Unfortunately, the Mishnah became more important and more authoritative than the original Law of Moses" (Wiersbe, p. 53).

Just as Roman Catholics look to church dogma to discover what Scripture "really means," most Jews of Jesus' day looked to the traditions of the elders" (MacArthur, p. 452).

For a detailed study of the Jews' ceremonial rinsing, see Edersheim's The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. 2, pp. 10-13.

Two Religions:

External religion says that if a person keeps the outside clean, then the inside will be clean.

Internal religion says that if a person is clean on the inside, then he will keep the outside clean

(SEE: "The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible, p. 341)

God very seriously warns us by saying: "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" (Col. 2:8)

***Beware of the evils of man-made tradition!**

Man-made tradition results in three evil traps:

I. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of: TRANSGRESSING God's Word (v. 3-6a)

(Tradition offers a religious justification for sin)

"*. . . ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition*"

V. 3

"***But He answered***" - Jesus answers their question with a question so as to show how they had violated God's Law.

"***Transgress***" = to overstep a fixed boundary. To cross over into forbidden territory.

"***The commandment of God***" - This phrase is a deliberate contrast with "***The tradition of the elders***" (v. 2)

V. 4

"***Honor***" = to treat with value. To view as worthy of respect and special treatment.

One who honors his father and mother respects their position as parents and treats them with dignity. Such a son would do anything to meet the needs of his folks.

"***Curseth***" - to speak bad or evil about.

God was so strong about children respecting their parents, that He instituted capital punishment for anyone who cursed out, verbally abused, or refused to submit to and obey his/her parents

> Ex. 21:17 - "*And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.*"
> Lev. 20:9 - "*For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.*"
> Dt. 27:16 -"*Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.*"
> Prov. 30:17 - *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.*"

V. 5

"***But ye say***" - a contrast to Verse 4 - "*For God commanded.*"

"***It is a gift***" - the catch-all word they used was the Hebrew word *corban* which meant "it is a gift" (Mk. 7:11).

"*Corban*" (Mk. 7:11) - "Was the transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning a "gift." The word referred to something devoted to God by an inviolable vow.

"If a son declared that the amount needed to support his parents was *corban*, the scribes said that he was exempt from his duty to care for his parents as prescribed in the Law. Evidently, too, he was not really obliged to devote that sum to the temple" (Ryrie Study Bible note, p. 1411).

Even if children owed their parents money, even if they were obligated to them, if they pronounced their money *corban* - this vow relieved them of paying back their parents.

The justification for not providing for one's aged parents got so extreme that eventually they did nothing at all for them.

By their false teaching, they did not allow a child to do anything for his father or his mother (Mk. 7:12).

V. 6

"True religion" gives and meets needs. It is practical. It touches lives (Ja. 1:27 - "*True religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*")

II. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of: IGNORING God's Word (v. 6b)

(Tradition results in a religious disregard for God's commands)

"*. . . ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition*"

"***None effect***" - nullified, invalidated. The Word of God was ignored, abandoned, and disobeyed because of the conflicting predominance of man-made tradition.

Why are multitudes indifferent, inattentive, or negligent toward the Bible or Bible teaching? They don't see it as important or worthy of their concern.

How can "religious" people ignore clear commands of Scripture? Answer: They buy into an authority other than Scripture.

Examples: of the specific injunctions of Scripture violated by traditionalist Roman Catholics.

Why do people like "tradition" over the Bible?

--Tradition often accommodates the lifestyle of the sinner, whereas the Bible demands a change of lifestyle.

--Tradition focuses on external ceremony and ritual, whereas the Bible focuses on internal purity and true Godliness (the most hard-hearted unbeliever could easily practice a religious ritual).

--Tradition keeps the worshippers doing and giving, offering eternal life as the reward; whereas the Bible declares you can do nothing to earn eternal life. You must humble yourself and receive it from Jesus Christ by grace.

A cult is any religion which has as its authority something other than the Bible (whether it be a pope, guru, prophet, society (EX: Watch Tower), or book (EX: Book of Mormon).

As Baptists, one of the distinctives of fundamental Baptist is that we believe that the Bible is our only authority for faith and practice. Our authority is not:

--Not Catholic tradition
--Not charismatic new revelation
--Not cultic authoritative gurus and leaders
--Not creeds
--Not commentaries by human authors
--Not church constitutions
(creeds, commentaries, and constitutions are beneficial only to the degree that they are true to sacred Scripture. But they are fallible and must be open for modification and revision.

III. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of: REPLACING God's Word (v. 7-9)

(Tradition becomes a religious substitute for sound doctrine)

"*. . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*"

V. 7

"***Hypocrites***" - play actors, mask wearers, pretenders.

They had a pretense, facade, or show of religiosity, but did not have a heart for God.

Jesus authenticates the book of Isaiah and paraphrases Isaiah 29:13, which sadly proclaims, "*Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of man.*"

V. 8

Many can pray elaborate, ornate, fancy prayers.

They can seem so spiritual and can impress the listeners with their fair-sounding words and religious phrases, yet their heart is light years away from God.

True love is action oriented, not mere words (I Jn. 3:18 - "*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*")

Traditions do not require the heart in order to do them. "Tradition can be followed mechanically and thoughtlessly without conviction, sincerity, or purity of heart. Because traditions are made by men, they can be accomplished by men. They require no faith, no trust, no dependence on God. Not only that, but they appeal to the flesh by feeding pride and self-righteousness. Often, as in this case, they also serve self-interest" (MacArthur, p. 455).

Beware of the trap of "mechanical" Christian living. Such as going through the motions, but not putting your heart into it. Doing but not being! Doing the work of the Lord without being close to the Lord of the work!

V. 9

Their worship was a hollow, empty, void, meaningless ritual!

The Delusion of man-made religion (See: Col.2:20-23)

1. The world's religion "sounds" spiritual, but it is not (v. 20-22)

   What "ordinances" is Paul speaking about? Such superstitious or legalistic taboos as:
   "You should not touch"
   "You should not taste"
   "You should not handle"

   True spirituality is not a matter of a list of man-made DO's and DON'Ts.

   v.22 - No material thing is to be viewed as a god or idol, but the things God has given us are to be used.

2. The world's religion "looks" spiritual, but it is not (v. 23)

   "A shew of wisdom" = to have the appearance of spiritual wisdom.

   "Is will-worship" = a system of worship that stems from the will of man. Self-made worship; man-made worship.

   To the world's eyes, that which looks religious must be:

   1) "Humility" - Pretentious holiness dressed in religious garb and actions

   2) "Neglecting of the body" - human taboos and hard treatment of the physical body.

      --Asceticism -- Monkery -- Nunnery -- are not the secret to moral purity and God-honoring spirituality.

Man-made tradition is a great danger to true Godliness. Without the person even noticing, it becomes a substitute for God's truth.

"Teaching for doctrines" - Their doctrinal instruction did not focus on the Scriptures. it was rooted and based on the rules and regulations of men! Only the Word of God is profitable for doctrine (II Tim. 3:16).

The traditions even affirmed that "the words of scribes are more lovely than the words of the Law," and it became a greater offense in Judaism to transgress the teaching of some rabbi (like the revered Hillel) than to transgress the teaching of Scripture (citied by MacARthur, p. 452).

"People obey tradition (not to please God) but to please men and gain status (Gal. 1:14)." (Wiersbe, p. 53)

When man's wisdom is elevated above God's, man falls into the same trap eve did when Satan induced her to trust her own wisdom above God's. This led to the Fall and to every subsequent sin and evil in the world" (MacArthur, p. 456).

CONCLUSION:

Anything that leads to disobedience to God's Word is not of God!

Anything that robs your interest in God's Word is not of God!

And anything that takes the place of God's Word is not of God!

Ritual, or Reality, which do you have?

You must have reality!

TRADITION

(Study by C.E.C.)

BASIC Roman Catholic BELIEF

One source of Divine revelation, the other being Sacred scripture (see 31). During the years between the beginning of the Church and the completed scripture, people relied on the Apostles' oral teachings. Then, as cultures were growing, they felt that the Bible was not able to meet their needs, so tradition was developed to meet the demands of men of all ages. This teaching authority resided in the pope (see 216) and authorized theologians. Because of this, tradition became a meaningful part of life.

St. Robert Bellarmine had five rules for recognizing the true Apostolic Tradition.

(1) When the Universal Church accepts as a dogma of faith something which is not found in the Divine Scriptures, it must be said to originate from the Tradition of the Apostles.

(2) When the Universal Church observes something which no one, except God, would have been able to establish and which, in any case, is not found to be written down anywhere, it must be said that it was transmitted by Christ himself and by his Apostles.

(3) Whatever has been observed in the Universal Church and throughout all ages past is rightly believed to have been instituted by the Apostles, even if it is the kind of observation which could have been instituted by the Church.

(4) When, by common consent, all the Doctors of the Church, either in General Council or in their individual writings in books, teach that something descends from Apostolic Tradition this must be believed to be Apostolic Tradition.

(5) It must be believed to be descended without a doubt from Apostolic Tradition that which is held as such in Churches where the succession from the Apostles is integral and continual. (From 30 DAYS, No. 5, 1992, pp 68ff.)

POST VATICAN II

"The sacred synod encourages the sons of the Church who engage in biblical studies constantly to renew their efforts with complete dedication and in accordance with the mind of the Church. Sacred theology relies on the written Word of God, taken together with Sacred Tradition" (DEI VERBUM, Vatican II document).

From DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION, Vatican II, Sections 9,10. "There exist a close connection and communication between sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture. For both of them, flowing from the same divine wellspring, in a certain way merge into a unity and tends toward the same end. ... Consequently, it is not from the sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both sacred tradition and sacred scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence. Sacred Tradition and sacred scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God which is entrusted to the church.

From SIMPLICITY, John Michael Talbot, page 54. "Care must be taken, though, that the Scriptures not be studied in isolation from the ongoing teaching of the church. True, we have the Spirit of God within us to guide and direct us. We have an objective body of teaching in the Scriptures. But remember: it was the church that authenticated these Scriptures, and it is the teaching office of the church which provides the commentary or the instruction to interpret these biblical documents. A balance must be maintained between tradition and Scripture.

CATHOLIC JOURNALS

From 30 DAYS, No. 5, 1992, page 68. "A dangerous trend is gaining ground in the Church diminishing the Revelation so that it becomes just a facet of Scripture. One sign of this tendency is that even Church documents no longer make recourse to Apostolic Tradition, which is without error just as the Scriptures are without error. And like the Scriptures it is born of the Divine Source, Jesus Christ. Five ways to recognize the true Apostolic Traditions, as indicated by this cardinal and saint. (For St. Robert Bellarmine's five ways, see in Basic R.C. Beliefs, above."

CHRISTIAN COMMENT

In order to make God's Word meaningful, the Holy Spirit was sent to be the Infallible Teacher of the Church; He can interpret scripture for any culture. Before the New Testament scriptures were available, Christian teachers used available epistles and the Old Testament. In II Thessalonians 2:15, the word tradition means teachings, and Paul states these were "by word or epistle." The epistle was the Word of God, and Paul's oral teaching was based on Old Testament scripture (Acts 26:22).

Roman Catholic tradition not only adds to the Word of God, it severely alters it.

① CATHOLICS REFER TO PRIEST AS FATHER — MATTHEW 23:9

② SELL RAFFLE TICKETS + PLAY BINGO - AS MEANS OF RAISING MONEY - ST. JOHN 2:13-16

③ BAPTISE INFANTS - BAPTISM IS ONLY FOR SAVED, BORN AGAIN, BLOOD BOUGHT, BELIEVERS - HOW CAN AN INFANT WHO CAN'T TALK AND WHO HAS NO KNOWEGE OF RIGHT + WRONG GET SAVED! THE BIBLE SAYS "TO HIM THAT KNOWETH TO DO RIGHT AND DOETH IT NOT TO HIM IT IS SIN"
* ONLY FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE FIRST — MARK 16:15+16
* BAPTISM IS NOT BY SPRINKLING IT IS BY SUBMERSION AND IT IDENTIFIES THAT BELIEVER WITH THE FAMILY OF GOD - BAPTISM PICTURES THE DEATH, BURIAL, + RESERECTION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST - ROMANS 6:3+4

④ CONFESSION IS MADE TO A HUMAN PRIEST, WHO HAS NO POWER, OR AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SIN. EZRA 10:11 — I TIMOTHY 2:5 * JESUS IS OUR MEDIATOR NOT A PRIEST!

⑤ "HAIL MARY'S" + "OUR FATHERS" ARE REPETITIOUSLY SAID OVER + OVER — VAIN REPETITIONS MATTHEW 6:7

⑥ ROSARY BEADS USED AS A MEDIUM OF PRAYER - IT IS VAIN IDOLATRY — I CORINTHIANS 10:14

⑦ PEOPLE IDOLIZE THE POPE - BOW TO HIM — ISAIAH 45:22

⑧ PRIESTS ARE FORBIDDEN TO MARRY - "BIBLE SAYS" - "IT IS NO SIN TO MARRY" - SEE ALSO I CORINTHIANS 7:9

⑨ PRAYER IS MADE TO VIRGIN MARY, ST. PATRICK, ST. PETER, ETC... ACTS 4:12, JOHN 14:13 * IN BIBLE - EITHER YOU GO TO HEAVEN OR HELL + LAKE OF FIRE. MATTHEW 25:31-45

⑩ PERGATORY MENTIONED AS A PLACE IN BETWEEN HEAVE + HELL. NO SUCH PLACE MENTIONED

⑪ PERSONAL BIBLE READING IS NOT STRESSED - JOSHUA 1:8 - MATTHEW 4:4

⑫ CATHOLICISM BELIEVES THAT KEEPING THE SACRAMENTS WILL SAVE YOUR SOUL. THEY WON'T EVEN HELP SAVE YOUR SOUL! - ISAIAH 64:6 - TITUS 3:5.

⑬ MEAT IS FORBIDDEN TO BE EATEN ON FRIDAYS + CERTAIN DAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR * I TIMOTHY 4:1-5 *

⑭ CARVED IMAGES ERECTED AND BOWED DOWN TO - "HAT TIPPED TO VIRGIN MARY" BREAKING THE 4th, [redacted] commandment - SEE EXODUS 20:4-6.

⑮ VIRGIN MARY IS ALWAYS UPLIFTED TO EXTREMES - OFTEN GIVEN SUPREMISY - JESUS SHOWS THAT ALTHOUGH MARY IS BLESSED THE ONES WHO ARE JUST AS EQUALY BLESSED are the ONES THAT OBEY HIM! SEE - MATTHEW 12:46-50 *

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Man-made tradition results in three evil traps:

I. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of: <u>TRANSGRESSING</u> God's Word (v. 3-6a)

(Tradition offers a religious <u>justification</u> for sin)

". . . ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition"

II. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of: <u>IGNORING</u> God's Word (v. 6b)

(Tradition results in a religious <u>disregard</u> for God's commands)

". . . ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition"

III. Man-Made Tradition leads to the trap of: <u>REPLACING</u> God's Word (v. 7-9)

(Tradition becomes a religious <u>substitute</u> for sound doctrine)

". . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"

CONCLUSION:

"SPIRITUAL DEFILEMENT"

Matthew 15:10-20
11/14/93

INTRODUCTION: Verses 10-11

The key thought in verses 10-20 centers around the word "*defile*" which occurs five times in verses 11, 18, and 20.

To be "*defiled*" is to be contaminated, to be polluted. When you are defiled, you feel unclean, unholy, ungodly. You feel dirty, stained.

V. 10

"***He called the multitude***" - After being confronted by a select group of Pharisees and Scribes, Jesus brings the hot issue out to the general public -- to teach them a vital lesson lest they fall into the Pharisees and Scribes' trap.

"***Hear and understand***" - Hearing is of no value if you don't comprehend.

Jesus' call to listen carefully and to pay close attention introduces a message of great importance (MacArthur, p. 457).

V. 11

In the context, the Pharisees and Scribes were accusing Jesus' disciples of violating their sacred tradition and defiling themselves by eating with unwashed hands (unceremonially pure hands) (15:2).

True defilement as God sees it does <u>not</u> occur when a little dirt goes down the throat into the stomach.

"***<u>Into</u> the mouth. . . <u>out of</u> the mouth***" - It is <u>not</u> what <u>enters</u> your mouth that pollutes you, but what <u>exits</u> your mouth that pollutes you (James 3:6 - "*And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*")

It is not food that defiles (which will be a predominant false doctrine in the last days - I Tim. 4:1-5).

A man is <u>not made unclean</u> by things; ("*there is nothing unclean of itself*" - Rom. 14:14); he is made unclean because of his polluted heart. It is he himself who takes things and does unclean things with them.

***Hear and understand the true source of defilement.**

I. Spiritual Defilement is MISUNDERSTOOD by Legalists Who Base Spirituality on EXTERNAL MAN-MADE RULES (v. 12-16)

V. 12

"***After they heard this saying***" - When Jesus rebuked their tradition and teaching that one is not defiled by a failure to ceremonially wash his hands before eating. The truth often hurts!

Anyone who is easily offended reveals a lack of love for God's Word.

"*Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them*" (Ps. 119:165).

The disciples were no doubt worried that problems would result because of their master's bold repudiation of the Pharisees' tradition; they also were perhaps worried that because of Christ's contradiction of their tradition, the Pharisees and scribes would not come to trust in and follow Christ but would be repulsed and repelled from Him.

If God's truth drives anyone away, it is because they were not open to it.

Preaching the Bible "as it is to men as they are" will either:

--Drive away those whom God has not planted
--Draw together those whom God has planted

One thing is true, Jesus was not afraid of the Pharisees (cp. Mt. 23:13-30).

V. 13

Many religious teachers (like the Pharisees of old) look like a real "plant" for God. They appear to be "good seed." They may even be very impressive or attractive (II Cor. 11:15).

However, unless God planted them, they will not remain. They either planted themselves or some other men planted them into ecclesiastical work, but God did not. He must call a man into the ministry.

"***Shall be rooted up***" - to be pulled up by the roots. Their semblance of stability will one day be removed. They, like "chaff," will be blown away (Ps. 1:4-6).

These "*plants*" are the "tares" that were planted by Satan, but will one day be "*gathered up and burned with fire*" (Mt. 13:40-42).

V. 14

"***Let them alone***" = Leave them; don't bother with them; i.e. don't associate with them, separate from them.

God's people have no business fellowshiping with religious leaders who have forsaken the Bible. The saved are not to work with those who hold tradition as their authority. Unless they show an obvious openness to submit to Biblical truth, God's people should not waste their time debating them.

The command is "*Come out from among them*" (II Cor. 6:17), not "stay in among them."

They were blinded by their "***tradition***" (v. 3-9), by their man-made religious rules and regulations.

They can't see, and the ones they lead can't see. As Isaiah said, "*Their eyes they have closed*" (Mt. 13:14-15).

Only one who sees can lead the blind.

Before you seek to advise someone else, make sure you know the truth and can back it up with solid evidence in God's Word (Ja. 3:1).

V. 15

"***Declare unto us this parable***" - Clearly explain what you mean by verse 11.

V. 16

Even the disciples lacked spiritual discernment.

II. Spiritual Defilement is a <u>MATTER</u> of the <u>INSIDE</u> Not the <u>OUTSIDE</u> (v. 17-18)

V. 17

Quite bluntly, Jesus is saying: "*From the mouth to the belly into the sewer.*"

What's the big deal about being concerned about that which is going to be purified (purged) in the stomach and intestines (Mk. 7:19), digested, utilized, and then emptied into the drain or latrine?

Whatever enters the mouth passes through the system and "comes out in human waste. [But] food never touches the heart" (Mk. 7:19) (Wiersbe, p. 54).

V. 18

Not only does what comes out of the mouth defile, but it reveals a defilement deeply rooted in the heart.

(EX: One vomits because of a problem in the stomach; so one speaks evil because of a problem with the heart) (SEE: Mt. 12:34-37)

Where is the problem. . . the black smoke pouring out of the exhaust pipe, or the motor with cracked rings?

The heart (*kardia)* refers to the innermost core of our being. Our thoughts, feelings, and decision-making ability; the control center for our intellect, emotion, and will. The seat of our <u>motives</u>. That which triggers our words, thoughts, and actions.

The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

"*The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?*" (Jer. 17:9).

Such teaching about God's concern for the heart should not have shocked the Jews, because in their Old Testament God said:

"*The Lord looks at the heart*" (I Sam. 16:6-7)
"*Serve the Lord with all your heart*" (Dt. 10:13)
"*Circumcise your heart*" (Dt. 10:16)

III. Spiritual Defilement is MANIFESTED by the POLLUTION That Comes Out of the HEART (v. 18-20)

V. 18

Note: that the word "*heart*" is singular, whereas the things that proceed out are in the plural (V. 18-19).

Reason: Many evil sins can come from the same heart.

What are the culprits that defile us? What villains march out of our hearts and defile us?

First on God's list of defiling sins is the sin of evil speech. The tongue is the first area that discloses (uncovers, reveals, manifests) the condition of our hearts.

Where your mouth is, that's where your heart is. One's mouth is a mirror (perfect reflection) of their heart.

"The mouth is the most dominant revealer of internal pollution, because it is through our words that hatred, deception, cruelty, blasphemy, and most other evils are most clearly manifest" (MacArthur, p. 458).

Sins of the Tongue:

--Gossip (reveals a hateful heart)
--Yelling (reveals an angry heart)
--Vulgarity (reveals a foul and vain heart)
--Boasting (reveals an arrogant heart)
--Criticism (reveals a jealous or unforgiving heart)

Eph. 4:29 - "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*"

5:4 - "*Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.*"

V. 19

"***Evil thoughts***" come from the heart.

"*And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*" *(Mt. 9:4).*

In Gen. 6:5 it is recorded: "*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*"

"***Evil thoughts***" - Morally sinful thinking. "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*"

Thoughts that defile:

1. Lustful thoughts (reveals a covetous heart)
   Lust = Adultery

2. Vengeful thoughts (reveals a vindicative heart)
   Anger = Murder

3. Vain thoughts (reveals an empty heart)

"You are not what you think you are; You are what you think"

"***Murders***" - to intentionally take the life of an innocent person.

--Abortion is murder
--Suicide is murder
--Homicide is murder

Murder is always motivated by what is in the heart. (anger, jealousy, selfishness, etc., are the catalyst to murder).

"***Adulteries***" - marital unfaithfulness (used of sexual affairs after marriage). This is such a serious sin that the Old Testament required the death penalty for offenders (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24).

"***Fornications***" - Used of sexual relations before marriage (I Cor. 7:20.

This word (*pornea*) would also include every form of immoral sex: homosexuality, bestiality; pornography, incest, rape, masturbation, etc.

"***Thefts***" = Stealing what does not belong to you.

Stealing reflects:
--a discontented heart (not satisfied with what you have)
--a covetous heart (envious of what others have)
--a deceptive heart (most stealing occurs in the secret or in the dark)
--a dishonest heart (does not believe in God's principle of "*work*" - Eph. 4:28 - "*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*")

"***False witness***" - Those who testify falsely; those who tell lies; those who twist the truth.

Lying and insincerity are related twins. Both are forms of hypocrisy. The intent of the heart is to deceive.

The motive for lying is most often selfishness (people lie for self-preservation, self gain).

You are never more like the devil than when you lie (Jn. 8:44 - "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*")

A lie is never justified. It is never right to lie. Lies don't come in two colors either! A half truth is a whole lie.

"***Blasphemies***" - to slander or speak evil of: --God (the Father, Son, or Spirit)
--Truth (the Bible)

Such blasphemy shows that the person does not fear God!

Mark 7:20-23 gives a more extensive list of defiling sins (included are: covetousness, wickedness, lasciviousness [sensual lewdness], evil eye [envy and jealousy], pride, and foolishness).

CONCLUSION:

If you are unsaved, you need Christ to dwell in your hearts (You need a new heart - Jer. 31:33).

If you are saved:

1. Ask God to purify your heart

   Ps. 51:10 - "*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*"

   (cp. Mt. 5:8)

2. Guard the gates to your heart

   Prov. 4:23 - "*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.*"

   Eye gate - Ps. 119:37
   Ear gate

3. Feed the Word to your heart

   "*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee*" (Ps. 119:11).

   "*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind*" (Rev. 12:2).

The reason we should be "undefiled" is so that we might:

--know the will of God (Rom. 12:1-2)

--be more like Jesus (Heb. 7:26)

--be usable for the Master (II Tim. 2:21)

"SPIRITUAL DEFILEMENT"

Matthew 15:10-20
11/14/93

INTRODUCTION: Verses 10-11

***Hear and understand the true source of defilement.**

I. Spiritual Defilement is <u>MISUNDERSTOOD</u> by Legalists Who Base Spirituality on <u>EXTERNAL MAN-MADE RULES</u> (v. 12-16)

II. Spiritual Defilement is a <u>MATTER</u> of the <u>INSIDE</u> Not the <u>OUTSIDE</u> (v. 17-18)

III. Spiritual Defilement is <u>MANIFESTED</u> by the <u>POLLUTION</u> That Comes Out of the <u>HEART</u> (v. 18-20)

CONCLUSION:

"GREAT IS THY FAITH"

Matthew 15:21-28
11/21/93

INTRODUCTION:

Hebrews 11 - The Heroes of the Faith

V. 21

Mark's gospel reveals that on this occasion Jesus actually "*entered into a house, and would have no man know it, but He could not be hid. For a certain woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet*" (Mark 7:24-25).

***What is a great faith?**

I. She had faith in Christ despite enormous <u>OBSTACLES</u> (v. 22)
(A <u>Desperate</u> Faith)

--A <u>Social</u> Obstacle - "*A <u>woman</u> of <u>Canaan</u>*"

"***Canaan***" - the part of Canaan situated on the North West coast (modern-day Lebanon)

According to Mark's gospel: "*The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation*" (that is, she was a despised <u>Syrian</u> from the region of Phoenicia).

She had faith and kept trusting God for a miracle when it seemed everything was against her:

--the fact that she was a <u>Gentile</u> Greek was against her
--the fact that she was a <u>Syrian</u> was against her
--the fact that she was a <u>woman</u> was against her ("for most Jewish rabbis paid little attention to women" - Wiersbe, p. 55)
--and the fact that her daughter had such a <u>serious problem</u> was against her!

--A Sin Obstacle - "*Have mercy on me*"

"***Cried unto Him***" - the imperfect tense indicates that she in desperation kept on crying o ut; she continued over and over again to beg Jesus.

"***Have mercy upon me***" - In humility she kept saying, "Have compassion or pity on me."

By requesting mercy, she is admitting that she does not deserve to have what she requests.

She recognized that Jesus had the authority to show mercy. She believed Jesus was "*the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth*" (Exod. 34:6).

"By definition, the person who asks for mercy asks for something undeserved. This woman did not come demanding, but pleading. She did not ask Jesus' help on the basis of her own goodness, but on the basis of His" (MacARthur, p. 469).

Faith is of no value, unless it is directed at the right object.

(Faith is not effective if the object of that faith is impotent; also faith is not blind, nor am I speaking about "Faith in faith." Some say: "I believe in love"; "I believe in believing"; or "I believe it will all work out." Such faith is powerless if the true and living God is not the object of it.")

"***O Lord***" - A testimony that she believed in Christ's authority, sovereignty, and deity. Jesus is Adonai and Yahweh. She was confessing that Jesus was "Lord." (Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:10)

"***Thou Son of David***" - she believed that Jesus was the Messiah. This was a royal title pointing to Christ's right to sit on the throne of David as Israel's king!

"After the irreverent treatment of the Lord by the Scribes and Pharisees -- who had called Him a drunk, a companion of sinners, and demon-controlled -- it must have been refreshing for Jesus to hear this Gentile woman come to Him with such respect and submission" (MacArthur, p. 471).

--A Supernatural Obstacle - "*Grievously vexed with a devil*"

"***Grievously vexed***" - Severely or badly controlled by a demon.

Her demonized daughter was seriously afflicted by a fallen evil spirit, that no doubt affected her intellect (her thoughts); emotion (her feelings), and will. This demon no doubt controlled her speech and actions.

What she said and what she did was so evil, so bizarre, so unlike her natural behavior, so supernatural, that her mother knew beyond a doubt that her own "flesh and blood," her own beloved daughter was dominated, manipulated, controlled by a messenger of Satan.

This woman's faith was great in light of her pagan culture and background; in light of the little or no written revelation she had about Christ; and in light of the enormity of her daughter's bondage.

II. She had faith in Christ despite apparent REJECTION (v. 23-26)
(A Persistent Faith)

V. 23

"***But He answered her not a word***" -

Not out of disrespect or disinterest, but Jesus remained silent to:

1) Make sure that everyone heard her request
2) Make a dramatic point

Sometimes the hardest response to accept (from God) is no response at all.

Her persistence became so annoying that she was beginning to get on the disciple's nerves. They began to beg Him and urge Him to send her away, let her go!

"***Send her away***" - "We are not sure whether they meant, "Give her what she wants and get rid of her" or just "Get rid of her!" In either case, they were not showing much compassion for either her or her demonized daughter" (Wiersbe, p. 54)

With their backs to the w omen, the disciples gave the reason for their request: "She is behind us crying out and she is not letting up!"

Do something! Anything! Just get this woman off our backs.

V. 24

IN order to fulfill some Old Testament promises made to national Israel, Christ went to the Jew first (Ro. 9:4-5).

When He sent the disciples out to witness and perform miracles in Matthew 10, He commanded them saying: *"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 10:5-6)*

Jesus' mission was to "*seek and to save*" the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He came with an intention to "*save His people* [Israel] *from their sins*" (Mt. 1:21).

He was fulfilling promises made to national Israel:

Acts 13:32-33a - *"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again"*

Acts 13:23 - *"Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus"*

John 1:11 - *"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."*

Matthew 21:37 - *"But last of all He sent unto them His Son, saying, they will reverence my Son"*

Christ's top priority was to minister to His chosen nation, Israel (to reveal Himself as their Messiah and to offer them the Kingdom), but He always extended Himself to open hearts and never refused a person of any race or culture who came to Him in faith (MacArthur, p. 467).

Not one person who sincerely came to Him was turned away (Jn. 6:37).

On this occasion, Jesus is not saying these things to discourage or to turn away this woman, but to draw out her faith as a testimony.

(EX: How God told Moses He would destroy Israel only to draw out Moses' faith in God's integrity [Ex. 32:10-14; Num. 14:11-20])

When the "*lost sheep of the house of Israel*" rejected their Messiah, He then turned to the Gentiles (which was His plan all along) (cp. Mt. 21:28-22:14).

What God is showing more and more in Matthew's gospel is the growing antagonism and rejection of Christ by the "house of Israel" and the great faith of the Gentiles (cp. the Centurion - see Mt. 8:5-12).

If Jesus had no intention of ministering to Gentiles, He would not have travelled into Tyre and Sidon - Gentile territory!

God intended His Gospel to be "*to the Jew first but also to the Greek*" (Rom. 1:1b).. The Great Commission was to "*make disciples of all nations*" (mt. 28:19), to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (Mk. 16:15), to carry the gospel from Jerusalem unto the "*uttermost part of the earth*" (Acts 1:8).

"Keep in mind that our Lord responded to this woman as He did, not to destroy her faith, but to develop it" (Wiersbe, p. 54).

Jesus purposely "put up the barriers, not to keep her away but to draw her closer. He also used the occasion to show the disciples the value of persistent faith and to help them distinguish between the genuine and the superficial (Ex: in Mt. 19:16-22, Jesus placed barriers before the young man to test the genuineness of his plea for eternal life)" (MacArthur, p. 472).

Though the answer was delayed, though the answer was long in coming, she did not quit. She persisted! She didn't faint in prayer!

"Great faith does not give up; it is not deterred by obstacles, setbacks, or disappointments" (MacArthur, p. 471).

V. 25

"***Worshipped Him***" -She in desperation and deep humility fell down on her fact in front of Jesus and briefly and to the point pleaded, "*Lord, help me!*"

I'm sure that Christ knowing this woman's deep misery, sincerity, earnestness and need, was touched by her cry for "help."

However, in order to make a point and to draw out her faith for all to see and hear, He responds in a peculiar, seemingly harsh and unfeeling manner.

V. 26

Jesus is saying: It is not right (suitable or proper) to take the children's [the children of Israel] bread [Christ's spiritual nourishment and power] and cast it to dogs [Gentiles].

"***Dogs***" = little household pet dogs (not filthy, wild, garbage-eating street dogs).

"***Dogs***" - Jesus is quoting terminology used by Israelites toward Gentiles and Samaritans. Back then, many Jews despised and belittled the Gentiles, viewed them as unclean canines.

After such a response, most people would have indignantly said, "So much for your God of love, your message of compassion, and your narrow, bigoted religion. I want nothing to do with a God or religion like that" (MacArthur, p. 4720.

"Her seeking heart would not give up. Like Abraham, she grew strong in faith through God's testing (Rom. 4:20), and like Jacob wrestling with the Lord (Gen. 32:26), she would not let go until He blessed her. She fulfilled the pledge of Jeremiah 29:13-14, "*And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you, declares the Lord*"" (MacArthur, p. 474).

III. She had faith in Christ for a <u>SMALL "CRUMB"</u> of blessing (v. 27-28)
(A <u>Big</u> Faith)

V. 27

"***Truth, Lord***" - this woman recognized God's dealings with the children of Israel.

With an "incredible flash of insight" this woman picked up on Christ's own illustration and brought it to a grant conclusion.

This woman humbly refers to herself as a "dog" who would eat any crumb of blessing that would come her way!

"***Their master's table***" = Israel's Messiah's table

Israel had a banquet full of opportunity, a banquet table of blessings, a feast of miracles, healings, messages, yet they ignored and for the most part did not hunger and thirst for what Christ offered.

Yet the dogs (Gentiles) did. The hungry Gentiles salivated for any morsel of spiritual food that would fall from Christ's table!

(Here in the USA, we have so much, "*rich and increased with goods,*" yet some people in other third world countries do more with "*crumbs*" than what we do with steak dinners!)

This woman is saying: "Lord, just a little crumb will do" Only utter the word and my daughter will be healed!

This woman recognized that even a "crumb" of blessing would be more than

adequate!

She would be satisfied with merely a crumb. Just a "tiny left-over" of Jesus' great power could heal her daughter.

V. 28

With much feeling and emotion (just as the lady said, "*O Lord*" [v. 22]), Jesus says, "*O woman, great is thy faith!*"

Compare her "*great faith*" with that "*little faith*" of Peter and the disciples (8:26; 16:8)

"***Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt***" - You may have the exact help and miracle that you desire.

CONCLUSION: **The <u>Reward</u> of Faith (v. 28b)**

"***That very hour***" - at that same time that Jesus said these words, the woman's daughter had the demon leave her body.

Jesus does not need any time at all to accomplish the most incredible of miracles! What He desires gets accomplished the very moment He wills it to be.

This miracle was performed from a distance. Christ did not have to be physically present to perform the miraculous. All He had to do was say the word (or think the thought) and He could heal someone who was on the opposite end of the earth!

Mark adds this detail: "*And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed*" (Mk. 7:30).

I can just imagine the amazement, joy, and wonder of this woman upon seeing her daughter (formerly wild, vicious, foaming at the mouth, out of control) now calmly and peacefully lying on the bed.

This woman wouldn't quit! She kept on asking until she received, she continued seeking until she found, she persisted knocking until it was opened to her (Mt. 7:7).

"GREAT IS THY FAITH"

Matthew 15:21-28
11/21/93

INTRODUCTION:

***What is a great faith?**

I. She had faith in Christ despite enormous <u>OBSTACLES</u> (v. 22)
(A <u>Desperate</u> Faith)

--A <u>Social</u> Obstacle - "*A <u>woman</u> of <u>Canaan</u>*"

--A <u>Sin</u> Obstacle - "*Have <u>mercy</u> on me*"

--A <u>Supernatural</u> Obstacle - "*Grievously vexed with a <u>devil</u>*"

II. She had faith in Christ despite apparent <u>REJECTION</u> (v. 23-26)
(A <u>Persistent</u> Faith)

III. She had faith in Christ for a <u>SMALL "CRUMB"</u> of blessing (v. 27-28)
(A <u>Big</u> Faith)

CONCLUSION: **The <u>Reward</u> of Faith (v. 28b)**

"A REFUSAL TO BELIEVE DESPITE THE EVIDENCE"

Matthew 15:29 - 16:12

11/28/93

INTRODUCTION:

The undeniable, overwhelming, irrefutable evidence (15:29-39)

V. 30

By this time, Christ's fame had spread so widely that He did not have to come to the multitudes; rather, they came to Him!

Although Jesus had recently been to the Galilean region (14:34-35), many people had not had the opportunity to have Him heal their loves ones. So now they hear He has come back!

They swiftly gather their ailing relatives and friends and bring them to the miracle worker of Nazareth.

Their response was probably the result of a deaf and dumb man's testimony of a miracle Jesus did for him (Mk. 7:31-37).

They collected everyone they cared about and either led them, carried them, or assisted them to Jesus. They then "***cast them down***" (lit. in haste, speedily or quickly) - placed them in front of Jesus.

They brought to Jesus. . .

"***the lame***" - those who couldn't walk
the "***blind***" - those who couldn't see
the "***dumb***" - those who couldn't hear
the "***maimed***" - those who couldn't function normally
(the cripple who had limbs that were deformed and incapable of use)

V. 31

Although the multitude had enough faith to believe their loved ones could be healed, they "***wondered***" with amazement when they witnessed the immediate, complete, supernatural miracles take place before their very eyes! Such amazement resulted in God being glorified (not just any God . . . but the God of Israel as opposed to the pagan deities that were impotent to do the wonders Jesus did).

V. 32

"***Compassion***" - deep feelings, whereby His heart went out to the hungry multitudes.

V. 33

Such a question reveals how hardened their hearts must have been when Jesus fed the 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish.

This miracle (of reproducing food, turning scraps into a banquet feast, turning 5 lbs. of food into 10,000 lbs) was repeated because the disciple's hearts did not get the impact of the first miraculous feeding ("*For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened*" - Mk. 6:52).

V. 34

"***Seven, and a few little fish***" - This is more to work with than Jesus had at the prior miracle.

V. 36

Again, Jesus meets the needs of the multitude through the instrument of His disciples (just as He reaches multitudes with the Gospel through the witness of His saints).

Each time the disciples reached into their basket, more bread and fish appeared.

V. 37

"***Seven baskets full*** = seven large baskets

The "***four thousand men***" who were fed along with women and children may have totaled anywhere from 10,000 to 15,000.

V. 32-38

Several of the same principles from Matthew 14:14-21 (the feeding of the 5,000) are re-emphasized here: Six truths to realize:

1. Jesus has compassion for people (even their material needs burden Him) (v. 32)
2. We are not adequate in ourselves to meet the needs of the multitudes (v. 33).
3. With Jesus, nothing is insignificant (v. 34-35).
4. What Jesus does, He often does through His servants (v. 36).
5. Little becomes much when given to Jesus (v. 36-37).
6. The incredible is not impossible for Jesus (v. 38)

***Beware of a stubborn refusal to believe or a weak reluctance to believe!**
***Beware of two wrong responses to Christ and His miracle-working, life-changing power!**

When are we stubborn, mule-headed, or unyielding to the evidence God has revealed?

What is a sick, infirm, weak faith?

Two wrong responses:

I. *No Faith* - Requires SIGNS in order to believe (16:1-5)

V. 1

"***Tempting***" - Since Christ is God, He could not be "*tempted with evil*" (Ja. 1:13) from inside Himself (Ja. 1:14). All attempts to trap Him came from an external source.

Their temptation came in the form of a test. A test for Him to prove Himself (just as their father, the Devil, attempted - Matthew 4).

"***The Pharisees also with the Sadducees***" -

The Pharisees were the religious self-righteous (who believed in the supernatural, in miracles, in spiritual power).

The Sadducees were the religious liberals (who did not believe in the supernatural, miracles, nor spiritual power).

The Pharisees believed in miracles, but denied Christ's deity; therefore they did not believe Jesus could perform miracles.

The Sadducees did not believe in miracles and therefore did not believe Jesus could perform them.

It is interesting how these two groups of totally different theological beliefs (Acts 23:8) could come together (find common ground, converge, unite) to attack Christ!

The world's different philosophers, different religions, different world views, etc. all find a common bond in attacking Christianity. They all can unite over a shared antagonism toward Christ (EX: Pilate and Herod, who were enemies became "*friends*" over their mutual unjust dealings with Jesus [Lk. 23:12]).

"***A sign from Heaven***" - lit. a sign out of the Heaven

At their bidding, they wanted Christ to send a lightning bolt down from Heaven, or alter the constellations.

After all the signs that Christ had done, these religious leaders had the audacity to demand more!

They saw His miracles (mt. 9:1-8; 9:32-34; 12:9-13). They heard the testimony of others who experienced His miracles (Jn. 9:19ff). They no doubt heard about the multitudes who were just miraculously cured and fed on the other side of the Lake (Mt. 15:30-39).

Yet rather than believing, they want more evidence.

V. 2

By looking at the sky and sun at sundown, they were able with some accuracy to determine tomorrow's weather.

"Those sayings correspond to the age-old mariner's ditty: 'Red sky at night, sailor's delight; red sky in the morning, sailors take warning'." (MacArthur, p. 5-6).

V. 3

In the morning, the appearance of the sky and clouds could serve as an accurate gage for the day's forecast.

"***Hypocrites***" - play actors; two-faced religious pretenders.

"***You cannot discern***" - People can discern only what they want to discern. If they don't want to believe, they keep their head in the sand and avoid the obvious, compelling evidence (evolutionistic thinking is one example of deliberate ignorance).

"***The signs of the times***" -

"***Signs***" = the objective, miraculous indicators or evidences validating Christ (signs always vindicate God's message and messenger).

Christ had for two years performed hundreds of signs up and down Palestine. They had more than enough testimony and proof of His credentials

"***Of the times***" - the seasons in which Christ walked the earth.

They had the privilege of living at a moment of history when signs were dispersed with convincing abundance and authenticity.

"Why did our Lord talk about the weather? To reveal to His enemies their own dishonesty and stubborn blindness. They could examine the evidence in God's world and draw valid conclusions, but they would not examine the evidence He had presented" (Wiersbe, p. 56).

Nothing is wrong with signs; however, something is desperately wrong with seeking them.

1) Those who seeks "signs" demonstrate a lack of faith (they <u>disbelieve</u> God) (rather than believing God's Word, they want evidence that will satisfy the carnal senses)

   Examples:

   --Gideon and the fleece (Judg. 6:37ff)
   --the rich man in hell (Lk. 16:30-31)

   "*We walk by faith not by sight*" (II Cor. 5:7)

2) Those who demand signs ask God to lower Himself and stood down to their level to do what they say when they say to do it (they <u>dethrone</u> God).

   God sends signs at His will not at the will of man!

3) To seek a sign is to be dissatisfied with the <u>evidences</u> God has already given (Ps. 19:1; SEE: Rom. 1:18-22).

   In this context, Christ has given more than enough signs to prove Himself!

V. 4

"***Wicked***" = morally evil

"***Adulterous***" = spiritual adultery with the world (Ja. 4:4) (not faithful to God; but buying into the world's philosophy that "seeing is believing")

To be worldly is to be carnally-minded. To live life based on the 5 senses. Such a mentality reasons: "If I can't touch it, taste it, see it, smell it, or hear it, I won't believe it. It must be "sensational" for it to impact me.

Many have a "Show me" attitude! Prove it to me! Convince me with the evidence I demand.

The wicked always demand signs because to them "Seeing is believing."

The evil mob that surrounded the cross of Christ again chided Him for a sign. They demanded, "*If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross*" (Mt. 27:40; Mk. 15:30).

If it is evil and spiritually adulteress people who seek after signs, should we be seeking after signs today?

Do we need authenticating signs from God for Him to prove to us that He is real, or that His Spirit is real, or that His Word is true? NO!

To demand God to prove Himself by giving a sign is "Satanic theology." Satan demanded that Christ prove His Messiahship by two spectacular signs (Mt. 4:5-7).

NOTE: Signs and sign gifts were given by God's sovereign discretion, at the Holy Spirit's will (I Cor. 12:11). Such sign gifts came upon God's people without the recipient seeking such; it wa automatic, uninvited, unsolicited.

If "***a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign***", what does this tell you about people who seek signs and sign gifts? (EX: tongues which are a "*sign*" - I Cor. 14:22).

It is interesting to note that as this age draws toward a close, people will demonstrate how wicked they are by an increased desire to see "signs and wonders." Such a thirst will play right into the hands of Satan who will (via the Antichrist) performs powerful "*signs and lying wonders*" (II Thes. 2:9). These Satanic eschatological miracles will seem so real (since they are called "*great signs and wonders*") that they will deceive everyone except the elect (Mt. 24:24).

V. 1-4

Folks, you don't need the "sign gift" of tongues to:

1) prove you have <u>salvation</u> (Ti. 1:2; I Jn. 5:11-13)
2) prove you have the <u>Holy Spirit</u> (Rom. 8:9)
3) prove you have the <u>baptism</u> of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:13)

Just believe God's Word! Trust His promises! You are complete in Christ! (Col. 2:10)

Example: How people want "signs" today:

--"Lord, if you don't want me to marry this unsaved man, break us up" (God's will has already been revealed - II Cor. 6).

--"Lord, if you want me to witness, make him/her bring up the topic of conversation.

--"Lord, if you want me to give to you through my local church, give me a raise in pay"

--"Lord, if you don't want me to get a divorce, take my boyfriend/girlfriend out of my life"

*God has already spoken on these matters!

V. 4

"***Shall no sign be given unto it***" - Christ did perform more signs and wonders, but not for the Pharisees and Sadducees to see.

"***The sign of the prophet Jonas***" - Just as Jonah was 3 days sin the great sea creature's belly and then expelled, so Christ would be 3 days in the tomb and then resurrected (cp. Mt. 12:40).

(This sign was also rejected, and a lie was invented - Mt. 28:11-15)

"***And He left them and departed***" - Christ just turned around and left them hanging, with none of the sign proofs they had demanded.

He confidently departed, not worried about the fact that they remained unbelievers.

Note: One mark of insecurity is a feeling that you have to "prove yourself" to people. The insecure are always defending themselves, trying to prove themselves.

Christ knew who He was and had proven it by His spotless life, His soul-stirring messages, and His undeniable miracles. He did not have to succumb to the existential, carnal wishes of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

V. 4b

Even if Jesus gave a sign from Heaven which they could not refute, they would simply attribute it to Satan like they had done earlier (Mt. 12:24).

"The French atheist Voltaire declared, "Even if a miracle should be wrought in the open marketplace before a thousand sober witnesses, I would rather mistrust my senses than to admit a miracle." Unbelief will always find a way to reject the truth." (MacArthur, p. 5).

II. *Little Faith* - Fails to REMEMBER God's past faithfulness (16:6-12)

V. 5

"***They had forgotten to take bread***" - They intended to bring a supply of food over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, but it slipped their preoccupied minds.

V. 6

"***Take heed***" - look out; keep your eyes open, stay alert.

"***Beware***" - hold onto this, hold your mind or attention to this; be on guard against this.

"***Leaven***" - the false teaching (v. 12) of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

1. Pharisees - their false teaching was a works righteousness based on the tradition of the elders (they added to the authority of scripture).

2. Sadducees - their false teaching was a skeptical, liberal, humanistic denial of spiritual realities (they denied the authority of Scripture).

Jesus also warned to beware of the leaven of:

3. "Herod" - (Mk. 8:15) - this false teaching was worldly secularism)pleasure seeking, living to please the flesh, indulgence, sensual living - cp. Mt. 14:1-10) (he ignored the authority of Scripture).

V. 7

Because Jesus warned against "***leaven***", the disciples--because they had bread on their mind--thought He was warning them not to eat the physical bread that a Pharisee of Sadducee might offer them! They thought He was warning them not to eat that bread, which may have been laced with poison.

They no doubt argued and fought over someone's failure to remember to pack the bagels, challah, or pita!

V. 8

"***O ye of little faith***" - contrast with the Syrophoenician woman's "*great faith*" (15:28).

Why should they have worried about bread when they had the "Wonder Bread" bakery walking right next to them!

Why would they need to fear hunger when the "Tastee" bakery, or better yet General Mills, Quaker Oats, and every other granary and produce company at their disposal!

""***Little faith***" was one of our Lord's favorite names for His disciples (Mt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31). Of course, 'little faith' is better than no faith" (Wiersbe, p. 57).

V. 9

They failed to:

1) "***Understand***" - realize who Jesus was!

2) "***Remember***" - They forgot what Jesus could do!

"***Baskets***" - (v. 9) (*kophinos)* a wicker basket (perhaps like a picnic basket size)

"***Baskets***" - (v. 10) (*spuris*) a big round, circular, plated reed basket; the size of a hamper, large enough to hold a man (Acts 9:25).

Jesus is saying: "If I were concerned about our having bread, I would simply create some Myself. . ." (MacArthur, p. 13).

V. 11

How often we are like the disciples in soon forgetting how great our God is! We fail to remember His faithfulness of the past!

We, like O.T. Israel, experience the great Exodus, then we worry about the Red Sea; we experience the Red Sea, then worry about drinking water; we experience manna, then worry about meat; we experience victory over Pharaoh's army and concern ourselves with the Philistines!

Our Lord, who took care of us in the past, will not abandon us in the present!

He who met our needs will not suddenly forsake us!

Phil. 1:6 - "*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*"

What God starts, He finishes.
What God begins, He completes.

--He who taught you His plan of salvation will teach you the whole counsel of God (Col. 1:9).

--He who fed you will not let you starve to death (Mt. 6)

--He who protected you will not let Satan prevail against you (Mt. 16:18)

--He who lives in you via His Spirit will not abandon you (I Cor. 6:19; Heb. 13:5)

--He who called you to Himself and His work will equip you for every task He calls you to (Phil. 4:13)

--He who loves you will not ever stop (Rom. 8:31-39)

--He who redeemed you from sin and Satan will sanctify you (I Th. 5:24 - "*Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*")

--He who saved you will keep you saved (Rom. 5:9-10)

--He who satisfied our concerns about life after death sand gave us eternal life will satisfy your needs in this temporal life (I Tim. 6:17 -"*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who given us richly all things to enjoy*"

CONCLUSION:

Let His faithfulness to you in the past sustain you in the present and future!

SEE: Deut. 8:1-18

How big is your faith? How hungry are you for God's truth?

"The story is told of a blind French girl who was given a copy of the gospel of Mark in braille. As she read and reread the book, she came to have faith in Christ, and the book became more precious with each reading. She read it so much that she developed callouses on her fingers that eventually prevented her from feeling the raised dots. She was so determined to read God's Word that she peeled the skin off the tips of her fingers to make them more sensitive, but in doing so she permanently damaged the nerves. Devastated, she picked up the book to kiss it farewell, only to discover that her lips were even more sensitive than her fingers." (MacArthur, p. 16).

"A REFUSAL TO BELIEVE DESPITE THE EVIDENCE"

Matthew 15:29 - 16:12

11/28/93

INTRODUCTION:

The undeniable, overwhelming, irrefutable evidence (15:29-39)

***Beware of a stubborn refusal to believe; Beware of a weak reluctance to believe!**

Two wrong responses:

I. ***No Faith*** **-** **Requires SIGNS in order to believe (16:1-5)**

II. ***Little Faith*** **-** **Fails to REMEMBER God's past faithfulness (16:6-12)**

CONCLUSION:

"WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?"

Matthew 16:13-20

12/5/93

INTRODUCTION: Verses 13 - 15

V. 13

Perhaps as the disciples crossed over into the territory of Herod Philip ("*Philippi*"), they began talking about how this was the tetrarchy of the Roman leader Herod Philip, which naturally led to questions about the importance (or non-importance) of the Caesars and the Herods, and this set the stage for Jesus to be revealed as the "*Christ.*"

"***The Son of man***" - a title showing how Christ humbled Himself in the incarnation in becoming man. A title which also identified Jesus as the Messiah (Dan. 7:13).

"If anyone else asked, 'Whom do men say that I am?' we would think him either mad or arrogant" (Wiersbe, p. 57).

But Jesus, knowing who He really was, quizzed the disciples to see if they recognized His true identity.

V. 14

"***They said***" - plural; no doubt each of the disciples had input on this questions. It's easy to say what others think. The question that comes up later is "*Who do <u>you</u> say that I am?*" (and only Peter is bold enough to speak up).

"***John the Baptist***" - Herod Antipas thought this (Mt. 14:2).

No, he could not be John the Baptist, because John prepared the way for Christ and was not worthy even to untie Jesus' shoe.

"***Elias***" - Elijah, who was to come before the "*Great and dreadful day of the Lord*" (Mal. 4:5)

No, he could not be Elijah, because Elijah (like John did for His first coming) will prepare the way for Jesus' second coming.

Jeremias" - No, He was not Jeremiah, although Jesus (Mt. 23:37) like Jeremiah (Jer. 9:1) wept over the sinful lostness of the nation of Israel.

"***Of one of the prophets***" - No, Jesus was not a mere man, a mere prophet.

Many today have mistaken notions as to who Jesus is.

--To the Jehovah's Witnesses, He is Michael the Archangel
--To the Mormons, He is the brother of Lucifer
--To the Muslims He was the forerunner of Mohammed
--To the theological liberals, He was a "good man"

"One thing is clear: We can never make a true decision about Jesus Christ by taking a poll of the people" (Wiersbe, p. 57).

People have all kinds of ideas as to who Jesus is!

V. 15

"Who do <u>you</u> say that I am?" -

As far as you are concerned, it doesn't matter what others think of Christ. The question is: **"Who do <u>you</u> say He is?"**

Your whole eternity hinges on how you answer that question (Rom. 10:9)

"If ye believe not that I am [He], ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24)

The eunuch gave the right answer: *"And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the on Son of God."*

The Question of All Questions:
***Who do you say Jesus is?**

The Scriptures reveal Him to be:

I. The DIVINE MESSIAH (v. 16-17)

V. 16

V. 15 - "*Whom say ye*" (plural) - The question was asked to all the disciples, but no one had the conviction to admit that Jesus was the "*Christ*" except Peter (v. 16)

"*Thou art the Christ*" - the definite article "*the*" points to these facts:

1) There is only one "Christ" (not many - Mt. 24:5)

2) Jesus is the specific One promised in the Old Testament; the word *Christos* when "used without the article has the character of a personal name; without the article, it is a title of the one promised in the Old Testament" (Reinecker, p. 49).

"*Christ*" - the Messiah, the Anointed One (Is. 61:1; Lk. 4:18; Acts 10:38); the Deliverer

--the One whom the Jews expected to come and deliver them (Zech. 12 - 14)

--the One whom Daniel said would die for the sins of others - Dan. 9:25, 26

From the outset of the disciples following Jesus they recognized Him as the Messiah (Jn. 1:41). Now Jesus for 2 1/2 years has proven it before their eyes and ears. And Peter unashamedly recognizes it.

Jesus is the only One who could and did fulfill the Old Testament promises of Messiah:

Here are some of the O.T. prophecies and their fulfillment in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ:

Prophecy of the Messiah	**Prophecy**	**Fulfillment**
Messiah would come at an appointed time	Dan. 9:25-26	Mark 1:15
Messiah would be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt.2:1-6
Messiah would be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt.1:18-25
Messiah would die for the sins of the world	Is.52:13-53:12	Luke 22:37 Acts 8:28-35
Messiah would be hated	Ps.69:4 Is.49:7	Jn.15:24,25
Messiah would be rejected	Psalm 118:22	Mt.21:42
Messiah would be betrayed	Psalm 41:9	Jn.13:18-21
Messiah would be forsaken	Zech.13:7	Mk.14:27
Messiah would be sold	Zech.11:12	Mt.26:15
Messiah would be smitten	Micah 5:1	Mt.27:30
Messiah would be spit upon	Is.50:6	Mk.14:65
Messiah would be nailed	Psalm 22:16	Jn.20:25
Messiah would be forsaken	Psalm 22:1	Mt.27:46
Messiah would be mocked	Psalm 22:7,8	Mt.27:39-44
Messiah would be pierced	Zech.12:10	Jn.19:34,37
Messiah would be raised from the dead	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:22-27
Messiah would come (again) in judgement	Zech.12-14	Rev.19

"***The Son of the living God***" - Peter not only confessed Christ's messiahship, but His deity as well!

Just as Jesus' title "*son of man*" (v. 13) identifies Christ as "man", the title "*son of God*" identifies Christ as God! (Jn. 5:18)

V. 17

"***Blessed***" = extremely fortunate; showered with heavenly, spiritual blessings. (in this case, the blessedness was a spiritual understanding that the Father in Heaven gave to Peter).

"***Simon Barjonah***" - Simon the Son of Jonah (John). This was Peter's original name before Jesus gave him the name "*Cephas*" which is Aramaic meaning "a stone" (Jn. 1:42).

"***Flesh and blood***" - no human; no man gave Peter this belief (cp. Gal. 1:16). God the Father opened his spiritual eyes.

Unless God opens one's eyes (Heb. 6:4; 10:32; Eph. 1:18) and heart (Acts 16:14), they will remain blind to spiritual truth.

Hence, the new birth is said not to originate from "*blood nor the will of the flesh*" (Jn. 1:13).

"***Revealed***" - opened up; manifested; uncovered

II. The CHURCH'S MASTER (v. 18-19)

A. Christ is the FOUNDATION of the Church (v. 18a)

"*upon this Rock*"

V. 18

"***Peter (petros). . . rock (petra)***" -

Petros = masculine name

Petra = feminine noun

Petros - " a detached stone or boulder (Vine, p. 302), or a stone that might be thrown or easily moved

Petra - "a mass of rock"; bed-rock; a huge foundation (upon which something may be built - Mt. 7:24, 25; 27:51, 60; Mk. 15:46; Lk. 6:48).

Jesus deliberately uses a play on words in the Greek to show that He does not mean (refer to) Peter when He uses the word "*rock*".

Since the name "*Petros*" means a piece of the rock and not the rock itself, it would make no sense for Jesus to say, "*You are a piece of a rock and upon you I will build My church.*"

No one can build anything on a "stone," but you can build on a bedrock!

"*This Rock*" - Three Views

1) **Peter** (Roman Catholic View)

Peter could not be the first Pope for several reasons:

(1) The word pope means "father." Peter would never have violated the command of his Lord Jesus and allowed others to call him "Father." (Mt. 23:9)

(2) Popes received worship; Peter rejected it (Acts 10:26)

(3) Popes cannot be married; Peter was (Mt. 8:14)

(4) Only Peter is said to possess the keys of the kingdom (no successors are ever mentioned) (Mt. 16:19)

(5) The Catholic church was not even in existence till Constantine enforced Christianity as the state religion

(6) Peter warned against ecclesiastical leadership lording it over God's Church (I Pet. 5:3)

(7) Peter never referred to himself as a "pope" but as an "*apostle*" (I Pet. 1:1) and "*elder*" (I Pet. 5:1) and a "*servant*" of Jesus Christ (II Pet. 1:1).

(8) Peter blundered (cp. Mt. 16:22-23; 26:669-75; Gal. 2:11-14). The RCC says that a Pope never makes a mistake when speaking "ex cathedra," that he is the infallible teacher of doctrine.
The only infallible teacher of truth is the Holy Spirit. It is blasphemous to give such credit to a mere man.

2) **Peter's Confession**
(i.e. upon this solid testimony that "*You are the Christ the Son of the living God*")

It is true that the boulder of truth that Jesus was the "Christ" was indeed the message the Apostles preached. And it was upon this truth the Church was built.

* Peter on the Day of Pentecost preached "*Christ*" to Jews and the church began (Acts 2:31, 2:38, 3:18).
* Philip preached "*Christ*" to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5).
* Paul preached "*Christ*" to the Jews and Gentiles (Acts 9:20, 22; 17:3; 18:5, 28).

*** **3) Christ**

The words "*thou. . . this*" show that Jesus is pointing (perhaps with His finger).

"You (pointing to Peter) are a piece of a rock, and upon this Rock (pointing to Himself), He says: I will build my Church."

The proof that Christ was referring to Himself when He used the word "*rock*" is because only He (not Peter nor anyone else) is called a "*Rock*" (*petra)* in the Scriptures:

I Cor. 10:4 - "*And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.*"

He is the "*rock of offense*" (Rom. 9:33; I Pet. 2:8).

Christ (not Peter) is the foundation upon which the Church is built.

I Cor. 3:11 - "*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*"

I Pet. 2:4, 6 - "*To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. . . Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.*"

Cp. Isaiah 8:14, 28:16; Psalm 118:22

No one is a "Rock" except "*our God.*" **SEE:** Psalm 18:2, 31; 46

Cp. Psalm 28:1, 31:3, 42:9, 661:2, 62:6-7, 71:3, 78:35, 95:1, etc.

If Jesus were saying that He would build His church on (*upon*) Peter, then clearly Peter would have been the greatest one in the kingdom. However, even the disciples did not take this to be the point, or else they would not have disputed among themselves who would be the greatest in the Kingdom (Mt. 20:20-21, 24-28).

B. Christ is the <u>BUILDER</u> of the Church (v. 18b)
"*I will build*"

"***<u>I</u> will build***" - the Church is not built by man, but by <u>Christ</u>. We may be His tools, but He is the builder.

"*And the <u>Lord</u> added to the Church daily such as should be saved*" (Acts 2:47)

"***<u>I will</u>*** [future tense] ***build My Church***" - the Church had not been built yet; but was a work to begin in a future time from when Jesus made this statement.

The Church began at Pentecost (Acts 2), a time which Peter refers to as the "*beginning*" (Acts 11:15).

C. Christ is the <u>POSSESSOR</u> of the Church (v. 18c)
"*My Church*"

"***<u>My</u> Church***" - The Church belongs to Jesus Christ

--The Church is called "*the bride, the <u>Lamb's</u> wife*" (Rev. 21:9; cp. Eph. 5)

--The Church is called: "*the church of <u>God</u>*" (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; II Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; I Tim. 3:5)

--The Church is called "*the flock of <u>God</u>*" (I Pet. 5:2)

This church is not "my church" or even "our church"; it is His church.

""***<u>My church</u>***" - the church (singular) is a called-out group of believers who will one day assemble in Heaven. Not the local church; but the Church in prospect is what Christ is referring to. The wider spectrum o "the church"; all true regenerate believers, all over the earth from Pentecost till the Rapture.

(this wider, general, greater body of believers is the meaning of the word *eklesia* in the following passages:

Mt. 16:18 -	"I will build my Church"
I Cor.12:28 -	"God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers..."
I Cor. 15:9 -	"I persecuted the Church of God"
Gal. 1:13 -	"I persecuted the Church of God"

Eph. 1:22,23 "Gave Him to be head over all things to the Church"
Eph. 3:10 - "Be made known through the Church"
Eph. 3:21 - "Might be glory in the Church"
Eph. 5:23-32 - "...Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her..."
Phil. 3:6 - "Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church"
Col. 1:18 - "He is the Head of the Body, the Church..."
Col. 1:24 - "For His body's sake, which is the Church."
Heb. 12:23 "To the general assembly and Churchof the firstborn (ones), which are written in Heaven..."

NOTE: The general (generic) usage of the word "Church" is often described as:
"The Church" (Eph. 3:10, 21)
"The Church of God" (I Cor. 15:9)

D. Christ is the PROTECTOR of the Church (v. 18d)
"*The gates of hell shall not prevail against it*"

"***The gates of Hell***" - a reference to where the dignitaries and rulers sat.

"The gates stood for those who held government and administered" (Vine, p. 141).

EX: the "gates" in the Old Testament were places where those in public authority and power sat (Gen. 19:1, 22:17, 24:60; Deut. 21:19, 22:15, 22:24, 25:7; Ruth 4:1, 11; Esther 4:6, 5:13; Ps. 127:5; Prov. 24:7).

The "***gates of Hell***" is a reference to the "*principalities...powers...rulers of the darkness of this world... spiritual wickedness in high places*" (Eph. 6:12)

I.e. it is a reference to Satan and his high-ranking powerful spirits.

Satan and his host of demons are not in Hell yet (Mt. 8:29), but are associated with "Hell" because everlasting fire was created for them (Mt. 25:41) and Satan will be trapped there forever one day (Rev. 20:10).

"***Shall not prevail against it***" - There is no way the hoards of hell can overcome, overpower, have strength against or gain mastery over Christ's regenerate believers!

By Christ's death, He destroyed him who had the power of death (that is, the devil) and He delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:14-15).

"*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them* (the false prophets): *because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world*" (I Jn. 4:4)

"*If God be for us, who can be against us?*" (Rom. 8:31)

E. Christ is the <u>SOVEREIGN DIRECTOR</u> of the Church (v. 19)
"*<u>I</u> will give. . . keys. . ; shall have been bound . . . loosed in <u>heaven</u>*"

"***<u>I</u> will give***" - Jesus alone has the authority to give such "keys" since He has all authority in Heaven and earth (Mt. 28:18; Rev. 1:18)

"***I <u>will</u> give***" - future. Jesus gave the keys on the Day of Pentecost.

"***Unto thee***" - singular (<u>Peter</u> only, not a succession of Popes).

How do Roman Catholic leaders interpret this verse?

Archbishop John F. Whealon says: "This one apostle was made doorkeeper of Heaven. If he opens, we enter. If he closes, we do not enter. His <u>control</u>, then, reaches <u>from earth</u> to Heaven according to this divine promise. . . It makes good sense for us to be friends of Peter if he is our doorkeeper to Heaven." (Columbia, March, 1991, p. 16).

A Roman Catholic once said to a Baptist: "You are in the wrong church; you should belong to the church which has the keys!" The Bible-believing Christian replied, "I don't need the keys. I have the 'Door'!" (Jn. 10:9)

"***The keys of the kingdom of Heaven***" - the keys to unlock the Gospel of God's kingdom.

The "*keys*" do <u>not</u> suggest that Peter is at the Gates of Heaven and He decides who enters and who does not.

Rather, the keys represent that which unlocks knowledge to people who are spiritually ignorant.

(EX: In Luke 11:52, Jesus said the Pharisees had taken away "*the key of knowledge.*" Not only had they failed to enter the kingdom themselves, but they had hindered others from doing so.)

"A key is of great need when a door is locked, but once the door is unlocked, the key loses its importance. . . **After Peter unlocked the mystery of the Gospel to the <u>Jews</u> (Acts 2), <u>Samaritans</u> (Acts 8:14-17) and <u>Gentiles</u> (Acts 110; 11:8-18),** the door was never again locked, so the keys were never again used. After using the keys, Peter himself fades from view (in Acts)" (Vatican Bank, C.E.C., Box 99141, Louisville, KY 40269).

"***Shall be bound. . . shall be loosed***" - perfect tense, passive voice participles.

Lit. "*shall have been bound (by God). . . shall have been loosed (by God)*"

In other words, Peter was only confirming something that already had been decided in Heaven!

If Peter said that something was "binding" for Christians not to do, it is because God already decided such a prohibition. If Peter said that something could be done ("*loosed*"), it is because God in Heaven already decreed the allowance.

What Jesus is saying is: "*And whatever you bind on earth [forbid to be done], shall have been already bound...in Heaven; and whatever you loose on earth [permit to be done] shall have already been loosed in Heaven.*" (Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest, The Expanded Translation; cited by Wiersbe, p. 59)

In order to understand this concept of "binding and loosing" observe how the local church in Matthew 18:18 is given the authority to make decisions regarding church discipline. Such decisions made by the local church would simply be confirmations of what God had already decided in Heaven.

"Jesus did not say that God would obey what they did on earth, but that they should do on earth whatever God had already willed." (Wiersbe, p. 59).

How would Peter know what to "bind" or "loose"? The Word of God which came to him via Christ's teachings while on earth or by direct revelation (Acts 10).

How does a local church make decisions of "binding" and "loosing"? The Word of God, the Bible.

CONCLUSION:

V. 20

The reason for this serious warning is because Jesus did not want the people to make Him King (Jn. 6:15); He had to die on a cross first (Mt. 16:21-28).

PETER

BASIC R.C. BELIEF

Peter went to Rome in 43 A.D., wrote his Epistles from there and was martyred there. His bones were found under the Vatican. This forms the basis for the Pope being is successor to Peter and Head of the Church.

A Roman Catholic in the Shrine Bookstore in Necedah (see 327), Wisconsin told me that one of the proofs he had for the validity of Roman Catholicism is that he saw a faded painting in the catacombs of Naples, and he was told this was an original painting of St. Peter saying Mass (see 184) on his way to Rome, where he ruled as Pope (see 216).

POST VATICAN II

In CATHOLICISM AND FUNDAMENTALISM, page 203, Karl Keating quotes Eusebius Pamphilius as giving the precise date of 42 when the Apostle Peter is sent to Rome. In the previous paragraph (quoted again in THIS ROCK, December 1990), Lactantius was quoted as saying, "When Nero was already reigning Peter came to Rome..." Nero began his reign in 54, so one of the two authoritative ancient writers was at least 12 years off in his calculations. If one history book says Columbus discovered America in 1492, and another says it happened in 1504, at least one of them is wrong.

God never promised to preserve the writings of the Church fathers and historians. The Catholic Encyclopedia (Volume VI, page 136) admits, "Substituting of false documents and tampering with genuine ones was quite a trade in the Middle Ages."

CHRISTIAN COMMENT

Peter was apostle to the Circumcision (Galatians 2:7-8) and the people whom Paul salutes as Christians in Rome (60 A.D.) are all of Gentile name (Romans 16:3-15). At about this same time, Peter wrote his first epistle from Babylon (see 27).

In 52 A.D., 9 years after he was supposed to go to Rome, Peter is in Jerusalem, telling of his experience with the Gentile Cornelius, but not breathing a word about any Gentile ministry in Rome. In Romans 16, Paul greeted 26 Christians in Rome. If Peter were Bishop of Rome, why was he left out? (Romans 16:3-15).

If Peter's being in Rome is so important, why does the scripture point away from any connection of Peter and Rome? Even if there were, there is no scriptural link between Peter in Rome and a Papacy in Rome.

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

BASIC R.C. BELIEF

The spiritual jurisdiction of the Church, in virtue of which power sins may be forgiven (see 114), indulgences (see 151) granted and penalties inflicted.

The binding and loosing power (Matthew 16:19; 18:18) is identical to the jurisdiction exercised by the Pope (see 216) as the head of the Church and the priest in the Confessional (see 67).

The "power of the keys" was given to Peter (see 213); the Pope, as successor to Peter, has full power of the keys. All priests participate in this power to a lesser degree.

POST VATICAN II

These same scriptures are cited in Vatican II document Lumen Gentium as basis for the Pope's absolute and the Bishops' relative power over the Church.

CHRISTIAN COMMENT

The Apostles couldn't have understood the above to be the case, as they didn't have any Confessional in the early Church. They proclaimed the Gospel, which was the power of God to the loosing of the sins for all who believed, and to the binding of the sins of those who rejected (Romans 1:16).

There are two suppositions that must be proved if we are to accept the Roman Catholic position. It must be proved that the keys represented absolute jurisdiction for Peter, and that this jurisdiction passed, by Apostolic Succession (see 21) to other Bishops of Rome. There is no evidence that whatever prerogatives were given to Peter were to be perpetuated in Rome. The Bishop of Rome achieved supremacy because he was in the chief city, and in response to his own ambition. Peter received his ministry directly from the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Peter alone is mentioned as having received keys, there must have been a privilege that was uniquely his. A key is of great need when a door is locked, but once a door is unlocked, the key loses its importance. Peter used the key to open the door to the Church to the Jews (Acts 2) and the Gentiles (Acts 10). The door was never again locked, so the keys were never again used. After using the keys, Peter himself fades from view.

Peter's loss of prominence in the latter part of Acts is God's way of showing that, like all godly men, Peter had a definite ministry, but that he wasn't eternal. As he declined, God raised up others to carry on the task of preaching the Gospel.

Jesus Christ is Giver of ministry gifts in the Church (Ephesians 4:8-13). The office of the Papacy was first bestowed by Imperial decree and is now voted on by men.

POPE

BASIC R.C. BELIEF

The name given to the Supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church; from papa, father. The pope is often called the Holy Father (Ed-see John 17:11).

Full title: Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City, now Gloriously Reigning. For these last 3 words are sometimes substituted "Servant of the Servants of God."

In 533, John II became the first pope to change his name, but the practice did not become general until 1009, when a man named Peter was elected pope and changed his name to Sergius IV. After that it became normal for a pope to take a new name.

From THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE POPES-SAINT PETER TO JOHN PAUL II by Michael Walsh, S.J., Chapter I:

"There has been a great debate over (Matthew 16:18) because, was we shall see, this is the crucial text by which the popes attempted to justify their claim to rule over the whole church, and not just over their local community in Rome.

But whatever the interpretation of the facts, the facts themselves are these: in Aramaic, the language Jesus was using, the word 'Peter' and the word 'rock' are the same: kepha. Until Jesus bestowed it on Simon, kepha was not a personal name, and neither was its Greek equivalent, Petros ... But the name kepha was translated into Greek as Petros. So those who were writing and translating the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles clearly did not want the significance of the word kepha (meaning rock) to be lost."

Scriptural "proof" for the primacy of the pope is Matthew 16:18-19. In explaining this, Dr. Murray, Maynooth, Ireland, said: "By saying these words, Jesus appointed Peter supreme head of the Church, and gave him full authority to legislate for it; to teach, to inspect and judge; to reject and denounce all false doctrines, and to declare what is the true Faith; to appoint all its clergy and teachers and to arrange their work; in short, the whole church, its officers, its constitution, its work, were entrusted to Peter."

From THE NEW CATHOLIC DICTIONARY, Imprimatur, Cardinal Hayes, New York, page 356: "Fabian, SAINT, POPE (236-250), b.Rome; d. there. A dove descended on his head while he attended the papal election. Considering this a sign from heaven he was elected by acclamation. Little is known of his reign."

From HOW TO FIND THE TRUE CHURCH, page 45, "Peter acted as chief of the apostles, as for instance, at the election of Matthias. . . at the first council, after much discussion Peter gave his opinion to which all submitted."

From OUR SUNDAY VISITOR, April 18, 1915. "The letters inscribed on the Pope's miter are these: VICARIUS FILII DEI, which is Latin for VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD." (Editor's Note-The numerical value for VICARIUS FILII DEI is 666)

POST VATICAN II

Roman Catholic ecumenists play down fears of papal jurisdiction over Protestants. They are saying that the Pope is a fellow bishop of all bishops in Christendom. Because he comes from the See where Peter and Paul were martyred he has a prominence that he uses to help his fellow bishops.

The Vatican II document LUMEN GENTIUM says, "For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ namely, and as pastor of the entire church, has full supreme and universal power over the whole church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered" (Vatican II, edited by Austin Flannery, O.P., page 375).

From INTRODUCING CONTEMPORARY CATHOLICISM by Theo Weston. "Underlying conflict concerning the unfinished and, according to some, one-sided treatment of the papal primacy by Vatican I."

From CURRENT TRENDS IN THEOLOGY by Jesuits Wolf and Schall, page 223, "At the first Vatican Council the Church developed in detail the function of the Pope in the life of the church. But the Council broke up before there was time to balance this announcement of papal prerogatives and papal duties with a definition of the status of the bishops in the church, or to balance the statement on the hierarchy with complimentary statements on the role of the laity in the Church."

During a visit to Des Moines, Iowa (1979), John Paul II was welcomed by a Roman Catholic choir singing, "Joy to the world, the Pope has come" (BAPTIST BULLETIN, DEC. 1979).

(From KEEPERS OF THE KEYS, Wilton Wynn, Random House, New York. 1988, p. 11 - "In the year 236 a farmer named Fabian wandered into Rome and stopped to watch the clergy and people select a pope. A dove landed on Fabian's head, and the assembly instantly acclaimed him pope."

CHRISTIAN COMMENT

In Matthew 16:18, "petra" is used for Rock and means foundation stone; "petros" is used for Peter and means a small stone. See I Peter 2:4-5.

When Jesus first met Peter (John 1:42), He said to him, "Thy name shall be Cephas" (an Aramaic word that Catholic apologists insist can mean rock or stone), but the Holy Spirit defined it by saying "which is by interpretation, a stone (Greek: petros).

If Dr. Murray is correct in his interpretation, why didn't Peter choose Matthias in Acts 1 instead of having to cast lots?

Five witnesses can be summoned to answer the question, "Did you understand that Jesus proclaimed Peter to be the infallible primate in Matthew 16:18-19?" See if these witnesses testify that Peter exerted the two papal prerogatives, primacy and infallibility. (a) Jesus (Matthew 16:23); (b) The Apostles (Luke 22:24; Acts 8:14); (c) James (Acts 15:19); (d) Paul (Galatians 2:11); (e) Peter (I Peter 5:1; II Peter 1:1).

From paper by Hugh Greene, WAS PETER (CEPHAS) THE ROCK?: "The word kepha is derived from two ancient Hebrew (Chaldee-Aramaic) words. The first is keph, meaning a hollow rock. The other is kaphaph, meaning to be bent over, or the hollow palm of one's hand. (Strong's EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE AND DICTIONARY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, Numbers 3710, 3721 in the Hebrew section.)

"Therefore it is obvious that kepha, or Cephas, Peter's new name was never meant to mean or signify a massive, immovable foundation such as a mountain, or BEDROCK. Quite the contrary, Jesus (who used the word kepha in John 1:42) wanted to show the complete difference between Peter and Himself with regards to who He would build His church upon."

Three Catholic publications which enjoyed wide acceptance among pre-Vatican II Roman Catholics were THE FAITH OF MILLIONS by John O'Brien, published by Our Sunday Visitor (designated below as FM); WHAT'S THE TRUTH ABOUT CATHOLICS (WT) by John O'Brien, published by Our Sunday Visitor and THE STORY OF THE POPE (SP), Dell Publications. All three had the official imprimatur of Bishop Noll (O'Brien's books) and Cardinal Spellman. While none is infallible, they are certainly authoritative.

Alex Dunlap, Founder of The Conversion Center, quoted from these three books regarding the number of popes, and about specific names of popes.

Following are his findings:

FM - 261 popes; WT - 262 popes, SP - 258 popes (all through Pius XII)
Pope #5: FM - Evaristus; WT - Anacletus
Pope #137: FM - John XIV; WT - Donus II
Pope #207: FM - Martin V; WT - John XXII, XXIII or XXIV.

Further, Alex cites the removal in 1947 of pope Donus, who had been pope in 973 but was found by the Vatican "never to have existed." This, with the removal of sainthood from popes Felix II, Liberius, Anastasio, Stephen III and Stephen V constitutes what Alex aptly called "The Confusion of the Popes."

CATHOLIC JOURNALS

The Roman Catholic paper TWIN CIRCLE, July 1, 1979, stated: "It is customary for the pope to speak using the plural form 'We' which means 'the Holy Spirit and I'.

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Is Jesus the Messiah?

Does He fulfil the O.T. promises of the anticipated anointed deliverer of Israel?

Here are some of the O.T. prophecies and their fulfillment in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ:

Prophecy of the Messiah	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Messiah would come at an appointed time	Dan. 9:25-26	Mark 1:15
Messiah would be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt.2:1-6
Messiah would be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt.1:18-25
Messiah would die for the sins of the world	Is.52:13-53:12	Luke 22:37 Acts 8:28-35
Messiah would be hated	Ps.69:4 Is.49:7	Jn.15:24,25
Messiah would be rejected	Psalm 118:22	Mt.21:42
Messiah would be betrayed	Psalm 41:9	Jn.13:18-21
Messiah would be forsaken	Zech.13:7	Mk.14:27
Messiah would be sold	Zech.11:12	Mt.26:15
Messiah would be smitten	Micah 5:1	Mt.27:30
Messiah would be spit upon	Is.50:6	Mk.14:65
Messiah would be nailed	Psalm 22:16	Jn.20:25
Messiah would be forsaken	Psalm 22:1	Mt.27:46
Messiah would be mocked	Psalm 22:7,8	Mt.27:39-44
Messiah would be pierced	Zech.12:10	Jn.19:34,37
Messiah would be raised from the dead	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:22-27
Messiah would come (again) in judgement	Zech.12-14	Rev.19

"WHO DO YOU SAY JESUS IS?"

Matthew 16:13-20
12/5/93

INTRODUCTION: Verses 13 - 15

The Question of All Questions:
***Who do you say Jesus is?**

The Scriptures reveal Him to be:

I. The DIVINE MESSIAH (v. 16-17)

II. The CHURCH'S MASTER (v. 18-19)

A. Christ is the FOUNDATION of the Church (v. 18a)
"upon this Rock"

B. Christ is the BUILDER of the Church (v. 18b)
"I will build"

C. Christ is the POSSESSOR of the Church (v. 18c)
"My Church"

D. Christ is the PROTECTOR of the Church (v. 18d)
"The gates of hell shall not prevail against it"

E. Christ is the SOVEREIGN DIRECTOR of the Church (v. 19)
"I will give. . . keys. . ; shall have been bound . . . loosed in heaven"

CONCLUSION:

rifice on Calvary to fully satisfy God's demands of Justice and provide salvation as God's free gift to undeserving man.

Chapter 2

Peter and the Papacy

CA

There is ample evidence that Peter was first in authority among the apostles.

BR

That means one of two things. Either Peter was the first pope, or God knew that Satan would produce a counterfeit of His true Church. He also knew that, in order to pass this counterfeit off, Satan would have to claim apostolic origin. God did two important things. He forced Satan to pick one certain Apostle by making him pre-eminent, and then He proved conclusively in the Bible that this apostle (Peter) was not in any way a papal head of the Church. Therefore we will find out from the Bible if Peter manifested any papal qualities.

Every Roman Catholic pope has two discernable attributes. He is the primate, that is to say, number one. He also has infallibility, when he speaks in an official way concerning faith and morals.

Matthew 16:22 records Peter's making a doctrinal statement that Christ has to correct. Acts 8:14 records his being sent by the other apostles to Samaria. A primate is not sent because there is no superior which has any power over him.

CA

The Speaker of the House of Representatives is sent to the White House by member of the house even though he clearly has precedence over them.

BR

He has first place among the members, but the House of Representatives as a whole still exercises authority over him. He is sent not by any individual member, whom he would outrank, but by the Body as a whole, to which he is subservient. Peter's being sent proves he is subordinate to the body of apostles who sent him.

CA

In the first Council at Jerusalem, Peter presided and gave forth the official teachings of the Council.

BR

Acts 15:19 plainly states that it is James, not Peter, who presided and gave the judgment on the teaching to be promulgated at the first Jerusalem Council. Further, Galatians 2:11 tells us that Peter was wrong on a doctrinal point, led others astray, and had to be corrected by Paul. The entire books of I and II Peter do not give us any hint about any papal authority being claimed or exercised by Peter. He claims only to be "a servant of Jesus Christ" and a "fellow elder," whereby the Pope of Rome has a long, extravagant title, beginning with "Vicar of Jesus Christ."

CA

God's having changed Simon's name to Peter in Matthew 16 clearly indicates a special role he is to fulfill. While it is true that the Greek words "petra" (Rock) and petros (Peter) are different, they had to be since you could not ascribe a feminine name (petra) to Peter. But in the original Aramaic, there is only one word that is used in Matthew 16 — kepha. Jesus said "Thou art kepha (rock) and on this kepha (rock) I will build my church."

BR

This Aramaic word is actually used in our English text, being transliterated as Cephas. It is in John 1:42. Jesus, on

meeting Peter, says "thou shalt be called Cephas." The Holy Spirit, Who inspired this writing, knew that some would say "kepha" meant a large rock. Therefore He gave the meaning when He said, "which is, by interpretation, a stone."

Further, in I Corinthians 10:4, it reads, "and that Rock (petra — feminine) was Christ (masculine)."

We can also see a clear contrast between the words of Peter, as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write in his epistles, and the present day teaching of Roman Catholic popes.

Peter writes of people being born again in I Peter 1:3,4; and he says true biblical re-birth brings an absolute guarantee of Heaven. Pope Paul VI, in promulgating the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, said, "By the sacrament of Baptism man is re-born to a sharing of the divine life." We know that Baptism is only the first of many steps a Catholic needs to take in order to have any hope for Heaven.

God's absolute guarantee gives us assurance of salvation, but Paul VI said, a few months before he died, "Death holds motives for apprehensive concern by reason of the imminent judgment of God."

"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN!"

Matthew 16:21-28
12/12/93

INTRODUCTION: Verse 21

Throughout the Bible God contrasts His view of things with man's (MacArthur, p. 35).

Isaiah 55:8-9 - *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

Prov. 14:12 - *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."*

Psalm 92:5-6 - *"O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this."*

V. 21

"From that time" - this is the first time Jesus plainly mentions His death in Matthew's gospel.

After being declared the "*Christ*" (the Messiah), it was not an easy thing for the disciples to learn that the Messiah would have to die.

"He must go. . . and suffer" - the death of Christ on Calvary was not an accident; it was ordained by God (Is. 53; Dan. 9:26), and nothing could hinder its fulfillment! (Lk. 24:26)

Jesus had to die to fulfill Scripture (Ps. 16:22; Is. 53; Dan. 9:25-26) to shed His blood (Heb. 9:22) to atone for man's sin and to ransom us (Mt. 20:28).

"Raised again the third day" - this revelation of the resurrection definitely went over the disciples' head (or it went "in one ear and out the other") because their minds were blank to this promise until after Christ appeared to them after His resurrection (Jn. 20:9).

What Jesus reveals here did not fit in with Peter's ideas; it did not match his theology; it did not suit his taste; it did not thrill his soul; it did not square with what Peter anticipated.

***Don't be ignorant of Satan's devices!** (II Corinthians 2:11)

I. SATAN'S ATTACK (v. 22-23)

A. Satan will often attack right after a great victory (v. 22a)

It's scary how quickly Satan can work on a person.

One minute Peter makes the most glorious statement (v. 16), and the next, he makes the biggest blunder with his mouth that he could ever make!

Peter, now with over-confidence, speaking as an acknowledged leader of the disciples (16:19), evidently puffed up with sinful pride, takes it upon himself to question (yea, deny) the words of the Messiah.

B. Satan can attack even through the well-intended advice of a believer who is not Spirit-filled (v. 22b)

"***Then Peter took Him***" - Peter grabbed hold of Jesus and took Him aside.

"***Began to rebuke Him***" - this same word "*rebuke*" is used of Jesus rebuking demonic spirits (Mt. 17:18; Mk. 1:25, 9:25).

"***Be it far from thee***" = lit. "May mercy be upon you!" (like our idiom: "May God have pity/mercy on you!")

Peter in total shock and bewilderment said something like: "May God be gracious to you!"

Peter addressing Jesus as "***Lord***" rings hollow, since he is placing his will over Christ's (MacArthur, p. 40).

"***This shall not be unto Thee***" - Peter uses a double negative (*ou ma*) to stress the absolute impossibility of such a thing happening.

Suffering and death for a mere mortal, yes. But not for the Christ!

Before you are too quick to judge Peter, how often have you (by your thoughts, words, or actions in life) contradicted the Lord's will for you?

The irrational actions and words by Peter show that a diabolical force was motivating and prompting him.

What was Satan saying through Peter? "You deserve something better than God's will."

Satan had earlier offered Jesus a kingdom without a cross (Mt. 4:8-10).

Peter never expected this response from Jesus. In his mind, he thought such a remark to Jesus would show how much he cared for Jesus. (ILLUS: like the paster in Minnesota who told me I should not go to NYC because of all the crime in the city).

Apparently, Jesus was not looking at him when Peter rebuked Him. As they walked, Peter with his arm on Jesus' arm or shoulder, begins to rebuke Him, upon which Jesus turns around, looks Peter straight in the face, and says: "***Get thee behind me, Satan.***" (ie.e. "Get away from my face, Satan!").

While Michael the archangel would not dare make a railing accusation against Satan (Jude 9), Jesus did not spare!

C. Satan cannot possess a Christian but <u>can attack the thought life</u> of a believer (v. 23a)

Mark 8:33 says that when Jesus turned around and "*looked on his disciples*" - He intended all of his disciples to hear what He was about to say. They, too, (not just Peter) no doubt had the same wicked thought as Peter. It's just that only impetuous Peter had the "quick draw" mouth to say something.

"Before Peter had a chance to finish his objections, Jesus abruptly cut him off and accused him of being the mouthpiece for His adversary, Satan." (MacArthur, p. 41).

"***Satan***" = adversary; opponent; enemy

"***Said unto Peter***" - "*He rebuked Peter*" (Mk. 8:33).

Satan on this occasion did <u>not possess</u> Peter, but he did influence Peter's thoughts (Satan cannot possess a believer, but he can put thoughts into our heads. This is why it is so important to continually flood our minds with God's thoughts-- the Bible!)

D. Satan's attacks are always with <u>a goal to thwart the cause of Christ</u> (v. 23b)

"***Offense***" = *scandalon* (Eng. "scandal") - a deceitful trap or snare; an obstacle designed to hinder or stop someone.

Although there was no way Satan could trap, snare, or stop Christ from fulfilling His mission of going through with the cross, the Devil tried his best (cp. "*Come down from the cross*" - Mt. 27:40, 42; Mk. 15:30).

Satan has no interest in God's cause at all. His doom is sealed; the eternal Lake of Fire awaits him (Rev. 20:10), and he will seek to do anything he can to thwart, disrupt, or de-rail the things of God.

E. Satan attacks because he <u>abhors the things of God</u> and <u>adores the things of men</u> (v. 23c)

"***Savourest***" = to have a mindset that is totally focused on one thing. To be mentally obsessed with something.

For Satan, his thoughts were (and are) not one bit for the divine cause of God, but for the things of lost, unregenerate, hell-bound men.

Satan passionately hates the things of God.

These are all areas Satan attacks:

--The <u>Son</u> of God
Mt. 4:3 - "*And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*"

--The <u>Word</u> of God
Lk. 4:4 - "*And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*"

--The <u>will</u> of God
Mk. 3:35 - "*For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*"

--The <u>church</u> of God
I Cor. 11:22 - "*What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.*"

Gal. 1:13 - "*For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it*" (cp. I Cor. 10:32; 15:9)

--The kingdom of God
Acts 14:22 - "*Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*"

--The righteousness of God
Rom. 10:3 - "*For they begin ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*"

--The grace of God
I Cor. 1:4 - "*I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ*"
cp. Titus 2:11

--The glory of God
I Cor. 10:31 - "*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*"

--The man of God
I Tim. 6:11 - "*But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith...*" (cp. II Tim. 3:17)

--The peace of God (via prayer)
Phil. 4:6-7 - "*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"

What things does Satan savor? What things of men (unsaved carnal humanity) does Satan love to promote?

--The glory of men
Mt. 6:2, 5

--The commandments of men
Mt. 15:9

--The traditions of men
Col. 2:8; cp. Mk. 7:8

--The heart of men
Mk. 7:21; cp. Jer. 17:9

--The praise of men
Jn. 12:43

--The ungodliness and unrighteousness of men
Ro. 1:18

--The wisdom of men
I Cor. 2:5

--The sleight (deceit) of men
Eph. 4:14

--The lusts of men
I Peter 4:2

--The sight of men
Rev. 13:13

II. SATAN'S DEFEAT (v. 24-26)

How to have victory over Satan's humanistic snare:

A. Say NO to self. . . *and say YES to God's will (v. 24a)*

"If any man will come after Me" - "If any one desires (wishes) to follow me" - This does not refer to the means to salvation, but to sanctification; not relationship with Christ, but fellowship with Christ.

"Deny himself" - (*aparneomai* - a strengthened form of *arneomai*) - meaning to utterly say "no" to oneself; to turn away from your own self-centered ways; to totally disregard one's own selfish ways.

When a conflict of wills occurs (God's will vs. our old nature's) and we by the power of God's Spirit under the direction of God's Word choose to say "No" to selfish impulses, we have denied self.

When our flesh screams out for gratification (outside of God's ordained boundaries) and we don't give in but rather disregard temptation's cry, we have denied self.

True Christian maturity is not when we do right because we feel like it, but when we do right when we don't feel like it.

B. **DIE to self. . .** *and LIVE for Christ (v. 24b)*

"***Take up*** - the imperative anticipates willingness to do so. You must decide or choose to take it up.

The "cross" to which Jesus refers is not a physical handicap nor a "nagging wife" nor a "domineering mother-in-law" (MacArthur, p. 48).

"***His cross***" - Each one of us must take our own cross, our own instrument of death.

Each must die to self for oneself!

Such cross bearing is to be "*daily*" according to Luke 9:23.

In response to Peter's repulsive remark against suffering and dying (v. 22), Jesus tells him that unless He is willing to suffer, he cannot be a true disciple of Christ.

The "cross" was a common symbol of death. Many were hung on them, but none of their own volition. The purpose of the cross was not to bear it, but to die on it.

✳ Jesus calls upon us to radically abandon our life for the purpose of living for Him! To die to our own plans, our own ambitions, our own desires, our own goals, our own praise and glory, our own fame and fortune. . . all for the purpose of fulfilling His plans, ambitions, desires. . .

Gal. 2:20 - "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

"The only good Christian is a dead Christian" (dead to self, that is).

"***And follow Me***" - Jesus is not calling upon us to deny self and die to self for no purpose. Our purpose is to free us from that which keeps us from following Christ.

How well you follow Christ can be measured by how often you choose His ways over yours!

C. **LOSE your self. . .** *and FIND real life (v. 25-26)*

"***For***" = Because. Jesus gives a reason why we must be willing to die to self.

The reason is simple: Those whose sole interest is to preserve one's life will end up losing his life.

The greatest test of verse 25 will come in the future Great Tribulation (Mt. 24:21), when the test will be: "Take the mark 666 or die" (Rev. 13). Those who do take it show by doing so their allegiance to Satan and his diabolical "Antichrist." They think they will live, when in reality, they will die for eternity! (Rev. 14:9-11).

"***For My sake***" - Our sacrifice of self is not in vain. It is for Jesus. Everything we do should be for Him.

"*For to me to live is Christ*" (Phil. 1:21)

"***Soul***" - the immaterial part of man (used synonymously with "*spirit*" in this verse).

The soul is the inner real you. it is that aspect of you which will exist forever, even after death (Rev. 6:9).

What do you gain if you acquire the whole world (with all its temporary gold, luxury, pleasure, fame, etc.) and yet lose your soul forever!

"***Give in exchange***" - What would you trade for your soul? There is nothing as valuable, important, vital, or precious to you as your own soul!

Many have forfeited their "soul" for a cheap, temporary, brief, fleeting moment of happiness

--for the foolish farmer it was his self-sufficiency and material security (Lk. 12:20)
--for the rich man it was his sumptuous living (Lk. 16)
--for Judas it was a bag of 20 pieces of silver
--for those who receive the mark of the Beast, it will be to "*buy and sell*" (to keep their business open) (Rev. 13)

So many sell out so cheaply!

--For many today it's a sexual encounter that leads to AIDS. . . it's a drug high that leads to an overdose and death. . . it's a bottle that leads to a car crash. . . .

CONCLUSION: Christ's REWARDS (v. 27-28)

"***The glory of His Father***" = the same glory (brilliant brightness) the Father has.

For the Son to share the glory of God, He must be equal with God, because God said He would not share His glory with another (Is. 42:8).

"***With His angels***" - cp. Mt. 24:31 - "*And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*"

"***Then He shall reward***" - Christ rewards his people (those who were willing to deny self and die to self and follow Him) at the moment of the Rapture.

"*Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.*"

"***Every man***" = i.e. every man who has a reward coming! There are no rewards for the unsaved, only punishment.

"***According to his works***" - The rewards are based on your practice, your over-all life emphasis, your selfless conduct.

"***Some standing here***" - namely, Peter, James and John (17:1)

This verse was fulfilled in 17:2. Christ's kingdom was "seen" by this inner circle on the Mount of Transfiguration (a preview of His coming splendor).

These are all areas Satan attacks:

--The <u>Son</u> of God
Mt. 4:3 - "*And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*"

--The <u>Word</u> of God
Lk. 4:4 - "*And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*"

--The <u>will</u> of God
Mk. 3:35 - "*For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*"

--The <u>church</u> of God
Gal. 1:13 - "*For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it*" (cp. I Cor. 10:32; 11:22; 15:9)

--The <u>kingdom</u> of God
Acts 14:22 - "*Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*"

--The <u>righteousness</u> of God
Rom. 10:3 - *"For they begin ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."*

--The <u>grace</u> of God
I Cor. 1:4 - *"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ"* (cp. Titus 2:11)

--The <u>glory</u> of God
I Cor. 10:31 - *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."*

--The <u>man</u> of God
I Tim. 6:11 - *"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith..."* (cp. II Tim. 3:17)

--The <u>peace</u> of God (via prayer)
Phil. 4:6-7 - *"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

What things does Satan savor? What things of men (unsaved carnal humanity) does Satan love to promote?

--The <u>glory</u> of men
Mt. 6:2, 5

--The <u>commandments</u> of men
Mt. 15:9

--The <u>traditions</u> of men
Col. 2:8; cp. Mk. 7:8

--The <u>heart</u> of men
Mk. 7:21; cp. Jer. 17:9

--The <u>praise</u> of men
Jn. 12:43

--The <u>ungodliness</u> and <u>unrighteousness</u> of men
Ro. 1:18

--The <u>wisdom</u> of men
I Cor. 2:5

--The <u>sleight</u> (deceit) of men
Eph. 4:14

--The <u>lusts</u> of men
I Peter 4:2

--The <u>sight</u> of men
Rev. 13:13

"GET THEE BEHIND ME, SATAN!"

Matthew 16:21-28
12/12/93

INTRODUCTION: Verse 21

***Don't be ignorant of Satan's devices!** (II Corinthians 2:11)

I. SATAN'S ATTACK (v. 22-23)

A. Satan will often attack right after a great victory (v. 22a)

B. Satan can attack even through the well-intended advice of a believer who is not Spirit-filled (v. 22b)

C. Satan cannot possess a Christian but can attack the thought life of a believer (v. 23a)

D. Satan's attacks are always with a goal to thwart the cause of Christ (v. 23b)

E. Satan attacks because he abhors the things of God and adores the things of men (v. 23c)

II. SATAN'S DEFEAT (v. 24-26)

How to have victory over Satan's humanistic snare:

A. **Say NO to self. . .** *and say YES to God's will (v. 24a)*

B. **DIE to self. . .** *and LIVE for Christ (v. 24b)*

C. **LOSE your self. . .** *and FIND real life (v. 25-26)*

CONCLUSION: Christ's REWARDS (v. 27-28)

"THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST"

(The Transfiguration)
Matthew 17:1-13
12/19/93

INTRODUCTION:

Read the poem: *"The Incomparable Christ"*

Who was this Jesus Christ?

In Matthew 17:1-13, God (as it were) pulls back the curtain and unveils who Jesus really is!

As Peter previously revealed Jesus to be the Christ with words (Mt. 16:16), now God the Father reveals Jesus to be the Christ with a vision (a visual, three-dimensional, sensational appearance of who Jesus really is).

* p3

When the Son of God became the Son of man, His divine glory was veiled from human view. In His incarnation He took on all the features of mortality and humanness with one exception: He did not have a sin nature (Heb. 4:15; Jn. 8:46; II Cor. 5:21).

Christ's incarnation involved a change in His position and state.

Note the humility of Christ as evident by the following changes He underwent in becoming man:

a. A change in His dwelling-place
(from the presence of the Father to the presence of men - Jn. 6:51)

b. A change in His possessions
(from riches to poverty - II Cor. 8:9)

c. A change in His reputation among men
(from glory to obscurity - Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:6, 7)

d. A change in His position
(from equality with God [in authority] to servanthood - Mt. 20:26-28; Phil. 2:6, 7)

e. A change in His form (bodily appearance)
(from the form of God to the likeness of men - Phil. 2:6-8)

Christ only surrendered the use of certain divine attributes.

EX: the ability to do all (omnipotence; Mt. 28:19)
the ability to know all (omniscience; Mk. 13:32)
the ability to decide all (omnisapience; Lk. 2:52)
the ability to be everywhere (omnipresence; Jn. 14:28)

Christ possessed the essential elements of human nature.

a) Jesus had a body (Heb. 2:14, 16; I Jn. 4:2, 3)
b) Jesus had a soul (Mt. 26:38)
c) Jesus had a spirit (Lk. 23:46)

Jesus exercised all the attributes of human existence.

a) Birth (including pre-natal development -Lk. 2:6, 7)
b) Growth and development (Lk. 2:40, 52)
c) Physical appetites
   (1) Hunger (Mt. 4:2)
   (2) Thirst (Jn. 19:28)
   (3) Sleep (Mt. 8:24)
d) Emotions
   (1) Anger (Mk. 3:5)
   (2) Sorrow (Jn. 11:35)
   (3) Compassion (Jn. 13:23)
   (4) Anguish of soul (Jn. 12:27)
e) Human restrictions and limitations
   (1) Fatigue (weariness - Jn. 4:6)
   (2) Exhaustion (Lk. 22:43)
   (3) Time/space limitations (Mk. 11:13)
   (4) Death (Jn. 19:30)

V. 1

"***After six days***" - Jesus would fulfill His promise of 16:28 right after He gave it, so the prophecy would be fresh in the disciples' minds.

"***After six days***" - six full days (excluding this day, plus the day of the actual Transfiguration) - totally eight days - Luke 9:28).

"***Peter, James, and John***" - This core group of disciples formed an "inner circle" which is often singled out as having a particularly close relationship with Christ (cp. Mk. 1:29, 5:37, 13:3, 14:33; Lk. 8:51). They were all of the same trade and were close companions with each other before following Christ (Lk. 5:10).

Why three men? Three would be an adequate witness to verify or confirm this vision: "*On the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed*" (Dt. 19:15; Mt. 18:20) (cited by MacArthur, p. 62).

"***An high mountain***" - "The text does not name the place where this miracle took place. It was probably on Mount Hermon, which is close to Caesarea Philippi (16:13)" (Wiersbe, p. 60).

(Insert * p. 1)

***See Christ for who He is!**

I. His Bright GLORY Was Unveiled (v. 2)

"***Transfigured***" - aorist passive voice - The Father transformed the incarnate Son to give the disciples a preview of the same glory Christ will display when He comes to establish His future eternal kingdom.

"***Transfigured***" - *metamorphoo* - to undergo a change in form, to be totally transformed

[While believers are commanded to be transformed inwardly (Rom. 12:2), Christ was transformed externally (outwardly) on this occasion.]

According to Luke 9:29, this alteration of Christ's appearance occurred "*as He prayed*". As Jesus prayed, the disciples slept (Lk. 9:32), and when they awoke "*they saw His glory.*"

"***As the sun***" - John saw the blazing glory of Christ in Rev. 1:13-18 and described "*His countenance*" as being "*as the sun shineth in his strength*" (at high noon) (Rev. 1:16).

This is the same bright, brilliant intense supernatural light that blinded Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:3.

Ezekiel also saw the glory of Christ, which will one day fill His temple (Ezek. 43:1-2, 4).

"Many years later, John recalled this event as the Spirit led Him to write: "*And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" *(Jn. 1:14). (cited by Wiersbe, p. 61)*

(Jesus is called: "*the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person*" (Heb. 1:3).

"***Raiment was white as the light***" - Mark includes this detail - Mark 9:3 - "*And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.*"

Such whiteness speaks of the absolute purity, holiness and righteousness of Christ, just as the white garments of the saints signify their righteousness in Christ (Rev. 3:4, 5; 6:11; 19:8, 14; cp. Is. 1:18).

Such a garment of brilliant white also identifies Jesus with the "*Ancient of days*" in Dan. 7:9 - "*I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.*"

This display of Christ is a picture of His glory (Lk. 9:32) that will be manifested at His second coming (Rapture) (Mt. 16:27, 24:30, 25:31; cp. Jn. 1:14, 12:41, 17:24; I Pet. 1:11, 4:13).

When Christ returns He will destroy the Antichrist "*with the brightness of His coming*" (II Th. 2:8)

II. His Special UNIQUENESS Was Unveiled (v. 3-7)

V. 3

"***Moses and Elijah***" - Two men representing the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah). Many believe these two men will be the two witness of Rev. 11:3, who will perform the same miracles as Moses and Elijah did in the Old Testament (EX: Moses - water into blood; Elijah - draught for 3 1/2 years) (Rev. 11:6).

Elijah is sure to return (Mal. 4:5; Mt. 17:10-11).

"***Talking to Him***" - What was the subject of their holy conversation?

These two prophets of old (Moses and Elijah) appeared (somehow, miraculously materialized "***in glory***" - in glorified form) and spoke with Jesus concerning "***His decease***" (lit. "his exodus") from the earth by death at Mt. Calvary in the city of Jerusalem (Lk. 9:31).

(Note: The timing of this discussion is very significant because it falls upon the heels of Peter's [Satan's] denial of Christ's suffering and death (Mt. 16:22) -- What carnal Peter denied, Moses and Elijah confirmed.

V. 4

When Peter said this, he did not realize what he was saying (Lk. 9:33b).

Peter instantly wakes up out of his slumber and impetuously requests permission to build three tabernacles (tents, booths, or shelters, like that built in the Old Testament) - "***one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah***".

Why does Peter ask to build such things?

Peter, being a Jew, recalled the bright, Skekinah glory that filled the O. T. tabernacle (Exod. 40:34-38). Now, seeing the splendid glory of Christ, he asks to build three tabernacles to house the glorified Christ as well as the glorified Moses and Elijah.

What is wrong with such a request? Answer: Peter gives Jesus, Moses , and Elijah "equal billing." He wrongly puts them on par with the Son of God. So now the Father comes on the scene and straightens this matter out.

V. 5

This "***bright cloud***" overshadowed (enveloped) them - while the words were in Peter's mouth, suddenly this extremely brilliant cloud (like a white fog) falls upon them, sending a fearful feeling through their "spines" (Lk. 9:34), and a voice (which Peter never forgot - II Pet. 1:17, 18) began to speak out of the cloud.

The voice of God the Father said: "***This (one)*** **[not the other two - Moses and Elijah)** ***is my beloved*** (Eph. 1:6) ***Son***" -- The Father proclaims the UNIQUENESS of the Son! Jesus was not a mere prophet (like Moses and Elijah).

"***In whom I am well pleased***" - As Jesus testified - "*I do always those things that please Him*" (Jn. 8:29).

These are almost the identical words the Father spoke at Christ's baptism (Mt. 3:17).

"***Hear ye Him***" - Listen to Him! Give Him your ear! Give attention to Jesus!

The Pharisees questioned: "*Why hear ye Him?*" (Jn. 10:20). Jesus responded: "*My sheep hear my voice*" (Jn. 10:27) and "*He that hath ears, let him hear.*" (Mt. 13:9, 43).

He was saying, in effect, "If my Son tells you He must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die, believe Him. If he tells you He will be raised up on the third day, believe Him. If He tells you to take up your own cross and follow Him, that is what you are to do. If He says He will come again in glory, then believe Him and live accordingly" (MacArthur, p. 68).

"The Father will not permit His beloved Son to be put on the same level as Moses and Elijah" (Wiersbe, p. 63).

Christ's glory will not be shared with another (is. 42:8). Christ alone must be honored with the same honor given only to the Father (Jn. 5:23).

Beware of detracting from Christ (beware of robbing Him of the glory He alone deserves).

V. 6

"***They fell on their face***" - This is always the response of a fear of God (EX: John in Rev. 1:17).

No one sees the glory of God or hears His voice and remains the same!

V. 7

"***Touched them***" - a touch of comfort (cp. Rev. 1:18).

"***Be not afraid***" - there is no need to fear when Jesus is near!

III. His Humble INCARNATION Was Unveiled (v. 8-13)

V. 8

The cloud now left, the voice ceased, Moses and Elijah was gone, Jesus' glory was again veiled. He was back to His incarnate human physical body.

Several things reveal the humility of Christ's incarnation:

--He was transformed back into "*flesh and blood*" (v. 8)

--He called Himself "*the Son of Man*" (v. 9, 12)

--He would "*suffer*" at the hands of mortals (v. 12)

V. 9

This vision was to be kept secret until after Christ's resurrection. Why? Probably because they would not believe it until then. Another reason is that Jesus wanted His Messianic glory to be confidential until after He had died to atone for man's sin.

There can be no kingdom without a cross!

V. 10

The disciples are wondering, "If you are going to die and rise again and then establish your kingdom," (cp. Mt. 16:28), "why do the Scribes say 'Elijah must come first?'" (ie. before the inauguration of Your Kingdom)

They asked in effect: How does this chronology work? Where does Elijah's coming fit into all this?

V. 11

"***Elias truly (certainly, assuredly) shall (will in the future) come***" - Before the "Day of the Lord" God promised that He would send the man who never died (II Ki. 2:1, 11) back to the earth to prepare the way for the Lord's coming (Mal. 4:5).

Jesus does not deny the promise of Mal. 4:5. He affirms it.

V. 12

However, He also says that there was a sense in which Elijah already came - He was mistreated (as Jesus would be) in the person of John the Baptist (v. 13).

V. 13

When asked "Are you Elijah?" John said, "I am not" (Jn. 1:21).

John was not literally Elijah, but as Luke 1:17 says, he prepared the way for Christ "*in the spirit and power of Elias*"

Just as John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ's first coming (Mal. 3:1; Mt. 11:10), Elijah (perhaps as one of God's two witnesses - Rev. 11:3) will prepare the way for Christ's second coming (Mal. 4:1, 5).

And this "Elijah" is not Rev. Sun Yung Moon, nor any other self-appointed prophet!

CONCLUSION:

"THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST"

(The Transfiguration)
Matthew 17:1-13
12/19/93

INTRODUCTION:

***See Christ for who He is!**

I. His Bright <u>GLORY</u> Was Unveiled (v. 2)

II. His Special <u>UNIQUENESS</u> Was Unveiled (v. 3-7)

III. His Humble <u>INCARNATION</u> Was Unveiled (v. 8-13)

CONCLUSION:

"*The Missing Secrets to* POWER OVER THE IMPOSSIBLE"

Matthew 17:14-21
12/26/93

INTRODUCTION: Verses 14-19 Song: "Nothing is Impossible"

1. A <u>desperate</u> man (v. 14-16)

V. 14

"***Kneeling down***" - In desperation the man races over to Jesus, falls down on His knees and tells Jesus His plight.

V. 15

"***Mercy***" = compassionate pity

"***My son***" - This young boy (perhaps a teen) was the father's "***<u>only</u>***" son (Lk. 9:38), and he had this demonic possession ever since he was a "*child*" (Mk. 9:21).

a. His son's condition was critical and apparently helpless

V. 15

"***Lunatick***" - lit. moonstruck; the boy had wild, out of control epileptic fits, which in ancient days the people thought was somehow mysteriously influenced by the moon (Vine, p. 37).

Mark and Luke's gospels give more details concerning the frenzied, irrational behavior of this poor young soul.

1) The boy couldn't speak because of a demonic spirit which caused him to be mute and deaf (Mk. 9:17, 25).

2) The boy would suddenly be seized (or grabbed) by the demon, which would take over the boy's "motor skills" and the spirit would tear at him, dashing him to the ground (Mk. 9:18a).

3) The boy would foam at the mouth (sending saliva flowing down the child's face) and would grind his teeth (in pain) (Mk. 9:18b).

4) The boy would stiffen out and become rigid ("*pineth away*" - KJV - Mk. 9:18c).

5) The boy would suddenly and uncontrollably cry out (Lk. 9:39).

6) The demonic spirit would rarely ("*scarcely*") ever leave the child but would maul him, continually leaving him black and blue with bruises (Lk. 9:39).

"***Sore vexed***" - really bad off

Often, in an attempt to destroy the boy, the demon would compel him to fall into fire (to burn him to death), or into water (to drawn him).

(Satan, "*the thief cometh. . . to kill and to destroy*" - Jn. 10:10).

b. Others had tried to help but failed

V. 16

"***Thy disciples***" - This man implicitly connects Jesus to the impotency of his disciples.

"***They could not cure him***" - And no man can do that which is in the realm of the supernatural. This was a case only God could cure!

2. A doubtful man (v. 17; Mark 9:22, 24)

V. 17

"***Then Jesus answered***" -

Mark 9:19 - says "*He answered him*" - He directed His comment toward this man as well as the crowd (including the scribes and His own disciples).

* SEE: Mark 9:22, 24

"*If thou canst do anything. . .*" (v. 22) - This father did not say, "If you will" but he questions Christ's ability.

"***Faithless***" = to be without belief; to be without trust (more and more this seems to describe our generation).

"***Perverse***" = to be perverted by someone; to be distorted or twisted. The idea here is that this people to whom Jesus is speaking had been turned aside from a strong confidence in Christ.

"***How long***" - Jesus had been proving Himself for months and months with indisputable miracles, and yet the hardness of men's hearts would not let the truth of who He was sink in.

V. 18

At Jesus rebuke of the demon, the child was released:

1) Completely
2) Permanently
and 3) Instantly (after one last shove - Mk. 9:26)

V. 19

"***Apart***" - Perhaps with shame and embarrassment, the disciples in privacy ask Jesus why they had failed.

Part of the answer to their question was in their question itself. (****"We")***

It is faith in God not in yourself.

***Three Keys to Power Over the Impossible:**

I. FAITH (v. 20)
(Total confidence in God's power)

"***Unbelief***" = the problem was not (as the critical text implies) a smallness of faith. Rather, their problem was an absence of faith (for Jesus in this very verse tells what a little faith (in the right Person) could accomplish.

"***Mustard seed***" - known for its smallness among the plant seeds.

It's not the size of your faith, it's the genuineness, sincerity, and right object of your faith that "***moves mountains***"!

"***Nothing shall be impossible***" - That is, nothing outside of the will of God (cp. Paul's thorn remained - II Cor. 12). (You cannot possibly have real faith in an unBiblical request).

Heb. 11:6 - "*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*"

"Faith honors God and therefore God honors faith."

"***Belief***" is a major prerequisite to answered prayer.

Mark 11:24 - "*Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*"

James 1:6-7 - "*But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.*"

How dare we question the ability of the One who created the universe!

How could we question the power of the One who has adequately proven Himself able in the past?

We need the "Faith of our Fathers"!

II. PRAYER (v. 21a)

(Total dependence on God's power)

This text, though omitted in the critical text, was nonetheless clearly stated by Christ (SEE: Mark 9:29).

"***This kind***" - This supernatural kind of Satanic grip on a person's life; this impossible kind; this hard kind; this humanly hopeless kind.

"***Prayer***" = points to serious, purposeful prayer. Not nonchalant, half-hearted chatter to God, but an intensity of a soul that pours out his request with humility, dependency, fervency, and faith!

Did you know that there is one thing that astonishes (amazes) God?

Isaiah 59:16 - "*And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessors: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.*"

Note: Even in urgent times like these, we have less praying going on than ever!

God was shocked (astonished) at Israel's prayerlessness when the need for prayer was so great (Is. 59:16).

We need to be people of real prayer before a time of crisis in order to be effective pray-ers in a time of crisis.

"*The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much* (accomplishes much)" (Ja. 5:16).

"*Call unto Me and I will answer thee and shew thee <u>great</u> and <u>mighty</u> things, which thou knowest not*" (Jer. 33:3).

Prayer unites puny man to the omnipotent God.

Prayer is most essential, the most needed activity, yet often the most neglected.

The most <u>important</u> person in any church is the one who prays the most.
The most <u>influential</u> person in any church is the one who prays the most.
(Dr. Bob Jones III)

What was it that brought the Communist wall down in Russia? The sovereign God of Heaven was no doubt moved by the prayers of His praying Russian saints (Prayer unleashes the power of God).

Although God is sovereign and does according to His will, prayer changes things!

Mysteriously, prayer moves God to work on our behalf, to do that which we cannot do by human power and wisdom.

(SEE: II Chron. 20:3-12, 15 - the prayer of Jehoshaphat)

III. FASTING (v. 21b)

(Total desperation for God's power)

"***Fasting***" - The Greek word translated "fasting" is nesteia (ne = a negative prefix; and esthio = to eat); hence, the word means to "not eat"

"Fasting" was (and is) a voluntary abstinence from eating food so as to spend the time normally spend in preparing and consuming food in prayer.

Note: Food preparation was a process which demanded more time than in our instant-microwave society.

"Fasting" and "Prayer" are constantly tied together (Ezra 8:23; Neh. 1:4; Mt. 17:21; Mk. 9:292; Acts 13:3; I Cor. 7:5)

You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast Biblically without praying. Fasting is an affirmation of intense prayer, a corollary of deep spiritual struggle before God. It is never an isolated act of a ceremony or ritual that has some inherent efficacy or merit" (MacArthur, p. 404).

"Fasting" is most often practiced when someone is so burdened (upset) with something that food has no appeal. Their heart is focused on an urgent need so the person mourns and cries out to God for help. Ex: David for his son (II Sam. 12:16, 22); Nehemiah for God's city (Neh. 1:4).

"Fasting" is the response of a burdened or broken heart that is so absorbed with the interests of others or the will of God that one sets aside his own needs and desires and humbles himself and cries out to God with a sincere heart for mercy.

"Fasting" is never a command for a N.T. believer. Jesus said men ought "*always to pray*" but not men ought "always to fast." The words "***When ye fast***" assume that believers will do so in their life, but does not command it. Mt. 6:16

"***Fasting***" - Points to the intensity of the felt need. To be so overwhelmed, so burdened, so distressed with a need for the mighty hand of God that food (or any earthly pleasure) is the farthest thing from your mind.

God never commands us to "*fast*" but He says when you do, do so sincerely (Mt. 6:16-18) and not with ulterior motives (EX: health and dietary reasons).

CONCLUSION:

When was the last time you were so burdened for a ....

lost relative,
a wayward teen,
a deeply hurting person,
a satanically-deceived backslider,

...That your mind fled the mundane (food, etc.) and was obsessed with the need to grip onto God?

ill. "The Holy Spirit has a monopoly on D.L. Moody"

PREACH THE WORD MINISTRIES, INC.

PREACH THE WORD

"Preach the word..., do the work of an evangelist."

II Timothy 4:2-5

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NO TRUMPET AND NO VOICE

By Dr. Wayne Van Gelderen, Sr.

This is a day when the evils and sins of America need to be exposed and the nation warned. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1).

But, there is little warning today! Our Bible-believing preachers speak to their own flock or, at best, to other believers. In time-past the pulpits of our land were orthodox. Modernism and liberalism had not yet shown their heads. Unbelievers went to church. Pastors could and did warn. Newspapers printed the messages. Revivals broke out, and the whole nation heard about the warnings of God's judgment.

But, today this is no longer true. Only a remnant remains who are true to preaching the whole counsel of God from a verbally-inspired Book. Today, we have tremendous media possibilities. Using them, a nation could be warned - but, we have no access! Books could be written - but, again, the secular press and bookstores would not be interested in such material. The Bible has been ignored and now ruled out of our society. It is mocked in the media, and there is a drumbeat of lies labeling it a collection of myths and fables. And what about Christian T.V. and radio? I think we can safely say that the compromisers and Christian religious entertainers of our day have largely captured these outlets - but it is doubtful that the world would listen anyway. There is a possibility of using leaflets - but the majority of believers would probably not cooperate.

It could be said that America will not, and probably cannot, hear us. If they could, they would deem us to be fools. God spoke to Ezekiel and commanded him to speak regardless of their response. In Ezek. 2:4-6 we read, "...and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, be not aftraid of them..."

Our dilemma is to know how to warn. We must warn! God will surely show us His Will. If we warn not, the judgment of God to come on them will be partially our fault (Ezek. 3:17-21). I'm not suggesting that this is the path to national revival. It could be if God so wills. But it is a matter of obligation and of clearing our consciences. Dr. Ian Paisley, who is a M.P. in the British Parliament, often speaks out vigorously concerning the wickedness in the U.K. Usually he is ignored, but as he says, "These are matters that need to be said!" And there are things that ought to be said in America!

Recently, I read in a leading news magazine that 3/4 of American girls are sexually active by the time they graduate from high school. Homosexuality is being promoted on every level. Alcohol and drug abuse is increasing. Violence is in the land. The deterioration of character is obvious. What shall we do? Let's pray that God will open the door of utterance for Bible preachers who will faithfully denounce sin and declare judgment. And, if opportunity arises, may we have discernment enough to see God's hand. Above all, we must not be swayed by the soft messages flooding out depicting God as tolerant of anything and just wanting to

(continued on page 2, Column 1)

THE LOST ART OF PRAYER AND FASTING

By Evg. John R. Van Gelderen

"Sanctify ye a fast...and cry unto the Lord." Joel 1:14

During the summer of 1980, after my high school graduation, I once stayed overnight with a buddy of mine who was two years younger than me. We were both growing in the Lord. When we got up in the morning, he suggested that we spend the day in prayer and fasting. At that time I really did not know much about fasting, but since I was the "preacher's kid" and older, I agreed to do so. We discussed the possibility of eating some donuts first before starting, but we finally decided to begin immediately. We read our Bibles, prayed, and discussed spiritual things for the first couple of hours. However, as the morning wore on and our hunger pangs increased, our spiritual endeavors began to wane. Somehow (painfully) we made it through the lunch hour, but by early afternoon we were not doing anything spiritual. We were starving, and it became our only subject of conversation. In desperation I told my brother Jim of our precarious predicament. He smiled and said that the idea was to be so burdened about what you are praying for that you do not think about the food. He added that if all we could do is talk about eating, we might as well get something to eat. So, taking that as sound advice, we went to a fast-food restaurant and "pigged-out."

The idea is that when we recognize how important it is that we have God's power and blessing, we seek Him in prayer by-passing food, or food and drink, which, in comparison to the cause, is insignificant.

We need to understand Biblical prayer and fasting. How does real Biblical fasting and prayer work? Unfortunately, there is not much written on the subject. I would like to give three clarifications regarding this important matter.

MISUNDERSTANDING

First of all, I would like to clear up a common misunderstanding. Some believe that fasting merits God's blessing. Actually, we never "merit" God's blessing. Thankfully, based on God's gracious promises, we can count on certain things from God, but we do not merit or deserve God's blessing. So fasting does not merit God's favor; however, it does reveal one's genuine desire for God's power and blessing.

MOTIVE

Secondly, the motive for fasting is to seek the Lord for divine aid. In II Chronicles 20:3, King Jehoshaphat sought the Lord for divine help against the Moabite invasion. In Ezra 8:21-31 Ezra sought the Lord for divine protection on the journey to Jerusalem. The specific need may vary, but the motive is always to seek the Lord for divine aid.

Obviously, the motive is not to be seen of men. Jesus clearly

(continued on page 2, Column 2)

"*The Missing Secrets to*
POWER OVER THE IMPOSSIBLE"

Matthew 17:14-21
12/26/93

INTRODUCTION: Verses 14-19

1. A desperate man (v. 14-16)

   a. His son's condition was critical and apparently helpless

   b. Others had tried to help but failed

2. A doubtful man (v. 17; Mark 9:22, 24)

***Three Keys to Power Over the Impossible:**

I. FAITH (v. 20)
(Total confidence in God's power)

II. PRAYER (v. 21a)
(Total dependence on God's power)

III. FASTING (v. 21b)
(Total desperation for God's power)

CONCLUSION:

"SOMETHING TOO HARD TO IMAGINE"

Matthew 17:22-27

1/9/94

INTRODUCTION:

Many times things don't work out as we thought they would. Such was the dilemma of the disciples. --They had found the Messiah! They had seen His miracles! They had visions of grandeur! But God's ways are not man's ways.

***Observe two totally incredible, yet unselfish, amazing acts of Christ!**

For the disciples. . .

I. It was hard to imagine that the LORD would have to DIE --- But He did! (v. 22-23)
(He gave His life to save others)

V. 22

"***The Son of man***" - a common title Christ used of Himself to point to His Messiahship (Dan. 7:13) and His humility [points to the incarnation of Christ and His partaking of human "flesh and blood" (Heb. 2:14) so that He could die].

"***Betrayed***" = By Judas Iscariot with a kiss (Mt. 26:48-50).

V. 23

This is the third time Jesus mentioned His suffering, death, and resurrection (cp. Mt. 16:21, 17:12); and still it didn't "sink in" (Lk. 9:44).

"***They shall kill Him***" = His death, however, was no accident; it was prophesied in the O.T. (Dan. 9:26; Is. 53). A life voluntarily given by Christ (Jn. 10:18 - *"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."*) by the will of the Father (Jn. 19:10-11 - *"Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have not power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."*) to be substitute payment for the sins of the world.

"***Exceeding sorry***" = to be so grieved that you are in pain; in agony over it. They were in deep distress.

Why were the disciples "***sorry***" when Christ just said, "*The third day He shall be raised again*"?

The concept of the Messiah suffering and dying was (in their minds) absurd, impossible, "out of the question" (Luke 9:44-45 - "*Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask Him of that saying.*")

They then were so hung up and pre-occupied with Christ telling them that He was going to die that His statement about His resurrection went in one ear and out of the other. His statement went right over their heads (Mk. 9:32 - "*But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him*")

The idea of a literal, physical resurrection of Messiah was foreign to their idea of things.

Perhaps the disciples "may have taken Jesus' reference to "*the third day*" as merely figurative" (MacArthur, p. 85) and not literal. Always take everything God says literally unless there is a compelling contextual or theological reason to take it otherwise.

II. It was hard to imagine that the LORD would have to pay TAXES --- But He did! (v. 24-27)

(He paid taxes to not offend others)

V. 24

"***Doth not your master pay tribute?***" = This question seems to be aimed at discrediting Christ. To have something to accuse Him of.

People are always quick to discredit Christ and Christians. We must, therefore, live above reproach.

"***Tribute***" = *didrachmas*, meaning "double drachma"

Two drachmas were collected each year to support the Temple (This "amounted to about two days' wages for the average worker" (MacArthur p. 86).

To maintain the upkeep, beauty, and practical function of the Tabernacle, then the Temple, a tax was levied.

This tax had its origin in the days of Moses (Exod. 30:13-14) and was carried out throughout the Old Testament (II Ki. 12:4; II Chron. 24:6; Neh. 10:32).

"***Capernaum***" - This temple tax was to be collected before Passover, so the Jerusalem Temple "IRS" sent tax collectors throughout Palestine to seek the 1/2 shekel tax.

It is interesting that this miracle is only recorded in Matthew's gospel and it is the only miracle involving money.

"Since Matthew had been a tax collector, we would expect him to be interested in this miracle" (Wiersbe, p. 63).

V. 25

Peter, quick to defend the Lord he loved, "***saith, Yes***" - Peter knew it was right for all citizens to submit to the governing authorities (Rom. 13:1ff).

"***Jesus prevented him***" - Before Peter could even ask the question, the all-knowing Lord Jesus (knowing what was on Peter's mind) anticipates his perplexion and gives him an answer.

Jesus in effect asks this: Who do the Romans collect tolls ("***custom***") or taxes ("***tribute***") from? Do they take these tolls and taxes from their own children (their own offspring) or from strangers (common citizens)?

(ILLUS: How in some states in America, state troopers are more quick to pull over and ticket out-of-state speeders than speeders from their own state)

"It would not make sense for a father to collect money from his sons ("*children*") who were dependent on him. To assess them would be to assess himself. In this context, "*strangers*" is a general term referring to those outside the king's family, specifically his subjects. . . (but) in the human governments of that day, the rulers' families (represented by "*the sons*") were exempt from taxation" (MacArthur, p. 88).

Roman tolls and taxes V. 25-26	Jewish temple tax V. 24, 27
Must be paid by everyone (all "*strangers*") except the king's children	Must be paid by all Jews except members of the royal family

V. 26

"***Then are the children free***" - Children of the kingdom in power would be free from such tolls and taxes. Whereas those outside of the royal family would have to "foot the bill" and shell out to the reigning Empire.

One implied point is this: Jesus is saying, "Do you know why we should pay taxes? Because we are foreigners in this strange land, pilgrims, sojourners, aliens. We are not children of this world (Jn. 15:19; 17:14, 16).

Jesus, being the God of the Temple, actually did not have to pay the tax.

V. 27

Jesus, being the Son of God, was not personally obligated to pay for the support of His own temple, yet to avoid offense, He did pay (Ryrie footnote).

"***Offend***" - anything that is a roadblock or a hindrance to others (coming to Christ).

If Jesus had refused to pay the temple tax, the tax gatherers may have thought He was rebellious or lawless, living in violation of the Law of Moses. Reason: They didn't realize who He was. He was Lord of the Temple.

"Regardless of how unjust a tax is assessed or how blasphemously or irresponsibly it is spend, it is to be paid. If the Son of God claimed no exemption for Himself in paying taxes to the "*den of thieves*" run by the wicked false teachers and leaders of Israel, how much less can His followers claim exemption for themselves" (MacArthur, p. 88).

"***Lest we should offend them***" - Jesus did not want those temple tax gatherers to have a reason to not listen to and believe in Him, so He did that which He was not obligated to do so as to avoid turning them off.

May we, too, never use our Christian liberty in such a way that it would cause a weaker Christian or a non-believer to stumble. (Jesus is serious, about not offending those who belong to Him - Mt. 18:5-7; cp. Rom. 14:13-16).

"***The sea***" - the Sea of Galilee

Cast a hook" - the most common form of fishing in Jesus day was to cast a "*net*" Jesus, however, is zeroing in on one particular fish. His omniscient mind and all-seeing eye knows of a fish swimming around with a coin in its mouth.

Jesus, being the Lord of earth, not only exercised dominion over the fish, "but also over the animals (Mt. 21:1-7) and the birds (Mt. 26:34, 74-75). (Wiersbe, p. 63).

"When we consider the complexity of this miracle, it amazes us.

1. First, someone had to lose a coin in the water.
2. Then, a fish had to take that coin in its mouth and retain it.
3. That same fish then had to bite on Peter's hook--with an impediment in its mouth--and be caught" (Wiersbe, p. 63)

4. Then the exact amount needed to pay the tax would be discovered (not a penny less or more)

"A piece of money" - a *stater* (another word for a sheckel). What is amazing is that Jesus and Peter needed a combined total of 4 *drachmas*. The silver coin found in the fish equals exactly 4 drachmas.

I have found a lot of things inside fishes' stomachs, but I have never found something to pay my taxes. What a miracle!

You can't explain away this miracle as an accident, or as a "freak of nature." It was too coincidental to be accidental!

In our lives the Lord Jesus still is able to glorify Himself by coming through (in response to prayer) to give His children exactly what they need, precisely when they need it, in just the right manner!

Trust Him!

"And thee" - This is one of many miracles that Jesus performed for Peter. He healed Peter's mother-in-law (Mk. 1:29-34), helped Peter to catch fish (Lk. 5:1-11), enabled him to walk on water (Mt. 14:22-23), healed Malchus' ear after Peter chopped it off (Mt. 26:47-56), and delivered Peter from prison (Acts 12:1ff). (Wiersbe, p. 64).

No wonder Peter wrote: "*Casting all your care up on Him, for He cares for you.*" (I Pet. 5:7).

This is "the only miracle which does not have the results recorded. We would expect another verse that would read: 'And Peter went to the sea, cast in a hood, and drew up a fish; and when he had opened its mouth, he found there a coin, and used it to pay the temple tax for himself and for Jesus.' But Matthew 17:28 is not there. Then, how do we know that the miracle took place? Because Jesus said it would! *'There hath not one word failed of all His good promise'*." (I Kings 8:56). (Wiersbe, p. 64)

CONCLUSION:

"SOMETHING TOO HARD TO IMAGINE"

Matthew 17:22-27

1/9/94

INTRODUCTION:

Many times things don't work out as we thought they would. Such was the dilemma of the disciples. --They had found the Messiah! They had seen His miracles! They had visions of grandeur! But God's ways are not man's ways.

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(He gave His life to save others)

II. It was hard to imagine that the LORD would have to pay TAXES --- But He did! (v. 24-27)
(He paid taxes to not offend others)

CONCLUSION:

"THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM"

Matthew 18:1-4
2/13/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1-2

V. 1

This question came about after the disciples had a private dispute among themselves as to who was the greatest among them (Mk. 9:33-34; Lk. 9:46).

"***The kingdom of Heaven***" - a synonymous phrase as "*the kingdom of God.*"

The question they are asking is: "When God sets up His Kingdom, who will be the greatest?" "When the kingdom of Heaven comes to earth ("*Thy kingdom come*") who will rank highest? Who will be most noble? Who will be endowed with the most authority and privilege?"

To illustrate His points, Jesus takes a little child and places him right in the middle of the disciples.

V. 2

"***Little child***" - *paidion* - a young toddler; a child old enough to walk and respond to simple instructions (like this child did to Jesus).

Jesus often used object lessons to teach spiritual truth.

Christ's placing a child in their midst and teaching that they must be like children must have shocked the proud, self-confident disciples. Such a lesson no doubt shook them to the foundation of their being.

***The key to greatness in God's Kingdom is to have certain qualities of a child.**

I. ENTRANCE into the Kingdom Requires a CHILD-LIKE FAITH (v. 3)

"***Verily***" - truly; assuredly

Jesus uses this word to show the guaranteed trustworthiness, fidelity and importance of the truth He is about to give.

"***Converted***" - to be turned around; to be changed over from one state to another.

The need for conversion should tell us something is desperately wrong with the situation we are in prior to conversion.

The "***conversion***" to which Jesus speaks (in this context) is a conversion into a humble child-like faith.

"***Except ye be converted***" - This statement addressed to the disciples implies that they were not yet converted; they wee not yet citizens of the kingdom; they were not yet saved.

Personally, I do not believe they were true believers until after Christ's resurrection.

Just prior to His betrayal and death, Jesus said to Peter, "*When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*" (Lk. 22:32).

"***Become as***" - Jesus is not calling on us to become children (to somehow revert back to childish ways); but He is saying we need to be as children in a certain respect.

There are certain qualities children have that we desperately need in order to enter God's kingdom.

The disciples wanted to know who was the greatest in the Kingdom. But Jesus warned them that apart from child-like faith and humility, they would not even enter the Kingdom.

Prior to this account, Jesus had said that no one could enter the Kingdom who was not "*born again*" (by the Spirit) (John 3:1ff). Now He says that no one can enter the Kingdom who is not like a little child.

"The fact that a person must "*enter the kingdom*" assumes he is born outside of it under the rule of Satan and that he is not naturally a heavenly citizen" (MacArthur, p. 96).

Jesus said in Mark 10:15: "*Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive (welcome, to take to oneself) the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein*" (cp. Luke 18:17).

A. A child is teachable
(Children have an openness to be taught)

Small children have an inquisitive mind that naturally seeks to learn everything about the world around him. They constantly ask questions. Like sponges, they absorb information without effort.

Children can readily accept new concepts and make corrections to previously held erroneous ideas.

Since small children have the greatest capacity for learning new things, they also are most vulnerable to being led astray. Hence, Jesus gives severe warning about stumbling one of these "*little ones.*"

There are many who are so convinced that they have the truth; that they have "arrived," and they are so complacently comfortable with where they are that they are not open to seeing defects in their lives and religion. They are so convinced that they "*see*" that no one could challenge them about the blindness int heir lives.

The Pharisees condemned themselves with such delusion: "*Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*"

Are you open to learn God's plan of salvation; are you will to have your ideas (about salvation) corrected?

Small children are not "set in their ways" like many older folks are.

A person is in a sad predicament who is not open to God's instruction.

God calls such a person a "fool." "*Fools despise wisdom and instruction*" (Prov. 1:7).

Our prayer should always be: "God, make me teachable." "May I never be so proud (arrogant) that I cannot be rebuked and corrected."

B. A child is dependent
(Children have a deep sense of dependency)

A small child depends upon his parents (or guardian) for everything.

Without even giving much thought to it, our children depend on us to protect, feed them, cloth them, shelter them, teach them, guide them, etc.

Children are "Dependent." As you fill out your taxes, you will note that they are listed on the form as "dependents."

Children know that they are in a position of need. They readily recognize that they cannot make it on their own. That spirit of "independence" may be in teenagers, but it is not in little children.

A little child simply submit to the care of his parents, relying on them for all that he needs. He knows he cannot meet his own needs and has no resources to stay alive (MacArthur, p. 99).

Whether you realize it or not, you need God for everything (both for this life and the life to come).

Jesus taught a lesson on dependency in His teaching about the "vine and the branches." (John 15).

What are you depending on for your salvation?

Are you depending on your righteousness? (Is. 64:6; Titus 3:5) (Ro. 10:3 - *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness,a nd going about toe stablish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."*)

Or on Christ's righteousness? (II Cor. 5:21).

Sometimes God allows afflictions, trials and tribulations to keep us dependent (Psalm 119:67 - *"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."*) (II Cor. 12)

C. A child is <u>trusting</u>
(Children have an eagerness to trust)

What does a child have that we need to have? A willingness to <u>trust</u> (willing to trust the security and safety provided for by another)

When a paren says something to a child, the little child does not suspect a lie, he takes what you say literally and believes you are being truthful.

A child trust his parents to take care of him.

They entrust their lives into our care (EX: How as a child I trusted my father to drive safely and to bring us to our desired destination).

A child's readiness to trust is evident by the response of his little child Jesus summoned to Himself. The child responded to Christ's call (v. 2).

The back of our dollar bill says: "In God we trust." But it would be safe to say that more people put their trust in that green piece of paper than in the living God.

Paul wrote to Timothy, saying: "*We trust in the living God.*" (I Tim. 4:10).

I Tim. 6:17 - "*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*"

What a release! What a joy! What peace comes when one has confidence in the faithfulness of God's promise. What solace comes to the heart of one who learns to totally "*commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator.*"

Paul had such assurance, as evident by his words: "*For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.*"

II. GREATNESS in the Kingdom Requires CHILD-LIKE HUMILITY (v. 4)

Someone who is proud has an over-estimation of one's self (thinks more of themselves than is right).

We are often so confident in our: --intelligence
--strength
--achievements

Many will be in hell because of pride.

They were too proud to admit:

1) their sinfulness
2) their need for forgiveness
3) their utter helpless
4) their need for Jesus Christ

"*When pride cometh, then cometh shame*" (Prov. 11:2)

"*Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*" (Prov. 16:18).

"*A man's pride shall bring him low*" (Prov. 29:23)

"*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble*" (James 4:6; I Pet. 5:5).

Jesus does not deny or refute that there are degrees of greatness in God's kingdom. Rather, He confirms that there are degrees of greatness and informs us as to the secret to being the greatest in the Kingdom.

The greatest people in God's kingdom were the humblest people while on earth:

How did their humility make them great?

1) Their humility kept them from trusting themselves and made them rely on God to work in a through their lives (their humility kept them on their knees)

2) Their humility allowed them to unashamedly preach Christ

3) Their humility allowed them to perform lowly service for God's glory (SEE: John 13:4-5, 12-17) (Mt. 23:11-12 - "*But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*")

CONCLUSION:

"THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM"

Matthew 18:1-4
2/13/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1-2

***The key to greatness in God's Kingdom is to have certain qualities of a child.**

I. <u>ENTRANCE</u> into the Kingdom Requires a <u>CHILD-LIKE FAITH</u> (v. 3)

A. A child is <u>teachable</u>
(Children have an openness to be taught)

B. A child is <u>dependent</u>
(Children have a deep sense of dependency)

C. A child is <u>trusting</u>
(Children have an eagerness to trust)

II. <u>GREATNESS</u> in the Kingdom Requires <u>CHILD-LIKE HUMILITY</u> (v. 4)

CONCLUSION:

"The QUALITIES of a CHILD"

Matthew 18:1-4
8/18/96

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1-2

***The key to greatness in God's Kingdom is to have certain qualities of a child.**

I. <u>ENTRANCE</u> into the Kingdom Requires a <u>CHILD-LIKE FAITH</u> (v. 3)

A. A child is <u>teachable</u>
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B. A child is <u>dependent</u>
(Children have a deep sense of dependency)

C. A child is <u>trusting</u>
(Children have an eagerness to trust)

II. <u>GREATNESS</u> in the Kingdom Requires <u>CHILD-LIKE HUMILITY</u> (v. 4)

CONCLUSION:

"THE LORD CARES FOR HIS LITTLE ONES"

Matthew 18:5-14

2/20/94

INTRODUCTION:

ILLUS: of the commitment, concern, care, protectiveness and zealousness I have for my four children. I'm deeply concerned about any harm, danger or bad influence that would come into their lives. "As any normal parent, I have great appreciation for those who help my children and great indignation for those who harm them" (SEE: MacArthur, p. 102).

If I, being a sinner, have such care for my children, how much more care does God have for His?!

EX: God loved Abraham so much that He said to him: *"I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you"* (Gen. 12:3).

The phrase "*little ones*" (*mikron* - cp. 10:42) appears 3 times (v. 6, 11, 14) in verses 6-14, tying this context together and giving us the theme of this text --

-- The Lord cares for young believers!

***The Lord cares deeply about the "*little ones*" who believe in Him.**

Four evidences of His care:

I. The Lord wants His "*little ones*" to be <u>WELCOMED</u> as He would be welcomed (v. 5)

"***Receive***" = to welcome, to accept

"***Little child***" - *(paidion)* a very young child

"***In My name***" - ie. for My sake. This phrase qualifies and defines what Jesus means by "*receiving little children*"

To welcome a young person in Christ's name means to welcome them (help them; teach them; care for them) for the sake of Jesus who loves them!

"***Receiveth me***" - Not speaking of receiving Christ for "salvation," but for fellowship.

What He means is this: Whatever you do to or for a young believer in Christ, you actually do to or for Christ (because of His oneness and identity with that believer)

Examples:

> --Giving a cup of cold water to anyone who belongs to Christ will merit reward (Mk. 9:41 - *"For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.")*
>
> --To do or not do something for the Lord's people is to do it or not do it for the Lord Himself (SEE: Mt. 25:34-46)
>
> --Whatever is done against Christ's people is done directly against Him (Acts 9:1, 4-5)

Luke 10:16 - *"He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."* (cp. Jn. 13:20)

Jesus' point: "The way you treat one of my children is the way you treat me." Whatever affects them, affects Him.

To welcome a young believer (for any purpose that would glorify God) is to welcome Jesus Christ Himself. Why? Because Jesus is <u>One</u> with His children no matter how old or young they are.

Who are we to reject someone whom Christ has not rejected?

If He accepted that person, who are we not to?

Since He is willing to identify with him, so should we!

The Lord must have a special place in His heart for Sunday school, Junior church, and AWANA workers!

Any one who pours His heart into young people is pouring their life out for Christ! This is what living for Christ is all about!

You cannot be living for Jesus if you are not in some real, tangible way doing something for those people who belong to Him! (the two go hand in hand)

Something is desperately wrong with a church that has no active children's ministry, no outreach to kids, no youth work.

A "young church" is a healthy church!

Jesus is saying: Don't reject children and teens; receive them into your life and ministry.

Sure, they test your patience; sure, they dirty your carpets; sure, they require work.

But they are the future of the church! They are future leaders, pastors, missionaries, and lay-servants.

II. The Lord is vehemently CONCERNED that no one STUMBLES His "*little ones*" (v. 6-9)

V. 6

"***Offend***" - to cause to stumble and fall; to trip up (i.e. to hurt the faith of and lead astray or lead into sin).

It is interesting that Jesus changes the word from "***child***" (*paidion* - v. 2-5) to "***little one***" (*mikron* - v. 6, 10, 14).

Such a shift indicates that Jesus is referring to any young Christian.

Although Jesus would not want any little one to be led into sin, He is especially jealous over those "***little ones which believe in [Him] Me***"

"***Believe in Me***" - Jesus is the object of our faith (trust, confidence, reliance) (cp. John 14:1).

Anyone who would intentionally be a stumbling block to a new believer in Christ would be better off chocked with a several hundred pound millstone and dumped into the depths of the ocean; rather than to face the severity of hell fire that awaits them.

"***Millstone***" - the large, heavy upper millstone that was turned in a grinding process by a donkey (MacArthur, p. 104).

They say that drowning is one of the most terrifying ways of dying; yet such is nothing compared to the horror of facing the wrath of God.

Such a drowning is nothing compared to the intensely hot and eternal torment and wrath of God to fall upon those who are stumbling blocks to God's people.

Zechariah warned that whoever harms God's people Israel "*touches the apple of His eye*" (Zech. 2:8) (i.e. "*the apple of the eye*" was an ancient figure for the cornea, the most delicate and sensitive exposed part of the body (MacArthur, p. 105).

You are a serious irritation to God -- you who lead any of His children into sin!

God is severely upset with churches which tolerate members who stumble His children (Rev. 2:14 - "*But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*" Rev. 2:20 - "*Notwithstanding i have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*").

Anyone who influences, entices, or leads a believer into sin, or makes it easier for him to sin, is in serious trouble with the Lord!

One of the main reasons for avoiding:

--pornography
--alcohol
--rock and rap music
--immodesty
etc.

is so that (out of love for others) we don't stumble anyone by what we allow into our lives.

Even in the area of "*Christian liberty*" we should "*use not [our] liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another*" (Gal. 5:13).

We should be so concerned that we do not cause another believer to stumble that we would even avoid practices that are lawful if by such a practice we would violate a weaker, more immature, believer's conscience (EX: Paul's not eating meat offered to idols - Rom. 14; I Cor. 8).

William Barclay tells the story of an old man on his deathbed who was terribly distraught. When asked what was bothering him, he replied, "When we were boys at play, one day at a crossroads we reversed a sign post, and I've never ceased to wonder how many people were sent in the wrong direction by what we did." (cited by MacArthur, p. 109).

Instead of tempting others to sin, we should provoke them to righteousness (Heb. 10:24).

One of the most common ways a "believer" will cause another believer to sin is by failing to lead them into righteousness (MacArthur, p. 108).

Parents (moms and dads), what kind of example are you setting for your children?

Is there a sin in your life that may cause your children to stumble?

Any parent who belittles, slanders, or verbally attacks spiritual authority or leadership (such as a S.S. teacher, deacon, or pastor) in front of their children is doing lethal harm to them. Don't be surprised when your kids turn teenagers and have no spiritual interest, desire for church, etc.

V. 7

"***Woe***" - a word expressing deep sorrow and pain for someone.

The lost, unregenerate, godless worked "is in a woeful state because of the stones of stumbling they throw out for God's people to trip on!

Because man is sinful, depraved, and lost, it is impossible for societies to avoid the planting of stones of stumbling.

But woe to the master minds behind such diabolical immorality and wickedness.

Woe to the TV producers whose seductive programs warp the minds of children!

Woe to the music bands, groups, and sponsors whose devilish, twisted, rebellious, lustful lyrics and sounds imbed themselves into the minds of young people!

Woe to the inventors of the RU486 French abortion pill, and to any president who would allow such a child-murderer into the USA!

Woe to the writers and publishers of the Rainbow curriculum!

Woe to those who use children for child pornography, books, and films!

Woe to those who teach evolution as if it were fact and boldly deny God's existence!

V. 8-9

It is interesting that Jesus shifts from speaking about not offending "*little ones*" to give a warning about not offending yourself!

Why? Because before you will ever stumble anyone else, you will stumble yourself.

The way to safeguard against causing others to fall into sin is to safeguard yourself against falling into sin.

Hence, the stern warning in vv. 8-9.

If what you do ("*hand*"), where you go ("*foot*"), or what you see ("*eye*") will detract you from Christ (if it will turn your attention away from Christ and His salvation), you would be better off losing that body part than to be cause into the lake of fire with all your body parts and a dirty, sinful soul.

(Note: All who are cast into the "Lake of Fire" will be cast in - body and soul [resurrected body] - Rev. 20:11-15).

Jesus sternly warns to remove from your life anything that causes you to stumble cp. Mt. 5:29,30.

"**Offend**" - to cause to stumble and fall. The greek word referred to a stick in a trap that would spring and close the trap when an animal would touch it (Reinecker, p. 15).

v.9 "**Hell fire**" = gehenna (meaning "the land of Hinnom" - II Kings 23:10). A reference to the continual place of burning ("where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched")

Jesus is saying that if your eyes should look upon something that would trap you and detract your sight from ever seeing God's plan of salvation, it would be better off if you had no eyes than to forever end up in hell fire.

The "eyes" are that body part which triggers the lustful thought, and the "hands" are that which grasp that which is forbidden resulting in a sinful act, and the "feet" are that body part which carries one into dens of sin.

Jesus is not really encouraging bodily dismemberment. But he is saying that you would be better off losing anything in this life that would keep you from Heaven in the next life.

Victory does not come by amputating certain parts of your body, but by purifying the desires of the heart.

Is there real "fire" in the Lake of fire? If not, then Jesus is a liar!

You had better believe that the Lake of fire has literal fire!

It is everlasting (never-ending; a place of no rest day nor night [Rev. 14], no relief; no way out)

V. 10

Jesus now gets back to His point.

Beware that you do not "think down upon," look down at; even <u>one</u> of the little ones who believe in Him.

Why not? Because God thinks so much of them that He has at least one angel stationed on duty to minister to them (Heb. 1:14 - *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?")*

III. The Lord has <u>ASSIGNED</u> special <u>ANGELS</u> to watch over His "*little ones*" (v. 10)

The phrase "***their angels***" shows a special relationship angels have with particular children of God (cp. Acts 12:12-15).

What is significant about angels continually looking at the face of God is that they can see as it were the expression on God's face when something which grieves Him is happening to one of His children on earth.

They get their orders from God; looking at Him, anticipating His command to go and defend His "*little ones.*"

The angels wait attentively, never taking their eyes off of the Father "lest they miss some direction from Him regarding a task they are to perform on behalf of a believer" (MacArthur, p. 118).

The fact that God has "hosts of angels in His presence ready to be dispatched to their aid demonstrates clearly how <u>valuable</u> believers are and how unthinkably wicked it is to look with disdain on someone whom God so highly prizes." (MacArthur, p. 119)

IV. The Lord SEEKS and SAVES each "*little one*" who goes ASTRAY and allows none to perish (v. 11-14)

V. 11

"***Save***" = to deliver

"***Lost***" = all men and women (boys and girls) are born lost in need of salvation.

From the moment Christ (because of His payment on Calvary) saves someone, they become a special object of His love! They can never escape His presence (Ps. 139), will never be forsaken, and when they are led astray -- He is faithful to bring them back into fellowship.

V. 12-13

A good shepherd cares so much for each of His sheep (which are so prone to go astray and wander off -- Isaiah 53:6) that if even one gets off the path and errs from the fold, the Shepherd will personally (leave His sheep in the care of a hireling) and will go out and find the sheep and rejoice exuberantly that is found, safe, and back in the fold.

V. 14

"***Even so***" - in like manner.

It is not God's will that even one of His "*little ones*" perish (be destroyed - cp. I Cor. 8:11).

It is never God's will (desire) for one of His adopted children to have a ruined life (a destroyed testimony).

Certainly this verse may also imply the "eternal security" of the believer (cp. John 6:39 - "*And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*").

CONCLUSION:

"THE LORD CARES FOR HIS LITTLE ONES"

Matthew 18:5-14

2/20/94

INTRODUCTION:

***The Lord cares deeply about the "*little ones*" who believe in Him.**

Four evidences of His care:

I. The Lord wants His "*little ones*" to be <u>WELCOMED</u> as He would be welcomed (v. 5)

II. The Lord is vehemently <u>CONCERNED</u> that no one <u>STUMBLES</u> His "*little ones*" (v. 6-9)

III. The Lord has <u>ASSIGNED</u> special <u>ANGELS</u> to watch over His "*little ones*" (v. 10)

IV. The Lord <u>SEEKS</u> and <u>SAVES</u> each "*little one*" who goes <u>ASTRAY</u> and allows none to perish (v. 11-14).

CONCLUSION:

"THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT"

Matthew 18:15
2/27/94

INTRODUCTION:

"***Moreover if***" - A transition in thought.

Jesus had previously warned against "*you offending <u>others</u>*" (v. 6-14); now He tells us what to do when "*others offend <u>you</u>*".

Do you know the feeling you have when someone sins against you? Most of the world goes through these stages:

1. Shock - How could he/she do that?
2. Anger - when your temperature increases; your ears turn red; you get hot
3. Resentment - You "replay" what was done in your mind over and over
4. Bitterness - Whenever that person comes to your mind, negative emotions grip your heart
5. Scheming - I'll think of some way to get back at him/her
6. Mean or violent actions or words

Verses 15 - 17 give us the Lord's way of preventing bitterness from growing in between His people.

If Matthew 18:15 were carried out by all Christians, there would rarely be gossip, grudges, hurt feelings, anger, resentment, church schisms (splits), etc.

In verses 15-17, Jesus describes 3 steps to take in seeking restoration with a sinning brother:

1) Personal confrontation *(go. . . alone)*
2) Private confrontation *(one or two more)*
3) Public confrontation *(tell it to the Church)*

And the hardest step is the <u>first</u> one! (Today, we will focus on this one)

***You need courage to lovingly confront a believer who sins against you.**

I. <u>WHY</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15a)

If he or she has sinned against you and has not acknowledged it nor asked for your forgiveness.

"***Thy brother***" - Your brother in Christ (a fellow-believer)

When Christ saved you, you were "born again"; He adopted you into His family. This meant you became united with Him and everything related to Him. God became your Father, and each other believer in Christ became your brother and sister (cp. I John 5:1). We are fellow adoptees.

--We share the same name ("*Christian*" - Acts 11:21)

--Have the same nature (the "*new man*" - I Pet. 1:4)

--We eat the same food (the Bible - Mt. 4:4; I Pet. 2:2)

--We live in the same "*spiritual house*" (we are each building blocks, "*living stones*" of God's temple - I Pet. 2:5)

--We share the same Spirit (I Cor. 6:19-20)

--Fight the same enemy - Satan (I Pet. 5:8)

--Have the same goal - to glorify God (I Cor. 10:31)

--Look forward to the same future (the Rapture and eternal life with Christ - I Thes. 4; Rom. 6:23)

. . . Therefore, we should care for all men, but "*especially those of the household of faith*" (Gal. 6:10).

"***Trespass***" = to sin by missing the mark of God's standard of behavior. To come short of the Bible's expectations of proper Christian conduct.

One reason many are tolerant of sin in the lives of others (even when it is directed at them) is because they are tolerant of sin in their own lives.

Before Mt. 18:15 will ever be carried out, you must have a love for God and His truth. You must have a personal quest for righteousness, both in your life and in the lives of your brethren.

II. HOW should you confront a believer? (v. 15b)

A. Take the initiative ("*go*")

"***Go***" - This is the hardest step. It is easier to ignore the problem. It is easier to hold a grudge or to counter his trespass with one of your own.

It takes conviction, courage, love, and a desire to please God to confront someone who sinned against you.

ILLUS: I heard of a man who flew from California to Pennsylvania to meet with a Christian who had slandered his character and hurt his reputation.

No one (in their right mind) enjoys confrontation. It is easier to simply walk away from conflict than to lovingly settle it.

"***Go***" - This is a mandate, not a suggestion. (an obligation, not an option)

In Matthew 5:23-24, our Lord commands the offender to go to the offended. Now, Jesus calls upon the offended to "*go*" and confront the offender.

Because he (not "I") is at fault, we can rationalize and say: "I don't need to go to him/her, he/she needs to come to me!"

"I'm not going to talk to him/her until he/she comes up to me and apologizes, kisses my feet, and sheds tears of genuine sorrow."

We should not "stew," "steam," "boil," "plot," "scheme," . . . God says to "*GO*"!

B. Speak the truth ("*tell him his fault*")

"***Tell him his fault***" -

For many, it is easier to admit your own fault than to confront someone about theirs.

"***Tell him his fault***" - (*elen cho*) - to bring to light; to expose (Rienecker, p. 54).

To bring under conviction by humbly and clearly (no "beating around the bush") bringing to light the sin committed against you.

Why does God command us to lovingly "bring to light" the sin some brother commits against us?

1) That person may not be aware of what he did (perhaps what he did had no malicious intent. It may have been simply foolishness not intended to hurt, but ended up being offensive).

The Bible speaks of sins of ignorance (the Old Testament even had a sacrifice to be offered for sins of ignorance - Num. 15:22).

Many misunderstandings are quickly and immediately resolved by obedience to our Lord's command.

"In some situations the sin is apparent and there is little or no doubt that the brother or sister has sinned. But it is wise in most initial confrontations to allow for the possibility that the sin is not actual. The person initiating the confrontation should explain his concern and then ask, "Am I understanding this situation correctly? Is there a matter of sin that needs to be dealt with or is there some clarification that can be made?"." (Carl Laney, The Biblical Practice of Church Discipline [Bibliotheca Sacra - Oct-Dec. 1986, p. 359])

2) That person if not confronted may continue down that road and continue to hurt others (and by so doing destroy himself).

In his sermon, "Reproof, a Christian Duty," Charles Finney remarked, "If you see your neighbor sin,a nd you pass by and neglect to reprove him, it is just as cruel as if you should see his house on fire, and pass by and not warn him of it" (Laney, p. 358)

Just as the Good Shepherd seeks out the lost sheep that went astray (v. 12-13), so a good Christian will seek to contact the erring brother (realizing the damaging and deadly effects of sin), and seek to help him come back to a Godly walk.

3) That person if confronted will be more convicted by your sincere, humble, loving rebuke than by his own unagitated conscience

Attitude is everything in confronting a brother. How should you deal with someone who sins against you?

You need -

--The motive of <u>love</u>

> Prov. 10:12 - "*Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins*"
>
> I Pet. 4:8 - "*And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins*"

--The kinship of a <u>brother</u>

> II Thes. 3:15 - "*Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother*"

--The spirit of <u>meekness</u> (gentleness)

> Gal. 6:1 - "*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*"
>
> "*Restore*" - (*katartizo*) meant to adjust, to put in order, to restore to its former condition - like a medical doctor would "set a bone." Such only can be done with gentleness. The word also was used of "mending" torn or tangled fishing nets (Mt. 4:21; Mk. 1:19). No one can effectively mend or pull out tangles without gentleness.
>
> "Pointing out someone's fault is (in a sense) risky, for there is no way of knowing how he will respond. But if done gently and graciously, the offender will be more likely to recognize the error than become stubborn and bitter" (Laney, p. 358-59).
>
> "*A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger*" (Prov. 15:1).
>
> Seek to restore your brother the same way you would want him to restore you if the situation were reversed (Wiersbe, p. 65)

C. Deal with the matter <u>privately</u> (*"between thee and him alone"*)

"Between thee and him alone" - Because the trespass was against you privately and personally, you should not broadcast his sin to others; you owe it to him to deal with it privately and personally.

RULE: Personal sin demands personal confession
Private sin demands private confession
Public sin demands public confession

"Any discussion of the sin must be with the offender, not behind his or her back. Many 'pious' gossips express concern for sin, often in the form of 'prayer requests'." (Laney, p. 358)

It's supposed to be a private meeting or phone call.

"But how different is our action many times! We say, 'Oh, have you heard about so and so?' Tongues begin to wag, and before long the brother that could have been corrected and restored is (more) deeply alienated from the fellowship of believers" (Paul R. VanGorder, <u>The Call for Church Discipline</u>, RBC, p. 19)

III. <u>WHAT</u> is the result of confronting a believer? *A brother won back from sin.*

"If he shall hear thee" = if he humbly listens to you, agrees with you, and asks your forgiveness -- then forgive him (18:21-22, 35).

(A willingness to "*hear*" shows humility - pride is the biggest reasons people don't seek restoration with each other)

"Listens" - The word often takes a stronger nuance, "to agree, follow, heed or obey" (John 5:25, 9:27; Acts 28:28) (Laney, p. 359)

"Thou hast gained thy brother" -

--To "gain" a brother is to win him from the clutches of Satan

--To "gain" a brother is to perhaps gain a better, closer, more meaningful relationship than you have ever had with him/her. Some of the closest, sweetest friends are those who did not allow a conflict, grievance, hurt to do permanent, irreparable damage to their relationship.

As long as we are in the flesh (given enough time and given the right circumstances) we are sure to offend each other. What we do at times like that will determine the future life of the relationship.

Why are there so many divorces? They don't know how to handle differences and offenses Biblically (reconciliation is not sought because a commitment to the relationship is not there)

There is something more important (valuable) than:

--Our hurt feelings
--Our stubborn pride
--The time and effort it will take to get in the "trenches" and battle with Satan and win back the brother or sister

The goal (purpose, reason) for confronting is:

1) Not to vent your anger and frustration

2) Not to "get even" (revenge, vengeful vindictiveness)
--Rom. 12:17 - "*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.*"
--I Thes. 5:15 - "*See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*"

3) Not to give reasons for why you want your relationship to end

--Rather, the goal is to get the sin confessed and "*covered*" so that it does not come in between you anymore.

The goal is RESTORATION.

Going up to a brother who sinned against you says "I care about my relationship (friendship) with you" (one who ignores the problem is saying, "I don't care; I don't want to be bothered - Get out of my life").

"Love will confront and rebuke, but love will never ignore."

"*Open rebuke is better than secret love*" (Prov. 27:5).

"*He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue*" (Prov. 28:23).

"Above all else, go to him with the idea of winning your brother, not winning an argument. It is possible tow in the argument and lose your brother" (Wiersbe, p. 65).

CONCLUSION:

Luke 17:3 - "*Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.*"

James 5:19 - 20 - "*Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*"

1) Make a list of people you believe have sinned against you (and that sin has affected your relationship with them)

2) Set a date to go visit their home (or call them by phone) and seek to have the hurt mended and the relationship restored.

"THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT"

Matthew 18:15
2/27/94

INTRODUCTION:

***You need courage to lovingly confront a believer who sins against you.**

I. <u>WHY</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15a)

If he or she has sinned against you and has not acknowledged it nor asked for your forgiveness.

II. <u>HOW</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15b)

A. Take the <u>initiative</u> ("*go*")

B. Speak the <u>truth</u> ("*tell him his fault*")

C. Deal with the matter <u>privately</u> ("*between thee and him alone*")

III. <u>WHAT</u> is the result of confronting a believer?

A brother won back from sin.

CONCLUSION:

"CHURCH DISCIPLINE"

Matthew 18:16-20

3/6/94

INTRODUCTION: The local church is to be a holy family.

Like a family, a local church requires three things to have God's blessings:
Love, Truth, and Discipline

Church discipline should be as normal as disciplining children.

Discipline is a family matter, and the church is a family.

God serves as the pattern for loving discipline (Heb. 12:4-13; Prov. 3:11-12; cp. Rev. 3:19).

Today, many churches are reluctant to take disciplinary action to deal with sin among their members.

Why? It takes courage, time, effort, and love (just as family discipline). Another reason is this: It's easy to tolerate sin in the lives of others, when you tolerate it in your own life.

Discipline is really an act of discipleship.

"Is church discipline necessary? Few would dispute the necessity of pulling a drowning man from a flooding torrent or recovering a fallen climber from a mountain crevasse. Most decent people would skip the verbal exercise and give themselves to the rescue! Should less concern be demonstrated for the believer who has fallen morally and whose spiritual life is in danger? With some justification the church has been accused of being the only army that shoots its wounded." ("The Biblical Practice of Church Discipline," Bibliotheca Sacra, Oct.-Dec., 1986, by J. Carl Laney).

***In our church family, we must uphold its purity by exercising loving discipline when needed.**

I. The PROCEDURE for Church Discipline (v. 15-17)

A. PERSONAL Confrontation (v. 15)

"*Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him.*" (Lev. 19:17).

The word "***gained***" (won) "is used in I Cor. 9:19-22 to refer to winning the lost, but it is also important to win the saved" (Wiersbe, p. 66)

If Step #1 is unsuccessful:

B. SEMI-PRIVATE Confrontation (v. 16)

"***If he will not hear thee***" -

A person who will not even listen to personal rebuke obviously has a problem he is trying to hide or harbor.

Such stubbornness requires the support of other believers to step in and loving provoke him to do right.

Many times the moral support that comes from a small group is just what a person needs to encourage him to do right (this positive peer pressure and accountability is what makes small group therapy so effective - EX: Alcoholics Anonymous, etc.)

"***One or two***" - These should of course be:

1) Fellow believers
2) Godly brothers who will be objective about the situation, will deal with it in love, and will keep confidentiality if needed
3) Preferably ones who know the individual at fault

"***In the mouth***" = i.e. upon (*epi*) their verbal testimony. The case would have more substantial evidence (than simply believing the words of the offended brother).

Even in our modern-day court proceedings, the testimony of other witnesses carries much weight.

Jesus does not permit believers to skip Step #2 and to move from personal confrontation to public (church) confrontation.

The testimony of one witness was never valid proof or evidence for public action to be taken (EX: Num. 35:30; Dt. 17:6).

Deut. 19:15 - "*One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.*"

I Tim. 5:19 - "*Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.*"

NOTE: II Cor. 12:20 - 3:2

"***Every word may be established***" - Every word spoken by the offender and to the offender will stand as true if two or three witnesses validate it.

NASV - "*so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.*"

The purpose of taking one or two more is "not to threaten or intimidate the sinner into repentance. The intent is to help the offender realize the seriousness of the situation" and to ensure that the testimony of the offended person was "truthful and unprejudiced" (before taking the issue to the church) (Laney, p. 359-60).

"***If he shall neglect to hear them***" - (v. 17) This clause implies that the two or three had also together agreed that the brother was in the wrong, and they together advised him to repent (turn from it), make restitution, ask forgiveness, etc.

If Step #2 is unsuccessful:

C. PUBLIC Confrontation (v. 17)

"***Neglect to hear***" = to refuse to listen

"***Tell it***" - one person (preferably the pastor) should act as a moderator and let the church hear the sad case.

"***The church***" - *(ekklesia)* this is the second and last time the word "church" is used in the Gospels.

Jesus used the term in 16:18 to speak of the whole church at large (the greater body of believers) which was to be built by Christ beginning at Pentecost and ending at the Rapture.

Now He uses the term to describe the local church (a congregation or assembly of believers meeting at a specific locality).

The clause "***If he shall neglect to hear the church***" - means that he must be given a chance to hear the verdict and appeal of the church. The church's decision in the matter must be conveyed to the sinner brother, and he must be given ample opportunity to respond to the church's decision.

Too often, churches move from:

1. Personal confrontation

to 2. Semi-private confrontation

then 3. Ex-communication
(voted out of the church without giving the brother the opportunity to hear from the church at large)

"When a matter is taken to the church, the congregation should pray for the sinner, avoid a critical spirit, and beware of proudly thinking, 'That would never happen to me!'." (Laney, p. 361)

The congregation's responsibility is to "pursue the person aggressively and plead with him to repent before the fourth step becomes necessary" (MacArthur, p. 133).

If one refuses to listen to the verdict and appeal of the local church, there remains no other court of appeal (I Cor. 6:1-8). There is no higher authority (Ex: bishop, cardinal, pope, synod, convention, fellowship, board, etc.) than the local church.

Baptists believe in the autonomy of the local church. It governs itself; makes decisions under Christ's oversight (v. 17-20) and no other. Congregational church government is supported by this text. The power to handle church matters is given to the local church.

If Step #3 is unsuccessful:

D. DISMISSAL from Church Fellowship (v. 17b)

The word "***as***" is important, because it shows that he should not be considered a heathen, but treated as if he were a heathen (because he is acting as such).

II Thes. 3:15 - "*Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*"

Only someone as obstinate, stubborn, and rebellious as a heathen would refuse to submit to his church's decision.

Jesus was saying that an unrepentant sinner should be regarded as heathen (Gentiles) and tax-gatherers -- outside of the circle of God's people. . . No longer is the unrepentant sinning saint to share in the activities and privileges of being a part of the church fellowship (Laney, p. 362).

II Thes. 3:6 - "*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us.*"

II Thes. 3:14 - "*And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*"

"***Heathen***" - (pagan) ***and a publican*** (tax collector) - In other words, such an individual should be treated as if he/she was not saved.

How should we treat someone who is not saved?

1. They can't be members of the church

(Hence, the sinning brother is to be dismissed from the fellowship; SEE: I Cor. 5:1-13)

Why should a sinning (one practicing a known, sinful, unrepentant lifestyle) brother be disciplined out of the church?

a. So that God may get his attention, as he is outside of the umbrella of the protection of the church and will feel the loneliness; the onslaught of Satanic oppression, etc. (cp. I Tim. 1:20).

I Cor. 5:5 - "*The destruction of the flesh*" would happen from sickness due to the sin (cp. James 5) and this may be effective in God getting the attention of the person, perhaps showing him his need of Christ for salvation.

b. To maintain the purity of the Body (Cor. 5:6-8)

c. To obey the clear command of Christ (I Cor. 5:9-13)

2. They should be prayed for and restored to fellowship after repentance is evident

The goal of church discipline is not a permanent shunning or lifelong excommunication, but restoration. (SEE: II Cor. 2:5-11)

When genuine repentance is evident by the offender's public acknowledgment and pursuit of Godliness, we cannot keep the offender at a distance. We must joyfully restore the person back into the fellowship (NOTE: This does not necessarily mean a restoration to public office - Ex: pastor or deacon. Total forgiveness does not necessarily mean restoration to leadership privilege if one becomes disqualified).

We must always "*forgive*"..."*comfort*"...and "*reaffirm*" our "*love*"

Unlike the "Scarlet Letter" in Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, Biblical church discipline is designed to restore not to punish" (Laney, p. 354).

We must never give up on people!

In reality the church discipline process should not end until the "brother has either repented or died. . . the purpose of the ostracism is not to punish (or rid ourselves of the sinner), but to awaken" (and restore) (MacArthur, p. 136-137).

II. The AUTHORITY for Church Discipline (v. 18-20)

The authority for an assembly to exercise loving discipline over its members is based on:

A. The Lord's DECISION (v. 18)

The context of church discipline does not end with verse 17 but moves into verse 18.

"***Ye***" - the plural indicates the members of the local church.

"***Bind***" - to come to a binding decision about something.

"***Shall be bound***" - (perfect, passive, participle) lit. shall have been bound in Heaven.

In other words, the vote of the church body reveals the decision of God. God has spoken through the decision of the church body.

God is not saying that the church dictates His decision, but that the church carries out a decision that has already been made in Heaven. The church does not have authority over God's decisions; rather, the church is given the authority to confirm and declare what has already been decided by God (cp. Mt. 16:19; Jn. 20:23).

"***Bind***" - to forbid to be done

"***Loose***" - to permit to be done

How does a local church know what to allow and what not to allow? The Word of God - the Bible (the Bible is our only authority for faith and practice).

B. The Lord's DIRECTION (v. 19)

"***Again***" - In verse 19, Jesus adds an expanded application of the principle of the power of corporate decisions made by His children.

Just as an assembly (group) of believers has power (under God) to make Godly decisions, a group of believers also has power on earth to be assured of answers to prayer.

Two conditions must be met:

1) Agreement (that what you request is God's will - I Jn. 5:14-15)

2) Unity in Christ's name (what you request is what Christ would want and would glorify Him)

The particular request that is being "asked" for (v. 19) in context most likely refers to asking god about any "***matter***" (*pragma)* related to restoring the wayward sinner back to a life of holiness. Such a request definitely conforms to God's will and therefore gives us the assurance of answered intercessory prayer in God's time.

The word "***agree***" in the Greek gives us our English word "symphony." The church must agree in prayer as it seeks God's wisdom and direction in disciplining the erring member (Wiersbe, p. 66)

C. The Lord's PRESENCE (v. 20)

"***There am I in the midst of them***" - "I stand with them in what they agree on; I am in agreement with their requests and their decisions."

CONCLUSION:

Church discipline is not fleshly revenge, nor cruel punishment, not an act of hatred but to the contrary it is a humble, gentle, truthful, loving response to seek to save a "*soul from death*" and to "*hide a multitude of sins*" (Ja. 5:20).

"*There is a vast difference between putting your nose in other people's business and putting your heart in other people's problems*" (unknown)

"CHURCH DISCIPLINE"

Matthew 18:16-20
3/6/94

INTRODUCTION: The local church is to be a holy family.

***In our church family, we must uphold its purity by exercising loving discipline when needed.**

I. The PROCEDURE for Church Discipline (v. 15-17)

A. PERSONAL Confrontation (v. 15)

If Step #1 is unsuccessful:
B. SEMI-PRIVATE Confrontation (v. 16)

If Step #2 is unsuccessful:
C. PUBLIC Confrontation (v. 17)

If Step #3 is unsuccessful:
D. DISMISSAL from Church Fellowship (v. 17b)

II. The AUTHORITY for Church Discipline (v. 18-20)

The authority for an assembly to exercise loving discipline over its members is based on:

A. The Lord's DECISION (v. 18)

B. The Lord's DIRECTION (v. 19)

C. The Lord's PRESENCE (v. 20)

CONCLUSION:

"FORGIVE AS GOD FORGAVE YOU"

Matthew 18:21-35

3/20/94

INTRODUCTION:

King Louis XII of France articulated man's fleshly abhorrence toward forgiving others when he said: "Nothing smells so sweet as the dead body of your enemy." (MacArthur, p. 142)

"I don't get mad, I get even" (Clint Eastwood in a film)

The greatest problem in most troubled marriages is unforgiveness.

The underlying problem most counsellors deal with is unforgiveness (old, hardened, fossilized "bones of contention").

What is the cause for most divorces? Unforgiveness (It is interesting that in the next context [Matt. 19:1ff], Jesus speaks to this issue)

The power of a home, the power of a church, etc., is short-circuited if there is unforgiveness.

Most often, how people treat others is a reflection of how they perceive they have been treated in life.

When one truly believes how much God has given them, they will respond in like manner to others.

Eph. 4:32 - "*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*"

Col. 3:13 - "*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*"

After teaching "how" to deal with a brother who sins against you (v. 15-20), Jesus now teaches how often and how much to forgive a brother who sins against you.

V. 21

"***My brother***" - Peter picks up where Jesus left off - The discipline of brethren in the church family (v. 15-20).

It's interesting that Peter speaks of someone sinning against him, rather than him sinning against someone else. Why didn't Peter ask: "*How often shall I sin against my brother and he forgive me?*" "He was sure his brother would sin against him, but not he against his brother" (Wiersbe, p. 67).

"***Seven times***" - The rabbis said to forgive three times ("3 strikes and you're out") so Peter thought seven would certainly be a generous number. Perhaps he figured that "seven" being the "perfect number" (the number of completion) would be a good limit to one's forgiveness.

Peter asked: "Is seven a good number to put a limit or a ceiling on my forgiveness? Isn't seven a good cut-off point?"

V. 22

"***Seventy times seven***" - 490. By this phrase Jesus is not really putting a cap on forgiveness, but He is making the point that we should always be willing to forgive.

As a matter of fact, on this same occasion Luke records that Jesus also said this: "*Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn against to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.*"

V. 23

"***Take account***" - settle accounts (i.e. straighten out all debts and get the books in order; to deal with unpaid debt; to see who owed what).

V. 24

"***Ten thousand talents***" - Amounted to anywhere from 580,000 lbs to 800,000 lbs. of precious metals. In terms of cash, this is a mammoth debt! A multi-million dollar debt!

The practice of selling a servant, his family, and every possession he owned to pay off a debt was a common in the ancient world (Lev. 25:39; II Ki. 4:1). Today, if you own a house and you don't pay your mortgage the banks will take it away from you (same goes for a car, etc.).

V. 26

"***I will pay thee all***" - What pride and insincerity! By today's average American family income (of $30,000) it would take this man 320 years to pay the debt off! His case was hopeless.

The debt was unpayable.

The servant, realizing the predicament he was in and the utter despair of his situation, falls down and begs the king for patience and time. He promises in time to pay the debt (all of it), yet the king--knowing that the debt was unpayable--was moved in his heart by the pitiful plight of this man and released him from the chains that bound him and totally forgave him the debt, saying: "You don't owe me anything."

V. 27

Forgive - from λυω - "To loose or let go; Release"

When we forgive someone, we release or free that person from their debt to us.

"We had a debt we could not pay, Christ paid a debt He did not owe."

V. 28

"But" **-** The king's forgiveness was undeserved, unlimited, and unappreciated.

V. 29

The same exact words which that servant had said to the king (v. 26).

The repeated statement "should have shocked the forgiven slave's memory into a right response, but those familiar words evoked no sympathetic reaction in him" (MacArthur, p. 153).

V. 30

*The unmerciful have higher demands for others than they have for themselves (Mt. 23:3-4)

They are very concerned that others are stringently dealt with according to the Law. They are rigid, unbending, bitter, "prune-faced." People who are anxious to see judgment executed on others, but fail to see their own need (ILLUS: the woman caught in adultery - Jn. 8:3-11)

V. 31

It grieves others to see unforgiveness.

How we treat others will always get back to God (Deut. 15:9, 24:15).

V. 34

This verse is used to prove:

1) "Purgatory
- a place of payment (there is no such teaching in Scripture) (Note: This servant pays while he is alive, not dead)

It's either eternal life or eternal damnation; Heaven or hell (Mt. 25:46; cp. Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:29).

This verse is also used by some (who don't hold to eternal security) to prove:

2) A believer can lose his salvation.

--Beware of pressing every detail of a parable into your theological scheme.

--The payment mentioned in v. 34 refers to payment in this life for how you did not forgive others. Proof: The word "***till***" marks a point in time when the penalty would be fully paid. The payment of those who go to hell will never be paid off.

Rev. 14:11 - "*And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*"

II Pet. 2:17 - "*These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.*"

Jude 1:13 - "*Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*"

V. 35

"***From your hearts***" - God expects our forgiveness to be real, genuine, sincere.

Not a "surface" forgiveness (EX: the plastic smile, the cold handshake, the distant hug, the shallow words "It's okay," the quick "I forgive you", etc.) Rather, when we forgive, it must come from within, from our innermost being.

"***Everyone***" - Every child of God must be forgiving (no matter how high and mighty you are; no matter what your brother did against you); if he requests forgiveness, all of us must grant it.

"***His brother***" - This ties in with the word "***fellow-servant***" (v. 28), showing that Jesus' primary point of emphasis is toward His children (saved people).

(Note: The parable was about the "***kingdom of Heaven***" [v. 23] which refers to God's program among His children.)

***Shouldn't you forgive others, the same way God has forgiven you? (v. 33)**

How can I forgive what he/she did to me?

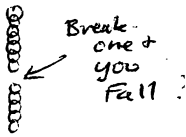
I. Compare the <u>QUANTITY</u> of sins you are asked to forgive with the great legion of sins God forgave you (v. 21-22)
"*Seventy times seven*"

You have been forgiven far more than you will ever forgive!

Do you realize how many times the average person sins in a day? How many selfish or lustful thoughts he entertains? How many covetous, envious, jealous or angry desires he has?

If you sinned just seven times a day (either in thought, word, or action), you have committed 2,555 sins in one year; 76,650 sins if you are 30 years old; 178,850 sins if you are 70.

If one sin separated Adam from God, and one sin violates God's whole law (Ja. 2:10), how great is our sin in God's eyes!



The psalmist recognized that if God held our iniquities against us no one would stand a chance (Ps. 130:3-4 - "*If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*")

God, however, is of great mercy and ready to forgive.

David said: Ps. 86:5 - "*For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*"

Daniel said: Dan. 9:9 - "*To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him*"

Record keeping is not the occupation of a loving Christian. "*Love keeps no records of wrongs*" (I Cor. 13:5)

II. Compare the <u>MAGNITUDE</u> of sin God forgave you with the trivial sins you are asked to forgive others (v. 23-28)

"*Ten thousand talents* (v. 24) . . . *a hundred pence*" (v. 28)

V. 24

10,000 talents (figured at $960.00 per talent) would equal 9.6 million dollars.

V. 28

A "***pence***" (denari) was equal in metal value to 16 cents. Hence, 100 pence = $16 (16 measly bucks!).

> --Based on Bible weights and Measurements (Ryrie Study Bible [1978], p. 1868)

? → 100 pence would equal 100 days wages for a common laborer in monetary value.

"***An hundred pence***" - Sixteen dollars is a trivial sum compared to the 9.6 million dollars this servant had owed the king.

10,000 talents is the equivalent of 600,000 denarii ("*pence*"). Hence, Jesus when comparing the 600,000 denarii to the 100 denarii is using the ratio 6000:1 (Blumberg, <u>Interpreting the Parables</u>, p. 242).

It's easy to understand how someone could refuse to forgive others who has never experienced God's forgiveness, but such unforgiveness held onto by a blood-washed saint is unjustifiable and unfair.

The more mature you become, the more you see the sinfulness of your own heart.

One reason why some find it extremely irritating and difficult to forgive the sin of others is because they themselves do not see the enormity of their sin against a holy God.

When we see God and His perfect standard, we see how far short we fall (Rom. 7:13; Job 42:6; Ezra 9:6).

Isaiah, Job, Peter, John > men who saw the Holiness of God.

Everytime we sin against people, we sin against God (Ps. 51:4).

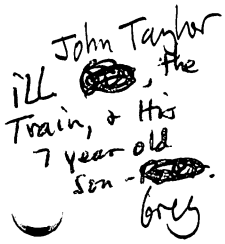
V. 30

Unforgiveness accomplishes nothing at all. What good would this imprisonment be to the servant he owed money to? How did he benefit by throwing him into jail? All he got was revenge; all he got was a "pound of flesh."

It is so sinful to demand that someone "pays" for what they did to you, when you yourself were let off the hook by God. He released you of the "*wages*" you owed for your sin.

"How absurd for one forgiven so much to refuse to forgive so little" (Blomberg, p. 242).

III. Compare the COST of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)



"*God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment*" (Dr. Jim Binney)

It costs to forgive (when you forgive, you have taken upon yourself the effects of that person's sin and freed him/her from their obligation of personally paying you for it)

What do Stephen (Acts 7:60) and Jesus (Lk. 23:34) have in common? The ability to forgive at great cost.

It is not difficult to forgive children, and most people, especially their parents, do it almost instinctively. We understand that children are uninformed, inexperienced, and immature. We expect them to do some things that are inconsiderate, but we tend to tolerate those things and forgive them, even when they hurt us deeply" (MacArthur, p. 142).

When we realize that adults, too, being depraved, often "*know not what they do.*" and are propelled by the same selfish nature children have, then we will be more forgiving.

IV. Compare the CONSEQUENCES of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)

"Perhaps he had the legal right to thrown the man in prison, but he (having been forgiven) did not have the moral right. . . The servant exercised justice and cast his friend into prison. 'So you want to live by justice?' asked the king. 'Then you shall have justice! Throw the wicked servant in prison and torment him! I will do to him as he has done to others'." (Wiersbe, p. 67).

Justice is now executed. This man now reaps (v. 34) exactly what he sowed (v. 34) (Gal. 6:7).

The punishment he exacted on his fellow-servant now comes back (like a boomerang).

He gets hit with the same penalty which he required of the other man.

The Bible teaches that God shall have judgment without mercy on those who showed no mercy (James 2:13).

Lord Herbert once said, "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass" (MacArthur, p. 155).

"The world's worst prison is the prison of an unforgiving heart. . . Some of the most miserable people I have met in my ministry have been people who would not forgive others. They lived only to imagine ways to punish these people who had wronged them. But they were really only punishing themselves" (Wiersbe, p. 67).

Compare the consequences of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness: (by Jim Binney)

1. Unanswered prayer (Mt. 6:4)
   vs. answered prayer (I Pet. 3:7)

2. Give place to the devil (Eph. 4:26; cp. II Cor. 2:10-11)
   vs. freedom from Satan (Ja. 4:7)

3. Grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)
   vs. receiving the comfort of the Holy Spirit

4. Hurting others (Heb. 12:15) - Root of bitterness ... defile many
   vs. being a blessing (Eph. 4:29)

5. Broken fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5)
   vs. intimate fellowship

6. Physical ailments
vs. health and good days (I Pet. 3:10)

(they say that 90% of physical ailments are psychosomatic - the mind effected by guilt and anger effects you physically)

Unforgiveness is like a cancer in the bones; it cripples and destroys relationships and you.

Forgiveness is not "forgetting" (although when you truly forgive, the memory of the evil committed against you will fade away).

A man's "*glory is to overlook a transgression*" (Prov. 19:11).

* Joseph forgave his brothers (Gen. 50:19-21); David forgave King Saul (I Sam. 24:6, 12; 26:11). They were both blessed because of it.

Who do you need to Forgive? Your spouse - unfaithful
" Parents - (Mom or Dad) unresolved conflicts if Parents still
" Neighbor
" Relative - Brother-Sister
" Fellow-believer
" PASTOR (He neglected to do what you thought he should do etc.)

Someone who ...
- Stole from you
- Took advantage of you
- gossiped about you

CONCLUSION:

Six "Don'ts" regarding forgiveness:

1) Don't expect the problem to "heal itself"

2) Don't have the attitude of "Why try?" ("It's not worth it")

3) Don't play the "waiting game" (i.e. "When you give in and apologize, I will")

4) Don't "fight fire with fire" (I Pet. 3:9; I Th. 5:15; Rom. 12:17-21)

5) Don't practice "character assassination" (don't attack the person rather than the problem)

6) Don't dig up "old bones" (don't bring up the past)

Test of Forgiveness

By Dr. Jim Binney

1) Can I thank God for the lesson(s) I learned through the painful experience?

2) Can I talk about it (the conflict) without angry resentment or feelings of revenge?

3) Have I accepted my part of the blame? (Prov. 13:10)

4) Can I reward them who hurt me and pray for them?

5) Can I grant forgiveness from the heart and verbalize it?

"FORGIVE AS GOD FORGAVE YOU"

Matthew 18:21-35
3/20/94

INTRODUCTION:

***Shouldn't you forgive others, the same way God has forgiven you? (v. 33)**

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III. Compare the <u>COST</u> of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)
"*God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment*" (Dr. Jim Binney)

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"FORGIVE AS GOD FORGAVE YOU"

Matthew 18:21-35
10/8/2000

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IV. **Compare the <u>CONSEQUENCES</u> of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)**

"NO GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE"

Matthew 19:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

God's plan and purpose for marriage.

"Marriage is a unique union of one man and one woman. It is so intimate that on the earth nothing is its equal." God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and that man needed a "Help meet" or a helper suitable to himself, his counterpart. Man needed someone to fellowship with him, someone to rejoice with him, someone to plan, share and experience with him the wonders of God and His creation. In Genesis 2:23-24 is presented the ideal which God intended in the marriage relationship. Eve was "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," said Adam. I Corinthians 11:8-9 states that "Man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man--neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." A principle that started in the Garden of Eden has gone down through the ages: Man was to leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and the two became one flesh (Gen. 2:24). This "leave and cleave" principle illustrates that God instituted marriage and that it was to be a monogamous, heterosexual and complete union of two persons.

God instituted marriage for four basic reasons:

1) To complete the man which He had created ("help meet" - Gen. 2)
2) To promote sexual purity (I Cor. 7:2)
3) To begin a new family unit (Gen. 2:18-24)
4) To propagate truth and godly principles from one generation to the next (Deut. 6:67)

What makes a marriage?

1. A covenant (a vow before witnesses - Mal. 2:14). This is the premiere essence of a marriage
2. A consummation (sexual union - Gen. 2:24; I Cor. 6:16)

*In the "vow" the two become one by verbal commitment, whereas in the consummation the two become one by a holy physical act.

One of the most plaguing menaces of all time is divorce.

Today many men change wives like changing socks.

Divorce is commonplace without the couple even considering the tragic effects of it.

What are the tragic effects of divorce upon the COUPLE?

1. The divorce usually ends up causing unresolved bitterness, loneliness, and insecurities.
2. If the couple has any conscience at all, the divorce results in guilt, emotional torment, and sorrow.
3. The remarriages that occur after divorce usually adopt the "baggage," unresolved conflicts, and problems of the previous marriage(s).
4. Most who fail in their first marriage fail in their second (the divorce rate for second marriages is higher than first marriages).

What are the tragic effects of divorce upon the CHILDREN?

1. Children become the major victims of the emotional scars divorce brings.

   --Innocently caught in the cross-fire of family feuds, the children often blame themselves.

   --They are often forced to side with one of the parents (usually the one who has major custody).

   --They will never have an example (model) of God's ideal for the family ("Preliminary data indicate that children of divorce, particularly women, have a higher chance of getting divorced themselves than children of intact families) (Newsweek, Jan. 13, 1992, p. 49).

   --Family closeness is hurt (in-laws and grandparent relationships are affected).
2. Divorce teaches children that one's vows, promises, or covenants are not binding.
3. Divorce teaches children that running from a problem is the answer to solving it.
4. Divorce teaches children that Mommy or Daddy are more concerned about themselves (what they want; what makes them happy) than they are concerned for the children and the effect the divorce will have on them. [What a selfish society we live in!]

Contemporary "grounds" for divorce:

1. "I don't love him/her anymore"
2. Physical/Emotional Abuse (Separation is allowed - I Cor. 7:11; not divorce)
3. "Incompatibility"
4. Adultery (unfaithfulness)

Are there grounds to justify a divorce?

Answer: NO

Evidence:

I. THE SERMON OF JESUS
Reveals no grounds for divorce (vv. 3-9)

v.3 "*The Pharisees*" - A Jewish Religious sect that believed they were "self-righteous"

"***Every cause***" - Pharisees wanted to tempt Jesus to contradict his previous statement in Matthew 5:32.

"For every cause" = the phrase alluded to the contemporary ideas about justifiable divorce in Bible days -

Two major views (schools of thought) toward divorce
(two interpretations of Deut. 24:1 - "some uncleanness"):

--Shammai (conservative) - only grounds for divorce was adultery

--Hillel (liberal) - anything that could be interpreted as uncleanness (if the wife spoiled his dinner, or went out with unbound hair, or was caught speaking to men in the streets, or if she became overweight or unattractive and he found someone more beautiful)
[Because of man's sin nature, this opinion became the prevailing view in Christ's Day]

Jesus taught:

A. Marriage is unchangeable (v. 4, 8b)

v. 4 - "Have you not read" - a statement proving their ignorance; note this statement put the authority on the Scriptures, not tradition, custom, or religious interpretation of the Law.

Jesus purposely skips over the dispensations, Mosaic Law (Dt. 24), etc.
(Jesus appeals to the beginning of God's institution of marriage and implies that nothing has changed since then)

"***male and female***" - incidently, in today's society its important to note that the names of the first couple were Adam & Eve and not "Adam and Steve"!!!

B. Marriage is binding (v. 5)

"cleave" - to glue, cement, or permanently bond together

In God's Word, the Bible, -
The permanence of marriage is evidenced by:

1. The Bonding of "WEDLOCK" (Gen. 2:24)
(Marriage is an inseparable union)

a. The Cleaving of Marriage (v. 24a)
b. The Oneness of Marriage (v. 24b)
c. "Till death do we part" (Romans 7:2-3)

2. The Meaning of a "COVENANT" (Malachi 2:14)
(Marriage is a Covenant)

--Definition of a "Covenant"

--Examples of "Covenants" in the Bible
a). Gen. 15:6-18 - Abrahamic Covenant (cp. Jer. 34:18-19)
b). Matt. 26:28 - The New Covenant

a. The marriage covenant is an irrevocable Vow
Observe the nature of vows:
1). Numbers 30:2 - Your words are extremely important
2). Deuteronomy 23:21 - God holds you accountable
3). Example: Jephthah's vow - Judges 11:30-39
b. The marriage covenant is an unconditional Vow
"For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer"

3. Christ's Relationship to His BRIDE (Eph. 5:22-32)
(Jesus will never forsake His wife, the Church)

a. The Church is one with Christ (Eph. 5:30; I Cor. 6:17)
b. The Church is the "Bride of Christ" (Rev. 19:7-9)
c. The Church has the promise of eternal security (Mt. 16:18; Jn. 10:28-29; Titus 1:2; Heb. 13:5)

4. God's Attitude about DIVORCE (Malachi 2:16)
(God hates divorce)

a. "He may not put her away all his days"
(Deut. 22:19, 29)

Suppose you were to pursue a divorce and you received a letter in the mail. It read: "I hate divorce. Signed, Jehovah God"

C. Marriage is <u>God's</u> work; Divorce is <u>man's</u> work (v. 6)

"***no more***" No longer. Once married, they will never again be two separate, independent singles (in God's eyes)

"***What...<u>God</u> hath joined***" God ordained the principle of the 2 becoming 1 and this principle applies to all people (saved & unsaved).

* Some might say: "*Well, I don't think God ever meant us to be married.*" (Perhaps you did marry outside of His desired will, but now that you are married, you are "one" and God intends for your to not break that unit.

* Perhaps others would say: "*God did not put us together because we were not married in a church*" (Where in the Bible does it say you must be married in a Church? A marriage is a covenant or vow in the presence of witness: A justice of the peace marriage is just as legitimate as a Church wedding)

"What God does man is not to undo"

No one can ever say: "<u>God</u> is leading me into divorce"

The state may give a marriage license, and offer grounds to break that marriage, but is God to whom you will give account for the choices you make.

D. Divorce was <u>tolerated</u>, never commanded or justified (v. 7-8)

v. 8 - "In this verse, Jesus takes the word "commanded" used by the Pharisees (v. 7) and changes it to "suffered" (Meaning: tolerated, put up with.

Just because God "tolerated" it, doesn't mean He approved of it or that it was His intention [cp. Israel was permitted to have a "King" prematurely (I Sam. 8), and was given Quail to eat against God's will for them (Num. 11).

See: Deut. 24:1ff - The reason a <u>written</u> bill of divorcement was required was not to make divorce easier but to put a "legal check upon reckless and tyrannical separation. Divorce was getting out of hand so Moses was regulating an existing practice. Moses was not laying down grounds for divorce as evident by the hypothetical, vague language in vv.1-3.

The implied regulation did not offer grounds for divorce but, in the Hebrew text, God was giving a hypothetical example to make His point in verse 4.

[Note: The Hebrew is not an imperative as the KJV implies but is hypothetical as the NASV translates: "*When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he write her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house....*" *(NASV)*

[Note: v. 9 - "And I say unto <u>you</u>" (Jesus' disciples -v. 10) When this verse is compared with Mark 10:10, you discover that Jesus' discussion with the Pharisees ended with verse 8. They never heard verse 9, which was given privately to Jesus disciples "in the house" (Mk. 10:10). So Jesus left the Pharisees with the conclusion that there was no allowance whatsoever for divorce.]

II. <u>THE MEANING OF "FORNICATION"</u>
Reveals no grounds for divorce (v. 9)

"Whosoever" - the most general, inclusive, unconditional term that Christ could have used. This verse applies to everyone who is married. No one is excluded.

"Put away" = divorce
"he may not *put her away* all her days" (Dt.22:28-29)
Joseph was "mindful to *put her away* privily"
Paul wrote: "let not the husband *put away* his wife" (I Cor. 7:11)

"His wife" - under Jewish law, only a husband was allowed to do the divorcing.

"Saving for the cause of fornication" - those exempt from the verdict of "adultery" are those whose spouse has committed "fornication."

What is meant by "fornication"? Two popular, plausible views:

A. View #1 - Adultery

This professor does <u>not</u> believe that Jesus meant "<u>adultery</u>". Why not?

1. He did not say "adultery"; he said "fornication."

2. Those words are two totally different words with totally different meanings.

   "Adultery" = moicheia (extra-marital sex)
   "Fornication" = porneia (pre-marital sex) - I Cor. 7:2; Jn. 8:41)

3. The two words are distinguished - Gal. 5:19; I Cor. 6:9

The word "adultery" is distinguished from the word "fornication" in these verses -

Mt. 19:9 - "fornication . . . adultery"
I Cor. 6:9 - "fornicators . . . adulterers"
Gal. 5:19 - "adultery . . . fornication"

4. If Jesus meant adultery, it would have been most natural for Him to say it, since he uses the word adultery 2 other times in this verse!

5. The penalty for adultery was death not divorce

   Under the Mosaic Law, one would not need to divorce his wife if she had committed adultery, because the penalty for this was death (Deut. 22:22) (he could not be going to a divorce court, but to a grave yard)

6. Such a view says that "one wrong justifies another" ("sin justifies sin") Where is forgiveness in this view?

B. View #2 - Unfaithfulness during the "betrothal" period

This professor believes Jesus is referring to unfaithfulness during the betrothal period.

Marriage was never to be entered into carelessly or lightly by a Jew who wanted to honor God. They did not rush into a marriage, but did formulate a binding agreement known as the "betrothal"

What was the betrothal period? SEE: paper on Divorce, p. 16, Pentecost

Jewish marriage custom in Bible times:

1. Legal contract between the fathers of bride and groom) (contract called a "Betrothal")

2. Betrothal was considered as equally binding as marriage (Deut. 22:23-27).

3. Couple were called husband and wife during "Betrothal" period (EX: Mary and Joseph - Mt. 1:19-20)

4. The marriage itself was not completed and consummated until at least 12 months later. Reasons for such a waiting period:

   a. The period gave sufficient time to reveal whether or not the woman had been immoral previously
   b. Preparations made for new home (EX: Jn. 14:3)

An important fact to consider is that the clause, "except it be for fornication," is only found in Matthew. Ironically, Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18 omit this clause even though their account is in the exact same context as Matthew 19. Why is this clause only in Matthew? What is the significance of "except it be for fornication" found in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9? What was Christ referring to?

> Christ was referring to the Jewish marriage custom of His day. Marriage was begun by drawing a legal contract between the father of a man and the father of a woman, pledging them to each other. This marriage contract was called a betrothal. The couple were called husband and wife by virtue of that marriage contract. The marriage itself was not completed until at least twelve months after the betrothal contract was drawn up. But they were still referred to as husband and wife. Such was the relationship between Joseph and Mary when the angel announced that Mary would conceive a child. The twelve-month waiting period was deemed necessary because of the low state of morals in that day. That period gave sufficient time to reveal whether the woman was pregnant when the contract was drawn up. The interval also allowed time to see if she would become pregnant by an unfaithful act after being joined by contract to her husband. If the wife proved to be immoral, <u>the marriage need not be completed</u>; the contract could be broken by a divorce.[22]

The period of betrothal (or the modern-day term engagement) was a very sacred one to the Jew and was considered as a marriage, outside of consumation (sexual intercourse) or living together (Genesis 29:21; Deuteronomy 22:23-30).

> If one who was betrothed to a wife found in the betrothal period that she was guilty of fornication--that is, she was an immoral woman--the marriage need not be consummated; but it had to be dissolved by a divorce. Since the marriage had not been completed, the man was free to marry without becoming an adulterer.[23]

5. Betrothal could only end by a legal divorce

Matthew is the only Gospel that records Joseph, the "husband" (1:19) "espoused to Mary" (1:18) as being minded "to put her away privily" (1:19)

Proof of Betrothal view:

1. **Grammatical Proof** - the word "fornication" refers to pre-marital sex

John 8:41 - "We be not born of fornication" (they were mocking the virgin birth of Christ, insinuating that because His mother was pregnant before marriage, He was illegitimate).

I Cor. 7:2 - In context Paul is speaking to unmarried persons.

I Cor. 6:18 - "He who committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." This illustrates that fornication in this text had to be involving an unmarried person, because a married person would be charged with adultery (sin) against his spouse and not merely against his own body.

2. **Historical context** - The phrase "except it be for fornication" is only found in Matthew (5:32; 19:9). Ironically not in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18. Why?

Matthew was written to the Jews.

Proof:

1. The theme of Matthew present Jesus as the promised Jewish Messiah (the king of Israel)

2. Matthew uses more references to the O.T. than any other Gospel writer (esp. O.T. fulfillments of Messianic prophecy).

3. Matthew uses Jewish words and customs which are not explained as they are in other Gospels (cp. Matt. 15:2-5, Mk. 7:2-4).

The exception clause is only found in Matthew's gospel, written to Jews (mt. 5:32; 19:9) and not in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18, written to Gentiles who didn't understand the Jewish concept of the betrothal (Mt. 5:32; 19:19; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18)

3. **An example**: Joseph was called a "husband" (Mt. 1:19) "espoused [betrothed] to Mary (1:18), who found out that she was pregnant before their marriage, so he decided to "put her away [divorce] privily" (1:19)

"**Adultery**" - This professor believes that the "adultery" committed is an "adultery" in the eyes of God (who views marriage as permanent).

The adultery would have to be a "spirit of adultery" and not the "letter of adultery". In other words, if the adultery was literal, then the second marriage would have to be dissolved, since they would be "living in adultery."

The real sin was in the divorce itself, more to than the remarriage. The remarriage prevents reconciliation.

NOTE: Those who are guilty of "adultery":

--The original husband (Mt. 19:9)
--The man who marries her (her new spouse)(Mt. 19:9; 5:32)
--The wife (divorcee) - "causeth her" (Mt.5:32)

III. THE REACTION OF THE DISCIPLES
Reveals no grounds for divorce (v. 10)

The shock of the disciples reveals that Christ's view of divorce was radically different than anything they had ever heard before.

v.10 The Disciples in effect say: "If there is absolutely no way out, it is good to remain single!)

v.11 "***To whom it is given***" - Celibacy is a gift given by God to some. Some people have no desire to marry (Paul commended singleness - I Cor. 7).

v.12 For those who cannot "*receive*" (accept) not having a matte, should be prayerful, careful, and Biblical in selecting a marriage partner.

CONCLUSION:

Jesus allowed no grounds for divorce after marriage!

--How did Paul interpret Christ's teaching about divorce? (SEE: I Cor. 7:10-11)

[Note: The word "*bondage*" *(v.15) is* "*doulos*" (to be in bondage as a slave to serve and meet needs) whereas, "*bound*" (v.27) is "*deo*" (which means to fasten with chains or to be tied together.]

--How did Paul interpret the Law's teaching about divorce? (SEE: Rom. 7:1-3)

A believer is never justified to pursue a divorce. If the unbeliever departs, that's one thing (I Cor. 7:15), but a believer is never to leave his/her unbelieving spouse.

Romans 7:1-3 - The only legitimate way out of the marriage bond is death (No exceptions).

How to Avoid a Tragic Divorce

1. Don't rush into a marriage to begin with. Make sure before you marry that your spouse is saved and loves the Lord.

2. Be convicted that God says: *Marriage is for life.* (Rom. 7:1ff) [Even though you think you married the wrong person at the wrong time for the wrong reasons, you are married and it is right to remain true to your commitment. One wrong does not justify another wrong.]

3. Do not allow conflicts to go unresolved.
   --Practice forgiveness
   --Don't go to bed angry
   --Talk! Learn to communicate. "*Speak the truth in love.*"
   --Seek Godly advice.
   --Learn to say the words: "I love you." "I was wrong." "Please forgive me

4. Meet your mate's needs.
   --physically ⇄ Husband is the breadwinner, wife is the homemaker
   --emotionally – Affairs get started usually blc an emotional bond is made due to the fact that their emotional needs were not being met at Home.
   --sexually (I Cor. 7:1ff)
   [Note: Beware of an over-demanding, time-consuming vocation. You need to spend time together.]

5. Guard yourself against anything you might read, hear, or see that causes discontentment (Beware of Satan's attempts to breed covetousness). Don't compare your wife or husband to any other wife or husband to make a point (Example: "Mary's husband faithfully mows the grass every Saturday. Why can't you?"). God didn't give you to _____; He gave you your husband or wife, so you should be grateful, and quit looking at the greener grass at someone else's home!

   Ex. of the wife who noticed that everyday her neighbors husband would greet her with a kiss when He got home & when he left. She said: "Honey, why don't you do that?" He said: "Honey, I can't do that; I don't even know the woman!

6. Be ~~faithful~~ Emotionally & sexually to your spouse (Illicit sex [adulterous affairs] pulls down and destroys a couple's trust and respect for each other).

7. Fulfill your God-given roles in the marriage. When everyone on the Team wants to do the Job of everyone else the team will fall apart.

8. Cultivate a close walk with Christ as a couple. "*A family that prays together, stays together.*" Sincere prayer is the surest way to release Satan's stranglehold on your marriage.

   No couple who are both spirit filled, will ever have marriage Problems or get a divorce.

9. Realize that love is not a "feeling" or a "romantic emotion" but it is action based on a commitment! In fact, "love" is a commitment (i.e. a decision to be loyal to your responsibility).

10. Consider the word "divorce" the dirtiest word in the English language. It should never be considered as even a remote possibility!

be forgiven and put under the blood of Christ. By God's grace, just as the Apostle Paul was forgiven, you can be, too. No sin is too great for God's unlimited mercy. There will still be scars and after-effects of sin because it is a Biblical principle that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galations 6:7). But God desires to remove your sin as far "as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12).

If men (Christians) would learn to obey God, there would be no divorce. If men would learn to love, there would be no divorce. If men would learn how to forgive, there would be no divorce. If we as redeemed, though fallen, mankind who have been undeservedly made "joint-heirs" with Jesus Christ would learn that the love, mercy, and grace of God are an example for us to follow, we would not have the problem of divorce. As nothing can separate us from our Groom (Jesus Christ), so nothing can separate us from our spouse. "Marriage is like a padlock without a key." It lasts a lifetime, as the words of the wedding vow ring: "As long as they both shall live."

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 1989
Vincent Sawyer, Pastor

Happy New Year!

In 1989 we need to be:
"Redeeming the time because the days are evil"
--Ephesians 5:16

Sunday
11:00 a.m. . . . . Morning Service
("We Need God's Help in 1989")

6:30 p.m. . . . . Film - "In His Steps"
This old black and white film (based on the novel In His Steps by Charles M. Sheldon) shows the drastic change in the lives of an influential newspaper editor and a young actress as they fully dedicate their lives to follow "in His steps."

Wednesday
7:30 p.m. . . . . Bible Study & Prayer Meeting
(How to Witness)

Thursday
7:00 p.m. . . . . .Prayer Meeting for Revival
(at Pastor Sawyer's home; call church office if you need transportation)

Saturday
10:30 a.m. . . . . Wedding of Humberto Martinez & Nancy Rodriguez

Church

The Bible on cassette tapes (O.T. & N.T.) is in our Bookstore. We have the Spanish Reina-Valera Version of 1960 and the English K.J.V. (N.T. - $18.00; whole Bible - $68.00).

Nursery and Toddler Jr. Church workers are needed. If you are willing to serve the Lord, see Gloria Vargas for nursery and Docy Gomez for Toddler Jr. Church.

Dates to Remember

Sunday, January 8 . . . . Brief business meeting after the morning service (involving the revision of our Church constitution)

Statistics

Giving:

Total for the week	$ 824.80
Budgeted amount needed	1,002.02
17 weeks offerings (since Sept.)	14,096.20
17 weeks budget	17,034.34
Deficit	$ 2,938.14

Youth

February 10-11 . . . . . .Teen Retreat
(See Pastor Swanson for details)

Something to Think About

"I Left"

The Christian school wasn't perfect, so I left. The church offended me, so I left. I faced some pressures caused by people, so I left.

. . . My daughter called the other day. She said she was having some marriage problems. I asked her if she had sought counsel and tried to work through them. She replied, "No, Dad. I left."

"I Stayed"

When facing tribulation, I realized it was building patience. When facing pressures, faith was being strengthened. When facing offenses, forgiveness was being exercised. When facing lack of fairness, the character of Christ was being manifested. When faced with other's failures, I was reminded of my own imperfections, and tolerance was born.

. . . My daughter called the other day. She said they were facing some real pressures in their marriage. As I expressed concern, she said, "Don't worry, Dad. I know that God is using this to build the character of Christ in our lives and deepen our love. I'm staying."

"NO GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE"

Matthew 19:1-12 *(Part II)*

INTRODUCTION:

Are there grounds to justify a divorce? Answer: NO
Evidence:

I. THE SERMON OF JESUS
Reveals no grounds for divorce (vv. 3-9)

Jesus taught:
A. Marriage is unchangeable (v. 4, 8b)
B. Marriage is binding (v. 5)
C. Marriage is God's work; Divorce is man's work (v. 6)
D. Divorce was tolerated, never commanded or justified (v. 7-8)

II. THE MEANING OF "FORNICATION"
Reveals no grounds for divorce (v. 9)

What is meant by "fornication"? *Two popular, plausible views:*

A. View #1 - Adultery

B. View #2 - Unfaithfulness during the "betrothal" period

III. THE REACTION OF THE DISCIPLES
Reveals no grounds for divorce (v. 10)

CONCLUSION:
Jesus allowed no grounds for divorce after marriage!
--How did Paul interpret Christ's teaching about divorce? (SEE: I Cor. 7:10-11)
--How did Paul interpret the Law's teaching about divorce? (SEE: Rom. 7:1-3)

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3/27/94

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"HOW TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE"

Matthew 19:16-26
5/15/94

INTRODUCTION:

V. 16

All three of the synoptic gospels contain this account (cp. Mk. 110:17-30; Lk. 18:18-30).

This question is obviously sincere. He really wanted to know how he might "gain" eternal life.

Mark's gospel tells us of the earnestness of this zealous young man. He "*ran up to Him and knelt before Him*" (10:17).

***This rich young ruler, like all of us, needed to have eternal life!**

What did he have to "do" to be saved?

I. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE JESUS for who He was (v. 16-17a)
(He needed to recognize that Jesus is God)

V. 16

"***What good thing shall I do?***" - This man thought that eternal life was acquired by "good works," by his "doing" something "good."

However, the Bible teaches that this is not so (Ti. 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9; Is. 64:6).

"***What good thing***" (singular) - This man thought that by going up to the "*Good Master*" he would learn the "secret" one good thing that would gain him entrance into God's Kingdom.

"Jews of the time believed that performing some single act would guarantee salvation" (Ryrie note).

V. 17

"***Why callest thou me good?***" - By this answer, it's as if Jesus didn't hear the question; but indeed He did.

By making the statement "***There is none good but one, that is God***" Jesus is making at least two points:

1. Since none are good except God, all men are sinners (cp. Rom. 3); therefore sinners can't do good to go to heaven.

2. Since none are good except God, Jesus (if He is "*good*") must be God! Jesus does not make this statement to say that He is not God, but to cause this man to see that He is God, if He is good.

Just as God is the only One who can forgive sins (Mk. 2:7), and Jesus forgave sins (Mk. 2:10), proving He is God -- so God is the only One who is "*good,*" and Jesus is good, again proving He is God.

If Jesus ever committed one sin, He could not be considered "*good*" (according to God's perfect standard of goodness). Yet He was sinless.

I Pet. 2:22 - "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*"

Heb. 7:26 - "*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens*"

Heb. 4:15 - "*...[He] was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin.*"

He "*knew no sin*" (II Cor. 5:21). Jesus boldly said: "*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*"

Jesus is saying: "If I am 'good,' then I must be God, because God is the only one who is 'good'."

Verse 17, when thought about, is actually one of the greatest proof texts for Christ's deity in the Bible!

This man viewed Jesus as a "***good teacher***" (v. 16), but needed to see that He was a "good God."

II. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE HIMSELF at he really was (v. 17b-22)
(He needed to realize he was a sinner whose god was money, and to repent)

V. 17

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" - The imperative verb "keep" (in the present tense) refers to a continual obedience, a non-stop holding on to and observing of God's commands.

Has anyone (outside of Jesus Christ) ever ***"kept"*** God's commands perfectly, every second, of every minute of every hour, of every day, of every week. . . month. . . year of his/her life? No!

Hypothetically, if one did obey perfectly all of his/her life they would be "perfect," showing that they had no sin, and would go to Heaven. However, no one has ever done so, including this rich man. And Jesus wanted Him to see this.

"Which?" The rich man, wondering if He had kept the commands, asked, "Which?" to see if He had met the requirements for eternal life.

Note: Of these six commands, four are negative (v. 18) and two are positive (v. 19), and all are man-centered. That is, they are man-to-man commands.

V. 18

Jesus selectively listed commands which referred to relationships with others.

V. 18-19

Jesus intentionally did not mention the first four of the ten commands which focus on man's attitude toward God; nor did He cite the greatest command (Deut. 6:5; Mt. 22:38), which is the most difficult to keep.

The one commandment that especially applied to him, Jesus did not quote: "*Thou shalt not covet*" (Ex. 20:17).

Outside of Christ, no one has ever kept the commands perfectly. God gave His perfect commands to an imperfect, depraved people, not so that the people would "do" and be saved, but so that they would see that they cannot "do" and need God's mercy and grace to be saved. Rom. 3:20 - "*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*"

Remember the commands not to murder or commit adultery have a deeper application. Unrighteous anger and lustful thoughts in one's heart actually make one a murderer and adulterer in heart (Mt. 5:21-22, 27-28).

"Jesus did not introduce the law to show the young man how to be saved, but to show him that he needed to be saved. The law is a mirror that reveals what we are" (Wiersbe, p. 72).

He thought he kept this commands from his "***youth up***" but in fact he could not have, because he was not even willing to give what he had to the poor. v. 21

V. 20

Yet he asks, "***What lack I yet***" - This man, although he had a great deal of confidence in his self-righteousness, still saw that he was missing something. A gnawing emptiness bothered him. He knew he was empty on the inside. There was a void in his life that hadn't been filled, not even by money.

Luke tells us that this man was a "*ruler,*" most likely a ruler in the synagogue, revealing this man to be not only rich, but also spiritual in the eyes of the world.

V. 21

Jesus said this with love in his heart for this man (Mk. 10:21 - "*Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*")

"***God. . . come***" - This command involved repentance and faith.

Repentance = a turning from anything that is keeping you from turning to Jesus Christ.

"***Thou shalt have treasure in Heaven***" - It required faith for this man to believe this.

Jesus said earlier: Mt. 6:19-21 - "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*"

Why did Jesus tell this man to "***sell all***"? Answer: He wanted this man to see his own selfish, idolatrous, materialistic, covetous spirit.

Jesus actually had touched the root of this man's sin (by giving this request).

"***Give to the poor***" - If fulfilled, this would validate his claim to "***love his neighbor as himself***" (v. 19).

"Should all believers sell everything they own? No. We are responsible to care for our own needs and the needs of our families, so as not to be a burden on others. We should, however, be willing to give up anything if God asks us to do so. . . If you are comforted by the fact that Christ did not tell his followers to sell all their possessions, then you may be too attached to what you have" (Life Application Bible note).

"***Perfect***" - complete; to reach God's goal for one's life. This perfection is not attained is simply because the rich man gave up his wealth, but because his wealth would no longer be a hindrance to him coming to Christ. One must "***come***" to Christ to be "***perfect***".

It was Christ's finished work on Calvary that "*perfects*" us forever (Heb. 10:14 - "*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*"

V. 22

"***He went away sorrowful***" - He left the scene grieving (with deep sadness in his heart).

Why? Because he could not have his "cake and eat it, too"; i.e. He could not have "*eternal life*" (v. 16) and still have money as his God, his trust.

"***He had great possessions***" - the more you have, the harder it is to give it up.

This man's joy and security was all wrapped up in the bundle of wealth he had.

What was it that kept him from eternal life? According to Jesus, the man's problem was that he "*trusted in riches*" (mk. 10:24 KJV).

Having riches does not necessarily mean that you are materialistic and trust in them.

EX: Abraham and Job had vast wealth, yet were men of great faith (their complete trust was in God).

No man can serve 2 masters. You cannot serve God and mammon. You have to decide! Who or what are you going to live for? Anything that would prevent or hinder you as a Christian from following Christ must be repented of!

III. *This rich young man needed*
GOD TO DO what was HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE (v. 23-26)
(He needed God to work a miracle of grace in his heart)

V. 23

It is extremely difficult (but not impossible (v. 26) for a person of vast wealth to be saved, because materialism:

1) blinds one's eyes (from what matters most)

2) binds ones heart (is an obsession)

3) becomes one's faith (rather than "in God we trust," it's in money we trust. They never sense an utter dependency).

V. 24

"***Camel. . . eye of a needle***" - A hyperbole to emphasize Christ's point.

"***Needle***" - sewing needle.

You couldn't even get a camel's whisker through the eye of a needle!

V. 25

"***Disciples. . . exceedingly amazed***" - In Matthew's context, Jesus is constantly amazing the disciples with teachings that were radically different than what they had been taught before. (cp. Mt. 16:21-22; 17:23; 18:1, 22; 19:10, 14, 25; 20:26; 21:20-22)

"The disciples were astonished. They thought that if anyone could be saved, it would be the rich, whom their culture considered especially blessed by God" (Life Application Bible note).

"***Who then can be saved?***" - If it would require a miracle the size of a camel going through the eye of a needle for a rich man to be saved, what is it like for the rest of us? (maybe the size of a dog or cat going through the needle's eye? Still an impossibility!).

V. 26

"***Beheld***" - No doubt Jesus looked upon them with compassion and pity (in light of their desire to be saved).

"***With men this is impossible***" - This "salvation" is an absolute impossibility for man to accomplish on his own. Man cannot do anything to save himself. ("*Can a leopard change his spots, or an Ethiopian his skin. . .?*"

"***With God all things are possible***" - He is omnipotent!

The greatest miracle is the true and genuine salvation of one soul.

If God can save the chief of sinners, He can save you! (I Tim. 1:15-16 - "*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*")

CONCLUSION:

"HOW TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE"

Matthew 19:16-26
5/15/94

INTRODUCTION:

***This rich young ruler, like all of us, needed to have eternal life!**

What did he have to "do" to be saved?

I. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE JESUS for who He was (v. 16-17a)
(He needed to recognize that Jesus is God)

II. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE HIMSELF at he really was (v. 17b-22)
(He needed to realize he was a sinner whose god was money, and to repent)

III. *This rich young man needed*
GOD TO DO what was HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE (v. 23-26)
(He needed God to work a miracle of grace in his heart)

CONCLUSION:

"WHAT SHALL WE HAVE?"

Matthew 19:27 - 20:16

6/26/94

INTRODUCTION:

V. 27

"***Behold we have forsaken all...***" - In contrast to the rich young ruler (19:16-26) who was unwilling to forsake his materialism and follow Christ (v. 21-22), Peter is quick to speak on behalf of the disciples and to inquire as to what he and they would get for their "great" sacrifice.

"***What shall we have therefore?***" - Because of our sacrifice, what's in it for us? What will we get? What fortune do we have to look forward to?

EX: The human nature of man causes him naturally to have a "What's in it for me?" attitude.

***Observe Christ's promises to those who forsake all to follow Him:**

I. To the 12 Disciples Christ promised:
A POSITION AS JUDGE in the future regenerated Kingdom (19:28)

"***Verily***" - truly; most assuredly; you can count (bank) on this

"***Ye which have followed me***" - speaking of the disciples (excluding Judas) who left their jobs, families, hometowns, etc., for 3 1/2 years to follow Christ.

"***In the regeneration***" - The time when God makes all things new again; the time when this present creation receives its new birth, its total renovation.

Peter
~~Paul~~ referred to the renewal of the earth and heavens (sky) in this way: "*And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*" (Acts 3:20-21)

"***When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory***" - In Christ's Kingdom after the Rapture and Day of the Lord Judgments

See: Psalm 2:1-12; Is. 2:1-4, 4:2-6, 9:6-7, 11:1-12, 35:1,10, 40:1-5, 55:12-13, 65:17-25

Zech. 6:13 - "*Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; ~~and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.~~*"

There will be eating and drinking in the kingdom (Luke 22:30 - "*That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*")

"***Ye***" -the disciples were promised that they would sit on 12 thrones, each judging a tribe of Israel [Note: Matthias (Acts 1:26) would replace (Acts 1:20) Judas as one of the twelve.]

"***Judging the twelve tribes of Israel***" - This judging indicates that there will be mortals and sinners present when the Son of Man sits in the throne (SEE: Dan. 7:8-9, 13-22; Rev. 20:4-6).

"***The twelve tribes of Israel***" - Will be Jews who are saved at the end of the Tribulation (SEE: Rom. 11:25-31).

Zech. 12:9-10 - "*And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*"

(cp. Rev. 7:7-8, 14:1-5)

II. To Every one who forsakes all to follow Him, Christ promised: A "HUNDRED-FOLD" in this present life (19:29)

Jesus is not commanding us to forsake these situations and people, but if a choice between loyalties to Jesus conflicted with loyalties to such other things, the choice should be Jesus (Mt. 10:37).

For the disciples to physically follow Jesus while He was on earth did literally demand such a 3-1/2 year abandonment.

"Shall receive an hundred-fold" -

- When? A hundred-fold in this life

  Mk. 10:30 - *"But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."* Luke 18:29-30 - *"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."*

- What?
  A hundred-fold of that which you forsook (spiritual brothers and sisters, etc., Cp. Mt. 12:48)

Jim Elliot, a young missionary martyred by the Auca Indians of Ecuador whom he was seeking to reach for Christ, wrote shortly before his death, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose" (cited by MacArthur, p. 206).

"Shall inherit everlasting life" - Everlasting life is a gift given, not a reward earned. Gaining eternal life is not because of forsaking worldly attachments, but gaining eternal life is the outcome of a saved soul whose salvation manifested itself by a willingness to forsake all and follow Christ.

III. To <u>All (whether "*first*" or "*last*")</u> whom the Lord chooses, Christ promised: <u>EVERLASTING LIFE</u> (19:29b - 20:16)

*The "everlasting life" Jesus spoke about in <u>19:29</u> will be equally shared by all who are saved (whether they were saved early or later in life)!

V. 30

"***Many***" - Not all, but many

"***That are first***" - those who <u>selfishly seek</u> to be "<u>first</u>" shall be last.

ILLUS: Have five volunteers each receive an 8-1/2 by 11 card and stand in front displaying the card. On one side the card says:

6:00 a.m. (v. 1 - "*early*")
9:00 a.m. (v. 3 - "*third hour*")
12:00 p.m. (v. 5 - "*sixth hour*")
3:00 p.m. (v. 5 - "*ninth hour*")
5:00 p.m. (v. 6 - "*eleventh hour*")

On the back of each card it should read "1 Denarius"

Have each volunteer come up in order and begin a shoveling motion using the card as a shovel. Explain the parable of Mt. 20:1-16.

V. 2

"***Agreed***" - A contract was made (both parties knew the arrangement, knew what to expect).

"***Penny***" - lit. a denarius or a day's wage for a common worker

V. 8

"***At "<u>even</u>***" - (6:00 p.m.) The O.T. law commanded that the workers should be paid at the end of the day, before sundown (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:15)

"***Beginning from the last unto the first***" - the Lord of the vineyard intentionally began with "the last" to arouse thought in the "first" and then to make a point.

V. 10

"***They supposed that they should receive more***" - the ones hired at 6:00 a.m. thought and calculated, "If he got 1 denarius for 1 hour work, I should get 12!" The man hired at 9:00 thought he'd get 9; the man hired at 12:00 thought he'd get 6; the man hired at 3:00 - 3)

V. 15

"Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" **-** i.e. Are you envious because I am generous?

The meaning of the parable:

V. 1

"The kingdom of Heaven" **-** (v. 1) - the Kingdom which comes from Heaven; speaking about God's eternal kingdom which the saved will inherit.

Householder = symbolizes God

Laborers = those God saves by grace

Vineyard = the world of lost humanity

The "everlasting life" which Jesus spoke about in 19:29 will be equally shared by all who are saved (whether they were saved early or later in life).

"There are no exceptions or variations. Whether a person comes to God as a small child and lives a long life of faithful, obedient service, or whether he comes to Him on his deathbed -- all come into the Kingdom on the same basis and receive the same glorious eternal blessings" (MacArthur, p. 213).

All of the redeemed of all ages will stand equally before the Lord in Heaven.

"Here the Lord is not teaching about the differences of rewards but the equality of salvation" (MacARthur, p. 214)

Those who are saved at the last hour of this age will have the same eternal life as those who had been saved back in Jesus' day!

Believing tax collectors, prostitutes, criminals, and social outcasts will have the same heavenly residence as Paul, Luther, Moody, and Spurgeon. There are no servant quarters or lower-class neighborhoods in heaven.

Every believer in this age is part of Christ's bride (Rev. 21:2, 9), a fellow heir (Rom. 8:16-17), blessed with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) (MacARthur, p. 215).

"All believers will receive 'the crown of life' (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10), the 'crown of righteousness' (II Tim. 4:8), and the 'crown of glory' (I Peter 5:4)." (macArthur, p. 214).

Those who are saved early in life will receive no more (in terms of salvation or entrance into the "kingdom") than those who are saved later in life (EX: the thief on the cross will gain the same Paradise as Peter, James and John).

This is not to say that there will not be various rewards given for faithful service. Indeed, the Scriptures teach gain or loss of rewards for faithful service done for Christ (I Cor. 4:5; Rev. 22:12; Mt. 16:27; I Cor. 3:13-15)

II Cor. 5:10 - "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*"

This is not to say that one should "wait" until the last moment of his/her life before trusting Christ as Savior ("*Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation*" - II Cor. 6:2).

NOTE: Be careful when interpreting parables to discern the main point being made and <u>not</u> to <u>press</u> every detail of the story.

*There will be no griping when Christ returns or at the death of a believer when his soul goes to Heaven.

<u>12 Principles</u> Seen in the Parable of the Vineyard:

A. The Lord <u>takes</u> the <u>initiative</u> in seeking men to salvation (v. 1, 3, 5, 6)

John 6:39 - "*And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*"

B. The Lord <u>assures</u> in <u>advance</u> what He will give to His chosen laborers (v. 1-2)

C. The Lord expects all who come into the vineyard to <u>work</u> (v. 2)

D. The Lord always gives what is <u>right</u> (v. 4)

E. The Lord alone establishes the <u>terms</u> for <u>salvation</u> (v. 7)

F. The Lord <u>patiently</u> <u>continues</u> to call men into His Kingdom (v. 6-7)

"*He is longsuffering. . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*" (II Pet. 3:9)

G. The Lord will one day "*call*" His laborers (at the Rapture) and give each one eternal life (v. 8-9)

H. The Lord shows no partiality but gives eternal life equally to all who are chosen (v. 9-14)

I. The Lord gives more than is deserved (v. 9-12)

J. The Lord always keeps His promises (v. 13)

K. The Lord is right to do as He wishes with what belongs to Him (v. 15)

L. The Lord "*calls*" (invites) many to salvation, but only a few are chosen (v. 16)

"***Many be called but few chosen***" - Many are invited to salvation (since the payment of Christ was sufficient for all), yet only a few will be chosen (only a few respond to the invitation).

This phrase proves that the "calling" is not efficacious.

CONCLUSION:

"WHAT SHALL WE HAVE?"

Matthew 19:27 - 20:16

6/26/94

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D. The Lord always gives what is _____ (v. 4)
E. The Lord alone establishes the _____ for _____ (v. 7)
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G. The Lord will one day "_____" His laborers (at the Rapture) and _____ each one eternal life (v. 8-9)
H. The Lord shows _____ _____ but gives eternal life equally to all who are chosen (v. 9-14)
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K. The Lord is right to do as He wishes with what belongs to Him (v. 15)
L. The Lord "*calls*" (invites) many to salvation, but only a few are chosen (v. 16)

"THE GREATNESS OF BEING A SERVANT"

Matthew 20:17-28

7/3/94

INTRODUCTION: (verses 20-26a)

Many are seeking a path that leads to "greatness" today!

Some take the path of
- sports
- popular music
- financial power
- military control
- religious popularity

V. 21

Like most proud mothers, Zebedee's wife was deeply interested in the blessings and success of her two sons.

(A mother's self-worth and success is often linked to the success of her children)

Perhaps after hearing that her two sons would have the honored position of each sitting on thrones with Christ judging the 12 tribes of Israel (19:28) she became inquisitive as to who would have the two seats next to Jesus (EX: how children often desire to sit next to special guests at the dinner table or in the car).

Not only did she request this privileged position for her two sons, but they did as well (Mk. 10:35-37).

So Jesus response to them.

This was a self-serving request, a desire to exalt self, a quest for personal promotion.

V. 22

"***Cup***" - the bitter cup of suffering (Mt. 26:39).

"***Baptism***" - to be immersed in suffering and death

Jesus asks this question, implying that certain rewards and privileges will be given to those who face a martyr's death.

"***Ye shall drink indeed***" - James was the first martyr (Acts 12:2) for Christ. John would be boiled in oil, exiled to Patmos (Rev. 1), and eventually beheaded.

V. 24

The ten were deeply grieved, upset, and angry at James and John for desiring, along with their mother, seats of pre-eminence in Christ's Kingdom. With steam pouring from their ears, they began to debate as to who should be the greatest.

Perhaps Matthew appealed to his having given up a wealthy career of collecting taxes. John perhaps appealed to his great love and affection for Christ, Peter to his leadership, Judas Iscariot to his money management as the treasurer.

Even at the Last Supper Luke records their strife and bickering as to who would be the greatest (SEE: Luke 22:23-30).

V. 25

The world achieves "greatness" by raw power, military might, fame and fortune, by controlling and forcing subordinates into submission and total allegiance.

The best form of government is one that serves the people rather than exploits the people (like radical egomaniac dictators and self-serving Communists).

"William Barclay has succinctly commented, 'The world may assess a man's greatness by the number of people whom he controls and who are at his beck and call; or by his intellectual standing and his academic eminence; or by the number of committees of which he is a member; or by the size of his bank balance and the material possessions which he has amassed; but in the assessment of Jesus Christ these things are irrelevant." (MacArthur, p. 246).

V. 26

"It shall not be so among you" **-** God has different standards for His people. Different ways of achieving desired goals.

Today, a dangerous trend exists in the world, and it has afflicted many who name the name of Christ. It is a proud, self-centered, self-love philosophy which has a "me first" drive and an "I" agenda. If society were to write a Bible, its Golden Rule might read: "Thou shalt shove thy neighbor and love thyself."

Life itself depends on service! Every legitimate job is a service for someone else.

Teacher - instructs others
Bus driver - transports others
Farmer - provides food for others
Grocer - stocks and distributes food for others
Fireman - saves others
Police - protects others

The measure of your job is determined by the degree to which you really aid someone else.

We were saved to glorify God by serving (Eph. 2:10).

The least we can do is serve the One who saved us, bought us, and owns us!

Service is a duty. Luke 17:10 - "*So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which is our duty to do.*"

***Greatness is in serving, not in being served!**

Who is truly great?

I. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in* **HUMBLE Service for Others** (v. 26b)
("let him be your minister" - *diakonos*)

"***Whosoever will***" - Anyone who wants to be or desires to be "great" in God's eyes.

"***Minister***" - (*diakonos)* to perform common tasks, mundane tasks (cp. the 7 deacons in Acts 6). It is believed that this noun comes from the verb "*diako*" which means to run (to run errands) -- to be someone's "gopher."

"The world's way of greatness is like a pyramid. The prestige and power of the great person is built on the many subordinate persons beneath him. But in the kingdom, the pyramid is inverted. As the great commentator R.C. H. Lenski has observed, God's 'great men are not sitting on top of lesser men, but bearing lesser men on their backs'." (MacArthur, p. 240).

Luke 14:11 - "*For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*"

There is no limit to what a person will do for others if he is not consumed about who gets the credit.

All service for Christ done with pure motives of love will merit rewards ("giving a cup of cold water" - Mt. 10:42).

The greatest rewards in Heaven are not reserved for those who necessarily had the limelight of Christianity. They served in the "shadows" of the Church. Many they were not so well known. Their names were not printed in the "Who's Who" of Christianity. Their tasks did not require great brains or awesome talent. But they were faithful, dependable, reliable. "The greatest ability is dependability." (Bob Jones Sr.)

II. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in* **DEVOTED Service for Others** (v. 27)
("let him be your servant" - *doulos*)

"***Chief***" - *(protos)* first; first in rank, principle, top in honor and influence.

"***Servant***" *(doulos)* - a slave for life, a "bondslave," one who gives up his will to do the will of another, to advance the cause of another, to be devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests.

You will be successful if you live to make others successful!

Examples of people with servants hearts:
--Sarah - obeyed her husband (I Pet. 3:6)
--Rebekah - watered Eleazar's camels (Gen. 24)
--Moses - led Israel for 40 years
--Ruth - gleaned for Naomi
--Jesus - washed the disciples' feet (Jn. 13:14)
--Stephen (etc.) - dispersed money to Christian widows (Acts 6)
--Barnabus - encouraged new and weak Christians
--Aquilla & Priscilla - opened their home to disciple new converts and hold church meetings (Acts 18:26; I Cor. 16:19)
--Dorcas - sewed coats and garments for the needy (Acts 9:36, 39)

III. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in* **SACRIFICIAL Service for Others** (v. 17-19, 28)
("The Son of Man came. . . to minister and give His life")

V. 28

The point of V. 28 is that a servant makes sacrifices for others - as Jesus did.

When God through Isaiah introduced the suffering Messiah in Is. 52:13-53, He said, "*Behold, my Servant...*" (52:13)

V. 17

"***Took the 12 disciples apart***" - By pulling them away from the crowds Jesus would often privately teach them many things (SEE: Mark 9:30-35).

V. 18

"***They shall condemn Him***" - They lied about Him, hired false witnesses whose testimonies did not agree.

Their condemnation fulfilled God's sovereign plan so you would be free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

"***Betrayed***" - by the kiss of Judas Iscariot

"***Chief priests. . . scribes***" - the Jewish religious leaders of Christ's day (men who were supposed to be expert in worship and Bible interpretation).

V. 19

"***Gentiles***" - Pilot, Herod, and the Roman soldiers who mistreated Him and nailed Him to a cross

"***Mock***" - *"Hail, King of the Jews"*
"He saved others, Himself He cannot save"
"Come down from the cross"

"***Scourge***" - He was whipped with a cat-o-nine-tails that would rip and dig a furrow into His body with every laceration.

"***Crucify***" - the lowest, most humiliating form of death.

Jesus also foretold of His being *"spitefully entreated and spit upon"* (Lk. 18:32)

V. 28

"***Not to be ministered unto***" - not to be served (*diakoneo*)

Jesus came not to be waited upon but to attend to the needs of others.

This entire verse has several indications of Christ's sacrificial servitude.

* "***The Son of man***" - Even this title shows Christ's humility in condescending to mankind by becoming a man. The "Son of God" became the "Son of man."

II Cor. 8:9 - *"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."*

* "***Came***" - He who ruled Heaven "*came into the world to save sinners*" (II Tim. 1:15)

  He left paradise for a sin-cursed earth. Implicit in the word "*came*" is Christ's purpose. He came with a purpose of sacrificing Himself for others.

* "***Give***" - the response of love (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). His life was not taken, it was voluntarily given.

* "***His life***" - Christ's entire life was given for others, but the particular reference here is to His death.

  "Some years ago, Joe Delaney, a star football player for the Kansas City Chiefs, saw three young boys out in a lake, crying out for help and struggling to stay above the water. Although he was himself a poor swimmer, Joe dived into the water and tried to save them. One of the boys was rescued, but Joe and the other two boys drowned. He willingly laid down his life in an effort to save those boys, making the ultimate sacrifice in their behalf." (MacArthur, p. 245).

* "***Ransom***" - (*lutron*) the price paid to free (liberate) a slave or captive. "*You are bought with a price*" (I Cor. 6:20).

  His life and particularly His blood (I Pet. 1:19) was the price for your spiritual freedom, your release from sin and its penalty.

  "***For many***" - (*anti)* in the place of - His sacrifice was substitutionary

  "***For many***" - (*polus*) for a great host of people. The word "many" is not used in contrast to "all" (as the Limited Atonement view believes). Rather, the point is a contrast between His life (singular) and the multitudes (plural - "*many*") for whom He died.

CONCLUSION:

There is a good feelings you receive when you serve someone else (Acts 20:35 - "*It is more blessed to give than to receive*")

Many truly great people in the corporate world of business became great because of their willingness to expand their service to others.

(Good service will always eventually lead to promotion)

Today, people measure ministry success by: 1) Bodies 2) Bucks & 3) Buildings
But God measures it by service!

"Concentrate on the depth of your ministry (service), and God will take care of the breadth of your ministry" (MacArthur)

Today, Christianity does not need more celebrities but more servants!

Gal. 6:10 - "*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*"

What service is being rendered to this church body by you?

President Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

Ask not what the people of FBC can do for you, but what you can do for the people of FBC!

What service should you render? It depends on what gifts God gave you to serve with. Discover your gifts and use them! (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4:12-15).

Where do I begin? Find a need and meet it! (ask permission if needed; get instructions as to how to go about it if needed).

Many are good at finding needs, and then gripe and complain about them! . . . But few give thoughts as to how they might be an answer (solution) to the problem (need).

Are you willing to do the most humble of tasks?

Are you willing to sacrifice the time, energy, and resources necessary to serve someone else?

The measure of your greatness is the greatness of the time you spend serving other people.

The greatest service you can render is service in the greatest things! (in the Gospel ministry)

"THE GREATNESS OF BEING A SERVANT"

Matthew 20:17-28

7/3/94

INTRODUCTION: (verses 20-26a)

***Greatness is in serving, not in being served!**

Who is truly great?

I. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in* **HUMBLE Service for Others** (v. 26b)
("let him be your minister" - *diakonos*)

II. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in* **DEVOTED Service for Others** (v. 27)
("let him be your servant" - *doulos*)

III. *You are great in God's eyes when you give your life in* **SACRIFICIAL Service for Others** (v. 17-19, 28)
("The Son of Man came. . . to minister and give His life")

CONCLUSION:

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE MESSIAH"

Matthew 20:29 - 21:1-17

7/10/94

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus Christ--"*the Son of David*"--is clearly the Messiah!**

Four indications that show Jesus Christ--"*the Son of David*"--to be the Messiah:

I. The COMPASSION He Showed (20:29-34)

II. The PROPHECY He Fulfilled (21:1-11)

III. The SPIRITUAL ZEAL He Possessed (21:12-14)

IV. The PRAISE He Received (21:15-17)

CONCLUSION:

"JESUS CHRIST IS THE MESSIAH"

Matthew 20:29 - 21:1-17

7/10/94

INTRODUCTION:

One characteristic of the Last Days is that false Christ's shall appear (pseudo Messiahs) (Mt. 24:24).

Even in our day, many follow someone they view as the Messiah.

***Jesus Christ--"*the Son of David*"--is clearly the Messiah!**

Four indications that show Jesus Christ--"*the Son of David*"--to be the Messiah:

I. The COMPASSION He Showed (20:29-34)

V. 29

"***From Jericho***" - They had left "old Jericho" and approached "new Jericho" (archaeologists discovered two Jerichos).

V. 30

"***Two blind men***" - Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43 only specify one of the two. Although there were two blind men seeking their sight, Mark and Luke describe one of the men named Bartimaeus, who was apparently the more aggressive, more outspoken of the two.

"***:When they heard that Jesus passed by***" - Since they couldn't see, they depended on their acute sense of hearing. When they heard who it was, they in desperation and in deep faith cried out for Jesus to show mercy on them.

Although they were blind physically, they saw with great faith spiritually. They knew who Jesus was prior to His coming and perhaps sat there waiting along the road side hoping that one day He would pass that way.

These two blind men had faith that Jesus was the Messiah. Proof:

1) They addressed Him as "***Lord***" (Master, Ruler, God) -- A title of deity and authority. The expression "*O Lord*" shows the depth of their desperation and faith.

2) They called Him the "***Son of David***" which was a messianic title showing Jesus to be the fulfiller of the Davidic Covenant (II Sam. 7; cp. Is. 55:3).

Is. 9:6-7 - *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."*

Ps. 89:34-36 - *"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me."*

Ps. 72:12 - *"For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper."*

3) They knew that Jesus had the power and authority to have **mercy** on them (only the Lord could show them the kind of mercy they wanted) (Ps. 136)

4) They **refused** to be **silenced** in their cry of faith (v. 31 - the multitude who followed Christ did not have the faith in Him that these men had)

5) They knew that Jesus could do the **impossible** for them - to open their eyes which had been blind from birth).

V. 32

"***Jesus stood still***" - He stopped what He was doing to respond to these outcasts of society.

Every sincere petition gains the ear and attention of our sovereign Lord Jesus (never did Jesus ignore the petition of anyone, no matter how great their need).

"***What will ye***" - Jesus knew their need and what they wanted, but wanted them to verbalize it so the crowd would see this specific answer to a specific request (God is glorified by answering specific prayers).

V. 33

"***Jesus had <u>compassion</u> on them***" - He was filled with tenderness in His heart for the need of these men. His insides were moved at their plight.

The hymnwriter said it best - "His heart is touched with my grief". . . "He cares for me."

V. 34

A hallmark of Jesus' ministry was the compassion he had on others.

He had compassion toward the sick (Mt. 14:14); hungry (Mt. 15:32); demon-possessed (Mk. 5:19); shepherdless Israel (Mk. 6:34), etc.

"***Touched their eyes***" - Christ's compassion was frequently followed by a "touch."

[EX: His compassion moved Him to touch a leper (Mk. 1:41); His compassion moved Him to touch the casket of a dead teen whom he raised (Lk. 7:13-15)]

Jesus proved He was the Messiah by being the <u>Compassionate Deliverer</u> Isaiah prophesied about in Is. 61:1 (Lk. 4:18 - "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*")

"***<u>Immediately</u> their eyes received sight***" - An evidence of Christ's <u>power</u> and an evidence of a <u>bonafied miracle</u> (no process or delay)

We, like our Lord, need to have compassion on people (Jude 22) (our hearts need to go out to people in need).

Ask God right now to remove the callousness and hardness from your heart.

Although Christ's crucifixion was just a little over a week away, Jesus was "never too preoccupied to be compassionate, never in too much of a hurry to heal the afflicted, never in too much agony Himself to be insensitive to the agony of others" (MacARthur, p. 248).

II. The PROPHECY He Fulfilled (21:1-11)

V. 2

"***Straightway ye shall find***" - Christ's omniscience is evidenced.

"***If any man say ought***" - If anyone says anything or has any objection, the words "The Lord has need of them" would carry such power and authority that the person would gladly and willingly comply. (EX: If someone came up to my car and said, "The Lord has need of it" - I'd say, "I'm calling the police!" However the Lord so moved on the hearts of the owners that they willingly relinquished the two animals to the will of God - Luke 19:33; Mark 11:4-6).

V. 4

Up to this point Jesus deliberately avoided public scenes. Now He purposely plans a public demonstration to fulfill Scripture (Wiersbe, p. 76).

[At Passover, some 2 million Jews would father at Jerusalem! Here was their chance to embrace their Messiah!]

"***All this was done that it might be fulfilled***" -

Zech. 9:9 - "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of ion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, they King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*"

Is. 62:11 - "*Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.*"

The Lord Jesus fulfilled prophetic Scriptures which no other so-called Messiah could

Is Jesus Christ the Messiah? Does He fulfil the O.T. promises of the anticipated anointed deliverer of Israel?

Here are some of the O.T. prophecies and their fulfillment in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ:

Prophecy of the Messiah	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Messiah would come at an appointed time	Dan. 9:25-26	Mark 1:15
Messiah would be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matt.2:1-6
Messiah would be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matt.1:18-25
Messiah would die for the sins of the world	Is.52:13-53:12	Luke 22:37 Acts 8:28-35
Messiah would be hated	Ps.69:4 Is.49:7	Jn.15:24,25
Messiah would be rejected	Psalm 118:22	Mt.21:42
Messiah would be betrayed	Psalm 41:9	Jn.13:18-21
Messiah would be forsaken	Zech.13:7	Mk.14:27
Messiah would be sold	Zech.11:12	Mt.26:15
Messiah would be smitten	Micah 5:1	Mt.27:30
Messiah would be spit upon	Is.50:6	Mk.14:65
Messiah would be nailed	Psalm 22:16	Jn.20:25
Messiah would be forsaken	Psalm 22:1	Mt.27:46
Messiah would be mocked	Psalm 22:7,8	Mt.27:39-44
Messiah would be pierced	Zech.12:10	Jn.19:34,37
Messiah would be raised from the dead	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:22-27
Messiah would come (again) in judgement	Zech.12-14	Rev.19

V. 5

"We usually do not associate the lowly donkey with kingship, but this was the royal animal of Jewish monarchs (I Ki. 2:32ff)" (Wiersbe, p. 76).

NOTE: Jesus made His first triumphal entry from the Mount of Olives on a donkey; He will make His next triumphal entry on a white horse! (Rev. 19).

V. 8

Note the honorable approach the people made for Christ. They literally made Him a road using their clothes and palm branches as the pavement.

V. 9

"***Hosanna***" - Save now!

Now is the time for you to deliver us!

Christ did do something to deliver them that very week! He died on a cross! But this was not the type of deliverance they wanted. "The crowd wanted salvation from the oppression of Rome" (Ryrie note).

V. 10

Christ's presence was so moving, so stirring that it got the attention of the whole city!

V. 11

The multitude never really did comprehend who Jesus was. They thought Him to be a mere "prophet." On this occasion they hailed him "*the Son of David,*" but when He did not fulfill their expectations, this fickle mob later cried out, "*Crucify Him, crucify Him!*" (Lk. 23:21).

Their Messiah had come! But they never realized it. (SEE: Mt. 23:37-39).

III. The <u>SPIRITUAL ZEAL</u> He Possessed (21:12-14)

V. 12

This is the second time Jesus cleansed the temple -- When He started His public ministry (Jn. 2:13-16), and now as He finishes His public ministry.

The temple which was to be a place of blessing had become a cursed place.

"Before the thousands of worshippers, the bewildered merchants, and the priests who happened to be present, Jesus made a shambles of the bazaar and declared the shame of those who profited from it. The whole arena was in confusion and disarray, with animals running loose, doves flying around, and money of all kinds rolling across the courtyard (leaving the merchants powerless and speechless)" (MacArthur, p. 269).

"***Cast out. . . overthrew***" - such actions paint our Lord as a revolutionary; as extremely serious and upset about the wickedness that went on in His house, the Temple.

Jesus was meek, but He was not weak! He was not a passive Messiah w ho overlooked the wickedness of His chosen nation.

Many would erroneously interpret Christ's actions as unloving. However, no one can love God without hating sin! *"Ye that love the LORD, hate evil"* (Ps. 97:10)

After the first cleansing of the Temple by Jesus (merely 3-1/2 years prior), the disciples knew why Jesus responded so vehemently (Jn. 2:17). They saw Psalm 69:9 vividly fulfilled, which says, *"For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me."*

V. 13

"My house shall be called the house of prayer" - (Is. 56:7; Jer. 7:11) the Temple was not for merchandising and ripping people off.

"You have made it a den of thieves" - Many would come to the money-changers to exchange their currency for Hebrew shekels so that they could give to God's house, only to be cheated by false balances and swindlers.

"What had begun as a service and convenience for visitors from other lands soon turned into a lucrative business" (Wierse, p. 77).

If the Lord responded this way over the defilement of a building, I"m sure he is deeply upset by alot which goes on in the name of Christianity today!

--the materialism of religions
--the exploitation of the cults
--the chaotic confusion of the Charismatics
--the liberalism that is invading mainline Evangelicalism
--Women preachers
--Schisms and divisions over doctrinal deviations
--the cultic tendencies of some who claim to be fundamentalists

V. 12

Is such harsh, strict, zealous behavior characteristic of the Messiah? Absolutely! Note: Psalm 2

V. 14

To show the perfect balance in Christ between His righteous indignation and His compassion, He, after wrecking the thieves den turns right to healing the blind and lame that came to Him.

IV. The PRAISE He Received (21:15-17)

V. 15

"***The wonderful things***" - not a positive response. The word "wonderful" means awesome, amazing, incredible, terrifying.

"***The children***" - very young children who were repeating perhaps what they had heard their parents shouting earlier.

"***They were sore displeased***" - they were indignant, incensed, hotly mad

(It's amazing how many unsaved people react when Jesus Christ is praised)

Earlier that day (perhaps just a few hours before), as Jesus descended from the Mount of Olives on a donkey, the people had said: "*...Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*" (Luke 19:38-40).

V. 16

Expecting Jesus to rebuke them and stone their chants of praise, the priests and scribes say, "Do you hear what they are saying? (implied, "Stop them!")

Christ's praise may not come from the lips of the wise, "*learned,*" the pseudo intellectuals, etc. But He receives His best praise from the lips of humble, sincere children and those of child-like faith.

It's amazing to see the truths that come out of the lips of children (truths many adults are too cowardly to utter). (EX: the time Katie (age 5 or 6) told Mohammed Yousry, an agnostic, that he was going to go to Hell, if he did not get saved).

V. 17

"***And he left them***" - Because of their rejection, the Messiah rejected them, and left them desolate of any hope for their eternal destiny (SEE: Mt. 23:37-39).

"***Bethany***" - was the residence of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus - people who recognized Jesus as Messiah and glorified Him as such.

NO one who has ever lived has had more hymns, songs, and choruses sung to Him and about Him than Jesus Christ!

He is the Messiah! And He is entitled to every bit of praise He is given and more! (SEE: Rev. 5:9-14).
Don't be ashamed to praise the Lord Jesus!

JESUCRISTO ES EL MESIAS

Mateo 20:29 - 21:1-17
Julio 10, 1994

INTRODUCCION:

Jesucristo -"el hijo de David"- es claramente el Mesías!

Cuatro senales que muestran que Jesucristo "el hijo de David" es el Mesias.

I. La Compasión que mostró (20:29-34)

II. La Profecía que completó (21:1-11)

III. El Celo Espiritual que poseía (21:12-14)

IV. La Adoración que recibió (21:15-17)

"A FRUITLESS PEOPLE"

Matthew 21:18 - 22:14

7/24/94

INTRODUCTION: A fruitless fig tree represented the barrenness of unbelieving Israel (21:18-22).

Nothing is quite as good as sinking your teeth into fresh, juicy fruit!

Even our Lord had such a desire when He walked this earth.

V. 18

"***He returned in the city***" - The Jewish capital - Jerusalem

"***He hungered***" - In His incarnation, Jesus' physical body needed food. What humiliation for the Creator to become dependent and to experience the pangs of hunger.

V. 19

"***Leaves only***" - Normally figs and leaves appear at the same time (actually, the figs would sprout first).

--It was the time for fruit as evidenced by the leaves. The tree should have produced!

--The tree had an <u>outward</u> show, but when inspected closely it had no fruit (it was promising, but had no produce).

"***The fig tree withered away***" - Jesus is not in the ministry of cursing fig trees. Why then such a severe miracle?

Answer: The barren fig tree was symbolic of the barren nation to whom Jesus ministered.

Frequently God used the fig tree to symbolize the nation of Israel (Jer. 8:13; Hosea 9:10, 1b; Luke 13:6-9).

"***Let no fruit grow on thee***" - The curse on this tree was actually an illustration of the Lord's judgment on the nation of Israel. A nation to whom Christ came, expecting fruit but finding none (Jn 1:11 - "*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*").

In the context, this account of the fig tree was an object lesson of the fruitlessness of the nation of Israel (cp. 21:41,43).

The Lord came to the nation hungry for fruit, but found none from that generation as a whole.

Their fruitlessness was an outward indication of their faithlessness. *"By their fruits ye shall know them."*

They refused to be connected to the Vine (Jesus Christ) so as to be fruitful (Jn. 14).

V. 20-22

Although the main point of the cursed fig tree was to illustrate Israel and her rejection of Christ, Jesus incidently responds to the disciples' wonder by teaching them a lesson on faith (Note: v. 21-22).

***Why didn't Israel accept Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior?**
(And why do people today refuse Him and the fruitful life He gives?)

I. **FEAR** (21:23-27)
(Many are too intimidated to acknowledge the truth)

V. 23

"By what authority doest these things" - They are no doubt referring to His cleansing of the temple (21:12-13), His healing in the Temple (21:14), and now His teaching in the temple (21:23).

"By what authority" - What right do you have? What a question to ask the Creator of all things! (It's a bit like asking the president of a company what right he had to make decisions in that company).

"Who gave you this authority" - It was God, the Father!

V. 24

Jesus offers a pre-requisite to giving His answer to them.

Christ's response was a quick and efficient way to trap these religionists in their hypocrisy and inconsistencies.

V. 25

Christ is asking: "Who gave John his authority to preach repentance and to baptize -- God or men?"

If John the Baptist received his authority from Heaven, then they should have believed him. And if they would have believed John, they would have believed in Christ, because John (as the forerunner) pointed men to Christ.

They were afraid of Christ's response if they answered one way, and they feared the people's response if they answered the other way. So they bailed out with a response of dumb ignorance.

Prov. 29:25 - "*The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putting his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*"

John 7:13 - "*Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.*"

(cp. the cowardice of the parents of the man born blind - John 9:21 - 22 - "*But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*")

The first word God uses to describe those who will be in the Lake of Fire is "*fearful*" (Rev. 21:8).

To this very day, many Jews stay as far away from Christ as possible for fear of what their family, friends, peers, and religious associates might think and do!

The only One we should fear is God (Eccl. 12:13; I Pet. 2:17).

V. 27

Why wouldn't Jesus tell them that His authority was from Heaven? If they would not accept John's authority and message, neither would they accept Christ's.

Jesus doesn't give answers to those who really don't want answers.

II. STUBBORNNESS (21:28-32)

(Many are too stiff-necked to repent from unbelief)

V. 31

The dishonest publicans and the immoral harlots originally rejected God's prodding in their lives, but eventually they surrendered and obeyed; whereas the Israelite nation as a whole had lip service to God and His ways, but did not do His will (God's will was that they come to repentance and turn to Christ - II Pet. 3:9).

V. 32

"***When ye had seen it?***" - Although they saw the life-changing transformation that God did in the lives of the publicans and harlots (through John's witness and example), they did not repent.

They had seen a real, bonified man of God; they had witnessed the wicked becoming righteous (through the power of God), and yet their hearts were unyielding, unbending; they would not give in to the convicting work of the Spirit who empowered John's message and showed the authenticity of Christianity by the miraculous changes it produced.

Dt. 9:13, 10:16 - "*Furthermore the Lord spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. . . Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.*"

Acts 7:51 - "*Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*"

To you who may have been too proud to humble yourselves before God, II Chronicles 30:8 says, "*Now be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord. . .*"

Beware of being mule-headed, obstinate, set in your ways, impliable (like hardened clay); don't allow a hard shell to cover your heart and prevent God from moving you and convicting you, etc.

When was the last time you wept over your sin?

How open are you to God's voice (Word)?

III. IRREVERENCE (21:33-46)

(Many are too impious [disrespectful) to accept God's Son)

The interpretation:

1. "***Householder***" = God the Father
2. "***Husbandmen***" = the nation of Israel
3. "***Servants***" = the Old Testament prophets, up to John the Baptist
4. "***His Son***" = Jesus Christ
5. "***Other Husbandmen***" = the Gentiles (v. 41; cp. v. 31-32)

V. 36

As Jesus said, they had killed all the prophets from A to Z (See: Mt. 23:33-35).

V. 37

"***Last of all***" - Note: There was no Messiah to follow after Jesus Christ. He is the only and final voice for God (not Muhammed, Joseph Smith, etc.)

V. 41

They put their foot in their own mouths with their answer.

V. 42

Jesus is the Cornerstone!

The builders evaluated Him and did not want Him to reign over them.

V. 43

"***A nation***" - (*ethei*) the same word as "Gentiles"

V. 44

Whoever stumbles over Jesus shall be broken; and if people do not repent, Jesus will crush them in judgment (cp. Dan. 2:44).

Is Jesus your Cornerstone, or your Judgment Meteor?

V. 46

They had no power to take Him until His mission was fully accomplished (Mk. 14:41).

Note verse 37 again.

Today such irreverence and dishonor is aimed at Christ.

--His name is cursed by many.

--He is profaned and viewed as a mere man or prophet.

V. 37

"***They will reverence my Son***" - Did they respect Jesus? He who was and is worthy of equal honor with the Father (Jn. 5:23) was dishonored.

IV. **INDIFFERENCE** (22:1-10)
(Many are too preoccupied to be concerned about spiritual matters)

V. 2
"***King***" - God the Father

"***Son***" - Jesus Christ

"***Servants***" - prophets and apostles

"***Them that were bidden***" - the Jewish people

V. 5

In some cultures it is much more of an insult and offence not to come to a wedding upon being invited.

"***But they made light of it***" - They paid no attention to the invitation; they could "care less"; it was of no interest to them. It was no big deal. They no doubt yawned at the invitation. Other worldly things had captured their attention and interest. The affairs of this life had such a grip on them that spiritual things did not matter.

Just as Lot's family ignored him "*as one that mocked*" (Gen. 19:14) and were crushed by the destruction of Sodom and Gommorah, so will those who don't take seriously the Gospel of Christ face destruction.

Many times I've witnessed to people who clearly did not give two cents for what I was saying. They would stare at me glassy-eyed, their mind somewhere else. Many times they would even call the message "Nonsense" etc.

Many today are too pre-occupied with education, career, money, pleasure, houses, etc. The "Wall Street Journal" gets their attention, but not the Scriptures. Christ has no appeal to them.

But those of us who know Him, we would rather walk through the Arabian Desert with no water than not to have the water of life. Nothing matches the surpassing greatness of knowing christ and being part of His wedding bride.

V. 6

Not only were they indifferent, they were downright antagonistic toward Christ and His servants ("*He that is not with me is against me*" - Mt. 12:30).

One way of striking out at Christ is to strike out at His servants (this is their attempt to extinguish the message they hear).

V. 7
"***Wroth***" - God's wrath is on the unbelievers (Jn. 3:36).

"***His armies***" - Even the pagan army of Rome was God's tool to accomplish His judgment

"***Burned up their city***" - Jerusalem was burned in 70 A.D.

V. 9

"***Go ye therefore into the highways***" - The first time the "Great Commission" is hinted at in the New Testament.

V. 10

"***Both bad and good***" - Both moral and immoral; both ethical and the despicable; both kind-hearted and the evil-hearted. Technically none are "*good*" (Mt. 19:17); none righteous (Rom. 3:10); all have sinned (Rom. 3:23).

"***The wedding was furnished***" - One day a wedding will occur in Heaven and believers will comprise the Bride (Rev. 19).

V. SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (22:11-14)

(Many are too self-satisfied to see their need for Christ's righteousness)

V. 11

Don't press every detail of a parable; God is not teaching that people will make it to Heaven and then be kicked out. The point is that they will not inherit eternal life.

V. 12

"***Friend***" - This word shows the affection God has even for those who do not come to Him on His terms.

"***A wedding garment***" - The only suitable garment we can wear is the imputed righteousness of Christ (II Cor. 5:21; Rev. 3:5, 6:11, 19:8-9; Is. 61:10 - "*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*").

"***He was speechless***" - No alibies, excuses, or pleas are offered! This one knew better.

V. 13

This teaches the awful fate of those who don't have on a wedding garment.

Hell will be a place of:

1) Bondage ("***Bind him***")

2) Separation ("***Take him away***")

3) Darkness ("***weeping***")

4) Regret

5) Torment ("***gnashing of teeth***")

V. 14

"***Many are called***" - Invited, summoned

Salvation is offered to all, but is only given to those who are dressed in Christ's righteousness.

"***Few are chosen***" - In the parable, this man was not chosen because he thought he could make it without meeting the qualifications (SEE: Rom. 10:1-4).

Many who think they are right with God and clean are dressed in "***filthy rags***" (Is. 64:6).

--the rags of religion
--the rags of baptism
--the rags of morality

CONCLUSION:

"A FRUITLESS PEOPLE"

Matthew 21:18 - 22:14

7/24/94

INTRODUCTION: A fruitless fig tree represented the barrenness of unbelieving Israel (21:18-22).

***Why didn't Israel accept Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior?**
(And why do people today refuse Him and the fruitful life He gives?)

I. **FEAR** (21:23-27)
(Many are too intimidated to acknowledge the truth)

II. **STUBBORNNESS** (21:28-32)
(Many are too stiff-necked to repent from unbelief)

III. **IRREVERENCE** (21:33-46)
(Many are too impious [disrespectful) to accept God's Son)

IV. **INDIFFERENCE** (22:1-10)
(Many are too preoccupied to be concerned about spiritual matters)

V. **SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS** (22:11-14)
(Many are too self-satisfied to see their need for Christ's righteousness)

CONCLUSION:

"JESUS HAS THE ANSWER"

Matthew 22:15-46

7/31/94

INTRODUCTION:

Still smarting from the treatment they received in Christ's series of parables He had aimed at them (Mt. 20-21), the religion leaders now seek to trap Him with a series of "loaded" questions (Wiersbe, p. 79).

In verses 15-40, Matthew purposely and systematically cites Christ's rejection by the Jewish religious leaders of His day.

Their rejection of Christ is seen in three attempts to interrogate Him and to trip Him up or entangle Him in His words.

They like a prosecuting attorney in a courtroom scene fire questions at Jesus seeking to find some contradiction, some inconsistency, any inaccuracy, a slight blunder, error, mistake, any doctrinal heresy, any disloyalty to God or government (any politically incorrect statement).

What is thrilling is how Christ:

--immediately answers their questions (with no time for thought as to what to say or the articulate way of saying it);

--concisely answers their questions (with no "fat" that could be maligned and used to discredit the pillars of His arguments);

--profoundly answers their questions with answers that leave the inquirers baffled, dumb-founded, and amazed

(Note: V. 22 "*they marvelled*"; v. 33 "*they were astonished*"; SEE v. 46)

Christ's response to their questions, and the question He Himself asks shows that He was Who they thought He wasn't -- the Messiah! The King of Israel! God Almighty!

Note: The main points of this outline are adapted from Warren Wiersbe.

***No question could snare the Son of God! Got any questions? - He has the answers!**

I. Jesus answers. . .
A POLITICAL QUESTION ABOUT TAXES (v. 15-22)

V. 15

"***The Pharisees***" - Self-righteous religious "extremists" Everything about them looked and smelled "religious," but they stunk with hypocrisy (Mt. 23).

"***Entangle***" - They planned and plotted a way of ensnaring or trapping Jesus in His words. They wanted to say, "I caught you!" when they would find some inconsistency or contradiction in His teaching.

V. 16

In order to "***trap Him***" the Pharisees send to Him people with two totally different views of taxation. So if Jesus would swing either way in His answer, they could trap Him and accuse Him of an injustice.

They interrogate Jesus with "***their disciples***" and with the Herodians.

1) Their "disciples" - Jews who were made "*two-fold more the child of hell*" than their teachers (23:15), who supported Judaism (they believed in giving to God not government; they believed the land was God's not Caesars)

2) The "Herodians" - Jews who supported the Herodian dynasty (peace at any price) - they supported Rome and Caesar.

It's amazing how when it comes to opposing Christ, heathen of differing views, religions, philosophies (who can never get together on anything) can suddenly find common ground and unite in a common task to fight against Christ and Christianity.

"***Neither carest thou for any man***" - You don't "take sides," you are not swayed by men.

"***Regardest not the person of men***" - You don't show preferential, impartial or prejudiced treatment to people or parties.

V. 17

"***Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar***" - Is it in accordance with the Law (Torah) to pay taxes to government.

V. 18

The omniscient Lord Jesus saw right through their masks and "***perceived their wickedness***". He saw their well-covered trap!

If He said, "Yes, you should pay tribute to Caesar" - the Pharisees' disciples could accuse Him of being disloyal to Judaism (and send the religious inquisition after Him and hang Him as a heretic).

If he answered, "No, you should not pay taxes to Caesar," the Herodians could accuse Him of being disloyal to Caesar (and send the "IRS" after Him and hang Him as a tax evader).

V. 19

"***Shew me the tribute money***" - Jesus knew what it looked like, but wanted the coin as a convicting object lesson.

"***A penny***" - a denarius

V. 20

"***Whose portrait*** (picture) ***and whose name is stamped on the coin?***" Jesus asks.

V. 21

Jesus in His answer wisely and appropriately does not swing one way or the other, but teaches that we should give to government what is due them and should give to god what is due Him!

"***Render to Caesar***" - Pay your taxes

> (Rom. 13:7 - "*Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*"
>
> Don't practice tax evasion, hire workers "under the table," cheat on your income tax returns, or slug the toll booths or ignore your parking tickets.

"***Render to God***" - Give your tithes and offerings

> "***the things that are God's***" - Certain things that we have already belong to God. These words show an obligatory responsibility that we have toward God. What is owed God when it comes to money?
>
> --God commanded Israel to "pay" a tithe (10% to Him) (SEE: Mal. 3:8-12; cp. Lev. 27:30; Prov. 3:9-10, 11:24-26).
>
> --The practice of the New Testament believer was to give to God through the local church when they gathered on Sunday (I Cor. 16:1-2; cp. II Cor. 9:6-12).

By showing a distinction between God and government, Christ's answer shows how He favored a separation between church and state (i.e. the state [Caesar] is distinct from the Church, and the state is not to control the church, nor is the church to be a state church like the R.C.C. of the Dark Ages).

II. Jesus answers. . .
A DOCTRINAL QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION (v. 23-33)

V. 23

"Sadducees" **-**

Whereas a "Pharisee" was self-righteous and thought that his good works would get him to Heaven [That is why "I'm so 'fair-you-see'!"], a "Sadducee" did not believe in life after death, he denied the resurrection ["That is why I'm so 'sad-you-see'!"]

--They did not have the faith of Joseph, who requested his bones be buried in the land of promise because of his faith in the resurrection (Gen. 50:24-25; Heb. 1:22).

--They did not believe the words of ancient Job who said, *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."*

--Nor did they have faith like King David, who said: *"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."*

--They did not trust the words of the prophet Daniel who predicted (Dan. 12:2-3).

--Perhaps they ignorant of the prophecy through Ezekiel who heard God say, *"Son of man, can these bones live?"* (v. 3). . . *"Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord."* (Ezek. 37:5-6).

V. 24

"Seed" = Children. SEE: Deut. 25:5-6; Gen. 38:8.

"The object of such a marriage law (a Levirate marriage) was to perpetuate the line of the dead brother and to keep his property within the family" (Ryrie note)

V. 25

"There were with us seven brethren" **-** Whether their story is true or fictitious is uncertain. They may have lied to make up a scenario that Jesus would have to answer.

V. 28

They no doubt with self-confident smirks on their faces asked this question, thinking they had trapped Jesus.

V. 29

Everyone errs (is lead astray) who does not know the Scriptures (the surest way to prevent a life of error is to know God's Word!).

V. 30

Concerning their ignorance of the Scriptures, they thought that there was marriage in Heaven, whereas the Bible no where teaches this.

(Marriage is a bonding limited to this life - "*till death do we part*" Cp. Rom. 7:1ff)

"There will be no need for marriage in the next life because there will be no death. Therefore it will not be necessary to bear children to replace those who die" (Wiersbe, p. 81).

We do not become angels (EX: The man "earning his wings" in the old film "It's a Wonderful Life") - but are "***as***" angels.

"***As the angels***" - Angels are not male and female; do not cohabitate; do not marry; do not reproduce.

If you don't like your gender, wait a while. You will be "neuter" in eternity!

V. 32

Since the Sadducees only based their beliefs solely on the Pentateuch (the first five books of Moses), Jesus quotes it to again show them their ignorance of the Scriptures, and that their own Law proved there was life after death.

Jesus bases His whole point on the tense of the verb. "*I am*" (presently) not "*I was*" (which would imply that they were dead and gone.

Jesus was saying, "These patriarchs are still alive today!"

(cp. the presence of Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration - Mt. 17:3).

Those who die as believers go straight into the presence of God as living spirits (Rev. 6:7) awaiting their future bodily resurrection (I Cor. 15:5ff; I Th. 4; Rev. 20).

III. Jesus answers. . .
AN ETHICAL QUESTION ABOUT THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT
(v. 34-40)

V. 35

"***Tempting Him***" - testing Him

After hearing Christ's good answer to the Sadducees, this lawyer (doctor of the Law of God; a master in the Scriptures) tested Him with an ethics exam.

The Jews of Christ's day had documented 613 commandments in the Law (248 positive and 365 negative) (Wiersbe, p. 81).

V. 36

"***The great commandment***" - Which command is paramount? reigns supreme? ranks as the top? is first and foremost?

Loving God is not merely a N.T. priority, but is an eternal priority that also applied to the Old Testament saint.

SEE - Deut. 6:4-7
Deut. 10:12

HOW should we love God?

"Heart . . . soul . . . mind. . . strength" = Love Him with your whole being; with everything you have.

When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:

1. The center of my affections

   "Heart" - my inner being which thinks, feels, and chooses (what I feel deeply about reflects my priorities).

2. The center of my life

   "Soul" - the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life (what I live for reflects my priorities).

3. The center of my thoughts

"Mind" - my ideas, convictions, thoughts, philosophies of life should revolve around God. (what I spend my time thinking about [dwelling on, pondering] reflects my priorities).

4. The center of my activity

"Strength" - my physical ability (so translated in I Pet. 4:11), talents, etc., should be used for God (what I use my abilities on reflects my priorities)

WHY should we love God?

1. Loving God is the key to obedience
(the greatest stimulus [motivating factor] to obeying God is to love Him)

I Jn. 5:3 - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."

--Love makes obedience easy!

The reason "Love" is stated as the top priority attitude is because it is the motivating factor behind everything we do.

If one loves God, he will seek to please God.
If one loves God, he will be holy.
If one loves God, he will do right.
If one loves God, he will keep His commandments.
--John 14:15, 21

2. Loving God is the key to close fellowship with Christ

Jn. 14:23 - "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."
I Cor. 8:3 - "But if any man love God, the same is known of Him."
Ja. 4:8 - "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you . . ."

3. Loving God is the key to blessedness.

Showers of benefits fall upon those who make it their priority to love God.

Rom. 8:28 - "...All things work together for good to them that love God..."

Ja. 1:12 - "He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

*SEE Psalm 91:14-16

If the greatest command is to love God, then the greatest sin is to not love Him!

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22).

God foretold that in the last days men would be "lovers of their own selves . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:2, 4).
As the End draws near, lovelessness will be a sign: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt. 24:12).

V. 39

Note: Jesus does not command us to "love ourselves"; we automatically do already (Eph. 5:29 - *"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church")*

It is natural to love yourself; it is supernatural to love others int he same way as you love yourself.

How do you know when you are loving others the same way as you love yourself? Ask yourself: What do you do to help or benefit yourself? Do the same for others.

You are concerned about:
--Your relationship with God . . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your health, wealth, prosperity. . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your protection. . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your pleasure . . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your success . . . then concern yourself with others'

If you love God, totally, you will love others mutually.

A true love for God will manifest itself in a love for others who were made in God's image. No one can love God without loving our brother (I Jn. 4:20, 21).

Christ's combines Lev. 19:18 with Deut. 6:5 to summarize the whole Law.

V. 40
All of the Old Testament Law and prophets could be hung on these two commands. The pole that supports the hanger holding all of God's commands is love.

Rom. 13:9-10 - *"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*
Gal. 5:14 - *"For all the law if fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

CONCLUSION: Jesus asks a question to provoke thought regarding Christ's true nature (v. 41-46).

Now the Interrogated interrogates; now the Questioned asks questions.

V. 42

"***Christ***" - the Messiah; teh Anointed One (who in their minds was not Jesus).

"***In Spirit***" - What David wrote in the Psalms, he wrote under the control of the Holy Spirit.

V. 44

"***Lord***" = Hebrew *Adonai* (a title for deity)

Every Jewish expert in the Law interpreted Psalm 110 as Messianic and v. 1 as specifically referring to the Messiah, since no one else had the right to sit at Yahweh's right hand.

V. 45

David's calling the "*Christ*" "*Lord*" proves three things:

1) Christ was pre-existent to David
2) Christ was pre-dominant over David (*my Lord*")
3) Christ was pre-eminent over everything (He is Deity)

SEE: Mark 12:32-37 for the connection between the lawyer acknowledging monotheism (one "God") with Christ's implicit teaching that He as the "*Lord*" of David is Deity.

Because they did not have the courage to admit that Jesus was the Christ, they did not have the courage to ask Him any more questions.

V. 46

Every question they asked just added more weight to Him being the Messiah by how He answered it. With every question, they were "digging their own graves." His responses muzzled them!

Who is Jesus? Those who questioned Him so as to trap Him didn't know who He was. They failed to realize that He was the Lord, whom they were to "*love with all their heart*" (I Cor. 16:22 - "*If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema. Maranatha.*")

He was the One who is the "*resurrection and the life*" (Jn. 11:25). He is the God to whom we are to render our entire lives (like Paul, who considered himself a slave of Jesus Christ - Rom. 1:1). Christ is the ultimate object of our giving.

University, said that he could not believe that God would create man and then desert him at the grave. In that statement, Professor Dana summarized the hope that, to one degree or another, has captured virtually every heart in every culture in every time.

The ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead* is filled with ideas and stories about life after death. In the tomb of the great pharaoh Cheops, who died some 5,000 years ago, archaeologists discovered a solar boat intended for him to use in sailing through the heavens during the next life. Ancient Greeks often placed a coin in the mouth of a corpse to pay his fare across the mystic river of death into the land of immortal life. Some American Indians buried a pony and bow and arrows with a dead warrior in order that he could ride and hunt in the happy hunting grounds. Norsemen buried a dead hero's horse with him so he could ride proudly in the next life. Eskimos of Greenland who died in childhood were customarily buried with a dog to help guide them through the cold wasteland of death.

Benjamin Franklin, who did not claim to be a Christian in the biblical sense, nevertheless had the following epitaph inscribed on his tombstone:

The body of
Benjamin Franklin, printer,
(Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents worn out,
And stript of its lettering and gilding)
Lies here, food for worms!
Yet the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will, as he believed, appear once more
In a new
And more beautiful edition,
Corrected and amended
By its Author!

Despite many strange and unbiblical aberrations regarding the subject, men feel the pull of the afterlife. The Jews of Jesus' day were certainly no exception. Belief in the resurrection of the body is taught throughout the Talmud, the ancient codification of Jewish oral and written tradition. The apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees, written about 100 B.C., describes a Jewish elder named Razis who greatly resented Greek oppression. Rather than be executed by the hated Greeks, he decided to take his own life. Standing on a rock in front of a large crowd, he disemboweled himself with his sword and threw his entrails into the crowd, in vain hope "calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to give [his discarded organs] back to him again" (14:46). In the Apocalypse of Baruch, written nearly 200 years later, the expectation is expressed that when a person dies he will come back to life in the same form in which he died.

> The earth shall then assuredly restore the dead, which it now receiveth in order to preserve them. It shall make no change in their form, but as it hath received, so shall it preserve them, and as it delivered them unto it, so shall it restore them. . . . For then it will be necessary to show to the living that the dead have come to life again, and that those who had departed have returned. . . . They shall respectively be transformed . . . into the splendour of angels . . . and time shall no longer age them. For in the heights of that world shall they dwell, and they shall be made like unto the angels, and be made equal to the stars, and they shall be changed into every form they desire, from beauty into loveliness and from light into the splendour of glory. (50:2-51:10)

Much more important and reliable than those writings, of course, were the Old Testament statements regarding life after death. David wrote, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely. For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay" (Ps. 16:9-10). Another psalmist declared, "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; for He will receive me" (Ps. 49:15), and still another that, "With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24). Hosea wrote, "Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded us, but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day that we may live before Him" (Hos. 6:1-2). In perhaps the clearest teaching of resurrection in the Old Testament, the Lord promised through Daniel that "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" (Dan. 12:2).

For the most part, therefore, Jews not only believed in life after death but in the resurrection of the body. The one exception were the Sadducees, who in that and other ways were at odds with the rest of Jewish theology and culture. It was representatives of that sect who asked Jesus the second in a series of three questions designed to entrap Him (see also 22:15-22; 34-40).

The Approach

On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Him and questioned Him, (22:23)

It was still Wednesday, as Jesus continued to teach in the Temple after having driven the merchants out of it the previous day (21:12, 23). Sometime later **on that day**, after He had put to silence the disciples of the Pharisees and their Herodian co-conspirators (22:16), **some Sadducees** attempted to succeed where the others had failed.

The **Sadducees** were the smallest but by far the most wealthy and influential of the Jewish sects, which included the Pharisees, the Zealots, and the Essenes. The Pharisees were the most numerous, the most popular, the most outwardly religious. They held strongly to external customs and practices and were legalistic to the core, firmly believing that their works gained them acceptance with God. For them, the

"JESUS HAS THE ANSWER"

Matthew 22:15-46
7/31/94

INTRODUCTION:

***No question could snare the Son of God! Got any questions? - He has the answers!**

I. Jesus answers. . .
A <u>POLITICAL</u> QUESTION ABOUT <u>TAXES</u> (v. 15-22)

II. Jesus answers. . .
A <u>DOCTRINAL</u> QUESTION ABOUT THE <u>RESURRECTION</u> (v. 23-33)

III. Jesus answers. . .
AN <u>ETHICAL</u> QUESTION ABOUT THE <u>GREATEST COMMANDMENT</u>
(v. 34-40)

CONCLUSION: Jesus asks a question to provoke thought regarding Christ's true nature (v. 41-46).

How To Be Cured of. . .
"THE PHARISEE SYNDROME"

Matthew 23:1-12
8/7/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

It's difficult to be sick. What's even worse is to be sick and to go to a hospital only to be treated by inept doctors who themselves are sick, ignorant, and disorganized (EX: Katie's visit to a Queens Hospital for stitches).

Eccl. 10:1 - "*Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.*"

Nothing is quite as disgusting as people who have a reputation for spiritual wisdom and honor to be inconsistent, hypocritical, and arrogant.

There is a sickness in the Body of Christ today. It's not the AIDS virus (Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome). Today I will call it "SAPS" - "The Scribe and Pharisee Syndrome."

Such a sickness "saps" Christianity of its power; it "saps" your testimony of its credibility; it "saps" you of your usefulness to the cause of Christ.

V. 1

"***The multitudes and tot His disciples***" -This lesson applies to both laymen and "clergy" alike.

Every one who seeks to serve the Lord needs to sit up and take notice of how to serve and how not to serve.

V. 2

The verb "***sit***" is middle voice in the Greek, which means they "*seated themselves in Moses' seat.*" (cp. NASV). They made themselves substitute replacements for Moses.

They assumed a position of authority God never gave them. Many are in positions of spiritual authority today who were never "called" to it by God. They are self-appointed, self-ordained ministers (who for the supposed fame/glory/or "fortune" seized a position God didn't have for them).

***Avoid "Pharisaical" Christianity!**

I. PRACTICE what you PREACH (v. 3-4)

(The Pharisees had good advice but were bad examples)

V. 3

Jesus told them to . . . Do what they say, don't do what they do.

"***Observe and do***" - Guard the truth and practice it.

It is wrong to discredit a principle or position just because of the inconsistencies (or hypocrisy) of the ones who preached it (EX: the 1994 Pensacola pro-life murderer, an anti-abortionist who killed an abortion doctor).

Scriptural precept should always be followed even when the proponents of it are riddled with inconsistencies and personal failures.

What God says is still true and trustworthy even when the channel of communication is shady and suspect.

--Children, you should do the right your parents tell you even though they themselves don't do it (pray for them to practice what they preach).

--Members and friends, you should do the right you are fed from this pulpit even if you were to detect what seem to be flaws in my own character and conduct.

V. 4

These religious hucksters exploited the people. They treated them like "beasts of burden," loading them with ministry, religious works, and moral responsibilities that they would not lift a pinky to relieve.

Any preacher who cannot "roll up his sleeves" and work with the people even in the most menial tasks should not be in the ministry.

Some think they are too important to dirty themselves with what it takes to lead sheep and to set a practical example for them to follow (Note: Balance and priorities must not be neglected. God's ministers are not above any mundane task, but must not get side-tracked by it - Acts 6:1ff).

Don't ever ask someone else to do something that you yourself are unwilling to do.

Doctrine is supposed to produce duty.

Right teaching should be followed with right living.

(What set God's religion apart from all others was its practical application to life. It wasn't supposed to be theory or philosophy, but a moral code of ethics)

The most effective medium to use to make a striking impact on people is a visual aid. I can't think of a better visual aid than a real-life example (a sincere model).

"Most people would rather see a sermon than hear one!"

Set an example (model) for your family, co-workers, neighbors, etc.

Nothing is as compelling as a real, flesh & blood, true, authentic example.

Nothing is as sickening as someone who gives everyone else the medicine they need, but does not take it themselves.

Don't be all "lip" if you don't have a "life" to back it up!

"Your walk talks and your talk talks,
but your walk talks louder than your talk talks!"

II. EXAMINE your MOTIVES (v. 5-10)

(The Pharisees impressed people but displeased God)

V. 5

"***All their works they do for to be seen of men***" - Their sole reason, their driving motive, their only incentive for the good things they did was to catch the eye of men, to gain the attention of their peers, to impress people.

They could have won an "Academy award" for their talented acting, their pretence, their facade.

"***All their works***" - Every one of their religious deeds - the classes they taught, the worship they led, the giving, praying, fasting, etc. It was all a show, an act.

Why should we do right? Why should you obey God's Word?

Our ultimate motive ought to be God-centered not self-centered or man-centered.

The reason we do what we do must be: 1) to please Him and 2) to glorify Him, that His heart be filled with joy and that His honor be expressed to others.

Don't pursue vain. . .

A. Appearances of spirituality (v. 5)

"***Phylactery***" - "was a square leather box which contained four strips of parchment on which were written Deut. 6:4-9, 11:13-21, and Exodus 13:1-10. During prayer one was worn on the forehead between the eyebrows and another on the left arm close to the elbow. They were held in place by leather bands" (Ryrie note).

So as to attract more attention to themselves, they would tie larger than normal phylacteries to their foreheads and arms.

Instead of wearing a size 3, they would use a size 13!

The borders" - the fringes or tassels that hung from the hem of their garments were widened and lengthened so as to capture more attention to their spirituality.

These fringes were to remind the wearers of God's commands (like "tying a string around the finger," these tassels and cords of blue were to serve as a reminder of obedience to God's Word (SEE: Numbers 15:37-40).

Today, many Christians judge other Christians by how "spiritual" they look. They critique:

--hair length
--dress length and style
--no shaving legs, no make-up (Pentacostalism)

--Note: Others go to opposite extremes; they strive to look worldly so as to cram their Christian liberty down the throats of those they view as "legalists."

Other appearances of spirituality people put on:

1) Deep, monotone, KJV English prayers, but not from the heart

2) Religious lingo (when around Christians their vocabulary changes drastically)

3) Giving to be noticed by men

B. Positions of pre-eminence (v. 6)

"***Uppermost rooms***" - places where the guests of ho nor would sit at a banquet.

"***Chief seats***" - chairs of importance. The larger seats where the important rabbis sat.

There are practical reasons why you shouldn't seek seats of pre-eminence. One is that you may be humiliated and told to take a lesser seat, whereas if you had taken the less important place and were asked to move up, you should be honored (Prov. 25:6-7 - "*Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.*") (SEE: Luke 14:7-11)

The Pharisees thought too much of their own importance. With inflated egos and a desire to be known and popular they would seek positions of pre-eminence.

Honor is not something you get by grabbing it; it is bestowed on you by someone who thinks you are worthy! God knows whether or not we are worthy of honor. Let Him put it on the hearts of others to honor you; don't seek it!

C. Titles of importance (v. 7-10)

"***In the markets***" - out where the crowds gathered to shop.

They would love it when a crowd was gathered around them and someone would yell out, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" Their chest would dwell in pride and an aura of importance would inflate their ego.

"***Rabbi***" - an authoritative teacher of God's Word.

The only one who has a right to teach with independent authority is Christ! (Mt. 7:29).

The rest of us are in the same boat, on the same level; we have no authority of our own; but we interpret the authority of another -- the Word of Christ!

"***Father***" - not speaking of a parent, but of a "spiritual father," a man whom you are utterly depend on for spiritual guidance.

The only "spiritual Father" we have is in Heaven. We are spiritual children of God, not children of some human pope.

It is an abomination to call a priest "father" or to address the pope as "pope." (which is from the Latin *papa* meaning Daddy or Father). The believers' only pontiff is in Heaven!

"Paul referred to himself as a 'spiritual father' because he had begotten people through the Gospel (I Cor. 4:15). But he did not ask them to use that term when addressing him" (Wiersbe, p. 84).

"***Masters***" - An expert in spiritual matters, who gives unquestioned, authoritative leadership to followers (Note: Do you know what an "expert" is according to a etymological definition? "*Ex*" is a has been; and a "*spert*" is a drip under pressure!).

The only ultimate perfect leader we are to follow is Christ (I Cor. 11:1 - "*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*")

It is to Christ we pledge total allegiance. Every "cult" is a "cult" because it follows without question the absolute authority of a human leader(s).

Many pursue theological training to have M.Div., Th.M., D.D., Th.D. printed after their name. Others covet honorary doctor's degrees (EX: William Carey's being called "Dr. Carey" by Alexander Duff).

III. HUMBLE yourself and SERVE others (v. 11-12)

(The Pharisees exalted themselves but were abased by God)

V. 11

True greatness (as God measures it) is determined by what type of servant you are to others.

It is not the one who is served who is great, but the one who serves.

The more people you serve, the greater your honor (hence, the government leader of England is called "The Prime Minister").

Don't make it your goal in life to have people wait on you, drop grapes in your mouth, and fan you. . . Get busy serving Christ by serving His children!

Do you have a servant's heart?

Jesus washed the disciples' feet (SEE: John 13:4-5, 12-17).

V. 12

"***Whosoever***" - God can humble anybody! (no one is too big for God to squash!)

One of the seven things God hates is a "*proud look*" (Prov. 6:17).

"*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall*" (Prov. 16:18).

"*The Lord will destroy the house of the proud*" (Prov. 15:2)

--Ask Nebuchadnezzar (who boasted over Babylon) if God can abase (humble) the proud (Dan. 4)

--Ask Hezekiah (who boasted of his vast wealth) if God abases the proud (II Ki. 20:12-18; cp. II Chron. 32:25)

--Ask Uzziah (who usurped the role of priest) if God abases the proud (II Chron. 26:16-20)

--Ask Herod Agrippa if God abases the proud (Acts f12:20-23).

"***Shall be exalted***" - (passive) It is God who does the lifting up! Promotion is from Him. He is the best elevator.

"God resisteth the proud, but gives grace to the humble...Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time" (I Peter 5:5-6).

If you "lift up yourself", such promotion is not real. Nothing is quite as cheap as someone who "toots his own horn."

Ps. 75:6-7 - "*For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, But God is the judge: He putteth down one, nd setteth up another.*"

Prov. 27:2 - "*Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.*"

We must die to self promotion; die to the pursuit of fame (popularity), success (prosperity), etc. Only then can God raise us up.

CONCLUSION:

How To Be Cured of. . .
"THE PHARISEE SYNDROME"

Matthew 23:1-12
8/7/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 2

***Avoid "Pharisaical" Christianity!**

I. **PRACTICE what you PREACH (v. 3-4)**
(The Pharisees had good advice but were bad examples)

II. **EXAMINE your MOTIVES (v. 5-10)**
(The Pharisees impressed people but displeased God)

Don't pursue vain. . .

A. Appearances of spirituality (v. 5)

B. Positions of pre-eminence (v. 6)

C. Titles of importance (v. 7-10)

III. **HUMBLE yourself and SERVE others (v. 11-12)**
(The Pharisees exalted themselves but were abased by God)

CONCLUSION:

"MASKS"

Matthew 23:13-39
8/21/94

INTRODUCTION:

How is it that one can profess salvation, serve the Lord, go to bible school, teach Bible classes, witness to others of Christ, pray in public, etc., and then apostacize, leave church, abandon his Christian principles, and embrace the world?

Answer: He/she was a hypocrite (who played a part for a time, but wasn't really the person he/she portrayed).

Note the phrase repeated seven times: "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*" (v. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29)

The word "***woe***" occurs 8 times in this chapter, expressing the woeful, horrible, miserable fate that awaits the hypocrite.

". . . *The hypocrite's hope shall perish*" (Job 8:13).

When asked, "Why don't you get saved?" - many respond "Because there are too many hypocrites claiming to be saved." When asked "Where do hypocrites go when they die?" they answer, "Hell." The question now is, "Why do you want to go to hell and be with them forever??"

The word "***hypocrites***" *(hypokritai)* means one who answers or speaks out from underneath a covering; the word was used of actors who pretended to be someone they were not. These Greek and Roman stage actors would speak behind large masks and alter their voice to conceal their real identity and to match the person they pretended to be.

Matthew 233 is arguably the most scathing, denouncing, humiliating message in the Bible.

Christ's sermon is very pointed, very honest (true), and very hot!

The fervor with which this message is delivered shows how repulsive hypocrisy is to God.

Hypocrisy is totally the opposite of the nature of God. It is a lie, while God is truth; it is fake, while God is real and genuine; it is deceitful, while God is trustworthy.

One is never more like the devil [who can disguise himself as an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14)] than when one pretends to be something he/she is not.

*** Are you guilty of wearing a "Christian Mask"?**

Beware of the "7 Acts" of the religious hypocrite!



Act One: ***False <u>PREACHING</u>*** *(v.13)*
They teach of <u>Heaven</u>, but <u>slam the Door</u> in people's faces

"***Shut up***" - to close off; to slam a door shut.

These people who boasted of Heaven, taught of Heaven, actually thwarted others from entering Heaven!

Why? Because they denied that Jesus was the <u>way</u>. They did not teach that He was the <u>door</u>! They did all they could to steer people away from Christ, to "turn people off" from Him.

Does your life, testimony, and witness attract people to Christ or repel them from Him?

(EX: the Jewish false prophet Elymas Barjesus who sought to turn Sergius Paulus away from the Gospel of Christ - Acts 13:6-8)

"By teaching man-made traditions instead of God's truth, they *'took away the key of knowledge'* and closed the door to salvation (Lk. 11:52)" (Wiersbe, p. 84).

Any cult or religion that minimizes Christ's deity, humanity, and complete, finished, substitutionary work is a road block to salvation!

The J.W.'s, etc. "***shut up***" the Kingdom because they deny His deity.

The R.C.C. "***shuts up***" the Kingdom, because they minimize and detract from His complete, finished work on Calvary.

The Pharisee Saul of Tarsus was such a man, who sought to prevent people from coming to Jesus (Acts 8 - 9:1ff), but such a person can (by God's grace) be saved.



Act Two: ***False PIETY & PRAYERS*** *(v.14)*
They serve the needy, but rob for their services

"***Ye devour widow's houses***" (KJV) - (cp. Mark 12:40; Lk. 20:47) They would visit the widows and make long prayers for them, but would charge for their services. They would take advantage of these husbandless women. They would "eat up" the will money, the estate, and everything the husband left behind. They ministered for money. Filthy lucre was the motivating force behind their service.

Do you have a "what's in it for me?" attitude? (Do you minister for fame and fortune, recognition, honor of men, etc.?)

Do you pray to impress men or God?

"***Ye shall receive the greater damnation***" - Those who feign spirituality with selfish motives will be judged most severely.

The ones who exploit the gullible by sifting their funds in the name of Christianity will experience the hottest temperature in the Lake of fire.

To use God or His Word or His Christianity for selfish gain infuriates Him like nothing else!



Act Three: ***False PROSELYTIZING*** *(v. 15)*
They diligently make converts, but mold them for hell

The scribes and Pharisees would board ships and travel aboard; they would walk for miles to make one convert to "Scribianity" or "Phariseeism." They would go to great lengths to win converts. Not converts to God, but to their brand of religious distinctives.

Note: Just because a religious group is zealous for converts does not mean their motives and message are true.

Do you seek to make converts to Christ or to your "pet doctrines" or to your denomination or to your cult or clique?

Someone once said to D.L. Moody, "I saw one of your converts in a bar drunk on liquor!" Moody responded, "He must be one of 'mine'; he certainly is not one of Christ's converts."

The Scribes and Pharisees had such influence, persuasive ability, and respect that their converts would be so indoctrinated in their interpretations and man-made laws that they ended up more deeply entrenched in falsehood than their teachers were!

*Don't be a man follower!



Act Four: False <u>PROMISES</u> *(v. 16-22)*
They make <u>promises to God</u>, but plan "<u>loopholes</u>" to get out of them

A hypocrite makes promises with no intention of keeping them.

Oh, the hypocrisy of those who swear to tell the truth in court -- those who vow loyalty and chastity at the wedding altar -- those who make promises to God and God's people and do not intend to fulfill them!

Deut. 23:21 - "*When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy god, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.*"

Num. 30:2 - "*If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*"

V. 16

"***It is nothing***" - it means nothing; i.e. the vow is invalid (not under obligation).

When the Scribes and Pharisees would make oaths (vows or promises), they would "get out of it" and go back on their promises by discrediting the binding nature of that upon which their vow was made.

They would swear (take an oath) by the "***temple***" and then say, "Well, the temple oath is not binding anyway; if I had sworn by the "<u>gold</u>" of the temple I would be debtor (obligated) to carry out my oath."

EX: Oath-taking with your hand on the Bible (some might get out of it [or justify their lie by saying, "Well, it was not an authorized 1611 KJV Bible."

V. 21-22

Any oath or promise we make, we make in God's presence and are obligated to keep it!



Act Five: False PRIORITIES *(v. 23-24)*
They give money, but omit ethical and moral values

V. 23

"***Tithe***" - one tenth; 10% (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:12; Dt. 14:22-23)

One-tenth of the herbs, grain, fruit, wine, and oil were to be given to God (via His Tabernacle), but the Scribes and Pharisees had "expanded the items required to be tithed to include even the smallest of herbs" (Ryrie note).

They would go to extremes and legalistically count out 10% of their smallest seeds.

All of this giving was to impress men (Mt. 6:1-4).

Many give religiously on Sunday, and live like the devil on Monday.

God can't be "bought off" or bribed.

Godly giving is no substitute for Godly living.

They made a big deal about insignificant kitchen spices and neglected basic ethics and values (i.e. like the media making a big deal about the murderer of one abortion doctor but ignoring the issue of the millions of children murdered annually by abortionists).

"***Weightier matters***" - meatier, more important matters; higher priority matters.

"***Judgment***" - justice, righteousness (fairness to others and obedience to God)

"***Mercy***" - Showing pity and compassion on others, especially those who do not deserve it.

"***Faith***" - Trust in God, belief in His Word.

Many give great sums of money to charitable organizations, but are unethical at work, immoral at home, unmerciful to sinners and distrusting of god.

Note: Attitudes of righteousness, mercy, and faith matter more than the actions of religious benevolence (cp. I Cor. 13:1-3).

"***Not to leave the other undone***" - Tithing is commendable and should be done; but remember: right living, compassion toward others, and faith are indispensable virtues.

V. 24

"***Blind guides***" - blind spiritual leaders!

In an effort tot "guide" others without them being affected by the smallest of doctrinal or religious errors, they would sift out a gnat (so as to not drink the bug), but would end up swallowing a camel!

A hypocrite is a "perfectionist" when it comes to non-essentials or lesser issue of importance, but blind about the truly important matters of life (namely, right relationships with god and others).

The "Pharisees would drink their wine through clenched teeth in order to filter out any small insects that might have gotten into the wine" (MacArthur, p. 385).

Many major on the minors and minor ont he majors.

They are "sticklers for details, but blind to great principles." (Wiersbe, p. 85)



Act Six: False <u>PRETENSE</u> *(v. 25-28)*
They are clean on the <u>outside</u>, but corrupt on the <u>inside</u>

The religious leaders were careful to keep the outside of their lives clean, because this is what could be <u>seen</u> by others.

V. 25

For practical purposes, what matters more - the cleanliness of the <u>outside</u> of the cup or dish, or the <u>inside</u>?

"***Extortion***" - greed and robbery (stealing)

"***Excess***" - no self-control; self-indulgence; no power to control one's appetites and desires

When we allow God to clean our insides (our filthy hearts), the outside will take care of itself.

--People are transformed from the inside out.

--Our preaching at FBC is not a legalistic blasting of external failures and faulty dress and hair standards, but by God's grace we deal with the heart of the problem.

V. 26

D.L. Moody: "If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself" (cited by Wiersbe, p. 85).

V. 27

"***Whited sepulchres***" - Graves or burial tombs that have been white-washed.

Many focus on sanitizing the extremities of our lives (that which people can see), but fail to deal with the rotten bones and impurities hidden deep in our lives.

We need to clean out the inner caverns of our lives; we need to do some house-cleaning (not dusting off the surface, but ridding ourselves of the garbage and clutter).

V. 28

Things are not always what they "seem" to be.

Don't major on appearance.

Spend more time being what you should be than hiding what you are!



Act Seven: False <u>PRAISE</u> (tribute) *(v. 29-36)*
They venerate <u>dead</u> saints, but persecute <u>living</u> ones

V. 29

"***Garnish the sepulchres***" - adorn or beautify their monuments

V. 32

"***Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers***" - Put the finishing touch on the diabolical work of your ancestors; complete their hideous crime.

V. 33

"***Serpents***" - snakes (Satan hypocritically disguised himself using a serpent - Gen. 3)

"***Generation of vipers***" - offspring of venomous snakes

One who dies a religious hypocrite has no chance of escaping the eternal "***judgment of gehenna fire***"!

The day of escape is today!

V. 35

They killed the saints from A to Z (Abel to Zacharias).

It's amazing how the Roman Catholic Church venerates St. Peter, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John, St. Paul, etc., yet do not follow their epistles and gospels (and historically without apology persecuted and martyred those who did follow them).

They venerate (honor) great first-century Christians (build statues in their names and canonize them as Catholics), yet do not believe God's Word as they did.

You may praise D.L Moody, quote C.H. Spurgeon, adore John Calvin, and honor Martin Luther - but this does not matter if you mistreat your fellow church member, despise the brother/sister who rubs you the wrong way, or speak evil of the preacher or deacons of this church.

CONCLUSION: Verses 37-39

The perfect balance of Christ's character is seen in V. 37-39. He was righteously indignant at Jerusalem's hypocrisy, yet at the same time His heart was broken over them.

Jesus loves even the hypocrite. He wants to save the hypocrite.

V. 37

"***O Jerusalem***" - The word "O" is added to express the deep grief and anguish in Christ's heart over Jerusalem's people (cp. Luke 19:41-42).

"***Jerusalem***" - means "the city of peace" (it had become a city of bloodshed)

"***I would have. . . ye would not***" - divine sovereignty and human responsibility (John 5:40 - "*And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.*")

Jesus desired to save and shelter Jerusalem's people under His protective wings, but they were unwilling; they did not desire to come to Him.

V. 38

"***Their house***" (the temple and their city) - Would be left desolate - devoid of Christ's presence and protection, as Rome would burn their temple and city in 70 A.D. and scatter its occupants all over the earth.

V. 39

Until one sees Christ as the "***Blessed Lord***" they will never see Him.

One day 1/3 of Israel will see Him and consider Him their Blessed One (Zech. 12:10 - "*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*").

If you are a religious hypocrite, one day your "mask" will be removed; you can't wear it forever.

The real You will eventually be known (when the situation and circumstances are right; when the temptation is overwhelming; when the pressure is turned on).

Take of your masks now yourself, so God does not have to do it for you later!

ILLUS: Aesop's fable of a wolf that disguised itself as a sheep
(MacArthur, Matthew, Volume I, p. 353)

God is interested in the heart, not mere external, insincere displays of piety.

Phony "spiritual" practices cannot fool the Lord.

"You are what you really are when you are all alone."

What you do when no one is watching you reveals your true character.

Too many today, like the ancient Pharisees love "*the praise of men more than the praise of God*"

Christianity is not theatrics, it is not an act, it's not a game of pretending; it's to be a real, genuine relationship with God that results in real, genuine works for God.

In a world of facades, fake appearances, false impressions, deceitful image, masks, artificiality, we can make our greatest impact by just simple being <u>REAL</u> (genuine)!

"MASKS"

Matthew 23:13-39
8/21/94

INTRODUCTION:

*** Are you guilty of wearing a "Christian Mask"?**

Beware of the "7 Acts" of the religious hypocrite!



Act One: ***False <u>PREACHING</u>*** *(v.13)*
They teach of <u>Heaven</u>, but <u>slam the Door</u> in people's faces



Act Two: ***False <u>PIETY</u> & <u>PRAYERS</u>*** *(v.14)*
They <u>serve</u> the needy, but <u>rob</u> for their services



Act Three: ***False <u>PROSELYTIZING</u>*** *(v. 15)*
They diligently make <u>converts</u>, but mold them for <u>hell</u>



Act Four: ***False <u>PROMISES</u>*** *(v. 16-22)*
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Act Seven: ***False <u>PRAISE</u> (tribute)*** *(v. 29-36)*
They venerate <u>dead</u> saints, but persecute <u>living</u> ones

CONCLUSION: Verses 37-39

The Danger of False Righteousness

are of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; rwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. (6:1)

This verse introduces the section on the forms of religious righteousness applies to each of the three illustrations in 6:2-18.

The story is told of an eastern ascetic holy man who covered himself with s as a sign of humility and regularly sat on a prominent street corner of his city. :n tourists asked permission to take his picture, the mystic would rearrange his s to give the best image of destitution and humility.

A great deal of religion amounts to nothing more than rearranging ;ious "ashes" to impress the world with one's supposed humility and devotion. problem, of course, is that the humility is a sham, and the devotion is to self, to God. Such religion is nothing more than a game of pretense, a game at which scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day were masters. Because their religion was :tly an act, and a mockery of God's true revealed way for His people, Jesus' most tering denunciations were reserved for them.

But they were not the original or the last hypocrites. Since the fall of man 'e have been hypocrites. Hypocrites are mentioned in Scripture from Genesis)ugh Revelation. Cain was the first hypocrite, feigning worship by offering a d of sacrifice that God did not want. When his hypocrisy was unmasked, he ed his brother Abel out of resentment (Gen. 4:5-8). Absalom hypocritically /ed allegiance to his father, King David, while plotting the overthrow of his ime (2 Sam. 15:7-10).

The supreme hypocrite was Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord with a s. Ananias and Sapphira hypocritically claimed to have given the church all the ceeds from the sale of some property, and lost their lives for lying to the Holy rit (Acts 5:1-10).

Hypocrites are found in paganism, in Judaism, and in Christianity. There :e hypocrites in the early church, the medieval church, and the Reformation irch. There are still hypocrites in the church today, and Paul assures us there will hypocrites at the end of the age. "But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times ne will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as h a branding iron" (1 Tim. 4:1-2). Hypocrisy is endemic to fallen man, an egral part of his fleshly nature. Persecution of the church helps to diminish the mber of hypocrites, but even that cannot completely eliminate them.

Hypocrisy is never treated lightly in Scripture. Through Amos, God said, "I :e, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even)ugh you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept :m; and I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from : the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let tice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos

5:21-24). All of those religious acts had been prescribed by God; but because they were performed insincerely and were not accompanied by righteous living they were not acceptable to God. The sacrifices, offerings, and songs were not given to God's glory but to the people's own glory and self-satisfaction.

Outside of idolatry, the greatest sin both in Judah and Israel was hypocritical religion. The Jews were conquered and taken into captivity in large measure because they turned true worship of God into phoney mockery. In regard to that truth Isaiah says, "'What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?' says the Lord. 'I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats'" (Isa. 1:11). The Lord continued by declaring His displeasure also with worthless offerings, incense, new moon and sabbath festivals, and hypocritical prayers (vv. 13-15). God wanted purity and righteousness, not perfunctory rituals. "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean," He said; "remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together. . . . Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool" (vv. 16-18).

Similar calls to replace superficial ceremony with genuine righteousness are found in the other literary prophets (Jer. 11:19-20; Amos 4:4-5; Mic. 6:6-8; etc.), as well as in the book of Job (8:13; 15:34; 36:13).

An Aesop's fable tells of a wolf who wanted to have a sheep for his dinner and decided to disguise himself as a sheep and follow the flock into the fold. While the wolf waited until the sheep went to sleep, the shepherd decided he would have mutton for his own meal. In the dark he picked out what he thought was the largest, fattest sheep; but after he had killed the animal he discovered it was a wolf. What that shepherd did inadvertently to a wolf in sheep's clothing, God does intentionally. The Lord judges hypocrisy.

Speaking to the scribes and Pharisees on one occasion, Jesus said, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men'" (Mark 7:6-7).

Jesus used many figures to describe hypocrisy. He compared it to leaven (Luke 12:1), to whitewashed tombs (Matt. 23:27), concealed tombs (Luke 11:44), tares amidst the wheat (Matt. 13:25), and to wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15).

In New Testament times some people made their living as professional mourners who were paid to weep, wail, and tear their garments at funerals and on other occasions of sadness (cf. Matt. 9:23). It is said that some mourners were careful to tear their clothing at a seam, so that the material could easily be sown back together for the next mourning. Both the professional mourners and those who hired them were hypocrites, hiring and being hired to put on a display of mourning that was entirely pretense.

Prosechō (**beware**) means to hold, or take hold of, something and pay attention to it, especially in the sense of being on guard. The scribes, Ph ees, and

"THE BEGINNING OF THE END"

Matthew 24:1-14
8/28/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 4

V. 1

After delivering a hot, piercing, pointed sermon to the Scribes and Pharisees and rebuking their hypocrisy, Jesus leaves the Temple. He had just said that their "*House*" (Temple) was left desolate (empty of God and true worship) (23:38). Upon hearing this judgment to befall that magnificent work of architecture, His disciples draw His attention to the huge, beautiful stones (15-20 feet in length) and wonderful buildings (Mk. 13:1) that Herod the Great had built.

V. 2

Those earthly temporal things which man takes pride in will all perish in time.

"***Not one stone***" - "Absolutely no remains of that magnificent structure are visible today. The stones of the western or Wailing Wall, site of prayers today, were not part of the Temple itself but of the retaining wall around the mount. According to Josephus, the city was dug up tot such an extent that it was difficult to believe it had ever been inhabited" (Will Varner, Israzel My Glory, April, 1994, p. 8)

"***Thrown down***" - to tear down

Rome, under General Titus, totally tore down and burned the Temple and city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

V. 3

"***As He sat upon the Mount of Olives***" - It is interesting that the very Mount of Olives from which Jesus gave thtis End-time message is the spot to which He will return when He comes to judge this earth (Zech. 14:4).

Christ's message in Matthew 24 & 25 is commonly referred to as the Olivet Discourse because He gave it while sitting on the Mount of Olives (overlooking the city of Jerusalem).

The intimidated disciples secretly ask Jesus two questions.

Matthew records Christ's answers to the latter question, the more important question: "***What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world*** *(age)?*"

Jesus' answer to the disciples' question is the longest answer He ever gave to a question (2 chapters, totalling 97 verses), and therefore shows us the importance of the details of this eschatalogical message.

The Bible does not teach "imminency" but rather "expectancy."

It is evident that the apostles believed that the Rapture could occur during their lifetime or generation, but this does not mean that they did not expect signs to precede His coming.

*The Rapture could not be imminent for Peter because he was told that he would die before the Rapture (Jn. 21:18-19; II Peter 1:14-15).

*The Rapture could not be imminent for Paul because he was informed that he had a great ministry ahead in Corinth (Acts 18:9-11).

--Paul also affirmed that two events had to precede the Day of Christ's return:
(II Thes. 2:1ff)

1) The apostacy
2) The revealing of the Man of Sin

While God's Word admonishes believers to "*watch*" (Rom. 13:11-12; I Th. 5:6-8; Lk. 12:35-40) and "*look*" (Ti. 2:13) for Christ's return, the Bible does <u>not</u> teach an "any-moment," "imminent," sign-less Rapture!

The world will be caught "off guard" like a "*thief in the night*"; however, God's Word is clear that the Day of the Lord's return will <u>not</u> catch believers as a "*thief.*" (I Th. 5:4 - "*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, thatt that day should overtake you as a thief*")

What Jesus gives in vv. 4-28 are events that must transpire <u>before</u> the sign of His coming. They are "signs" indicating that the time is approaching, but are not the "sign" that the time has arrived.

"***The <u>sign</u>*** (singular) ***of Thy coming***" - The sign of Christ's coming is given in vv. 29-30. This sign, which will occur when the sixth seal is loosed in Rev. 6:12, will fulfill Joel 2:31, which foretold that this "sign" of the sun being darkened and the moon turning blood-red will come immediuately <u>before</u> the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

IV. THE FINAL 7 YEARS OF THIS AGE

The Disciples asked the Lord Jesus Christ:
"What shall be the sign of thy coming,
and of the end of the world (age)?" (Matthew 24:3)

Overview & Comparison of the SIGNS of the end of the age

MATTHEW 24	REVELATION 6	LUKE 17	LUKE 21
False Messiahs (v.4-5)	Antichrist's rise to power (v.2)		False Messiahs (v.8)
Wars & Rumors of Wars (v.6-7a)	Wars & Bloodshed (v.3-4)		Wars & Commotions (v.9-10)
Famine, disease, scattered earthquakes (v.7b-8)	Famine, Death (v.5-8)		Earthquakes, famines, pestilences (v.11)
Persecution of God's people & Deception (v.9-28) God's people - hated (v.9) God's people - betrayed (even by family) (v.10) **Abomination of Desolation by Antichrist** (v.15) Sever persecution (v.16-22) False signs & wonders to deceive (v.24)	Martyrdom of God's people	Trouble that will cause God's people to long for Christ's Return & Deception (v.22-23)	Persecution of God's people (v.12-24) God's people betrayed by family & friends (v.16) God's people hated (v.17) **Abomination of Desolation by Antichrist** (v.20)
Cosmic Disturbances (v.29-30)	Cosmic Disturbances (v.12-14)		Cosmic Disturbances (v.25-26)
The Second Coming of Christ (v.31-44) -some taken - Rapture -some left - Wrath	The Wrath of the Lamb (v.15-17)	The Second Coming of Christ (v.24-37) -some taken - Rapture -some left - Immediate Wrath	The Second Coming of Christ (v.27-36)

THE DAY OF THE LORD

- Trumpet Judgements (Rev. 8-9, 11:15-19)
- Bowl Judgements (Rev. 15-16)

"Your coming" - Your "*parousias*" (speaks of His personal presence at his second advent)

[This word is used to speak of the Rapture throughout the New Testament (v. 27, 37, 39; I Cor. 15:23; I Th. 2:19, 3:13, 4:15, 5:23; II Th. 2:1, 8; Ja. 5:7, 8; II Pet. 1:16, 3:4; I Jn. 2:28).]

Jesus is coming again!

"The end of the world" - lit. "the completion of the age" (*aionos)*

Not speaking of the obliteration of the earth (as some Bible teachers suggest), but of the end of this Age, before the Millennial Age.

The end of this Age will end the age of "man" and will commence the Day of teh Lord.

How will we know when the end of this Age is to come? Jesus gives specific, detailed descriptions of life on eartth prior to His coming.

V. 4

"Take heed that no man deceive you" - Be on the look out so that no one will mislead you or cause you to err regarding Christ's return (a favorite subject that many cults have used to trap and mislead people is the subject of the Last Days, particularly the issue of Christ's coming).

"The teaching of the Olivet discourse is much debated and frequently misunderstood, largely because it is viewed through the lens of a particular theological system or interpretive scheme that makes the message appear complex and enigmatic. . . the intricate interpretations that are someimtes proposed for this passage would have left the disciples utterly dumbfounded. It is preferable to take Jesus' words as simply and as straight-forwardly as possible." (MacArthur, p. 2).

Verses 5-8 deal with the first half of the last 7 years, and verses 9-ff deal with the second half.

***The Beginning of the End may be near!**

Don't be fooled as to when it will come.

In verses 5 - 15 Jesus gives 7 clear signs showing the Beginning of the End of this Age:

I. **DECEPTION by false Messiahs** (v. 5)

"Many will come" -

"Although many false Messiahs have appeared in the last 2,000 years (Simon BarCochba, Shabbettai Zvi, and today's [most recent] Menachem Mendel Schneerson, to name just a view), Scripture indicates that at the beginning of the [final 7 years] Tribulation period many more will claim to be the Messiah. Satanic deception will be rampant." (Mark Robinson, Israel My Glory, April, 1994, p. 10)

"In My name" - They will seize upon a title that only belongs to Jesus of Nazareth. Where there is the true, Satan will see to it that there are many imposters tso as to deceive. (this is why there are so many religions today -- tto deceive).

"I am the Christ" - I am the one wh om the Prophets foretold! I am the Messiah!

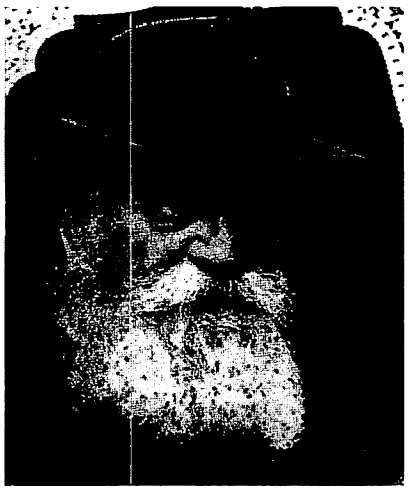
"Follow me," they will say; "I am your deliverer, your savior, your way to God."

The ultimate deceiver will be the "Antichrist" (I Jn. 2:18; Ii Th. 2:3ff). As his title suggest ("*Anti*" = instead of), this diabolical counterfeit will pose as a Messiah instead of or in the place of the true Christ. Many Gentiles and particularly Jews will blindly follow Him. The whole world (God's children and the sealed elect excluded) will worship Him beginning at the mid-point of the final 7 years (Rev. 13).

God said of Israel: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge"* (Hos. 4:6).

Those who lack a knowledge of Scripture will always be prime game for Satan's deceivers. Only the truth can set you free (Jn. 8:32).

THE MESSIAH IS DEAD. WHAT NOW?



Rebbe Menachem Schneerson

By Orman L. Norwood

Their hopes were sadly misplaced. They had looked to the charismatic Rebbe as a potential messiah, believing that he embodied principles which the "redemption" would mean to the world. Menachem Schneerson had described the day of redemption not as distant, but as coming closer each day. Lubavitchers believed that he would soon manifest himself as the "One." With his piercing blue eyes and long white beard, the Rebbe (exalted rabbi) was known across the world. Although he never visited Israel, he exerted an immense influence over politics inside the Jewish State and elsewhere.

At his World Lubavitch Headquarters located at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, huge crowds of men, women and children used to wait their turn to meet the Rebbe face to face and receive a special blessing, which included a crisp one-dollar bill he gave to each visitor. (It was expected to be donated to charity.) Non-Jewish leaders even sought his counsel, standing in long lines to have a brief audience with him. Followers placed his pictures on their walls. The Jewish Press described him as "the foremost Jewish personality of modern times." Schneerson led the movement for forty-four years.

Trouble In Paradise

But something happened. In 1992, Schneerson suffered a debilitating stroke. The Rebbe was not improving. Was not the messiah to be a powerful and inspiring leader who would change all things? How could he accomplish this in poor health? A second stroke came in March 1994. He died in June at the age of 92. The Lubavitch movement was shaken to its foundations. Hopes and dreams of his unique and dynamic leadership were shattered. Who would take his place? What now?

The Hasidic brand of rebbe-centered Judaism lost its champion. El Al Airlines hastily chartered an extra jumbo jet to accommodate 450 of the Rebbe's followers who were trying to get to his funeral. But neither El Al nor other airlines could handle the thousands who thronged into Ben Gurion's departure area. A stunned follower told Israel Radio, "This is not the end. The Rebbe will return. He lives on high; he lives forever." Some Jews began saying that he is now their "intercessor" in heaven!

The renowned Rebbe was buried in the Cambria Heights-Laurelton area of Queens. As his body was carried to the Old Montefiore Cemetery in a plain pine coffin made from the table in his study, his coat was lying on top of it. The faithful surged forward to touch the coffin as it passed by. Jewish sources estimated more than 50,000 people attended Schneerson's funeral. Some are going to his grave to pray.

Truth From Scripture

The New Testament exists, however, because the real Messiah arose. Christianity survives because Jesus came alive on the third day and is declared by this to be the Son of God. (Romans 1:4) Had He stayed in a tomb, there would be no salvation, no Christianity. For the two walking to Emmaus, the Messiah was dead. The One they had trusted was in a cemetery! What was to become of their hopes and dreams? What now? Then they heard Him say, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25,26) They rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the great news, then Jesus Himself appeared before them all saying, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." Yes, false messiahs will come and go, friends, but that Jerusalem tomb of Jesus is empty. He lives! He lives! With this life-changing news, the early Hebrew Christians went everywhere, preaching the gospel . . . and literally turned our world upside down.

II. **DESTRUCTION by furious Wars** (v. 6-7a)

V. 7

During the first 3 1/2 years of the final 7 years of this Age, nations and kingdoms will fight for global supremacy.

The world will eventually be divided up into 10 empires (10 sovereign nations). When Antichrist assumes global power, three of the ten will be overpowered by Him (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24; Rev. 12:3, 13:1; 17:3ff).

V. 6

"***Wars and rumors of wars***" - not small skurmishes, but major battles.

As Antichrist rises to world power, wars and rumors of wars will increase. At the mid-point of the 70th week, Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies (Lk. 21:20) and Antichrist will receive a fatal wound before being miraculously healed (Rev. 13:14).

"***Be not troubled***" - few of life's experiences are as frightening as wars (especially with today's weaponry and military artillery of mass destructiton).

The atomic, nuclear and chemical warfare devices in our world today can wipe out millions iwth one push of a button! [But man will not destroy the world;; that judgment will be performed by Jesus Christ.]

"***Be not troubled***" - Believers can take solace in the fact that when they see these events traspire, it will prove that God's Word is true and trustworthy and that His place is being fulfilled right on schedule.

"***But the end is not yet***" - At the end, people will feel secure with the New World Order fully in place and iwth the Antichrist in global authority. After the mid-point, the heathen world will have a false sense of "*peace and safety*" (I Th. 5:3).

III. **DISASTER by Famines and Earthquakes** (v. 7b-8)

V. 7

"*Famines*" - The result of three things:

1. Wars (as mentioned above)

2. Drought (for 3 1/2 years the earth will receive no rain, during the ministry of God's 2 witnesses - Rev. 11:3, 6)

3. Plagues (disease - Rev. 11:6)

[Note: such food shortage will incite nations to seek to conquer and spoil other nations' goods and natural resources]

"***Earthquakes***" - God will send earthquakes to shake up and wak up people from spiritual apathy and deadness. Earthquakes definitely get man's attention.

The plates upon which earth's land masses rest will shift and slide more and more as the end approaches. The fault lines will snap;; whole civilizations will affected.

A huge quake will hit Israel at the mid-point of the final 7 years (Rev. 1:13), which will kill 7,000 men.

But the grand quake of them all will come at the end of the Tribulation - which will wreck every city on earth! (Rev. 16:18 - "*And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*")

V. 8

"***The beginning of sorrows***" - These are merely foreshadows, or previews of the disasters to follow in the Day of the Lord.

Jesus in Matthew 24:8 is describing the pre-labor pains to occur prior to Paul's reference to the acttual labor ("*travail upon a woman with child*" - I Th. 5:3) (note: The word "*sorrows*" (*odinon* - Mt. 24:8) is plural; whereas the word "*travail*" is singular and has the definite article (*ha odin*), referring to the unescapable pain of delivery in childbirth.

IV. DELIVERANCE TO PERSECUTION by Foes of Jesus Christ (v. 9)

"Deliver you up" - The lost, godless, Antichrist-worshipping world will hand Christians over to the intense pressures of affliction and tribulation.

At that time, the lines will be clearly drawn between believer and non-believer. Following Jesus Christ will be a severe criminal offense. They will have "wanted" posters posted in search of those who reject the mark of the Beast.

"And shall kill you" - Multitudes of people who reject the mark of the Beast will be hunted down and killed (Rev. 13:7 - *"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."*)

Whoever will refuse to worship the image of the Beast will also be putt to deatth (Rev. 13:15).

"You shall be hated of all nations" - No nation will be called a "Christian nation." God's people will be despised on every continentt, because people from all walks of life will be followers of the Beast (Rev. 13). There will be no country in which to seek religious assylum.

"For My Name's sake" - christians will be killed simply because they belong to Jesus. Note: When God's people are attacked, it is really Christ they are attacking.

Some of God's reasons for allowing His children to be persecuted are:

1) To purify their faith (Ja. 1; I Pet. 1)

2) To purge out the phoneys

If they were arresting people for being Christians today, would there be enough evidence from your life to convict you?

V. DEFECTION by Fake Christians (v. 10-13)

V. 10

"Many (shall) be offended" - Professors, but not possessors, of salvation will "fall away"; they will "*depart from the faith*" (I Tim. 4:1).

This is the great "*Apostasy*" ("falling away") that Paul said will precede the Day 0of Christ (II Thes. 2:3).

The true colors of all will be revealed in the Great Tribulation. There will be no doubt as to which side people are on.

Pretenders eventtually defect from Christianity (I Jn. 2:19 - "*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no dobut have continued with us; but they went out, that htye might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*").

"Deliver up on another" - Because of the great pressures the Tribulation will bring, many people will turn each other in to governing autthorities (no doubt for reward).

Even your family will turn against you in the Tribulation (Mk. 13:12 - "*Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and hsall cause them to be put to death.*"; cp. Lk. 21:16).

V. 11

Because spiritual deception will be the hallmark of the Tribulation, Jesus interjects that thought again.

The false prophets will no doubt prophesy against God's people and the lost will believe them.

V. 12

"Iniquity shall abound" - Lawlessness will flowing through the streets. Moral absolutes will be thrown out the window. "Down with Christian ethics," the world will chant. "Away with the 10 commandments!"

"*The man of sin*" will convince the world to throw off moral restraints. Such an anti-law, anti-moral absolute mentality will affect people's love.

"***The love of many shall wax cold***" - Note: True love resides where truth abides.

When people reject God's laws, they in turn become totally self-centered and inconsiderate of others.

"Love" which is "others'oriented" will beocme cold.

Where sin reigns, love wanes.

"*Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money. . . lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.*" (II Tim. 3:1-5).

V. 13

"***He that shall endure unto the end***" - Those who remain under the pressures without giving up and giving in (the the Antichrist world) until the completion of thie Age will be saved.

Not speaking about soteriology (the new birth experience), but salvation in the same way Paul uses the term in I Th. 5:8-10 ("*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*")

"***Shall be saved***" - Saved from God's wrath, by means of the Rapture!

Jesus will also deliver His people from the world's wrath at His coming.

The days of the Tribulation are "*cut short for the elect's sake*" (v. 22).

A knowledge of what is coming to the lost Beast worshippers will be a great incentive for God's people to remain patient through it all (Rev. 14:9-12).

Who are the enduring saints? (SEE: Rev. 7:14-17).

VI. **<u>DECLARATION</u> by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)

Saved Jews will declare the Message (Mt.10:23)
An Angel will declare the Message (Rev.14:6)

VII. **<u>DESECRATION</u> of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)
[to be continued. . .]

CONCLUSION:

Note: There is perfect harmony between Mattthew 24:5-31 and the Seals of Revelation 6.

The Harmony of Matthew 24 & Revelation 6	
Matthew 24	**Revelation 6**
v.4-5 **Deception**	Seal # 1 **Deception**
v.6-7a **War**	Seal # 2 **War**
v.7b **Famine**	Seal # 3 **Famine**
v.7-8 **Death & Destruction**	Seal # 4 **Death & Destruction**
v.9-22 **Persecution** (Innocent Bloodshed)	Seal # 5 **Persecution** (Innocent Bloodshed)
v.29-31 **Cosmic Signs** **(Sun & Moon Altered)**	Seal # 6 **Cosmic Signs** **(Sun & Moon altered)**

--The End is coming. Are you ready?

--The end of your life is coming. Are you ready to meet God?

The Harmony of Matthew 24 & Revelation 6

Matthew 24		Revelation 6	
v.4-5	**Deception**	Seal # 1	**Deception**
v.6-7a	**War**	Seal # 2	**War**
v.7b	**Famine**	Seal # 3	**Famine**
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v.9-22	**Persecution** (Innocent Bloodshed)	Seal # 5	**Persecution** (Innocent Bloodshed)
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"THE BEGINNING OF THE END"

Matthew 24:1-14
8/28/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 4

***The Beginning of the End may be near!**
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[to be continued. . .]

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[to be continued. . .]

"TROUBLE & TRICKS IN THE END TIMES"

Matthew 24:15-28

9/3/94

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus in this chapter answers the question, "*What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]?*" (v. 3).

The particular sign He gives is in vv. 29-30; however, the events that lead up to that specific sign are given in vv. 5-28.

*Review exposition of vv. 5-14.

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6. **DECLARATION by Faithful Witnesses** (v. 14)
7. **DESECRATION of a Future Holy Place** (v. 15)

The Bible speaks of a great abandonment of Christianity to occur in the Last Days (I Tim. 4:1 NKJV - "*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.*")

Satan has many ways to ruin or destroy people; he employs many methods to turn them away from the truth. Two of the most basic methods he and his co-horts use are described by Jesus in Matthew 24:15-28.

Satan will either seek to trouble you (v. 15-22) or trick you (v. 23-28).

To test one's faith, Satan will use two weapons. The devil will either employ: tribulation or deception (either he will seek to pressure you with fear or fool you with falsehood).

The Bible uses 2 word pictures to describe Satan's character and tactics (Rev. 12:9 - "*And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*")

He is called:
1) A "Dragon" - who intimidates with fear
2) A "Serpent" (snake) - who deludes with lies

Many Christians today are told they will never have to face the Antichrist nor face the trials of the future Tribulation.

ILLUS: (preparation in boot camp and military training) One prepares differently for battle when told, "Men, we are preparing for battle, but I have good news for you: there will never be a war." than when told, "Men, we are preparing for battle, and there will be a war."

Jesus said: ". . . *Whoso readeth, let him understand*" (v. 15)

***Be ready! Be prepared for what is ahead!**

I. Be Ready for End-Time TROUBLE (v. 15-22)
(Great & powerful Satanic Tribulation is coming in the Last Days)

V. 15

"***Spoken of by Daniel***" - SEE: Daniel 9:2, 24 - 27

Dan. 9:27

Daniel 9:27

"He" - "the prince that shall come" (v. 26) - not Christ but the Antichrist.

"Confirm" = to make stand; to establish (same word as in v.12); AntiChrist may reaffirm a convenant already made; He will make it a strong covenant. Perhaps by force; with mighty global power, the Antichrist will ratify a peace treaty.

"Covenant" - a binding promise of peace; a pact; a treaty (the Antichrist will be the Diplomat of Diplomats. He will do what no leader, no nation, and no United Nations Peace plan has ever accomplished. He will "settle" the Arab-Israeli conflict.)

Such a peace proposal is right on the horizon. The rider on the white horse is coming! Rev. 6:2

"With many" - a peace treaty will be signed between Israel and the many Arab nations that have plagued them throughout history (Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, the PLO, Jordan, Saudi Arabia; Iraq, Iran, etc.)

"For one week" = one period of 7 years.

"A world leader signs a 7 year peace treaty" will one day be the headlines in the NY Times and Daily News. This period of 7 years refers to the 70th week of Daniel (v. 24). 69 are now history; one more period of seven is yet to be fulfilled.

**This signing of a 7-year covenant marks the beginning of the Tribulation period. From the day this covenant is signed, exactly 2,520 days will remain for Antichrist's reign.

"In the midst of the week" = at the mid-point of the 7 years; after 3 1/2 years, he (Antichrist_ will put an end to the Jewish sacrifices and offerings. He will stop the Jew's worship of Jehovah and will set Himself up in their Temple and demand worship, claiming to be God - SEE Mt. 24:15; II Thes. 2:4.

The mid-point of the Tribulation marks the time of Antichrist's recovery from a deadly wound (SEE Rev. 13:3-8), the issuing of the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-18); and the hottest anti-Jewish, anti-Christian persecution to ever be experienced (Rev. 12:12-17).

"Abominations . . . make it desolate" - the Antichrist, who will stand (as "God") in the Holy Temple, will thereby make the temple an abominable (polluted) place and a desolate place (since the Jews will flee Jerusalem at this point - Mt. 24:15ff).

Jerusalem's desolation - cp. Zech. 14:1, 2

"Even until the consummation" - the Temple will be polluted and desolate - right until the end of the 70th week.

"That determined shall be poured upon the desolate" - what God has decreed will be poured upon the Jews at that time (SEE: Rev. 12).

"***When***" - speaks of a specific point in time in the future when this prophecy will be fulfilled.

"***See***" - To see with the eyes (not some vague experience; but a clear manifestation)

Luke gives an expansion of what Jesus said in v. 15 - Luke 21:20 - "*And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.*"

These armies will inflict a fatal wound on the Antichrist (Dan. 11:40 - 12:1), who will miraculously be healed and elevated to global authority and worship at Jerusalem (Rev. 13).

"***The Abomination of Desolation***" -

"***Abomination***" = an object of disgust; something detestable; an abhorrent thing.

"***Desolation***" - to be empty; deserted, barren, laid waste (cp. Mt. 23:38).

The phrase "*abomination of desolation*" refers to an "object of disgust" being set up in the "Holy Place" which causes that place to become "wasted, ruined, and deserted" of its worshippers.

The word "*abomination*" is a neuter, singular noun, pointing to a specific "thing" that will stand in the Jewish "Holy Place" (cp. Mk. 13:14 - "*it*").

It refers not merely to the Antichrist himself, but to the "image" (idol, statue of the Antichrist) ("the image of the Beast" which will one day be erected in Jerusalem's Temple (Rev. 13:14-15).

"***Stand*** (lit. standing) ***in the Holy Place***" - SEE: II Thes. 2:1-12. V. 4 - "*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*")

This "temple" is one that the Jews are ready to build (the only questions are where and when). The phrase "***temple of God***" does not mean that God is in favor of this temple; it simply means that from the Jews' standpoint, it will be a temple dedicated to God (but desecrated by the Antichrist) (Rev. 11:1-2 - "*And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.*")

The future Abomination of the Jewish temple (Dan. 9:27; 12:11) can be previewed by comparing it with the past Abomination of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 11:31), who slew an abominable pig on the Temple's altar, compelled the priests to eat its flesh, and then erected an idol of Zeus in the Temple.

"***Whoso readeth, let him understand***" - This urgent exhortation to comprehend this future sign shows its importance.

Verses 16-22 describe the most intense persecution of human life ever to be experienced.

V. 16

The land of Israel, particularly the land surrounding the city of Jerusalem.

"***Flee into the mountains***" - Run away toward the southeast to the mountains of the wilderness of Judea, or to the mountains of Petra.

Why escape to the mountains? To hide and seek refuge from Satan's fierce persecution (Rev. 12:6, 13-17).

V. 17

"***Him. . . on the housetop not come down***" - The housetops were places of leisure and relaxation.

Jesus is not saying, "Don't come down"; rather, "Don't come down with the intent of packing your suitcase." Don't worry about packing your bags. Just get down and RUN!

V. 18

If news hits the fields that Antichrist has abominated the Holy Place, don't go home to gather a change of clothing; just run with what you've got on!

V. 19

"***Woe***" - an expression of sorrow for someone

"***With child***" - pregnant women. It will be extremely difficult for pregnant women [particularly in the latter months] to run many many miles to flee from the bloodshed.

"***Them that give suck***" - to mothers with nursing babies. For a mother to run for miles carrying an infant will be intensely difficult. To stop for feedings will be impossible.

V. 20

"***Flight***" - does not refer to an air-lift on a "El Al" Airlines 747 jet, but refers to the fleeing (running) from the Antichrist's persecution.

"***Not in the winter***" - Cold weather would make travelling unbearable, especially going up to higher elevations.

"***The Sabbath day***" - Jews have a law that they can't walk more than a mile on the Sabbath. This running would cause them to violate their Sabbath law, if that time should fall on a Sabbath.

V. 21

"***Then . . . great tribulation***" - The Tribulation period is technically not the entire 70th week of Daniel; rather, the word "*tribulation*" is only used to refer to the last 3-1/2 years.

"***Great tribulation***" - enormous pressure, intense trial. Difficulty for Israel and the Church beyond compare.

God promises to protect a remnant of His faithful people through this time (Rev. 3:10).

NOTE: Jesus does not promise removal from the Tribulation, but protection (for a faithful remnant) through it ("*Keep thee from*" = guard you from - cp. Jn. 17:15).

This time of persecution will be unparalleled by anything that preceded it.

It will surpass (be worse than):

Israel's slavery in Egypt
Israel's conquest by Babylon
Israel's horror inflicted by Antiochus Epiphanes in 171 - 165 B.C. (Dan. 8:14)
Israel's slaughter by Rome in 70 A.D.
Israel's holocaust by Germany in the 20th century

The "*Tribulation*" spoken of here is not:

--"The Day of the Lord's wrath" (this does not begin until v. 29; cp. Joel 2:31)

--God's wrath, but Satan's wrath being vented toward God's people (Luke 21:23; cp. with Rev. 12:12, 17).

Although God allows this Tribulation to fall, and He is sovereign over these events (Rev. 6 - the "*seals*"), He has not yet begun the "*Day of the Lord.*"

The context surrounding v. 21 clearly identifies this tribulation as coming from Antichrist.

*SEE: Revelation 12:1-f

> (When the dragon [Satan] persecutes the woman (Israel) . . . God will provide refuge in the wilderness for this remnant of Jews for 1,260 days.)

Note: This wilderness refuge will be where God fulfills Ezekiel 20:35-36 - "*And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God.*"

V. 22

"***Shortened***" - Jesus is not teaching that the Great Tribulation will be shortened (it will last a full 3 1/2 years). What He is teaching is that it will be shortened (lit. "cut short" or "limited") for the elect.

Why is this period limited only for the elect's sake? Could it be because they are raptured prior to the very end? Or could it be that God has limited it to only 3-1/2 years - Mark 13:20.

"***There should no flesh be saved***" - Not speaking of the flesh of the persecutors, but the persecuted.

No believer would live, if God had not shortened that time of Tribulation.

No believer would be left alive to be "*saved*" (raptured) in living bodies, unless those days of Tribulation were shortened. However, we who are "*alive and remain shall be caught up. . .*" (I Th. 4:17).

II. Be Ready for End-Time TRICKS (v. 23-28)

(Great & powerful Satanic Deception is coming in the Last Days)

V. 23

You should never "believe" what any man says, but only what the Scriptures teach.

False messiahs will abound. The Antichrist will be the ultimate deceiver, mascarading as the messiah (instead of Christ = AntiChrist) until his true identity is revealed to Israel at the mid-point of the 70th week (v. 15).

V. 24

The "***false prophets***" will be promoters of the false Christs (as the False Prophet will be for the Antichrist - Rev. 13:12).

"***Great signs and wonders***" - not just miracles, but great miracles (awesome, breath-taking, indisputable, supernatural [demonic] signs will be performed).

"***Signs***" - miracles to vindicate someone or something (to prove the authenticity of something).

"***Wonders***" - miracles to cause amazement (to marvel an audience).

If God is sovereignly in control of all things, why would He allow Satan's servants to perform such realistic miracles?

Answer: To prove your love for Him and your commitment to His Word.

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:1-3).

(VINNY, MAKE OVERHEAD)

No miracle proves any message or messenger to be true, if that message or messenger is contrary to the Word of God.

As believers, the basis of our authority is not . . .

--What we "experience" with our senses (it is not what we see, hear, feel, or sense).

Our senses are often deceiving. There is a realm of existence outside of your sense that will delude you if you function in this carnal realm and don't trust the Word of One who exists outside of our senses.

The Bible is our only authority for what we believe to be true in the spiritual realm. God's people will only overcome the deception of Antichrist by the Blood and the Word (Rev. 12:11 - "*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death*")

Do you know the Scriptures?

--Are you able to give a Biblical reason for your salvation?

--Are you able to refute a cult that denies Christ's deity?

--Are you able to examine a doctrine or practice and measure it be the Scriptures to see if it is right or wrong?

--Can you refute the "date setters" who say that Christ is coming back September '94?

--Do you know why you believe what you believe, or do you cling to "borrowed" convictions?

--Are you able to "*prove* (test) *all things*"? (I Th. 5:21-22).

"***If it were possible***" - Which it is not! (John 10:27-28). Those signs will be so real, so amazing, so believable that it will get some believers to ponder and question the validity of them. Only the Biblically literate elect will see through the lies and deception.

Knowing and believing the truth is the only way to avoid the greatest deception ever to come (SEE: II Thes. 2:9-12).

The reason why you are considered "*blessed*" for reading and hearing the book of Revelation is because "*the time is at hand*" (Rev. 1:3). A knowledge of prophecy will fortify you to withstand the Satanic assaults to come!

V. 25

"***Behold, I have told you before***" - Look, I am warning you in advance. I am forewarning you ahead of time. Without Scriptural forewarning, everyone would be deluded!

V. 26

So as to kill God's people, they will seek to draw their victims away to isolated deserts, or hidden inner rooms.

V. 27

Christ's coming will be as "***lightning***". What is He teaching by this metaphor?

1. Christ's coming will be <u>sudden</u> (not a gradual event stretched over a long period of time that will require messengers to announce it).

2. Christ's coming will be <u>visible</u> (not a cryptic, unknown, undiscernible event - Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:17)

   This is the main point of V. 27. The "shining" of lightning can be seen (cp. Luke 17:23). Our Lord's coming will be visible - v. 30.

V. 28

"***Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together***" - How does this statement tie in with the context of Christ's return?

It appears that Christ is using a well-known Jewish proverb (Job 39:30; Hab. 1:8) to illustrate that just as eagles quickly gather around a carcass, so believers will immediately be gathered around our Savior who died for us.

(The disciples asked Jesus "*<u>Where</u>*" will the Raptured be "taken"? He responded with this same parable - Luke 17:36-37.)

CONCLUSION:

Is there any degree of trouble or tricks that could pull you away from Christ and His Word?

"TROUBLE & TRICKS IN THE END TIMES"

Matthew 24:15-28

9/3/94

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus said: ". . . *Whoso readeth, let him understand*" (v. 15)

***Be ready! Be prepared for what is ahead!**

I. Be Ready for End-Time <u>TROUBLE</u> (v. 15-22)
(Great & powerful Satanic <u>Tribulation</u> is coming in the Last Days)

II. Be Ready for End-Time <u>TRICKS</u> (v. 23-28)
(Great & powerful Satanic <u>Deception</u> is coming in the Last Days)

CONCLUSION:

"THE DRAMATIC RETURN"

(The Drama of Christ's Second Coming)
Matthew 24:29-31
9/18/94

INTRODUCTION:

The second coming of Christ is no small, insignificant event.

It will be the most dramatic event in human history!

Three Important Facts

1. I Thessalonians 4:16-5:2 teaches that the Rapture of the Church are the Day of the Lord are tied together (the Rapture and the Day of the Lord begin on the same day).

2. Joel 2:31 (cp. Acts 2:20) teaches that the alterations of the sun and moon will occur before the Day of the Lord begins.

3. Therefore, the darkening of the sun and moon, the Rapture of the Church, and the beginning of the Day of the Lord all happen at the same time.

   (This is precisely what Matthew teaches in verses 29 - 31.)

***Three powerful events will be experienced when Jesus Christ comes back!**

I. The Sky is DARKENED (v. 29)

(The lights of outer space are turned out)

"***Immediately after the Tribulation***" - the Lord is going to do something to "cut short" those days of Tribulation. What is it? Answer: the Rapture of His Church.

And then, immediately after the time of Tribulation ends for God's people, He is going to turn out the lights of Heaven to announce the commencement of the Day of the Lord's wrath.

Those days of Tribulation will be "cut short" or amputated for the sake of God's people.

The Tribulation will not last a full 3-1/2 years for the Elect (Mark 13:20 - "*And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days*"; cp. Mt. 24:22)

Christ will "cut short" the bloodshed of God's people. When the last one to be killed is fulfilled, He will step in (Rev. 6:11).

The Great Tribulation will not run the full 42 months allotted to Antichrist.

While the 70th week will run its course and the times of the Gentiles (Lk. 21:24) will come to a full completion, God's people will "*escape*" via the Rapture.

How much will the Tribulation be cut short for the elect's sake? (No one knows for sure)

It would be safe to say that it will be amputated at least 5 months prior to the end of the 70th week [since the fifth Trumpet judgment (to occur in the Day of the Lord) will involve an army of demonic locust-like creatures inflicting torment on people for 5 months - Rev. 9:5, 10.]

The sequence of events is: 1) Tribulation

2) Cosmic signs, Rapture, & Day of the Lord

"***The sun (will) be darkened***" - These cosmic signs are frequently mentioned in Scripture:

Isaiah 13:9-11 - "*Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.*"

Isaiah 24:23 - "*The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.*"

Isaiah 50:3 - "*I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.*"

Ezekiel 32:7-8 - "*And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord GOD.*"

Joel 2:10 - "*The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.*"

Joel 2:31 - "*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.*"

Joel 3:15 - "*The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.*"

Amos 5:18, 20 - "*Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness,a nd not light. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?*"

Acts 2:20 - "*The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.*"

Revelation 6:12 - "*And I beheld, when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.*"

Luke 21:28 says, "*But when these things* (these signs) *begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*"

Charles Hadden Spurgeon (who would be considered a proponent of the Pre-wrath Rapture view if living today) said in his sermon entitled "Joyful Anticipation of the Second Advent" - "When the Lord Jesus Christ shall come, the heavens shall tell us, *'There will be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars'* . . . Now I come to THE REMARKABLE PRECEPT itself: *'Then look up, and lift up your heads'*. . . Let there be no looking down because the earth is quaking and shaking, but let there be a looking up because you are going to rise from it; no looking down because the graves are opening; why should you look down? You will quit the grave, never more to die. *'Lift up your heads.'* The time for you to hang your heads like bulrushes, is over already, and will certainly be over when the Lord is coming, and your redemption draweth nigh. Wherefore, *'look up, and lift up your heads.'*" (cited by VanKampen, p. 275)

The darkening of the sun and moon and the dropping of the stars will not be a one-day event but will occur over a several-day period. "*But in those days* (plural) . . . *the sun shall be darkened. . .*" (Mk. 13:24)

"***The moon shall not give her light***" - Actually instead of reflecting the light of the sun, it will evidently reflect the bloody earth (perhaps depicting the blood shed of God's servants (Rev. 6, 20) and the coming blood bath of Armageddon (Rev. 14:20).

"***The powers*** (*dunamis*) ***of the heavens shall be shaken***" -

Isaiah 24:1, 19-20 - "*Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. . . . The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and for like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.*"

* The universe (now held together by Christ - Col. 1:17) will be unglued; normal orbits and rotations will be shaken; the tides will be drastically affected (Luke 21:25 - "*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring*").

"The events will be so calamitous that men will faint (Luke 21:25-26) from absolute terror. The Greek term behind "*faint*" means to expire or stop breathing, indicating that people will literally die of fright" (MacArthur, p. 51).

People will hold onto their stomachs because of the nausea and upsetness caused by the dreadful terror.

II. The "*Son of Man*" is REVEALED (v. 30)

(The Shekinah glory of Jesus Christ is seen)

"***Then***" - At the same time as the cosmic disturbances, Christ appears!

The "*lights*" of the universe are divinely turned off to draw the world's attention to Christ's glorious entrance at His second coming.

"The natural light of the heavenly bodies will be shut off (darkened) and then the supernatural light (the glory of God) will be revealed" (Rosenthal, Pre-Wrath Rapture, p. 111).

"***The sign***" = (Remember the disciples' question - v. 3) The Shekinah or glory of Christ will be the sign of His second coming.

He is not pictured on a "*white horse*" (Rev. 19:11) at this point in time, but is in the "*clouds*" (Shekinah cloud). Just as He went away (Acts 1:11), He will come again for His own.

This "***sign***" of Christ's return is important especially in light of the false signs and false Christ's and prophets prevalent in the Last Days (v. 23-26).

In the Last Days many will say: "*Where is the promise of His coming?*" (II Pet. 3:4). They will mock such a return. And then suddenly (like "*lightning*" - v. 27) and unexpectedly (like a "*thief*"), the Lord will come with a spectacular brilliance, a brilliance that will be seen by every eye (even the "despicably evil eyes of Antichrist and his wicked hosts" - Robert VanKampen, The Sign, p. 268).

"***Tribes***" - Various nations all over the earth.

"***Mourn***" - Not a mourning of repentance, but of fear because of the wrath about to be outpoured.

(SEE: Rev. 6:12-17)

The "***mourning***" of one tribe will be that of repentance. That tribe is Israel! (Zech. 12:10 - "*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*")

"***They shall see***" - The Rapture will not be a secret event. Christ's coming will be undeniable and inescapable.

"***Clouds***" - not just any clouds (not the clouds covering the earth) - but clouds from Heaven.

Rev. 1:7 - "*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.*" Cp. Rev. 14:14

"***With power***" - Christ's coming will not be humble and lowly like His first entrance into the human race (He came then as a Lamb; He is coming again as a Lion. He came the first time to suffer and die; He is coming the second time to conquer and reign).

"***Great glory***" - His glory was veiled in His incarnation (Phil. 2), but His glory will shine at His return.

This is why Paul referred to the Rapture as the "*glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ*" (Ti. 2:13).

III. The Saints are <u>RAPTURED</u> (v. 31)
(The <u>elect</u> believers are swept away to Heaven)

"***He shall send his angels***" - The Son of man (Jesus) has authority over angels; they do His bidding.

"***A great sound of a trumpet***" - Not speaking of the trumpet judgments (Rev. 8-9) but of the trumpet to summon His elect (cp. Exod. 19:16; Zech. 9:14).

I Cor. 15:52 - "*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*"

I Thes. 4:16 - "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*"

"***They***" - God will employ angels to seize away His people. This is how we will be "*caught up*" to meet the Lord in the air.

"***Gather***" = (*episunaxousin)* - to assemble together at one central location (cp. v. 28).

Many erroneously interpret this gathering as referring to the "regathering of Israel." This, however, is <u>not</u> the meaning as evidenced by Mark's parallel passage, which indicates clearly that the people taken are taken "*<u>from</u>...<u>earth</u>...<u>to</u>...<u>heaven</u>*" (Mk. 13:27).

The "***elect***" are those for whom the Days of Tribulation were cut short (v. 22).

Only the "***elect***" will be gathered. Who are the "***elect***"? They are those whom God has chosen (selected) to be saved; and those who are chosen are those who <u>believe</u> the Gospel.

"*...God hath from the beginning <u>chosen</u> you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and <u>belief</u> of the truth*" (II Th. 2:13).

You can know whether or not you are one of the "elect" by whether or not your total faith and trust is in Jesus Christ and His finished work on Calvary (Jn. 3:36).

Did you come to Jesus for salvation? (Jn. 6:37) If so, you will not be put to shame (Rom. 10:11).

CONCLUSION:

"THE DRAMATIC RETURN"

(The Drama of Christ's Second Coming)
Matthew 24:29-31
9/18/94

INTRODUCTION:

***Three powerful events will be experienced when Jesus Christ comes back!**

I. **The Sky is <u>DARKENED</u>** (v. 29)
(The <u>lights</u> of outer space are turned out)

II. **The "*Son of Man*" is <u>REVEALED</u>** (v. 30)
(The <u>Shekinah glory</u> of Jesus Christ is seen)

III. **The Saints are <u>RAPTURED</u>** (v. 31)
(The <u>elect</u> believers are swept away to Heaven)

CONCLUSION:

"LIFE ON EARTH WHEN JESUS RETURNS"

("The Times of the End Times")

Matthew 24:32-41

9/25/94

INTRODUCTION:

The failure of date-setters.

(SEE: VanKampen, p. 401)

Oct. 22, 1844 - Evang - William Miller (Millerites; precursors to SDA)
1874 - Charles Taze Russell - JW
1914 (Gentile ERA Ended) " "
1918, 1920, 1925, 1941, 1975 " "(JW) (world would end)
1988 / 1989 > Book "88 Reasons why Christ must return in 1988 / 89 " " " 1989
1992 - Korean Presbyterian Church (Mission for the Coming Days)
~~Sept~~. 6 1994 (Harold Camping - Gen. Manager Family Radio)

***What will life be like in the days before and during the return of Christ?**

I. The Days Before Christ's Coming (v. 33-35)

A. The SIGNS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 32-33)

V. 32

"When the sap begins to flow into the branches, making them "***tender,***" and new "***leaves***" appear on the tree, "***you know that summer is near.***" (MacArthur, p. 62).

Just as a budding fig tree indicates that summer is approaching, so when you see all of the events mentioned in vv. 4-29, you can know that Christ's return is soon approaching.

"Unfortunately, this parable, like many others, has often been made confusing and misleading by those who view it as a complicated allegory rather than a simple analogy" (MacArthur, p. 61).

Some interpreters view the reference to the "***fig tree***" as referring to Israel.

Note: In this context the "***fig tree***" is being used as an analogy to teach about the timing of Christ's return.

You don't use a symbol to explain a symbol. Rather, Jesus is speaking of a literal fig tree to explain a spiritual truth.

V. 33

"***All these things***" - The events of mass deception (v. 4), false Christ's (v. 5), universal wars (v. 6), famines, pestilences, earthquakes (v. 7), persecution (v. 9-13), the Abomination that makes the Jewish Holy Place desolate (v. 15), the Great Tribulation (v. 16-22), false prophets and false miracles (v. 24). . . these are all signs that Christ's coming is approaching.

"***It is near***" - Christ's coming (v. 30-31) and the establishment of the Kingdom of God ("*the kingdom of God is near*" - Luke 21:31).

"***Even at the doors***" - When those events transpire, we will know that Christ is ready to open and exit Heaven's doors to make His descent to earth.

The Rapture (Second Coming) is not "sign-less", as pretribulationalism teaches.

When the beginning of birth pangs have run their course, one can know that Christ's coming "*is near*" but still be unsure of the exact "*day and hour*"; hence, the admonition to "*watch*" (v. 42).

B. The SHORTNESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 34)

"***Verily***" - Truly, assuredly, positively without a doubt

"***This generation***" - not the generation Jesus was speaking to (the disciples did not live to see "*all these things*"); but the generation that would be around when these events began to transpire.

In other words, the generation of people who are alive when these events (v. 4-29) begin to be fulfilled, will be the same generation which will experience the second coming. The generation that is present when Antichrist is manifested will be the generation to see the fulfillment of Christ's words.

By speaking of a particular "***generation***" Jesus is demonstrating that the events He referred to are not some long, drawn out, century-long Tribulation, but a brief period of time -- no more than 7 years long.

C. The SURENESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 35)

"***Heaven and earth shall pass away***" after the 1,000 year Kingdom described in Revelation 20:1-10 is fulfilled. At the time of the Great White Throne Judgment (20:11), this present Heaven (space) and earth will be replaced by a new version (21:1).

Christ's words will:

--endure through the end of time (the preservation of Scripture is taught)

--be fulfilled at God's appointed time (the actual accomplishment of prophetic Scripture is taught).

Luke 16:17 - "*And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.*"

Scripture is "*clean, enduring forever*" (Psalm 19:9).

Matt. 5:18 - "*For verily I saw unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*"

II. The Day of Christ's Coming (v. 36-41)

A. The SUDDENNESS of the day of Christ's coming (v. 36)
(A day of secret)

"***That day and hour***" - refers to the Second Coming and Rapture

It is futile even to attempt to predict a date prior to the budding of the "***fig tree***" (i.e. prior to the fulfillment of vv. 4-26).

Acts 1:6-7 - "*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.*"

Even the Son of God, while He humbly was on earth (Phil. 2:7), did not know the date in which He would return ("*neither the Son*" - Mark 13:32).

Note: If the date of Christ's return could be calculated by dates given in the Old Testament and New Testament and by building a Scriptural chronological time-line, then why wasn't even Jesus able to do so with His superior knowledge of the Scriptures? -- So much for the date-setters!

It is true that Jesus did not say we could not know the year. We will be able to estimate once these predicted events begin to transpire.

B. The SHOCK of the day of Christ's coming (v. 37-39)
(A day of surprise)

V. 37

The days prior to the Coming ("*parousia*" - visible presence) of Christ will be just as they were before the flood came in Noah's day.

"***The days of Noah***" - What were those days like? SEE: Genesis 6 -

1) Inter-marriage between the saved and unsaved (Gen. 6:2-3)

2) Human notoriety (6:4)

3) Wickedness (6:5)

4) Continual evil thoughts (6:5)

5) Moral corruption (6:11)

6) Violence (bloodshed) (6:11)

7) Unbelief (they did not believe Noah's message - I Pet. 3:20; II Pet. 2:6)

V. 38

"Despite the distress, persecutions,m and upheavals (vv. 4-28), life goes on: people eat, drink, and marry" (Gaebelein, p. 509).

The activities of "***eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage***" are not in and of themselves sinful; they are merely normal, daily human activity.

There is nothing spiritual about them; such activities do not show any expectancy of Christ's return and the judgment to follow.

They were simply living independently of God (they was a feeling of "***peace and safety***" as they ignored Noah's warning).

Although God's people will not be experiencing "***peace***" in the world (rather, Tribulation from the Antichrist world), lost humanity will say "***peace and safety***" prior to Christ's coming (I Thes. 5:3-4 - "*For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*").

"***Until the day Noah entered into the ark***" - On the very day (Gen. 7:7, 12-13, 16) Noah entered the ark, their partying and "liaise fair" life ended, because the flood began.

Note: Just as God delivered Noah and Lot on the same day He poured oust His judgment and wrath on the earth, so it will be at Christ's coming (Luke 17:26-30).

The Day of the Lord's Wrath begins at the Rapture (I Thes. 4 & 5).

*God always delivers His people before He pours out His vindictive judgment.

V. 39

"***And knew not***" - The world didn't know when the flood would come; and even Noah (who expected it 120 years after the Gen. 6:3 warning) didn't know exactly the day until 7 days prior (Gen. 7:4).

Noah and his family knew the flood would come in their lifetime and they were prepared for it, but the rest of the world was caught by surprise. They had heard that judgment was coming, since Noah (the preacher of righteousness) warned them (II Pet. 2:5), but they did not believe it.

So will it be in the Last Days (they will scoffingly say: "*Where is the promise of His coming?*") (II Pet. 3:4).

The people in Noah's day no doubt laughed and mocked at his preaching of a coming flood (they had never seen rain, much less a flood -- just as people living today have never seen the sun and moon darkened and the stars fall, etc.). It was business as usual until the day Noah entered the ark.

C. The SEVERANCE of the day of Christ's coming (v. 40-41)
(A day of separation)

V. 40

"***Then***" - the day of "*the coming of the Son of Man*" (v. 39)

"***Field. . . grinding at the mill***" - Note: The ones taken will be ready, but still continuing the routines of life. Jesus does not expect us to be waiting on a mountain or in a church building the day He comes back.

Jesus said, "*Occupy till I come*" (Luke 9:13).

A hand mill was "normally operated by two women squatting opposite each other with the mill between them, each woman in turn pulling the stone around 180 degrees" (Gaebelein, p. 509).

When Christ comes, depending on which side of the globe you live on, it will either be daytime (for some) or nighttime (for others).

The jobs described in these verses (v. 40-41) are daylight jobs. However, in Luke 17:34 Jesus said: "*I tell you, in that night there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.*"

The ones "***taken***" (in this context) most obviously refers to the same people who were "*gathered together*" in verse 31.

(Any other view is to twist and coerce a meaning on this text that is unwarranted and inconsistent with the inspired flow of thought in this context)

In verses 32-41, three key words tie this context together in describing the same event -- namely the Second Coming of Christ (v. 3, 30).

v. 33 - "*It is near*"

V. 36 - "*But of that day*"

V. 40 - "*Then shall two be in the field*"

Many pre-tribulationalists in a desperate attempt to make verses 40 & 41 not refer to the Rapture explain it thus:

"Those taken in verses 40 & 41 are not saints but sinners who are removed from the earth at the very end of the 70th week." (Matthew 13:40,41)

This view has a major problem explaining how the previous context (v. 36-37) relates to those seized away (i.e. v. 40-41).

Every pre-tribulationist knows that the end of the Tribulation will involve the most severe, terrifying judgments (bowls - Rev. 15-16) ever to fall on earth.

The world's conditions at the end of the Tribulation will not allow the relaxed, uninhibited, normal "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" scenario described in vv. 36-39.

The "peaceful" conditions on the earth (v. 36-39) experienced by the unsaved prior to the "coming of the Son of man" unquestionably point to the Rapture.

The word translated "***taken***" is *paralambano* (*para* = along side of; *lambano* = to take or receive). The word means to "take with one's self" or to "join to one's self" (Strong). This same word occurs in John 14:3 where Jesus promised to "*come again and receive you unto myself*".

This word is different than the word "*took*" in verse 39, which describes how the flood waters carried the unsaved world to their doom and destruction.

The ones taken are taken to be with Christ; whereas the ones left are left to remain on earth for the Day of the Lord's Wrath.

John the Baptist said, "*Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his flood, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*"

There will be a severance (splitting/breaking) of many close acquaintances (co-workers) and relatives (Luke 17:34) when Christ returns.

s book — that we would be overcomers, that Christ would
d be our *Lord* and *Savior*, that we would be sons of the Lord God
;hty, completely prepared for the cataclysmic days of the end
To this end the last chapter of Revelation includes this beauti-
/itation: "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the
ho hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the
ho wishes, take the water of life without cost" (Rev. 22:17).
in the days of Noah, God has given both the church and the
advance written notice of exactly what will occur in the end
To His own, the inhabitants of the kingdom of light, He
ses blessing for obedience and severe persecution for compro-
To the unbelieving world, the inhabitants of the kingdom of
ess, He promises but one thing: "the wrath of God, which is
in full strength in the cup of His anger . . . tormented with fire
imstone . . . forever and ever" (Rev. 14:10, 11). "The seed of the
d will be cut off [but] the righteous will inherit the land and
in it forever" (Psa. 37:28, 29). How will you — how will I —
ıd?

Epilogue

Over the ages men have always liked to set dates for the return of Christ. A recent book listed "eighty-eight reasons why Christ must return in eighty-eight" (1988). When Christ failed to return during that year, the author recalculated, discovered he had missed one point concerning the exact year of Jesus' birth, and moved the date of His return up to 1989. In the process of making the one-year adjustment, he advertised *eighty-nine* reasons why Christ would return in 1989. Needless to say, the Lord returned during neither of those years.

"WHEN THE FIG TREE . . ."

In the Olivet Discourse Christ spoke directly about the time of His second coming:

> "Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; even so you too, when you see all these things,

Bob Larson

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

She died on her sixth birthday. She could have lived. A blood transfusion would have saved the life of Ricarda Bradford, who was critically injured in a car accident. But her father, a chiropractor and devout Jehovah's Witness, refused the life-giving procedure. He quoted Genesis 9:3-4 and Leviticus 17:10-15, explaining that Witnesses consider taking blood in the veins to be the same as eating it.

Refusing to accept blood transfusions is just one of several distinctive beliefs associated with Jehovah's Witnesses. They do not donate vital organs or receive transplants. Until 1952, they refused smallpox vaccinations. They also refuse to vote, salute the flag, sing "The Star Spangled Banner" (or any nationalistic anthem), and will not serve in the armed forces.

In 1879 a Bible study leader named Charles Taze Russell was looking for a way to expound his somewhat peculiar teachings. He had departed from orthodoxy by denying the existence of hell, the Trinity, and the deity of Christ, and felt compelled to reach a larger audience. He copublished *The Herald of the Morning* magazine with its founder, N. H. Barbour, and it is here that we find the first records of Russell's movement. By 1884 Russell controlled the publication, renamed it *The Watch Tower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*, and founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (now known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society). The first edition of *The Watch Tower* magazine was only 6,000 copies each month. Today the Witnesses' publishing complex in Brooklyn, New York,

churns out 100,000 books and 800,000 copies of its two magazines—daily!

Russell's theology established the foundation for the Witnesses' militant opposition to all other church organizations. Until his death in 1916 aboard a train in Texas, Russell insisted that the Bible could be understood only according to his interpretation. At the heart of his system was a prophetical chronology that predicted the Gentile era would end in 1914. (Russell had already concluded that Christ had returned in 1874, but as a "presence in the upper air," not a visible manifestation.) The end of the sealing of the 144,000 saints who would be "kings and priests in heaven" was also designated to occur in 1914. Those saved after that would belong to a servant class, "the great company," who would rule on earth under the tutelage of the 144,000. In these early days, abstention and strict doctrinal discipline were not mandated.

After the death of Russell, a Missouri lawyer named Joseph Franklin Rutherford took over the presidency of the Watch Tower Society. At a Columbus, Ohio, convention in 1931, he cited Isaiah 43:10 as the pretext for changing the name of the organization to "Jehovah's Witnesses." Thus, the stigma of Russell's questionable scholarship (he had only a seventh-grade education) and morals was resolved. Rutherford assumed total charge of the organization, and from then on his prolific writings were the source of divine mandate. This consolidation of power enabled him to discard some of Russell's less desirable teachings about the gathering of the Jews and the great pyramid theory.

After Rutherford's death, Nathan Knorr took over. In the same way that Rutherford had sought to supplant Russell's influence, Knorr ignored the works of Rutherford. Today, the Society is led by Frederick William Franz, now in his eighties, who wields papal power over the lives of Witnesses all over the world. The Society has evolved into a two-class system where governors maintain strict control over believers' lives and thoughts.

The pronouncements that issue forth from the Brooklyn headquarters (known to members as Bethel) are binding, and no deviation is tolerated. Witnesses who depart from such injunctions are "disfellowshiped" (their term for excommunication). From then on, Kingdom Hall worshipers (even family members) consider them as dead and are forbidden to speak with them. The excommunicated "apostate" is told he will not rise from the grave on Judgment Day. Many former Witnesses have revealed that in the early 1980s grounds for this shunning increased to include reading books written by ex-members, eating with suspected dissenters, and even, for some women, wearing pantsuits.

Strict theological control insures a consistency of doctrine. Witnesses avoid contact with outsiders, and the rare chance to meet one usually occurs when they knock on the door. Society statistics indicate that 740 house calls are required to recruit *each* of the nearly 200,000 new members who join every year. During the 1970s the Society grew 45 percent worldwide; in 1985 alone members spent 590,540,205 hours in missionary outreach worldwide.

Never identifying themselves, these friendly but persistent zealots deserve high marks for perseverance. The first thing to notice once they're inside the front door is that they do bring a Bible, *The New World Translation*—their especially prepared version. Its translators are anonymous, so neither credentials nor their manuscript sources can be checked. But astute students of the Word will readily notice that the Society's theological stance is enhanced by significant changes from the Authorized Version.

Debating a Witness requires skill and a thorough knowledge of Bible doctrines. They have been taught that all other beliefs are satanic and have been programmed with stock answers for questions that are often raised. Even if they don't know an answer, they're confident that their leaders back at the Kingdom Hall will provide the correct response. Evangelical Christians need to be aware of Witness beliefs so that a clever choice of words doesn't disguise their extremely unorthodox doctrine. The following paragraph points out some of their more controversial views.

To begin with, the Trinity is seen as a demonic doctrine. The Holy Spirit is robbed of his personality, and Jesus is stripped of his deity. Their *Translation* renders John 1:1 "the Word was *a* god," introducing the Witness belief that Christ, the Archangel Michael, was created by Jehovah. The appearance of Jesus on earth was not an incarnation but an example of human perfection in response to Jehovah's moral law. Witnesses do not consider Christ to be Eternal God, the Creator of the universe, and our Great High Priest as declared in Hebrews 4:15 and Colossians 2:9-10. Each year around March, Jehovah's Witnesses hold a "Memorial" service, which all members and potential members are expected to attend. This occasion commemorates Jesus' sacrifice, which began the covenant between the 144,000 and Jehovah. While it is similar to the biblical ordinance of Communion, only a few Witnesses partake of the meal. The Memorial is considered merely symbolic. No spiritual significance is attached to the event. Even October 2, their estimated date of Christ's birth, is largely ignored. (The only birthday the Witnesses acknowledge

is that of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, which celebrated its hundredth anniversary in 1984.)

Other Jehovah's Witness doctrines that may be encountered are soul-sleep and the annihilation of the wicked (along with Satan and his demons). They deny the existence of a soul that can exist apart from the body. To Witnesses, the soul is just the life-animating force that gives life to a material body. When a human being dies, his soul ceases to exist and his body ultimately deteriorates. There is no hell since there is no conscious existence after death. Hell, for the Watch Tower, is the grave. Faithful Witnesses hope one day to be recreated (resurrected) from Jehovah's memory. Those destined for resurrection will inhabit either paradise, earth (the large earthly class), or heaven (the elite spiritual class, the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14). The earthly class will live as they have here with a body and life-animating force (soul). The heavenly class will "give up" any right to a resurrected body and will live as spirits, as they believe Jesus did after his "recreation" or spirit resurrection.

Witnesses make much of their devotion to Jehovah and eschew any reference to God by another name. Ironically, respected Greek and Hebrew scholars tell us that the word *Jehovah* is nonexistent in the original Scriptures, no matter how many times it appears in *The New World Translation*. (No one is exactly sure how the Hebrew consonants referring to God—*YHWH*—were pronounced. Probably it was "Yahweh." The word *Jehovah* did not appear until William Tyndale's English translation of the Bible in the 1500s.) There is no sufficient proof that any designation other than Jehovah is a deliberate distortion of God's name. The greatest challenge to Watch Tower Society doctrine is the fact that the Bible presents Jesus as God incarnate, a fatal blow to their entire belief system.

But one need not be a Hebrew scholar to be aware of the most glaring inconsistency in the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses. A brief study of the Society's history shows a confused view of the end times as indicated by their record of erroneous dates for Christ's return. The world's end has been prophesied for 1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1941, and 1975. Since Adam's creation was presumed to occur in 4026 B.C., Witnesses taught that 6,000 years of human history would end in A.D. 1975. When the date passed, thousands of disillusioned members left the sect. But President Franz had an explanation ready. The 6,000-year chronology was set forward to begin with Eve's creation, and how long that occurred after Adam's advent is an interval not yet revealed by Witness leaders.

Still, members believe the end can't be far off, and in fact the society has mathematical reasons to delay Armageddon only until the early

he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with **fire and brimstone** *in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name." (Rev. 14:9-11)* It's better not to receive the mark and **be martyred** for he **will be saved** to eternal life through his death, but he who receives the mark will be thrown into **Hell** and **suffer** forever!

★ THE WAY TO ETERNAL LIFE

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." (John 1:12)

Friends, **everybody is a sinner** and **in need of salvation.** (Rom. 3:10) Because a man cannot save himself, Jesus shed His blood on the cross to pay the price for our sins and redeemed us. Only in Jesus is the **eternal life,** not in any other religion or in good life. *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)*

Accept Jesus as Lord and Savior in your life and **repent** of all your sins. Also, go bear the fruit of repentance. It is those who keep their faith until the end who are saved. Remember, faith without works is dead and cannot save! (James 2:14, 17) **Fear God** and work out your salvation with fear and trembling. (Phil 2:12) Blessed and wise is he who believes and prepares for eternal life!

In Autumn 1992, Jesus is Coming!!
In 1999, Human History will End!!

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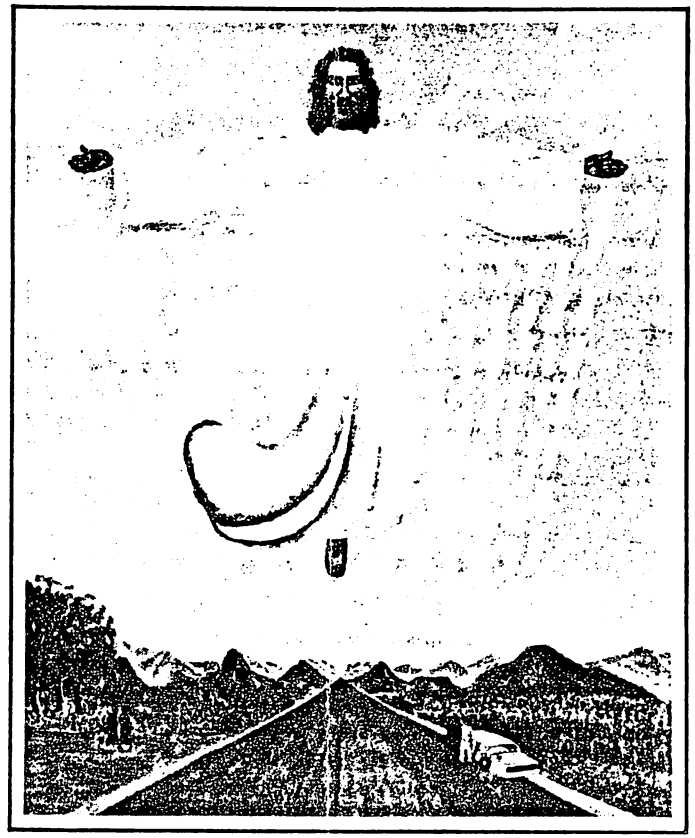
Rapture Date Setting

GOD'S JUDGEMENT DAY IS NEAR

IN AUTUMN 1992, JESUS IS COMING AGAIN

"Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgement has come" (Rev.14:7)

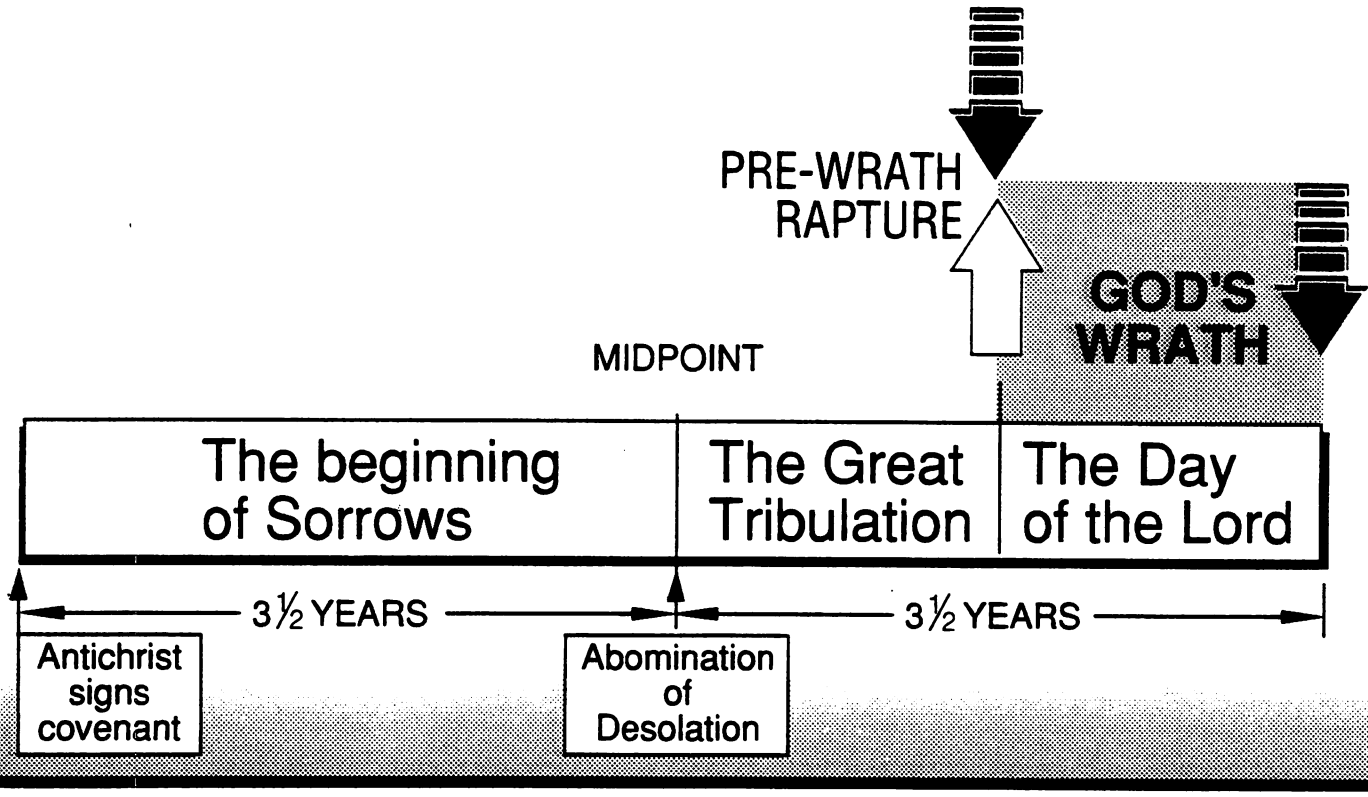


(BIBLICAL PROPHESY TO BE FULFILLED)

Rapture ⇨ United Europe (E.E.C.) ⇨ Antichrist Revealed ⇨ 7 yrs. of Great Tribulation ⇨ Jesus' Coming to Earth with Saints ⇨ Thousand Years of Jesus' Reign on Earth ⇨ Great White Throne Judgement ⇨ Eternal Heaven and Hell

PRE-WRATH RAPTURE

Daniel's 70th Week



"LIFE ON EARTH WHEN JESUS RETURNS"

("The Times of the End Times")
Matthew 24:32-41
9/25/94

INTRODUCTION:

***What will life be like in the days before and during the return of Christ?**

I. The Days Before Christ's Coming (v. 33-35)

A. The SIGNS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 32-33)

B. The SHORTNESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 34)

C. The SURENESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 35)

II. The Day of Christ's Coming (v. 36-41)

A. The SUDDENNESS of the day of Christ's coming (v. 36)
(A day of secret)

B. The SHOCK of the day of Christ's coming (v. 37-39)
(A day of surprise)

C. The SEVERANCE of the day of Christ's coming (v. 40-41)
(A day of separation)

CONCLUSION:

"BE READY FOR TAKE-OFF"

Matthew 24:42 - 25:13

10/2/94

INTRODUCTION: Verse 42

ILLUS: The tragedy of a plane not ready for take-off.

The flight of flights is yet to come and millions are not ready for take-off!

V. 42

"***Watch therefore***" - Jesus draws a practical concluding application to His previous teaching about His coming (READ v. 36-41).

"***Watch***" - Has 2 main ideas:

1) Being spiritually alert (not blind or in the dark)

   (Acts 20:31; I Cor. 16:13; Col. 4:2; I Thes. 5:6, 10; "*vigilant*" - I Pet. 5:8)

2) Being spiritually awake (not sleeping)

   (Mt. 24:43; 26:38, 40, 41)

"***Ye know not what hour***" - Although one living in the Great Tribulation can know that His coming is getting close (v. 32-33), one cannot pinpoint the specific "*day and hour*" (v. 36).

Mark's Gospel tells us that no one knows the specific point of time Jesus will return (Mark 13:35-37 - "*Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*"

The days of Tribulation will be "*cut short*" for the "*elect's sake*" (v. 22); however, no one knows exactly how much they are "cut short."

"The generation living during the Tribulation is specifically told they will not know the exact time of Jesus' appearing, but they are informed in detail as to what signs immediately preceding it will be." (MacArthur, p. 77).

***Be ready for Christ's return!**
(Only those who are ready will be Raptured!)

Readiness involves: Watchfulness

Faithfulness

Preparedness

I. **BE WATCHFUL** (like an alert householder) 24:43-44
(Don't be caught off guard as if a thief broke into your home)

V. 43

"***The goodman of the house***" - The house master; the head of the home; the homeowner (i.e. the one in charge of the home).

(implicit truth: The husband is responsible for the protection of his family - both physically and spiritually.)

"***Watch***" - (*phulake*) More time than a specific "*hour*" (*hora* - v. 44).

"Among the Jews the night was divided into 3 watches (Ex. 14:24; Jud. 7:19) [each of four-hour segments from 6:00 at night till 6:00 in the morning] and this continued on through Roman times. The Romans divided the night into four watches [3 hour guard duty]. This was recognized by the Jews (Mark 13:35)." (Vine, p. 200).

The Lord's point is this: If the head of the home had known the general time period in which the thief would come, he would have been ready at the specific hour he came.

"***Thief***" - A common expression in describing the Lord's return (Lk. 12:35-40; I Thes. 5:2; II Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3, 16:15).

Although the unsaved world will be caught by surprise (like a "*thief*") at the Lord's return (I Th. 5:2), true believers will not (I Th. 5:4 - "*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*")

(SEE: I Th. 4:16 - 5:9)

V. 44

"Be ye also ready" **-** You too must be ready. Just as it would be advantageous for a homeowner to be ready for the thief and to make preparations for his eventual coming, you must also be ready for Christ's coming.

Some people are more "security conscious" for their homes, than they are for their souls! Many are more worried about their homes being broken into than where they will spend eternity. Many people fear losing their material goods more than losing their souls for ever!

Don't fear him who can wreck your possessions, as much as you fear Him who has the power to confine you to hell forever!

"In such an hour as ye think not" **-** Christ will come at a time when the world will not expect Him. They will be *"eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage"* (v. 38). It will be life as normal for the unsuspecting world.

II. **BE FAITHFUL** (like the faithful and wise servant) 24:45-51
(Don't be caught giving in to the pressures of the world)

V. 45

"Faithful" **=** full of faith, which produces reliability, consistency, persistence in one's life.

"Servant" **-** a devoted bond slave

"Give them meat" **-** The ministers of Christianity do not dispense steak, pork chops, filet mignon, and chicken cutlets; rather, the *"meat"* of God's Word.

Just as Jesus told Peter to *"feed my sheep"* (Jn. 21:16, 17), so ministers (servants) of Christ are expected to feed God's people (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2) *"in season and out of season"* (II Tim. 4:2).

"His Lord hath made ruler" **-** It is the Lord who calls a man into ministry (Acts 20:28; cp. *"rule"* Heb. 13:7).

V. 46

"***Doing***" - The Lord expects us to be faithful to doing His will right up until he returns (no matter how much pressure comes upon us to quit and divert our lives to the pursuit of pleasure or mere existence).

"*Occupy till I come*" is our Lord's command (Lk. 19:13).

"Every believer has been giving a divine stewardship and responsibility in the work of Christ on earth, and in that stewardship he is to be faithful and sensible. His life, breath, energy, talents, spiritual gifts, and every other good thing he has are trusts from God to be used in His service and to His glory." (MacArthur, p. 78).

V. 47

Those who are faithful (even to the point of death) will have great authority and privilege in the Kingdom to come (SEE: Mt. 25:21, 23) as we live and reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:4, 6).

V. 48

The word "***servant***" does not necessarily imply that he was saved. The Lord gave this parable not merely to the saved but "*to all*" (Lk. 12:41).

"***Evil servant***" - Not the same "*faithful and wise servant*" Jesus just described. This servant is morally "*wicked.*" He "*serves*" Christ but not from sincere motives (but like Judas Iscariot; like Balaam - II Pet. 2:15; like Diotrephes - III Jn. 9 . . . they serve with false motives: for gain, attention, or fame.

"***My Lord delayeth His coming***" - spiritually procrastination: Illustration by William Barclay (SEE: MacArthur, p. 80).

Why does Jesus delay His coming? Answer: He wants more people to be saved. The "fullness of the Gentiles" must come in (Rom. 11:25).

II Peter 3:8-10a - "*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...*"
V. 15 - "*The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation*"

"***My lord delayeth his coming***" - He's not coming for a long time. Perhaps this man is impatient because he lacks the one virtue that gives patience, and that is faith (James 1:3). His impatience is no doubt due to the tribulations he is facing (cp. Rom. 5:3) and he can't stand it any longer!

V. 49

Out of frustration and anger, he begins to beat his "***fellow-servants***" (those he once served with). He succumbs to the pressures of the Antichrist-ruled world and becomes a traitor who turns against his fellow-preachers. He defects from the faith; he becomes offended (SEE: Mt. 24:10), and he departs from the faith "*giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils*" (II Tim. 4:1).

This false servant (this "*hireling*" - Jn. 10:12, 13) abandons God's sheep and begins to associate with the devil's crowd (the heathen, the pagans). He now eats (fellowships) with them and joins them in their abominable practices. To such people God warned: "*For it had been better for them not tot have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing int he mire.*" (II Peter 2:21-22).

"***Drink with the drunken***" - In an attempt to dull his senses to the misery he finds himself in, he turns to alcohol (as an aesthetic to cover up the tough times and as an escape to get out from the pressures). [Note: We should never turn to mind-altering drugs or alcohol to escape the unpleasant reality we find ourselves in. But turn to God -- whose spirit can give us victory (Eph. 5:18)]

Just as drinking and driving don't mix - drinking and "flying" (up - in the Rapture) don't mix! (no one goes to be with Christ who is a drunkard! cp. I Cor. 6:10; I Th. 5:7).

V. 50

"***The Lord of that servant***" - the Lord Jesus is "Lord of lords." (Rev. 17:14; 19:16) He is Lord over pagan lords; therefore he is Lord over pagan servants as well.

This servant did not have Christ as his personal Lord, but nonetheless is accountable to him.

Jesus is Lord over you whether or not you know Him, trust Him, and live for Him.

One day every tongue will confess His Lordship (Phil. 2:11).

"***Looketh not for him. . . not aware of***" - Christ will come back so suddenly (v. 27), and so unexpectedly (since this man's senses were dulled by drink) that he will not be ready. He is a lost man who will get no second chance to believe and be saved. He had great opportunity to be saved and blew it. He was given much but was unfaithful (Lk. 12:47-48). The Lord he did not expect to return is now suddenly upon him in judgment.

V. 51

"***Cut him asunder***" - to cut in two pieces (speaking of severe judgment) He will be physically destroyed when Christ returns (II Th. 1:8 - "*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*")

"***Appoint him his portion***" - Assign him his place (of doom). He will be sentenced along with the "*hypocrites.*" Why? Because he himself was a hypocrite (whose true character was eventually manifested - vv. 48-49).

He played the part of a servant only so long. [Note: In countries where Christianity is outlawed, you don't find people claiming to be Christians if they are not. When the pressures of the Tribulation come, the masks will come of; the church will be purged of pretenders.].

Why did Matthew record this word "*hypocrites*" rather than "*unbelievers*" (Luke 12:46)?

Answer: To show us the character and practice of this false servant (who no doubt did many wonderful things in the name of Christ - Mt. 7:22-23).

"*The hypocrite's hope shall perish*" (Job 8:13).

"***Weeping and gnashing of teeth***" - Describes the remorse and agonies of the darkness of hell (Mt. 8:12, 22:13, 25:30).

"***Weeping***" - speaks of <u>sorrow</u> (emotional suffering and torment)

"***Gnashing of teeth***" - speaks of <u>pain</u> (physical suffering and torment)

Jesus said to the suffering church of Smyrna: "*...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Rev. 2:10).

III. **BE PREPARED** (like the five wise virgins) 25:1-12
(Don't be caught without oil in your lamp)

V. 1

"The kingdom of heaven" - The Kingdom which comes from Heaven, and the Kingdom which belongs to the God of Heaven -- hence, *"Kingdom of God"* (Jn. 3:3).

"Ten virgins" - prospective brides; possible candidates to be part of the bride of Christ. (some view the *"virgins"* as representing the "bridesmaids" rather than the "bride" herself. The reasons is that they don't want in any way to view this parable as referring to the Rapture of the Church. However, in light of the context it can refer to no other event (cp. 24:31, 36-41; 25:10).

"The Bridegroom" - a clear reference to Jesus Christ.

A Jewish marriage consisted of 3 parts:

1) Selection of a bride (father of groom and bride make a contract)

2) Betrothal period (vows; then preparations)

3) Wedding (procession, feast, consummation

(See: MacArthur, p. 84)

v. 3

"No oil" - What good is a lamp without oil? Note: The outside of the lamp is worthless without oil on the inside to give it light.

V. 4

Note: In Rev. 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1 - Christ's 7 churches are called *"lampstands"* (light-holders), and the seven-fold manifestation of the Holy Spirit (7 spirits - Rev. 1:4, 3:1) are evidently the light of those lampstands.

V. 5

"While the Bridegroom tarried" - While Christ delayed His coming.

"They all slumbered and slept" - They all "got drowsy and began to sleep" (NASV).

Perhaps, for the *"wise"* it was a sleep of security (they had peace that their Lord would not come and leave them). For the *"foolish"* it was a sleep of false security (they thought they were ready, when in fact they were not; a faulty self-confidence).

"The delay of the bridegroom was a standard feature of Jewish weddings" (Craig L. Bloomberg, Interpreting the Parables, p. 194).

V. 6

"A cry" **-** Perhaps this corresponds to the "*shout*" of the Rapture (I Th. 4:16; cp. Rev. 14:15). Or this cry could correspond to the final announcement of the Gospel to all nations (Mt. 24:14); nonetheless, a final wake-up call is given.

V. 7

"All those virgins arose" (lit. were raised up out of sleep). Some view this wake-up call as a "revival" to occur prior to the Rapture.

V. 8

"Our lamps are gone out" **-** Our lamps are being extinguished, ar being quenched. The wick of their lamp would light and ~~ten~~ them go out because there was no oil to keep it burning.

"The foolish virgins, who had provided no oil, saw their dry wicks flicker for a few moments and then die. To insist that they had some oil but not enough contradicts 25:3. The failure to provide any oil at all displays their stupidity (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 974).

"It was not that they had been unaware of their lack of oil, but that they were not concerned enough about it to acquire it before the Bridegroom's arrival. Perhaps they thought they could quickly run down to the oil shop anytime they wanted and secure what they needed in plenty of time" (MacArthur, p. 90).

"Give us of your oil" **-** Note: No one can give salvation to any other; you cannot get to Heaven because your family or friends were saved. You are not going to be raptured hanging on to the coat strings of anyone. You will answer to God for yourself.

V. 9

No one can transfer part of his/her spiritual life to another.

"Go ye rather to them that sell" **-** This "selling" and "buying" without price, is without money (Is. 55:1 - "*Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*")

Caution: Don't press or force every detail in a parable to have interpretive significance. In parables, look for the main point that is being emphasized rather than extracting specific interpretations from every detail.

"*Examine (test) yourselves to see if you are in the faith*" (II Cor. 13:5).

V. 10

"***Ready***" - prepared; the wise were all set to meet their bridegroom. Are you ready?

No doubt all ten virgins looked alike; they all had lamps, and they all wanted to be selected as the bride. However, they were not all prepared.

Five were saved and five were not. The even "proportion suggests that a large part (perhaps 50%) of the professing church does not belong to God."

They had the "***oil***" of preparedness which is the saving grace and light of the Holy Spirit within them.

Many commentators view the reference to "oil" as being symbolic of the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Is. 61:1; cp. with Psalm 45:7; Heb. 1:9; Zech. 4).

No one gets into the wedding in Heaven without oil (the salvation of the Holy Spirit) nor without a wedding garment (the imputed righteousness of Christ) (Mt. 22:11-13).

"***The door was shut***" - no one else was permitted entrance (just as the Lord "shut" the door on the ark (Gen. 7:16) allowing no one else to enter, one day the same will be true of His marriage).

Today is the day to enter by faith in Christ (Luke 13:24-25 - "*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.*")

V. 11

"***Lord, Lord, open to us***" - a cry of desperation (Mt. 7:22-23 - "*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*")

Some will see their need for the new birth, God's grace, redemption in Christ, salvation too late.

V. 12

"***I know you not***" - While Christ knew about them, He did not have a knowledge of them in the sense of a "relationship knowledge" (*oida*).

This same concept is also expressed by the word *ginosko* (I Cor. 8:3 - "*But if any man love God, the same is known of him*"; cp. Gal. 4:9; Mt. 7:23).

CONCLUSION:

V. 13

Jesus ends this unit of thought the same way He began (v. 42) with an admonition to be awake and alert as to His return.

The only way to be ready is to be born again. Only those who believe in Him will be raptured.

John 14:1-6

Are you ready for Christ's return?

I Cor. 1:7 - "*So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*"

Phil. 3:20 - "*For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*"

Heb. 10:24-25 - "*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*"

James 5:8 - "*Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"

I Pet. 4:7 - "*But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.*"

Rev. 22:20 - "*He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*"

Luke records Jesus (in the same context) as saying: "*Let your loins be girded about* (be dressed to go) *and your lights burning*" (Lk. 12:35).

HYMN: "Almost Persuaded"

"BE READY FOR TAKE-OFF"

Matthew 24:42 - 25:13
10/2/94

INTRODUCTION: Verse 42

***Be ready for Christ's return!**
(Only those who are ready will be Raptured!)

Readiness involves: Watchfulness
Faithfulness
Preparedness

I. **BE WATCHFUL** (like an alert householder) 24:43-44
(Don't be caught off guard as if a thief broke into your home)

II. **BE FAITHFUL** (like the faithful and wise servant) 24:45-51
(Don't be caught giving in to the pressures of the world)

III. **BE PREPARED** (like the five wise virgins) 25:1-12
(Don't be caught without oil in your lamp)

CONCLUSION:

"Be Ready For Take-off"
(For An Air Plane)
For T/O
by Harry Wisbar

ALL ENGINES Working

MINIMUM ONE AIR COND. PACK FOR PRESSURIZATION

ALL OUT FLOW VALVES ~~operating~~ operating

ALL DOORS INDICATIONS - INDICATING CLOSED OR Verified Close

MIN. ONE Generator

STBY COMPASS operational

FLT. Controls Verfied operational

By INDICATION or Visually

FLAPS/SLATS Set To Take off Pos

Speed Brakes STOWED

M.N. ONE VHF Com operating

M.N ONE VHF ~~OR~~ NAV System operating

MIN. ONE PRIMARY FLT. ~~Stuff~~ INSTRUMENTATION

Working (Capt or F/O) operating

MIN. ONE Pitot/static System operating

Pitiot/Static Heat Working.

Anti Ice System WING + ENGINE operational

wearing such honesty as a badge of intellectual and moral integrity. But honest unbelievers are just as lost as **hypocrites** who pretend to have faith. They will go to the same place as the religious phonies they feel superior to and despise.

When He appears, the same resplendent glory and power (see Matt. 24:30) that will draw His own people to Him in loving gratitude will repel most unbelievers in hateful indignation. For the former it will be the time of final reception and redemption; for the latter it will be the time of final rejection and judgment.

All unbelievers—those who completely reject the Lord and those who think one day they will trust in Him, those who are honest in their unbelief and those who are hypocritical in their faith—will suffer the same destiny of hell. In that place there will be **weeping . . . and the gnashing of teeth,** figures representing inconsolable grief and unremitting torment.

The thrust of Jesus' warning is not simply to inform unbelievers about the horror of facing an eternal hell but to use that dreadful prospect as a motive for believing in Him in order to escape it. His appeal is to believe while there is opportunity, rather than foolishly wait for a supposedly more propitious time that might never come and might not be taken advantage of if it did come.

In his commentary on this passage, William Barclay relates the following story to illustrate the danger of spiritual procrastination:

> There is a fable which tells of three apprentice devils who were coming to this earth to finish their apprenticeship. They were talking to Satan, the chief of the devils, about their plans to tempt and to ruin men. The first said, "I will tell them that there is no God." Satan said, "That will not delude many, for they know that there is a God." The second said, "I will tell men that there is no hell." Satan answered, "You will deceive no one that way; men know even now that there is a hell for sin." The third said, "I will tell men that there is no hurry." "Go," said Satan, "and you will ruin men by the thousand." The most dangerous of all delusions is that there is plenty of time. (*The Gospel of Matthew,* vol. 2 [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975], p. 317)

Why, one wonders, is Christ waiting so long to come again? First of all, He is waiting for evil to run its course. In his vision on Patmos, John saw an angel come "out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.' And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Rev. 14:15-16). The imagery depicts a field whose crop is completely ready for harvesting, here indicating the harvest of final

judgment on unbelieving mankind. Not until the angel notifies Him th the harvest is ripe, will Christ come to earth and execute judgment. Goc sovereign purpose is to allow sin to reach its full evil limits, to run i complete destructive course.

Second, the Lord is waiting for all those whose names are writte in the Lamb's book of life to be saved. There must be the coming in "the fulness of the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:25), the gathering in of Genti saints into the church during the present age. It is also necessary for "a Israel [to] be saved" (v. 26), for all the believing sons of Abraham to b brought into the kingdom by faith in their Messiah and King.

Peter declares, "Do not let this one fact escape your notice, belove that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand yea as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some cou slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but f all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:8-9). What seems to human beings be a long period of time is but a moment to God, and they should n rely on their own finite perceptions of time to judge the delay in fulfillir His promises. It is not that God could not act in judgment at any time H chose, but that in His sovereign patience and love He is allowing th fullest time possible for men to repent and come to Him in faith.

But because He has chosen to delay judgment for what has alreac been thousands of years, some people in the last days will mocking declare, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathe fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creatio (2 Pet. 3:3-4). Like scientific uniformitarians, who believe that natur laws have always and will always operate in exactly the same way th operate now, latter-day religious scoffers will assume that because Gc has not yet judged the world He never will. "It escapes their notice however, Peter goes on to say, "that by the word of God the heaver existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by wate through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded wi water" (vv. 5-6). The mockers will foolishly ignore the most catastroph upheaval the world has yet experienced, in which every human being c earth was killed except for Noah and his family.

In Matthew 24-25 Jesus addresses those who will be alive durir the generation of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:34). But believers toda should be prepared for the Lord's coming in the rapture of the church, which the Lord takes them to heaven, just as believers in the end tin should be prepared for His appearing in power and glory to establish th millennial kingdom.

To the church at Rome Paul wrote these sobering words:

> [You know] the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken fro sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night

ferent from those of today. The first step was the *arrangement*. Young people did not choose their mates; a marriage was arranged by the father or a matchmaker (*shadchan*). The groom's family provided a dowry to the bride's father, and that money was put in trust to be used by the bride in the event of the loss of her husband, through either divorce or death. The second step was the *betrothal*. At the betrothal the bride and groom exchanged vows before family and friends, making the marriage official. Those official vows could be dissolved only through divorce or death. During the period following the betrothal the groom provided a home for his bride by building an addition to his father's house. The third step was the *wedding feast*. At the appointed time the bridegroom, accompanied by his attendants, proceeded through the streets (usually at night), with torch in hand, to the bride's home to claim his bride. The bride, hearing that her groom was coming, eagerly prepared for and awaited his arrival, along with her bridesmaids. The bridal party proceeded to the groom's house for the wedding feast and the physical consummation of the marriage. It was this third phase of the marriage that Jesus referred to in Matthew 25. In the parable, Jesus is the bridegroom coming from heaven with His bride (the church) to establish His Kingdom on earth.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

The focus of this parable is not the bride but the bridesmaids. They are referred as "ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (v. 1). At first glance they all seem alike, but then some differences appear. First, "five of them were wise, and five were foolish" (v. 2). Second, all had oil in their lamps at the start, but the five wise virgins took extra oil (v. 4).

There has been much speculation about who these virgins represent. Some teach that the wise virgins represent true believers within the church who are waiting for Christ's return, whereas the foolish virgins represent professing Christians within the church who are not truly saved. This view has a number of problems. First, the church is the bride of Christ, and it is not mentioned in this parable. Second, the virgins are not marrying the groom; they are only attending the wedding feast. Third, the parable is set at the end of the Tribulation before Christ's Second Coming. The church will be absent from the earth during the time of the Tribulation. Others interpret this parable in reference to people living during the Great Tribulation. This interpretation seems more fitting from the context of the Olivet Discourse.

While the virgins awaited the bridegroom's coming, they all slept (v. 5). This should not be interpreted as unfaithfulness or laziness on the part of the virgins. It only proves that, just as they did not know the time of the bridegroom's coming, so no one knows the time of Christ's Second Coming. One writer stated, "Sleeping of the foolish bridesmaids may suggest their false confidence, whereas sleep of the prudent suggests their genuine security and rest in the Lord."[1]

At midnight the call came: "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (v. 6). The ten bridesmaids arose quickly and trimmed their lamps (lit and adjusted the wick, v. 7), but the foolish bridesmaids found that their lamps had gone out (v. 8). The wise bridesmaids refused to give their oil to the foolish bridesmaids, lest there not be enough for them. They advised the five to go and purchase the needed oil (v. 9). The foolish bridesmaids soon returned without oil, unable to find anyone to provide it at such a late hour. Oil in Scripture is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. All Christians must obtain their own supply of oil. The five foolish virgins did not possess oil, a picture of a lack of salvation and living in spiritual darkness.

During the absence of the foolish virgins, "the bridegroom came" (v. 10). Those who had oil went into the marriage feast, and the door was closed (v. 10). When the foolish bridesmaids returned, they found that the door had been shut. Their request, "Lord, Lord, open to us" (v. 11), went unheeded. His answer was, "I know you not" (v. 12). This is a clear indication that they were not true believers. Jesus taught, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (Jn. 10:27-28).

Watchfulness and preparedness are the two lessons taught in this parable. Christ warned, "Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh" (v. 13). Only those Jewish people who receive Jesus as their Messiah during the Tribulation will be prepared to enter the Millennial Kingdom at Christ's Second Coming. Those without oil will face judgment and eternal damnation.

Working Until Christ Comes

The second parable the Lord taught His disciples concerned performance. The parable of the talents centers on being a faithful steward while waiting for Christ's Second Coming. Although the parable of the talents is similar to the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:11 to 27, there are differences. In the parable of the pounds Christ illustrated that equal gifts, if used with unequal diligence, may be unequally rewarded. In the

Olivet discourse (see 24:43, 45-51) that illustrate His repeated and specific declarations that the exact time of His second coming will not be known in advance. It will be at a time when it is least expected (24:36, 42, 44, 50; 25:13). As discussed earlier, the general time will be known by those who heed the birth pain signs He has given (24:4-29), because that is the purpose of those signs (v. 33). But the precise time of His personal appearing in power and great glory (24:30) will not be known in advance even by the heavenly angels. It was not known by Jesus Himself during His incarnation (v. 36).

The parable of the ten virgins is given to accentuate the incalculable importance of being spiritually prepared to meet Christ when He returns to earth, because after He appears, unbelievers who are then alive will have no further chance for salvation.

The setting for this parable was a typical Jewish wedding ceremony. In Israel, as well as in most other parts of the ancient Near East, a wedding was the most celebrated social event. Virtually everyone in a village or in a neighborhood community of a large city would be involved as a participant or as a guest. It was a time of great happiness and festivity.

A Jewish marriage consisted of three parts, the first of which was the engagement. Most often arranged by the fathers of the bride and groom, the engagement amounted to a contract of marriage in which the couple had little, if any, direct involvement. The second stage was the betrothal, the marriage ceremony at which the bride and groom exchanged vows in the presence of family and friends. At that point the couple was considered married, and their relationship could be broken only by formal divorce, just as if they had been married for many years. If the husband happened to die during the betrothal, the bride was considered a widow, although the marriage had not been physically consummated and the two had never lived together. The betrothal could last for many months, sometimes a year, during which time the groom would establish himself in a business, trade, or farming and would make provision for a place for the couple to live.

At the end of the betrothal period the wedding feast would be held, and it was in the feast and its related celebrations that the entire community became involved. This festivity, which could last a week, began with the groom's coming with his groomsmen to the bride's house, where her bridesmaids were waiting with her. Together the bride and groom and their attendants would then parade through the streets proclaiming that the wedding feast was about to begin. The procession was generally begun at night, and lamps or torches were used by the wedding party to illumine their way and to attract attention.

At the end of the feast period, a close friend of the groom, who acted much like a best man, would take the hand of the bride and place it in the hand of the groom, and the couple would for the first time be

left alone together. The marriage would be consummated and the couple would henceforth live together in their new home. It was that third part of the marriage rite that Jesus used as the framework for this parable.

As the parable unfolds, Jesus focuses first on the bridesmaids, then on the bridegroom, and finally on the warning that the parable is given to reinforce.

THE BRIDESMAIDS

Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. (25:1-5)

The world was not ready to accept Christ when He came to earth the first time, although His coming had been clearly and repeatedly predicted by the Old Testament prophets. The Messiah was to have a forerunner who would be a voice crying in the wilderness, and John the Baptist was that forerunner. He was to be born in Bethlehem, the son of a virgin, and in the line of David. Jesus uniquely and exclusively met those qualifications. He was to minister in Galilee of the Gentiles and exhibit great miraculous power, and He did those things. Nevertheless, when "He came to His own, . . . those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11).

Preparation for His second coming will be more decisive and consequential than preparation for His first, because those who rejected Him during His incarnation had continued opportunity to be saved as long as they were alive. Doubtlessly many of those who cried out for Jesus' crucifixion in place of Barabbas or who voted against Him in the Sanhedrin were later convicted to turn to Him as Lord and Savior. But there will be no such continued opportunity when Jesus comes again. When He appears **then,** the opportunity for salvation and citizenship in **the kingdom of heaven** will be past.

Then refers to the time of Christ's unexpected appearing in power and glory, about which He was speaking. At that time, He said, spiritual preparedness for entrance into **the kingdom of heaven will be comparable** to the preparedness of a certain **ten virgins** who served as bridesmaids at a wedding.

As with all of Jesus' parables, the message of this one is simple. It is meant to illustrate truths He has just been teaching: that He is coming again, that He will then judge sinners and reward the righteous, that

"BE FAITHFUL TILL JESUS COMES!"

Matthew 25:14-30
10/9/94

INTRODUCTION: The tragedy of a wasted life vs the blessedness of a faithful life.

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote the well-known lines, "For all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: *It might have been!*" (MacArthur, p. 96)

"The three servants fall into 2 categories: faithful & unfaithful" (Wiersbe, p.92)

***Be faithful with what God has given to you until the Lord returns!**

Be faithful because. . .

I. The Lord has entrusted you with responsibility (v. 14)

The subject of the "*Kingdom of Heaven*" is continued from verse one.

This parable cannot be disconnected from the parables and teachings preceding it. It ties in with the Lord's teaching about His second coming.

The parable of the virgins (vv. 1-13) focuses on readiness manifested in waiting, whereas the parable of the talents focuses on readiness manifested in working" (MacArthur, p. 97).

On an earlier occasion Jesus gave a similar parable (Luke 19:12-27) in which He said "*occupy till I come*".

"***A man travelling into a far country***" - An allusion to the ascension of Christ, who has "*gone into Heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him*" (I Pet. 3:22; cp. Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:51; Acts 1:11).

"***Called***" - The fact that one of the servants mentioned in vv. 24-30 ends up going to Hell (v. 30) proves that the Lord's "*calling*" is not necessarily efficacious ("*Many are called, but few are chosen*" - Mt. 22:14).

"***Servants***" - Slaves; not everyone who serves Christ is saved.

"***His goods***" - His property, his possessions

That which Jesus has left is His Word - the Bible. He also has "*given gifts unto men*" after ascending up on high to heaven (Eph. 4:8).

A spiritual gift is simply a crucified talent (an ability we had prior to salvation, but energized and utilized by the Lord when He saves us and we surrender to him)

Be faithful because. . .

II. The Lord has not entrusted you with more than you can handle (v. 15)

"***Talents***" - (*talanta)* - a talent was a weight of money equalling about 20 years wages in the days of the Roman empire. The talent was "money" in the form of silver (*argurion* - v. 18).

"***To every man according to his several ability***" - the Lord, knowing the abilities of each steward, gave them just talents that they could handle, properly manage, and use for Him.

The Lord never gives us more than we can handle.

> --This is true of the tests we face
> (I Cor. 10:13 - "*. . . God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able*")
>
> --This is true of the doors of opportunity He opens for us (Rev. 3:8 - "*I have set before thee an open door, and no many can shut it: for thou hast a little strength.*")

"No one received more or less than he could handle. If he failed in his assignment, his excuse could not be that he was overwhelmed" (Life Application Bible note)

Be faithful because. . .

III. The Lord expects you to <u>use the talents</u> He has given to you (v. 16-18)

V. 16

The steward with five talents immediately went and traded with them and fruitfully doubled that which the Lord gave him.

"***Traded***" - It took:

<u>risk</u> (faith)
<u>time</u>
<u>effort</u>
<u>wisdom</u>

. . . to invest and use what the Lord gave.

V. 17

In the same way, the one with two talents put them to work, investing them for his Lord and also doubled their value.

Although this steward had less than half of the talents that the man with five had, he was faithful with what he had.

It's <u>not</u> <u>how much</u> you have but what you do with what you have that counts.

(Never despise a small ministry - just be faithful and God will double it!)

V. 18

Like a dog hiding its bone in the ground, this unfaithful steward dug a hole and buried his one talent.

"***His lord's money***" - Note: Even though he was entrusted with the talent, it was not his. It belonged to the One who trusted him with it.

Ultimately, everything we have is a gift of God. As believers, our bodies don't belong to us (I Cor. 6:19-20). Neither does what we possess (I Cor. 4:7).

Psalm 24:1 - "*The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*" (cp. I Cor. 10:26, 28)

Be faithful because. . .

IV. The Lord is coming back and will hold you <u>accountable</u> for what you have received (v. 19)

"We are living in the time period between Mt. 25:18 & 19" (Wiersbe, p.92)

"***After a long time***" - after <u>much</u> time; so far, the Lord's tarrying has been nearly 2,000 years.

"***Reckoneth***" - settled accounts; a day of reckoning is coming. Everyone will be held accountable for what they did with what the Lord gave them.

Everyone will be held accountable for the Light (Scripture) . . . opportunities. . . gifts (abilities). . . time. . . which they had while they lived.

Be faithful because. . .

V. Faithfulness in little things (in this life) **will be rewarded with greater privilege in the future** (v. 20-23)

V. 20

"***Behold***" (cp. behold - v. 22) - Look! With excitement and confidence, the steward says, "Look at what I did with what you gave me."

Will you be able to face the Lord with optimism or regret?

"***I have gained***" - Although it is the Lord who gives us the desire and ability to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13), we are responsible to take the steps of faith to utilize what is given to our care and to work it!

--As you look over your life, what have you gained for Jesus Christ with the talent or talents He has given you?

V. 21

"***Well done***" - good (job); good (work); acceptable (task). Just to hear the words "*Well done*" will make all of our efforts for Christ worthwhile.

"***Thou good and faithful servant***" - By God's grace, the moral goodness of this servant had enabled him to be faithful (his love for his Master was no doubt his motive).

He is called "***faithful***" because he was "full of faith" and trust in God to prosper him int he risks he took in investing the talents.

This servant was faithful right up until his Lord returned (cp. 24:45-47 - READ).

"***Faithful over a few things***" - Even though he had more talents than anyone else in this parable, he is still considered faithful over a "*few things.*"

The little we do now will have great reward in the future.

"***Ruler***" - The two faithful people went from "*servant*" to "*ruler*"!

"***Ruler over many things***" - This rule will happen in the millennial kingdom, when God's people will rule and "*reign with Christ a thousand years*" (Rev. 20:4, 6) Rev. 2:26-27 - "*And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.*"

"***The joy of thy Lord***" - a reference to the kingdom of God. "*In thy presence is fullness of joy*" (Ps. 16:11).

Note: The exact same words are repeated to the servant with two (four) talents as the servant with five (ten). Again, rewards are not based on volume but faithfulness.

"Just as the angels serve God in ranks, so will redeemed men and women, and the degree of their heavenly service will have been determined by the devotedness of their earthly service." (MacArthur, p. 104).

Be faithful because. . .

VI. There are <u>no adequate excuses</u> you will be able to offer the Lord at Judgment Day (v. 24-27)

V. 24

The unfaithful servant is <u>excusing</u> himself (and in a sense blaming his master for his failure).

"***An hard man***" - He had an inadequate view of God. He is like the person who sees God only as stern, rigid, and ungracious.

Most people in the world fail to see God's grace and trust Him to extend that grace to them.

"***Reaping where thou hast not sown***" - He knew that God could do miracles. god could reap without ever planting (but has God chosen to do this? No. "*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*" [I Cor. 3:6] God has chosen to use us to plant seed [God's Word] [cp. Ps. 126:6]).

"***Gathering where thou hast not strawed*** (scattered seed)" - A synonymous re-statement of the first phrase (the Lord's doesn't need us to restate something tot plead our case, as if He didn't "get it" the first time).

Technically, God does not need us (for Him to get the job done right), but He has chosen to use the instrumentality of men to accomplish portions of His plan (EX: Romans 10:14 - "*How shall they hear without a preacher?*").

What this man is saying to His Lord is this: "You could have done it without me. You didn't need me." (EX: Hyper-Calvinism - Since god is going to save only the elect, He can do it without me).

V. 25

"***I was afraid***" - Afraid to take the "<u>risk of faith</u>." Afraid to lose or unfaithfully use what the Lord had given him.

*Remember, whatever God calls you to do, He will enable you to do.

V. 26

"Thou wicked and slothful servant" - the Lord saw through to the heart of the problem. His problem was not really a "fear" of displeasing his Lord. His problem was:

1. Wickedness - Moral evil. A life of sin kept him from being a good steward of what God entrusted to him (this man wanted sin; he didn't' care about pleasing his Lord).

2. Slothfulness - Laziness. A life of ease and laziness kept him from being faithful. He wanted to sleep rather than serve.

Perhaps the unfaithful servant "did not purposely do evil. But by doing nothing, he was committing sin and robbing his lord" (Wiersbe, p. 92)

Sins are of Commission (when we do that which is forbidden) & Omission (when we do not do that which is commanded).

"It is possible that the one-talent man thought that his one talent was not very important. He did not have five talents or even two. Why worry about one?...(however), were it not for the one-talent people in our world, very little would get accomplished" (Wiersbe, p. 92).

V. 26-27

"Thou knowest . . . thou oughtest" - If you really knew My power, you should not have feared to at least deposit what I gave you into the lives of others so they could have produced dividends and interest with them.

Be faithful because. . .

VII. There are <u>severe</u> and <u>serious</u> <u>consequences</u> for unfaithfulness (v. 28-30)

V. 28

"Use it or lose it!" - When you are unfaithful with what God entrusts into your care, He may just take it away from you and give it to someone who is faithful.

V. 29

"***Unto every one that hath***" - To the one who "hath" <u>been faithful</u>, more will be given. But to the one who "hath <u>not</u>" been faithful, that which was entrusted to him shall be taken away.

V. 30

"***Unprofitable***" - Useless, worthless

As God measures your life, is it being <u>useful</u> for His glory?

Note contrast:

<u>Little</u> faithfulness (I Cor. 3:15) result = "Suffer lost...saved yet so as by fire"
<u>No</u> faithfulness (Matthew 25) result = Hell

"***Servant***" - does not imply salvation. For Christ is Lord of all; therefore, all are supposed to serve Him (Judas was a servant, but was unsaved).

Four words or phrases reveal that Jesus is speaking of <u>hell</u>:

1) "***Cast***" (throw; hurl - Rev. 20:10, 15)

2) "***Outer darkness***" (Mt. 8:12)

3) "***Weeping***" (emotional suffering)

4) "***Gnashing of teeth***" (physical suffering)
SEE: 24:51

Although some commentators argue that Jesus was not describing such a horrible fate for this man, in the context, the outcome of this unfaithful servant (corresponds to) is the same as the outcome of:

The <u>evil servant</u> (24:51)
The 5 <u>foolish virgins</u> (25:10-12)
The <u>goats</u> on the Lord's left hand (25:41,46)

CONCLUSION:

One is not saved by how he manages the talents entrusted to him. However, how he manages the talents reveals whether or not he has been saved.

Outward works are a demonstration of inward character (Ja. 2:20, 26)

What have you done with the TRUTH God has given you?
Did you believe it?
Did you live it?
(cp. Rev. 3:10)

What have you done with the TIME God has given you?
Eph. 5:16 - "*Redeeming the time because the days are evil.*"

What have you done with the TREASURE God has given you?
II Cor. 9:6 - "*But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*"

What have you done with the TALENTS God has given you?
SEE: Romans 12:3-8

"BE FAITHFUL TILL JESUS COMES!"

Matthew 25:14-30

10/9/94

INTRODUCTION:

***Be faithful with what God has given to you until the Lord returns!**

Be faithful because. . .

I. The Lord has entrusted you with responsibility (v. 14)

Be faithful because. . .

II. The Lord has not entrusted you with more than you can handle (v. 15)

Be faithful because. . .

III. The Lord expects you to use the "talents" He has given to you (v. 16-18)

Be faithful because. . .

IV. The Lord is coming back and will hold you accountable for what you have received (v. 19)

Be faithful because. . .

V. Faithfulness in little things (in this life) **will be rewarded with greater privilege in the future** (v. 20-23)

Be faithful because. . .

VI. There are no adequate excuses you will be able to offer the Lord at Judgment Day (v. 24-27)

Be faithful because. . .

VII. There are severe and serious consequences for unfaithfulness (v. 28-30)

"THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS"

Matthew 25:31-46

10/16/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 31-33. No unrighteous person will inherit the future Kingdom.

Give chronology of End Time events:

1. 70th Week of Daniel 9:26, 27
2. Great Tribulation
3. Rapture
4. Day of the Lord/Armageddon
5. The separation of sheep/goats (living Gentiles & Jews, who will inherit the Messianic Kingdom - over which mortals we will rule and reign)

The "*sheep and goat*" judgment will evidently take place sometime in that extra 75-day period spoken of in Daniel 12:11-12.

V. 31

Christ's coming in "*glory*" which is also described in Mt. 16:27 was pictured for us (in a preview) in Matthew 17, in which Jesus was "*transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light*" (17:2).

His "*glory*" speaks of His blazing brilliance.

Christ in His first coming entered the human scene in obscurity, veiling from physical sight the splendid glory of His deity. However,w hen He comes the second time, all of His glory will be displayed.

"***Then shall He sit***" - After the Rapture and after the trumpet and bowl judgments (in the Day of the Lord's Wrath) and after the Battle of Armageddon, those survivors from all over the earth will stand before Christ, who will "*sit upon the throne of His glory*" at Mount Zion.

When the earth is regenerated (made new) and the promised utopia is ushered in, Christ will rule on His throne (Mt. 19:28 - "*And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*").

V. 32

"***All nations***" - All of the nations of people (Gentile & Jew) will be summoned to Jerusalem for judgment.

*Be careful not to confuse this judgment with the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15. That judgment is only of unbelievers and occurs 1,000 years after this judgment (Rev. 20:5,11) and will involve the unsaved dead who come out of graves and the sea (v. 12, 13).

"Based on the cataclysmic events described in the book of Revelation, we can make an assessment that only a relatively small number of men and women from among the earth's more than four billion [now 5 1/2 billion] survive the seventieth week" (Rosenthal, "Zion's Fire," June 1993, p. 11).

"***He shall separate***" - The Son of man = Jesus Christ

Jesus is the only Judge (Jn. 5:22), who as the "*Good Shepherd*" (Jn. 10:11, 14), will separate His own sheep from the goats.

V. 33

"***Sheep***" are a common description of God's people.

--We once like sheep went astray (Is. 53:6)

--The God Shepherd gave His life for His sheep (Jn. 10:11)

--The sheep hear His voice and follow Him (Jn. 10:27-28)

"***His right hand***" - The place of honor, privilege, and blessing

EX: Jacob was careful to place his right hand on Ephraim's head rather than Manasseh's (Gen. 48:8-20).

"Goats" - left Hand

Incidentally, one of the most well-known symbols of Satanism today is the goat's head.

As is the consistent teaching of Scripture, there are only two groups of people in the world (sheep and goats, saved and unsaved, believers and unbelievers, heaven-bound and hell-bound).

Jesus asked this question: "*When the Son of man cometh, shall He find [the] faith on the earth?*" (Lk. 18:8). Answer: YES!

***King Jesus will one day separate the saved ("*sheep*") from the unsaved ("*goats*").**

I. The Blessing Upon the "*SHEEP*" (v. 34-40)

A. The Verdict (v. 34)
"*Inherit the kingdom*"

"***Blessed***" - perfect passive participle - God granted them the blessing of inheriting the Kingdom before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4 - "*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*").

These "***blessed***" "***sheep***" will not worship the Antichrist because their names are written in God's Book before the foundation of the world (Rev. 17:8).

*Note: Although they do not become true, saved believers in Christ until after the Rapture when they "*look on Him*" as He comes in his glory, they did not receive the mark of the Beast, nor worship him nor do his bidding in persecuting God's children. Rather, they assisted God's children.

The Bible gives other examples of people who had never met Jesus Christ personally, yet evidenced God's sovereign working in their lives so that they showed deeds of kindness even before experiencing Salvation.

> For example: Cornelius, prior to hearing the Gospel of Christ performed righteous acts (alms) that were never forgotten by God. "*...And he (the Lord) said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*" (Acts 10:4).
>
> In Luke 7:5, a Roman Centurion (whose heart God evidently was touching) had an unusually great love for others (ex. his servant) and for the Jewish people. His servants told Jesus how he "*loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.*"

"***Inherit the Kingdom***" - This is the Millennial Kingdom spoken about in Rev. 20:1-10.

This is the promised Golden Age which the Old Testament prophets spoke of frequently (EX: Is. 11:1-12).

Since Christ will rule the nations with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9), there will be no corrupt government, wife-beating, child-molesting, abortion, rape, murder, pornography, drug or alcohol use tolerated.

Still in mortal bodies and able to have offspring, these people will inhabit the "*new heavens and new earth*" which the Lord will create (SEE: Is. 65:17-25).

"***From the foundation of the world***" - The Millennium is no afterthought of God. It was part of the plan of God since the beginning of creation. Its coming has been detained until God's timetable for the ages comes to a close (Acts 1:6-7 - "*When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*").

B. The Evidence (v. 35-36)
"*...Ye took me in...*"

V. 35
This judgment will not be arbitrary, vague, or not objective. But the outward evidence which revealed inward character will be the basis of this separation.

V. 35-36
These are basic human needs, essentials for physical sustenance and emotional encouragement.

"***I was in prison***" - not in prison for crimes or corruption but for "*righteousness sake*" (Mt. 5:10).

Christians and Jews will be persecuted for their faith during the coming Tribulation (Mt. 24:9 - "*Then shall they deliver you up tot be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.*").

"During the Holocaust of World War II, hundreds of Gentiles fed, housed, and clothed Jewish people escaping the wrath of Nazism. The same will take place during the Great Tribulation" (David Levy, Israel My Glory, April 1994, p. 25).

Christ feels the hunger, thirst, solitude, cold, sickness, and unjust treatment His followers face.

C. The Inquiry (v. 37-38)
"*...Lord...when?*"

V. 37

Note: The "*sheep's*" astonishment and shock - a surprise of joy as contrasted with the "*goat's*" shock of woe and sorrow (v. 45).

D. The Summary (v. 40)
"*Ye have done it unto me*"

"***Unto one***" - He knows and keeps track of every single righteous deed extended toward just one of His own.

"***The least***" = Those Christians whom people didn't think much of; they were insignificant from human evaluation.

Many would serve the Apostle Paul or Peter, but what did you ever do for a child of God with AIDS? What have you ever done for a homeless believer? What have you ever given to a poor Christian family in need? What time and energy did you ever extend toward someone who had no means of ever repaying you?

"***My brethren***" - Who are Christ's brethren? Answer: Mt. 12:48-50 - those who do the will of God.

As we have "*opportunity*" (occasion of need and resources to meet that need), we are to "*do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith*" (Gal. 6:10).

Whatever you do for Christ's brethren, you do for Him (Prov. 19:17 - "*He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.*")

Whatever you do against Christ's brethren, you do against Him (EX: "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*" (Acts 9:4).

Prov. 14:31 - "*He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.*"

"***Ye have done it unto me***" - Because of Christ's oneness (Eph. 5:30; I Cor. 6:15) with His believers, to do something for them is to do it for Him.

The Lord never forgets what you do for His people.

Heb. 6:10 - "*For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*"

The Lord repays even the most minimal deed done for His people ("*For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward*" - Mark 9:41).

II. The Curse Upon the "*GOATS*" (v. 41-45)

A. The Verdict (v. 41)
"Depart...into everlasting fire"

"Depart from me" - go away from me (be removed from my presence)

"Ye cursed" - All who reject Christ are under a curse -- the curse of the Law which they broke (Gal. 3:10) -- but a curse which Christ died to break and remove from us (Gal. 3:13).

"Everlasting fire" - the fires of Hell (Luke 16:24).

"Prepared for the devil and his angels" - Hell was not originally made for man; God created that place of torment for Satan and the demons who fell with him (Is. 14:9-15; Rev. 12:9).

Note the contrasts:

> *"Come* (v. 34) . . . *depart"* (v. 41)
> *"Blessed* (v. 34) . . . *cursed"* (v. 41)
> *"Kingdom prepared for you* (v. 34). . . *everlasting fire prepared for the devil"* (v. 41)

B. The Evidence (v. 42-43)
"...Ye took me not in"

Note: These people are not condemned for mistreating God's people (i.e. treating them badly), but for not positively doing good for God's people.

C. The Inquiry (v. 44)
"...Lord...when?"

D. The Summary (v. 45)
"Ye did it not unto me"

"Obviously everyone present at the sheep and goats judgment will realize who Christ is, and if given a second chance would be willing to sacrifice all for the sake of Christ rather than spend eternity in the Lake of fire." (VanKampen, The Sign, p. 389). However, such a second chance will not be offered.

"Ye did it not to Me" - To fail to ever do something for "*one of the least*" of Christ's brethren is to fail to serve Him. And to fail to serve Him is fatal!

CONCLUSION: Verse 46

The words "*everlasting*" and "*eternal*" are the same Greek word - *aionion*.
Therefore, the everlasting punishment will last as long as the eternal life does.
If one is forever, so is the other.

Two groups of people:
"These . . . the righteous"

Two eternal destinies:
"Everlasting punishment. . . life eternal"

It was <u>not</u> the service (v. 35-37) that earned the "*sheep*" eternal life; <u>nor</u> was it the absence of service that was the core reason why the "*goats*" went into everlasting punishment.

It was God's sovereign grace in the sheep (that resulted in fruitfulness) which was the <u>root</u> cause of their "*life eternal*" and it was the absence of God's sovereign grace in the goats which resulted in their fruitlessness and condemnation.

"To fail to serve Christ's people is to fail to serve Him, and to fail to serve Him is to prove one does not belong to Him." (MacArthur, p. 126).

The Bible teaches that you cannot separate <u>action</u> from <u>attitude</u>. The right <u>attitude</u> of <u>faith</u> will always produce the right <u>action</u> of <u>love</u>.

Everyone who has God's salvation will have an imputed righteousness which will show itself by one's actions toward others (SEE: James 2:14-26).

I John 2:29 - "*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*" I Jn. 3:7 - "*Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*"

"The righteous" - How does one become righteous?

--Believe God's <u>Word</u> (EX: Abraham - Rom. 4:3 - "*For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*") (Cp. 4:9; Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:6)

--Receive God's <u>Son</u> (II Cor. 5:20-21 - "*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as thou God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*") (cp. Jn. 1:12).

For all who reject Christ's salvation (provided at His first coming) will face His judgment (executed at His second coming).

overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:12-14). But the decisions in that day will not be made by men but by God. The time for deciding to receive Christ will be past, and the decisions people already will have made regarding Him will determine His decision regarding them. Those for whom He is Lord and Savior will enter the kingdom, and those who have rejected Him will be forever excluded. At that time the Lord will roar "from Zion and [will utter] His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth [will] tremble. But the Lord is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, and strangers will pass through it no more" (Joel 3:16-17).

At the ascension, an angel made clear that Jesus' return would be bodily and historical, not figurative or merely spiritual. He told the astonished disciples, "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). When He returns to earth He will reign personally on a literal **throne**, in a literal Jerusalem, and over a literal people.

THE SUBJECTS

And all the nations will be gathered before Him; (25:32*a*)

The subjects of Christ's judgment will be **all the nations.** *Ethna* (**nations**) has the basic meaning of peoples and here refers to every person alive on earth when the Lord returns. Although He will have taken all believers into heaven at the Rapture, during the following seven years of the Tribulation many other people will come to believe in Him. During that dreadful time, multitudes of Gentiles (see Rev. 7:9, 14), as well as all surviving Jews (Rom. 11:26), will be brought to faith in Christ.

As Jesus makes clear later in this passage, those who are alive on earth when He returns will include both saved and unsaved, represented by the sheep and the goats, respectively. And those two separate peoples will have two separate destinies. The believers will be ushered into the kingdom and the unbelievers into eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46).

Just as death immediately crystallizes eternity for unbelievers when they die, so will the second coming of Christ crystallize eternity for unbelievers who are then alive. They will be destroyed on the spot and ushered instantaneously into judgment and eternal punishment.

But believers who are alive at the Lord's coming in glory will go directly into the earthly kingdom in their earthly bodies. There is no indication in Scripture that those saints will experience any sort of transformation at that time. But mingling with them and ruling over them

will be the glorified saints of all ages who will then be reigning with Christ (Rev. 20:4). Although their bodies will be of vastly different orders, those two groups of saints will be able to communicate and interact with each other just as Jesus communicated and interacted with the disciples in His glorified body after the resurrection.

Amillennialists do not believe Christ will reign in a literal, thousand-year kingdom on earth. They consider the Millennium to be a figurative, spiritualized picture of Christ's reigning on earth through the hearts of His redeemed people. But what would be the purpose of God's giving His saints glorified bodies capable of living on the physical earth if they would never have opportunity to live there? The resurrected Christ was the perfect illustration of millennial kingdom living by glorified saints, because before His ascension He demonstrated His ability to live on this earth in the same glorified body in which He would forever occupy heaven.

There will be reproduction during the kingdom, but apparently all the children born to the redeemed people who enter it will not become redeemed themselves—any more than children born to redeemed parents in any age necessarily become redeemed themselves. At the end of the millennial kingdom there appear to be many unbelievers, who will participate in Satan's final rebellion against God (Rev. 20:7-9). Obviously, those rebels will be descendants of the saints who went directly into the kingdom at Christ's return. We should not be surprised that there are those who will not believe in Christ even though He will be in their presence. Most of His hearers did not believe the first time He came, either.

That final rebellion against the glorified Christ and His kingdom of perfect love, wisdom, justice, and righteousness gives final and irrefutable testimony to man's natural depravity. Although their environment will be perfect in every respect and Satan will be bound and unable to tempt or in any other way influence men, some people will nevertheless reject Christ even during the Millennium. The only possible source of their sin and rebellion will be their own corrupt hearts (cf. Jer. 17:9).

Contrary to what some Bible teachers and theologians claim, the idea of a literal, physical, earthly Millennium did not originate in modern times. As the astute German theologian Erich Sauer has well documented, belief in such a literal thousand-year, earthly kingdom was the common and orthodox view of the early church, from New Testament times through the middle of the third century (see his *The Triumph of the Crucified* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951]). Early church Fathers such as Papias, Justin, Tertullian, and Hippolytus all affirmed a literal and earthly future kingdom ruled directly by Christ. It was only later, as allegorical hermeneutics became fashionable, that literal millennialism was rejected in favor of a spiritualized interpretation (p. 144).

Those who reject a literal Millennium must do one or more of three things. The first is to confuse Israel and the church, taking the church to be a spiritualized form of the ancient nation of Israel. In that case, the Old Testament curses were for literal Israel, being already fulfilled, and the promises of blessing to Israel would be fulfilled in the church, but in a spiritual, not literal, way. That kind of divided, inconsistent hermeneutics in unacceptable. The second is to make present or past what is clearly future, assuming that all the promises to the literal nation and people of Israel have already been fulfilled, making the earthly kingdom unnecessary. The third is to arbitrarily spiritualize certain Old Testament prophecies, taking predicted places, events, or persons as being merely symbols of spiritual ideas or truths instead of physical and historical realities.

In the book just mentioned above (pp. 144-53), Erich Sauer suggests five compelling arguments for a literal and historical future kingdom. First of all, such a kingdom would be the only adequate confirmation of the truthfulness and reliability of God's promises. Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would establish an everlasting kingdom on the throne of David (Isa. 9:6-7). Paul declared that "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable," referring specifically to His promises to ancient Israel (Rom. 11:29). But if those promises were merely figurative, their fulfillments could never be verified and would be meaningless. In particular, the prophecies about the Messiah would have no clear meaning and could never be verified. But Isaiah himself declared that the Lord's promises are more unshakable than the mountains (Isa. 54:10) and Israel's endurance as a nation will be as permanent as the new heavens and the new earth that the Lord will one day create (66:22). Jeremiah affirmed that God's covenant promises are more secure than the pattern of night following day (Jer. 33:20) and more stable than the courses of the sun, moon, and stars (31:35-36).

Second, an earthly millennial kingdom is the only explanation of the end times that corresponds to Jesus' teaching in the gospels. For example, His promise to the apostles that one day they would "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28) would be meaningless apart from a literal, historical restoration of Israel.

Third, an earthly millennial kingdom is the only consistent interpretation of Messianic prophecy. It is obvious from the gospel records that a great many of those prophecies were literally fulfilled during Jesus' lifetime. He was born in Bethlehem, just as Micah predicted (5:2). He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and was pierced in the side, just as Zechariah predicted (9:9; 11:12; 12:10). His hands and feet were literally pierced, precisely as the psalmist predicted (22:16; cf. 16:10), and He literally died, was buried, and was resurrected, just as Isaiah predicted (53:8-12).

Those fulfillments were so obviously literal that no one suggests the predictions of them were merely symbolic of spiritual truths. Yet many other equally specific and detailed predictions about the Messiah, such as His establishing an eternal throne over the kingdom of David, were just as obviously *not* fulfilled during Jesus' earthly ministry. Therefore, to reject the idea of a literal Millennium is to maintain that some of the Old Testament prophecies were literal and some were not. And to take that position is to assume arbitrarily that all prophecies not literally fulfilled by New Testament times are to be spiritualized.

At the time they were written, *all* Old Testament predictions obviously pertained to the future. By what logic or authority, then, does one take some of their fulfillments to be literal and others to be only figurative?

Fourth, an earthly, visible kingdom is the best possible way for Jesus Christ to demonstrate that He is the supreme ruler over His creation. How else could He prove Himself to be King of kings and Lord of lords? How could He verify that His rulership is superior to that of all other monarchs if He had no opportunity to rule an earthly kingdom? How better could He prove Himself to be the supremely just King than by personally meting out justice to His subjects? How better could He prove Himself to be the infinitely merciful Lord than by personally showing mercy on His subjects? To do those things He would have to have an earthly kingdom, because in heaven there is no need either for justice or for mercy.

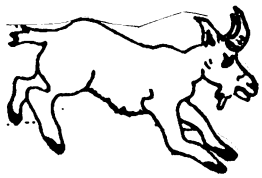
Could it be that, besides the brief time between the creation of Adam and the Fall, the world will know no dominion but Satan's? Could it be that God will literally destroy but not literally restore this vast creation, all of which longs to "be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" and in that longing "groans and suffers the pains of childbirth" (Rom. 8:21-22)?

The perfect millennial kingdom will testify through all eternity that Jesus Christ is the supreme sovereign, who alone can bring absolute harmony and peace to a world even while it is still infected by sin.

Fifth, an earthly millennial kingdom is the only and necessary bridge from human history to eternal glory. Paul declares that in the end Christ will deliver "up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power" and that "He *must* reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15:24-25, emphasis added). What other kingdom could Christ deliver to His Father but an earthly kingdom? The Father already possesses the kingdom of heaven. The Millennium could not refer to the church as a spiritualized form of the kingdom, because the kingdom that Christ will deliver to the Father will include His subjected enemies, of which there are none in the redeemed church. And it will be a kingdom over which Christ exercises



"THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS"



Matthew 25:31-46

10/16/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 31-33. No unrighteous person will inherit the future Kingdom.

***King Jesus will one day separate the saved ("*sheep*") from the unsaved ("*goats*").**

I. The Blessing Upon the "*SHEEP*" (v. 34-40)

A. The Verdict (v. 34)
"*Inherit the kingdom*"

B. The Evidence (v. 35-36)
"*...Ye took me in...*"

C. The Inquiry (v. 37-38)
"*...Lord...when?*"

D. The Summary (v. 40)
"*Ye have done it unto me*"

II. The Curse Upon the "*GOATS*" (v. 41-45)

A. The Verdict (v. 41)
"*Depart...into everlasting fire*"

B. The Evidence (v. 42-43)
"*...Ye took me not in*"

C. The Inquiry (v. 44)
"*...Lord...when?*"

D. The Summary (v. 45)
"*Ye did it not unto me*"

CONCLUSION: Verse 46

"SHE DID A GOOD WORK"

Matthew 26:1-16

10/23/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 6

V. 1

"***When Jesus had finished all these sayings***" - After the Olivet Discourse, in which Jesus gave specific details regarding His second coming, He now gives the disciples details about how His first coming would end.

V. 2

"***After two days***" - If Passover (14th Nissan) occurred on Friday, this would have been Wednesday that these events occurred.

The omniscient Christ knew that on Passover, He (as the Passover Lamb) would be killed. He also knew how He would die: by crucifixion (Gal. 3:13).

V. 3

Religious people (priests, scribes, elders) gathered at a religious place (the palace of the High Priest) to do Satan's work!

Just because people are religious doesn't mean they are of God!

Caiaphas was like the powerful pope of Judaism who served as High Priest from A.D. 15 to 37.

V. 4

"***Consulted***" = to plot together

"***Subtilty***" = by guile, trickery, or deceit

Because they didn't know who Jesus was, they actually thought they could trick Him and kill Him without His suspecting it (however, He was one step ahead of them and had already on numerous occasions foretold His death - Mt. 16:21, 17:22, 20:18, 26:2).

V. 5

"***Not on the Feast Day***" - not on the Passover. Yet that was the very day Christ said He would die (v. 2).

"***Lest there be an uproar***" - They would have to seize Christ quietly and privately so as to not stir up the crowd who were "pro-Jesus."

Judas would become their man for a quick and easy betrayal (Lk. 22:6).

V. 6

"***Now when Jesus was in Bethany***" - Matthew deliberately takes an event (v. 6-13) which occurred "*six days*" before the day of Passover (Jn. 12:1) and thematically interjects it in the midst of Christ's rejection by the religious leaders (v. 1-5) and by Judas Iscariot (v. 14-16) to make a point.

[Christ's rejection by the religious leaders occurred two days prior to Passover - v. 2]

The point God is making by moving this account out of chronological order is this:

--The religious leaders hated Him
--Judas betrayed Him
--But a woman loved and worshipped Him

"***In Bethany***" - In the same town of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead (Jn. 11).

"***In the house of Simon the leper***" A man who no doubt was cured from leprosy by Christ.

In the house was a former leper! Plus a former dead man raised to life!

"***Lazarus***" - sat at the table while his sister Martha served the food (Jn. 12:2).

V. 7

"***A woman***" - Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus (Jn. 12:3). The same Mary whose devotion to Christ was evident when she sat at his feet and listened to Him (Luke 10:39).

Mary no doubt had heard Jesus state that He would be crucified, and she believed Him and anointed Him as a parting kind deed (v. 12).

This Mary is not: Mary Magdalene (who had 7 demons cast out of her by Jesus - Mk. 16:9)
Mary, the mother of Jesus'incarnation, the wife of Joseph

Matthew gives us a definite contrast between Mary's worship and Judas' betrayal (Wiersbe, p. 94); between Mary's worship and the religious leaders plot to kill; between Mary's worship and the disciples' misplaced priorities.

A great contrast:

The religious leaders hated Him,
The disciples dishonored Him,
Judas Iscariot betrayed Him,
But Mary (sister of Martha & Lazarus) loved and worshipped Jesus.

***What will you do for Jesus?**

Six features of Mary's good work for Jesus Christ:

I. Mary Made a Great <u>SACRIFICE</u> (v. 7a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

"***Alabaster box***" - contained about a pound of ointment; half a liter (Jn. 12:3).

"***Precious ointment***" - spikenard (Jn. 12:3)

Very costly perfume of pure nard, valued at a <u>year's wages</u> for a common worker or soldier.

In ancient Israel, such an anointing of fragrant oil would have been extremely refreshing (cp. Ps. 133:2).

"Being absolutely controlled by adoration for her Lord, she lost all sense of restraint and economy" (MacArthur, p. 134).

God loves a "*cheerful giver*" (II Cor. 9:7).

II. Mary Showed Great <u>HUMILITY</u> and <u>AFFECTION</u> (v. 7b)
when she did a good work for Jesus

"***Poured it on his head***" - John, who also was at the table, records that Mary also anointed Jesus' feet with the ointment and wiped His feet with her hair filling the whole house with the aroma of the perfume (Jn. 12:3).

"A woman's hair is her glory (I Cor. 11:15). She surrendered her glory to the Lord and worshipped Him" (Wiersbe, p. 95).

Mary's life is only recorded 3 times in the Gospels, and at each time she is at the <u>feet</u> of Jesus -

1) To hear the Word (Lk. 10:38-42)
2) In sorrow after her brother's death (Jn. 11:28-32)
3) Now, to anoint Him

"Mary was a deeply spiritual woman. She found at His feet her <u>blessing</u>; she brought to His feet her <u>burdens</u>; and she gave at His feet her <u>best</u>" (Wiersbe, p. 94-95).

Out of a grateful heart, Mary worships Jesus for what He did for her personally and for what He did for her brother Lazarus.

Another woman offered a similar act of worship in <u>Luke 7:36-39</u>.

III. Mary Overcame Great <u>OBSTACLES</u> (v. 8-10a)

when she did a good work for Jesus

V. 8

"***Indignation***" - The indignation was "*within themselves*" (Mk. 14:4).

"***<u>Disciples</u>*** (plural) ***saw it, <u>they</u> had indignation***" - perhaps <u>all</u> of the disciples became upset by what they viewed as a "waste."

"***To what purpose is this waste?***" - "A whole year's income wasted in one minute!", They thought. "Why this waste of ointment?! Mary, why didn't you sell that perfume and put the money to real use?!"

*Nothing we give to Jesus is a waste!

(EX: the person who happened to see the size of a check a believer was putting in the offering plate -- looked horrified at the large amount and said, "Why don't you give that to me? <u>I</u> need it!")

It was actually Judas which instigated the murmuring (Jn. 12:4-6 - "*Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*").

Satan always seems to have his tares among the wheat, which spread their poison to others.

It was not "waste" but <u>worship</u> she gave Jesus.

If anything was a waste, it was the life of Judas Iscariot. He wasted privileges, opportunities, his life, and his soul! Jesus called him "*son of perdition*" (Jn. 17:12) which literally means "son of waste" (Wiersbe, p. 95).

V. 9

"***Sold for much***" - "*more than three hundred pence*" (Mk. 14:5) (300 denarii, or approximately a year's salary of a rural worker - Ryrie note).

Their criticism of Mary sounded so "spiritual." They were totally blind to the very high act of spirituality Mary was showing.

"Everytime Mary sought to do something for Jesus, she was misunderstood. Her sister Martha misunderstood her when Mary sat at Jesus' feet to hear Him teach the Word. Judas and the other disciples misunderstood her when she anointed Jesus. Her friends and neighbors misunderstood her when she came out of the house to meet Jesus after Lazarus had been buried (Jn. 11:28-31). When we give Jesus Christ first place in our lives, we can expect to be misunderstood and criticized by those who claim to follow Him" (Wiersbe, p. 95).

V. 10

"Why trouble ye the woman?" - Mark records that they "*murmured against her*" (they scolded her; they rebuked her harshly).

Perhaps they thought that Jesus (being the practical Lord He was) would have agreed with them, that this was not "good stewardship."

"Why trouble ye the woman?" - Why are you bothering this woman who is serving me?

Well meaning people often do cause trouble to those who are expending time, money, energy, and service to Christ. Without realizing it, because they are walking in the flesh, or listening to disgruntled instigators, they are a bother rather than a blessing to those living for Christ.

IV. Mary had Great PRIORITIES (v. 10b-11)
when she did a good work for Jesus

V. 10b

"She hath wrought a good work upon Me" - She did not waste her perfume, she invested it!

Rather than letting it gather dust at home, or using it solely on herself, she gave it all to Christ!

What good works have you done directly for Jesus lately? (works you did not do to receive the recognition of others, but to simply please Jesus?)

V. 11

"For ye have the poor always with you" - This was not a calloused or cold remark toward the poor; rather, Christ is saying, "You will have many, many more opportunities to do kind deeds for the poor, but this was her last chance to do something for me (in the flesh) before my death and burial."

We must make time for meeting the needs of the poor (Gal. 6:10), for evangelizing the lost (Mk. 16:15), for discipling the saved (Mt. 28:19-20), for teaching God's Word . . . but at the heart of all ministry lies the necessity to worship Jesus!

V. Mary Revealed Great FAITH (v. 12)

when she did a good work for Jesus

"Though the disciples ignored Christ's many predictions of His approaching death, apparently this woman (Mary) believed them" (Ryrie note).

"She did it for my burial" - Rather than using it to anoint His body when He was dead, she used it "*aforehand*" (Mk. 14:8) before He died.

(We often think to do something for someone after they are dead and neglect them while they are alive!)

VI. Mary Left a Great MEMORY (v. 13)

when she did a good work for Jesus

"This gospel" - What gospel?

The gospel of His death (v. 2) and burial (v. 12). The Gospel is Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-3).

"A memorial" - Mary's memory will be as sweet as the fragrance that filled that room the day she spent a year's wages on the Lord.

What memories will you leave behind?

After your life's work is ended and God calls you home, what will people remember you for? What will come to their mind when they recall your name? What legacy will you leave? What will the wording be in your eulogy?

Her memory encourages us to love and serve Christ with our very best.

CONCLUSION: Verses 14-16

V. 14

"*Then . . . Judas . . . went*" -Upon seeing what he viewed as a tremendous waste of money, he became so indignant that he could not stand it any longer. This was the "last straw" (the "straw that broke the camel's back").

His self-centered anger was all it took to open the door for Satan (Eph. 4:26-27).

No doubt, the Lord's rebuke also moved Judas to anger.

"***Judas Iscariot went***" -Satan literally entered into Satan (Lk. 22:3).

V. 15

"***What will ye give me?***" - Judas' god was not Jesus Christ, but money.

What price tag would pull you away from Christ? One million? 100 million?

For Judas, the price of a slave (Ex. 21:32) was all it took.

"*So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver*" (Zech. 11:26

What is it that you would not give up for Jesus?

Isn't He worth your time, energy, money, possessions, your very life?

"SHE DID A GOOD WORK"

Matthew 26:1-16

10/23/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 6

A great contrast:

The religious leaders hated Him,
The disciples dishonored Him,
Judas Iscariot betrayed Him,
But Mary (sister of Martha & Lazarus) loved and worshipped Jesus.

***What will you do for Jesus?**

Six features of Mary's good work for Jesus Christ:

I. Mary Made a Great SACRIFICE (v. 7a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

II. Mary Showed Great HUMILITY and AFFECTION (v. 7b)
when she did a good work for Jesus

III. Mary Overcame Great OBSTACLES (v. 8-10a)
when she did a good work for Jesus

IV. Mary had Great PRIORITIES (v. 10b-11)
when she did a good work for Jesus

V. Mary Revealed Great FAITH (v. 12)
when she did a good work for Jesus

VI. Mary Left a Great MEMORY (v. 13)
when she did a good work for Jesus

CONCLUSION: Verses 14-16

Lord's Prayer

I cannot say "our" if I live only for myself.

I cannot say "Father" if I do not endeavor each day to act like his child.

I cannot say "who art in heaven" if I am laying up no treasure there.

I cannot say "hallowed be thy name" if I am not striving for holiness.

I cannot say "thy Kingdom come" if I am not doing all in my power to hasten that wonderful event.

I cannot say "thy will be done" if I am disobedient to his Word.

I cannot say "on earth as it is in heaven" if I'll not serve him here and now.

I cannot say "give us this day our daily bread" if I am dishonest or am seeking things by subterfuge.

I cannot say "forgive us our debts" if I harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say "lead us not into temptation" if I deliberately place myself in its path.

I cannot say "deliver us from evil" if I do not put on the whole armor of God.

I cannot say "thine is the kingdom" if I do not give the King the loyalty due him from a faithful subject.

I cannot attribute to him "the power" if I fear what men may do.

I cannot ascribe to him "the glory" if I'm seeking honor only for myself, and I cannot say "forever" if the horizon of my life is bounded completely by time.

Author Unknown[797]

A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter. So he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block ten times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. *Forgive us our trespasses.*"

When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note: "I've circled this block for ten years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. *Lead us not into temptation.*"[798]

Love

A four-year-old girl, hugging a doll in each of her pudgy little arms, looked wistfully up at her mother and said, "Mama, I love them and love them and love them, but they never love me back."

How true of some Christians who are loved and loved and loved by God, but never love him back.[799]

In a boiler room, it is impossible to look into the boiler to see how much water it contains. But running up beside it is a tiny glass tube, that serves as a gauge. As the water stands in the little tube, so it stands in the great boiler. When the tube is half full, the boiler is half full; if empty, so is the boiler. How do you know you love God? You believe you love him, but you want to know. Look at the gauge. Your love for your brother is the measure of your love for God.[800]

This was the reaction of the unbelieving Greek writer Lucian (A.D. 120–200) upon observing the warm fellowship of Christians:

"It is incredible to see the fervor with which the people of that religion help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator [Jesus] has put it into their heads that they are brethren."[801]

"It is our care for the helpless, our practice of lovingkindness, that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. 'Look!' they say. 'How they love one another! Look how they are prepared to die for one another' " (Tertullian).[802]

What is love?

It's *silence* when your words would hurt.
It's *patience* when your neighbor's curt.
It's *deafness* when the scandal flows.
It's *thoughtfulness* for another's woes.
It's *promptness* when stern duty calls.
It's *courage* when misfortune falls.[803]

Love, Example of

Once on a railway train an elderly man accidentally broke a minor regulation and was unmercifully bawled out by a young train employee. Later a fellow passenger nudged the old gentleman and suggested he give the employee a piece of his mind. But the old man just smiled. "Oh," he said, "if a man like that can stand himself for all of his life, I surely can stand him for five minutes."[804]

"*The love of Christ constraineth us.*"—2 Cor. v. 14.

HOW much owest thou unto my Lord? Has He ever done anything for thee? Has He forgiven thy sins? Has He covered thee with a robe of righteousness? Has He set thy feet upon a rock? Has He established thy goings? Has he prepared heaven for thee? Has he prepared thee for heaven? Has He written thy name in His book of life? Has He given thee countless blessings? Has He laid up for thee a store of mercies, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard? Then do something for Jesus worthy of His love. Give not a mere wordy offering to a dying Redeemer. How will you feel when your Master comes, if you have to confess that you *did* nothing for Him, but kept your love shut up, like a stagnant pool, neither flowing forth to His poor or to His work. Out on such love as that! What do men think of a love which never shows itself in action? Why, they say, "Open rebuke is better than secret love." Who will accept a love so weak that it does not actuate you to a single deed of self-denial, of generosity, of heroism, or zeal! Think how *He* has loved you, and given Himself for you! Do you know the power of that love? Then let it be like a rushing mighty wind to your soul to sweep out the clouds of your worldliness, and clear away the mists of sin. "For Christ's sake" be this the tongue of fire that shall sit upon you: "for Christ's sake" be this the divine rapture, the heavenly afflatus to bear you aloft from earth, the divine spirit that shall make you bold as lions and swift as eagles in your Lord's service. Love should give wings to the feet of service, and strength to the arms of labour. Fixed on God with a constancy that is not to be shaken, resolute to honour Him with a determination that is not to be turned aside, and pressing on with an ardour never to be wearied, let us manifest the constraints of love to Jesus. May the divine loadstone draw us heavenward towards itself!

"*Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?*"—Luke xxiv. 38.

"WHY sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" The Lord cares for all things, and the meanest creatures share in His universal providence, but His particular providence is over His saints. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him." "Precious shall their blood be in His sight." "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." Let the fact that, while He is the Saviour of all men, He is specially the Saviour of them that believe, cheer and comfort you. You are His peculiar care; His regal treasure which He guards as the apple of His eye; His vineyard over which He watches day and night. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Let the thought of His special love *to you* be a spiritual pain-killer, a dear quietus to your woe: "I will never leave *thee*, nor forsake *thee*." God says that as much to you as to any saint of old. "Fear not, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." We lose much consolation by the habit of reading His promises for the whole church, instead of taking them directly home to ourselves. Believer, grasp the divine word with a personal, appropriating faith. Think that you hear Jesus say, "I have prayed for *thee* that thy faith fail not." Think you see Him walking on the waters of thy trouble, for He is there, and He is saying, "Fear not, it is I; be not afraid." Oh, those sweet words of Christ! May the Holy Ghost make you feel them as spoken to *you;* forget others for awhile—accept the voice of Jesus as addressed to you, and say, "Jesus whispers consolation; I cannot refuse it; I will sit under His shadow with great delight."

"SHE DID A GOOD WORK"

Matthew 26:1-16

10/23/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 1 - 6

A great contrast:

The religious leaders hated Him,
The disciples dishonored Him,
Judas Iscariot betrayed Him,
But Mary (sister of Martha & Lazarus) loved and worshipped Jesus.

***What will you do for Jesus?**

Six features of Mary's good work for Jesus Christ:

I. **Mary Made a Great SACRIFICE** (v. 7a)
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when she did a good work for Jesus

V. **Mary Revealed Great FAITH** (v. 12)
when she did a good work for Jesus

VI. **Mary Left a Great MEMORY** (v. 13)
when she did a good work for Jesus

CONCLUSION: Verses 14-16

"THE FINAL PASSOVER"

Matthew 26:17-30
10/30/94

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus Christ was the final Passover Lamb and He died for you!**

I. Jesus made sovereign preparations for the final Passover (v. 17-20)

II. Jesus foretold of His betrayal and death at the final Passover (v. 21-25)

III. Jesus instituted a perpetual reminder of the true significance of the final Passover (v. 26-30)

CONCLUSION:

Is Jesus Christ your Passover Lamb?

"THE FINAL PASSOVER"

Matthew 26:17-30
10/30/94

INTRODUCTION:

Describe the story of the Exodus - Israel's bondage in Egypt and the ten plagues.

Read the Passover story - Exodus 12:1-27

***Jesus Christ was the final Passover Lamb and He died for you!**

I. Jesus made sovereign preparations for the final Passover (v. 17-20)

V. 17
"The first day of the feast" = the 14th day of Nisan (the Babylonian name of the month) (Abib = the Canaanite name - Dt. 16:1)

This was the 14th day of the first month on the Hebrew calendar (March-April).

This was the first day of a week-long celebration of unleavened bread. The week would begin with the Passover Lamb being killed (Lk. 22:7) and then eaten as part of the Passover meal.

"Where wilt thou?" - It was not a matter of "*if*" they would celebrate Passover, but "*where*." The Jewish disciples were to give unquestioned obedience to this ceremonial law of Israel.

"Prepare" - "In crowded Jerusalem, Peter and John would have had to secure the bread and bitter herbs, as well as the wine, for the feast. They would have had to find a perfect lamb, and then have had the lamb slain in the court of the temple and the blood put on the altar. The lamb would be roasted whole, and then the feast would be ready." (Wiersbe, p. 96)

V. 18
"Go into the city" = the crowded city of Jerusalem

"To such a man" - The omniscient Lord Jesus further described this "*man*" as being one who would meet them carrying a "*pitcher of water.*" (Mk. 14:13) ("Since women usually performed this task, they would easily notice a man carrying water" - Ryrie note).

"***The Master saith***" - the authoritative teacher.

Note: The disciples don't merely say "our teacher" as if Jesus was only their teacher, but "the teacher," since He is the only authoritative truth giver for all people (. . . "*One is your teacher. . . even Christ*" - Mt. 23:8)

"***My time*** *(kairos)* ***is at hand***" - God's sovereign time table for the most significant, momentous sacrifice had come. The time for Christ's fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice had come.

Now the Old Testament prophecies, types, and foreshadows would be accomplished by the death of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29).

"***At thy house***" - This specially ordained house would have a guest chamber in a large upper room that would be fully furnished (Lk. 22:11-12).

It is amazing how the Lord always has everything fully arranged, set, and in place to fulfill His sovereign will.

*Let Him prepare the way for you in life. He will smooth out your path if you trust Him to (Prov. 3:5-6).

The Lord's sovereign preparation was previously exemplified as He commanded the disciples to go and take a colt which was sovereignly reserved just for Jesus' triumphal entry on Palm Sunday (SEE: Mark 11:2-7).

V. 20

"***Even***" - evening; on the brink of the 15th of Nissan (the Jewish day began at sundown - 6:00 p.m.). (This day would be the very day Christ would die.)

By collating all of the Gospel accounts, the order of events that night was:

1) Eating the Passover meal (Jn. 13:1-4)
2) Washing the disciples' feet (Jn. 13:5-20)
3) Identifying one who would betray Him (Jn. 13:21-27)
4) Then the disciples' quarrel as to who was the greatest among them (Lk. 22:24-30)
5) The institution of the Lord's Supper (Lk. 22:19-20; with Judas present - v. 21)
6) Judas departs to betray Christ (Jn. 13:30)
7) Messages and prayer in the upper room (Jn. 14 - 17)
8) A hymn in the upper room (Mt. 26:30)
9) Walk to the Mount of Olives to the Garden of Gethsemane (Jn. 18:1)
10) Christ's statement that all including Peter would deny Him (Mk. 14:26-31)
11) Christ's anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36-46)
12) Christ's betrayal and arrest (Mt. 26:47-56)

"***He sat down***" - lit. He reclined

II. Jesus foretold of His betrayal and death at the final Passover (v. 21-25)

V. 21

"One of you shall betray Me" **-** To "betray" is to hand over or deliver someone to their enemy.

Can you imagine the amazement, the shock, the horror at the thought that one of the twelve who walked with Christ, ate with Christ, heard His messages, saw His miracles, received power themselves to perform miracles, witnessed for Christ, witnessed His impeccable sinless life. . . that one would give Him over to the devil's crowd.

V. 22

"Exceeding sorrowful" **-** They were deeply grieved, very saddened. Instant depression overcame them

They know by now not even to think about questioning the validity of His statement. Hence, they don't ask, "Is it true?" But "Is it I?"

The question is asked in such a way as to expect a "No" answer.

"Lord, is it I?" **-** lit. "I am not [the one] Lord, [am I]?". "Surely it is not me, Lord, is it"

The way they ask the question proves that each thought that he could never do such a thing.

So they each look at each other with bewilderment (Jn. 13:22). John was reclining next to Jesus, and Peter gets John's attention and whispers, "Ask Him who it is" (Jn. 13:23-25).

Judas must have been a master at deception; no one except Jesus suspected him.

What is amazing is that no one has the foggiest idea as to who it might be. Even when Judas leaves the upper room in haste, they don't assume he is the culprit. Rather, they thought he was buying some more food for the Passover Feast, or that he was going out with his pouch of money to show benevolence to the poor (Jn. 13:29).

"They did not see any difference in the way Jesus treated Judas, which is remarkable testimony to our Lord's patience and love" (Wiersbe, p. 96).

If in a group of twelve apparently committed disciples, one was a traitor to Christ, it would be safe for us to assume that perhaps in a group the size of this congregation that a "Judas Iscariot" might be present. Someone no one would expect not to be a Christian. It is imperative, therefore, that each of us seriously examines our faith and the condition of our hearts before God.

V. 23

"***He that dippeth***" = lit. "the one who <u>has</u> (already) <u>dipped</u>" (aorist participle). The one who dipped may have known, but it would have been impossible for anyone else to have known, since they were all dipping into the Charoseth[a] (a dip of ground fruits [apples, dates, and pomegranates] and nuts).

At one point in the night, Jesus and Judas had both reached their hands out to moisten and flavor their bread in the dish.

Later, Jesus then (in a gesture of friendship and love) gave a dipped morsel to Judas, who ate it and then left to betray Him, after Jesus cryptically (yet in full awareness of what He was saying) said, "*That thou doest, do quickly*" (Jn. 13:26-27).

V. 24

"***As it is written***" - Judas' betrayal did not catch God by surprise (Ps. 41:9 - "*Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*" cp. John 13:18-19).

Christ's death was predicted hundreds of years prior to the event (Is. 53).

"Matthew 26:24 presents both the human and the divine sides of this event. From the divine point of view, Judas' treachery was predicted in Scripture and was part of the plan of God. But from the human point of view, Judas was guilty of a base crime and was completely responsible for what he did. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not in conflict, even though we may not be able to understand how they work together to fulfill God's will." (Wiersbe, p. 96).

"***Woe***" - an expression of sorrow and pity (like "I feel sorry for him!" "I pity you")

"***It had been good for that man if he had not been born***" - Judas, who had the greatest privilege, will be judged with the greatest severity (Lk. 12:47-48 - v. 47 - "*And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*") (II Pet. 2:21 - "*For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.*").

Judas was part of the most elite group of people in history. He also had an important responsibility as treasurer for the twelve.

> Remember, the more privilege and opportunity you have, the higher you are, and the higher you are, the harder you fall!

Judas, after throwing down the 30 pieces of silver, hung himself (Mt. 27:5), burst open in the mid-section of his body (Acts 1:18), and then went to "*his <u>own place</u>*" (Acts 1:25) -- that is, to <u>perdition</u> (destruction) (Jn. 17:12).

Rejecting Christ is man's way of shaking his fist at God and saying, "No! I don't want you in my life!" Hell is God's way of saying, "Okay, you may have your wish!"

V. 25

Judas, who had previously agreed with the Jewish religious leaders for 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus (v. 15-16), perhaps thought that the Lord Jesus didn't know what he had done. Maybe Jesus didn't know after all . . . or maybe He did!

"***Master, is it I?***" - "Master, I am not the one, am I?" The disciples had said, "*Lord (kurios), is it I?*"; whereas Judas significantly used the term "*Master (rabbi), is it I?*"

Judas viewed Jesus as "*Rabbi*" but never "*Lord*"!

Who is Jesus to you?

"*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, thou shalt be saved*" (Rom. 10:9).

"***Thou hast said***" - (a common expression of Christ in response to questions - Mt. 26:64, 27:11). "You have said it yourself"; "It is as you have said."

Judas' own words would condemn him ("*By your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned*").

III. Jesus instituted a perpetual reminder of the true significance of the final Passover (v. 26-30)

V. 26

"***As they were eating***" - i.e. as they resumed eating the Passover meal

Jesus took two elements of the Passover meal to illustrate his impending death and to institute something new.

Jesus introduces what would be perpetually known throughout the Church Age as "The Lord's Supper."

"***Bread***" - a loaf of unleavened bread (since no leaven was allowed any where in sight on Passover - Dt. 16:3-4).

The unleavened bread was the bread of "affliction," showing how the Israelites had to eat it in a hurry without waiting for yeast to cause it to rise (Dt. 16:3).

The "*unleavened*" bread also pictures the pure, sinless, undefiled, unhypocritical life and body of Jesus (I Cor. 5:6-8 *V. 7 - "*Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*")

Whereas Passover typified Christ's sinlessness and death, unleavened bread typified His uncorruptness in His burial (Acts 2:27, 31, 35).

"***Blessed it***" - gave "*thanks*" (I Cor. 11:24). Although He had previously eaten bread and food, Jesus pauses to give thanks because He was establishing a pattern for his followers to model at the "Lord's table" (I Cor. 11:23-26).

"***Brake it***" - the breaking of the common loaf symbolized two things:

1) How Christ's Body would be broken on the cross (I Cor. 11:24) [not His bones (Jn. 19:33, 36) but His flesh (I Pet. 2:24)].

2) How each person must personally appropriate the one Christ by faith (Jn. 6:51 - "*I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*") (I Cor. 10:17 - "*. . . we are all partakers of that one bread*")

"***This is my body***" - Obviously, the disciples saw that Christ was speaking figuratively (the bread being a symbol or picture of Christ's Body). He was not teaching cannibalism nor transubstantiation.

V. 27

"***Drink ye all of it***" - All of you drink it

Some Bible interpreters believe that Judas was not present at this Last Supper because He left immediately after receiving the sop (Jn. 13:30). However, the statement of Luke 22:21, "*But, behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table*" in the context of the Lord's Supper seems to indicate that Judas was present.

Note: The fact that Judas was present is proof that one does not receive efficacious grace by receiving the elements of the Lord's Supper.

V. 28

"***This is my blood***" - The unfermented grape juice pictures Christ's pure blood (note: An unfermented juice would best correspond to the "unfermented" [unleavened] bread that was eaten at this meal).

What is a "***testament***"? A covenant; a binding promise. It is like a "will" which goes into effect after the death of the one who wrote it (Heb. 9:16-17).

"***Blood of the new testament***" - i.e. the blood which would provide a new covenant.

Every time God established a covenant, the blood of an innocent animal was shed to confirm that covenant --

--EX: The Noaic Covenant (Gen. 8:20)
--EX: The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:7-21)
--EX: The Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 24:6-8; cp. Heb. 9:18-20)

The first covenant was conditional: I will bless you if you are faithful
The second covenant was unconditional: I will bless you because of Christ's sacrifice

When we speak of our Bible being an Old Testament and a New Testament, we are not saying that the Old was bad and needed to be replaced by a New (as some Muslims falsely assume). Rather, the New fulfilled the Old. The Old predicted the New (Jer. 31:31-34).

The New accomplished what the Old could not! Namely:

1) A change of heart
2) Fellowship with God
3) Knowledge of the Lord
4) Forgiveness of sins

"Shed . . . for the remission of sins" -

It is not merely the blood, but the shed blood on Calvary's cross that saves

(when the proper emphasis is placed on the word "shed", the modern confusion over the blood issue is resolved).

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28; cp. Mk. 12:24; Lk. 22:20).

"Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

1) **The cross of Christ and the blood of Christ are theologically indivisible in Scripture -** "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (Col. 1:20).

2) **Christ's death and blood are linked together in Scripture.** "Christ died for us. . . justified by His blood" (Rom. 5:8-9).

3) **Jesus' suffering is linked with His shed blood.** "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without [outside] the gate" (Heb. 13:12).

4) **Note the connection between Christ's blood, his offering of his flesh and His death on the cross** in Eph. 2:13-16.

"By the blood (v.13). . .in His flesh (v.15). . ."by the cross" (v.16)

*Salvation is provided because of the fact that Christ's literal, physical blood was shed on the cross to make atonement for sin.

To be precise: We are saved by Christ's one-time act of shedding His blood (Heb. 9:22) and not by some supposed enduring "eternal" blood that was retrieved from the ground under the cross, carried to Heaven and literally sprinkled on the mercy seat (an erroneous view promoted by the commentator John A. Bengel).

Interesting Analogies:

Note: In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the blood of the animal was applied to the horns on the altar (Exod. 29:12; Lev. 4:18). Just as the horns held the sacrifice to the altar, so Christ was fastened to the cross by spikes - the blood applied to the horns was perhaps a symbolic foreshadowing of Christ's blood that would spurt out when He was held to the cross.

Note: The rest of the blood was then poured out at the base of the altar into the ground. In similar manner, Christ's blood was spilled below the cross (Exod. 29:12; Lev. 1:15; 3:2; 4:18, 25, 30, 34, etc.; cp. Jn. 19:34).

The blood "atonement is the scarlet chord running through every page in the entire Bible. Cut the Bible anywhere and it bleeds; it is red with redemptive truth." (William Evans).

"***Remission of sins***" - The forgiveness of sins; the releasing of sins (because of Christ's shed blood, God no longer holds our sins against us who believe).

"***For many***" - i.e. for multitudes Christ's one death will save multitudes. This verse is not teaching a "limited atonement." Although, in the final outcome only a limited number will benefit from what His bloodshed accomplished. However, Christ's death was sufficient for all men.

1) *I John 2:1-2 - "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."*

2) *I Timothy 2:4 - "Who will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth"*

3) *I Timothy 2:6 - "Who gave Himself a ransom for all"*

4) *I Timothy 4:10 - "Who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe" (Christ's death is sufficient for all, but only efficient for those who believe)*

5) *Hebrews 2:9 - "Christ...tasted death for every man"*

6) *Titus 2:11 - "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men"*

7) *II Peter 2:1 - "False teachers . . . even denying the Lord that bought them"*

8) God offers salvation to "**all**" (Is. 53:6; Mt. 11:28; Rom. 3:22; 5:18; Acts 17:30; II Pet. 3:9)

9) God offers salvation to the "**world**" (Jn. 1:29, 3:16-17; II Cor. 5:18-20; I Jn. 4:14)

10) God offers salvation to the "**whosoevers**" (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 10:13; Rev. 22:17) ("Whosoever" occurs 110 times in the New Testament)

Christ's shed blood provides many other blessings as well

That past, completed sacrifice gives present blessings!

Because Jesus over 2,000 years ago shed His blood for sinners, believers now have the following blessings:

1)	Propitiation	(Rom. 3:25)
2)	Justification	(Rom. 5:9)
3)	Redemption	(Eph. 1:7; cp. Acts 20:28; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12; I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:9)
4)	Intimacy with God	(Eph. 2:13)
5)	Forgiveness	(Col. 1:14; Rev. 1:5)
6)	Reconciliation (peace)	(Col. 1:20)
7)	Boldness in prayer	(Heb. 10:19)
8)	Sanctification	(Heb. 13:12; cp. Rev. 7:14)
9)	Power to overcome	(Rev. 12:11)

Why don't we celebrate the "Passover" as Christians? Three reasons:

1) No more Passover lambs are to be killed (Heb. 8 - 10) ("*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*" - I Cor. 5:7).

2) The Passover was a feast to be observed only by the nation of Israel, who alone were brought out of the bondage of Pharaoh in Egypt (Ex. 12:1ff).

3) The "Lord's Supper" instituted by Christ on Passover, became a replacement for Passover (The Early Church in Acts or the Epistles were never admonished to celebrate the Passover but were told to celebrate the Lord's Supper - I Cor. 11).

V. 29

Christ has been in Heaven for nearly 2,000 years and has not taken a sip of the fruit of the vine since. He is awaiting that eventual reunion in the future millennial kingdom when He will enjoy the fellowship of his resurrected and regenerated saints in that kingdom to come (Micah 4:4; Mt. 6:10; Acts 1:6-7; Rev. 20:4-9).

"***New***" may refer to:

1. "New wine" - i.e. not fermented (Zech. 9:17; Mt. 9:17)

2. A new type of wine - i.e. from trees bearing 12 types of fruit (Rev. 22:2)

3. A "renewed" (NIV) fellowship in the kingdom

Until Jesus comes back, we are to remember His death with this memorial service (I Cor. 11:25-26)

V. 30

"***Sun an hymn***" - Probably all or part of Ps. 115 - 118, the traditional Passover Hallel. In light of Christ's impending crucifixion and death, Psalm 118:22-29 would have been most appropriate.

CONCLUSION:

The first Passover predated the Law. It had been celebrated for 1,500 years. "But the Passover Jesus was now concluding with the disciples was the last divinely sanctioned Passover ever to be observed" (macArthur, p. 150).

What was the Passover? It was ultimately a picture of the Perfect Lamb Jesus Christ, His death on the cross, and His shed blood to save people from their sins.

For Jewish people to annually celebrate the Passover without seeing its fulfillment in Christ is to be missing the real significance of Passover.

It's like a book's introduction without a conclusion.
It's like a framed house without siding and sheet rock.
It's like a shadow without substance.
It's like birth without life.

"Celebrating deliverance from Egypt is a weak substitute for celebrating deliverance from sin" (MacArthur, p. 151).

Is Jesus Christ your Passover Lamb?

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

AND THEIR PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

Leviticus 23

HISTORY (These Events have been fulfilled by Christ)				PROPHECY (These events are yet to be fulfilled)		
PASSOVER (v.4-5; cp. Ex.12:1-13)	**UNLEAVENED BREAD** (v.6-8)	**FIRSTFRUITS** (v.9-14)	**PENTECOST** (v.15-22)	**TRUMPETS** (v.23-25)	**DAY OF ATONEMENT** (v.26-32)	**TABERNACLE** (v.33-44)
REDEMPTION	INCORRUPTION	RESURRECTION	ORIGINATION	RECEPTION	REPENTANCE	REST&PROVISION
Typifies the **death** of Christ (Jn.1:29; Mt.26:17-29; I Cor.5:7)	Typifies the **Burial** of Christ (Acts 2:27)	Typifies the **Resurrection** of Christ (I Cor.15:20)	Typifies the beginning of the **Church** of Christ (Acts 2:1-f)	Typifies the **Rapture** by Christ (I Cor.15:52; I Th.4:13)	Typifies **Israel's Atonement** by Christ when they repent (Rom.11:25-26; Zech.12:13,14)	Typifies the **Millennial Rest** & **Eternal kingdom** when Christ "tabernacles" among us (Zech.14:16-19; Rev.20:4-6; 21:3)
Christ our Passover (Lamb) is sacrificed for us (I Cor.5:7)	Christ experienced No Corruption (Symbolized by leaven) (Acts 2:27)	Christ is the Firstfruits from the dead (I Cor.15:20)	Christ began His Ingathering of His great Harvest Field on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)	Christ will summon His bride to himself & will then send judment on the Earth. In the O.T. trumpets were blown on 2 occassions: 1) When God wanted to summon His people to His presence. 2) Whenever God was to go to war on behalf of Israel.	Yom Kippur is a Nationally celebrated time. Israel as a Nation will repent at the end of the 70th. Week.	God will tabernacle (dwell) among His people again!

"THE FINAL PASSOVER"

Matthew 26:17-30
10/30/94

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus Christ was the final Passover Lamb and He died for you!**

I. Jesus made sovereign preparations for the final Passover (v. 17-20)

II. Jesus foretold of His betrayal and death at the final Passover (v. 21-25)

III. Jesus instituted a perpetual reminder of the true significance of the final Passover (v. 26-30)

CONCLUSION:

Is Jesus Christ your Passover Lamb?

"THREE BIG MISTAKES

On the Night of the Betrayal"

Matthew 26:31-56

11/6/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 31-32

V. 31

"***Offended***" - lit. "caused to stumble"; you will "fall away."

Jesus specifically addressed Peter and said, "*Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat*" (Lk. 22:31).

As Jesus and the disciples leave the upper room and walk through the darkness toward the Mount of Olives, Jesus foretells what the disciples would do that night.

Because the disciples would see Jesus betrayed, captured, mistreated, etc., they--for fear of their own lives--would become offended (scared into abandoning Christ) that same night.

One would think that the disciples could muster up enough courage to stand firm to the end, but such could not occur, because the Scriptures had to be fulfilled.

"***For it is written***" - Zech. 13:7

V. 32

Although they all scattered, they would all be regathered after Christ's resurrection.

This verse should have given the disciples the confidence that they would not die, but would survive through the dark three days ahead.

***Don't make the same mistakes Peter did!**

Three big mistakes:

I. PROUD SELF-CONFIDENCE (v. 33-35)

(Never say, "I will never. . .")

V. 33

Impulsive, impetuous Peter pipes up with proud self-confidence, "***Though all [men] shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.***"

Peter had a knack for putting his foot in his mouth (cp. Mt. 16:22-23).

"Peter was unwilling to apply the word *'All'* (v. 31) to himself" (Wiersbe, p. 97).

"***All*** [men]" - i.e. all the other disciples; Peter somehow thought he had something they didn't have.

--Maybe he thought he had more love for Christ than they did; or more boldness & courage or more dedication.

Peter obviously viewed himself as spiritually superior to others.

Be careful never to think this way. Think humbly about yourself (Phil. 2:3 - "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*").

Right now "ask God to forgive you for your feelings of superiority" or you are headed for a nose dive (ILLUS: the minister, boy scout, and computer expert on board a small plane that was going down).

V. 34

"***Verily***" - truly; as impossible as such a denial seemed to Peter, Christ's words will always be fulfilled. What He says, will happen!

"***Deny Me thrice***" - Peter would even swear, saying, "*I know not the man*" (26:74)

V. 35

"***Peter said***" - Not with a skeptical tone of voice; but with intense, brazen confidence, he "***vehemently***" (Mk. 14:31) spoke.

Peter still had not learned not to contradict Jesus!

"***Though I should die with thee***" - I am willing to be a martyr for You! "*I am ready to go with thee, both to prison and to death*" (Lk. 22:33).

"***Yet I will not***" - an emphatic double negative. The word "*not*" translates <u>two</u> Greek words for "not" (*oὐ mā̀*).

Peter speaks as emphatically as possible.

We should never say "never" when it comes to trusting in ourselves.

Rather say, "If God is willing..." "By God's grace..." "With His enabling power..."

Martin Luther said: "Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, if the right Man were not on our side, the Man of God's own choosing."

We truly do not realize the evil and deception of our own hearts (Jer. 17:9).

At times, we are so smug, so sure, so bold, so enthused, so brave, etc. that we say things that we end up later eating.

Don't put confidence in yourself or in your plans, but in God and in His will.

James 4:13-16 - "*Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boasting: all such rejoicing is evil.*"

"***Likewise***" - Note: Peter's self-confidence spirit spread to the others.

Be careful your children will catch and copy your spirit as well.

II. PRAYERLESSNESS (v. 36-46)

(Never sleep when you should pray)

V. 36

"***Gethsemane***" - The name means "oil press." This ancient garden, which still remains to this day, was on the west side of the Mount of Olives.

V. 37

"***Two sons of Zebedee***" = James and John

Jesus often brought this inner circle of Peter, James, and John to be eye-witnesses of certain events (Mt. 17:1) . . . "*That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established*" (Mt. 18:16).

"***Sorrowful***" - to grieve over the separation which was about to take place (Mt. 27:46).

"***Heavy***" - to be distressed because of the weight of the sin He would bear for the world (I Pet. 2:24).

V. 38

The impending judgment from Heaven which was to fall upon Jesus so deeply grieved His soul so that He felt as if He would die even at this point.

"***Watch***" - stay awake so as to pray

V. 39

The cup that Jesus was to drink was not drunk in the Garden, but later that day (Jn. 18:11) at Calvary

Jesus didn't fear death. "Many godly people have been (wrongly) arrested, beaten, and slain because of their faith. But only Jesus experienced being made sin and a curse for mankind" (Wiersbe, p. 97) (II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13).

"***This cup***" - not speaking of the mere physical suffering Jesus would have to endure, but of the spiritual agony He would endure and drink for all of humanity.

Later that day from 12:00 - 3:00 p.m., "darkness" would mysteriously cover the earth (Mk. 15:33), as the Son of God would become a "*curse*" by hanging on the cross (Gal. 3:13), bearing the "*iniquity of us all*" (Is. 64:6), and as the Father would turn His back on His own Son (Mt. 27:46).

In that "*cup*" were all of the vile sins you committed, are committing, and would commit.

In that "*cup*" was death, as Christ would "*taste death for every man*" (Heb. 2:9).

The pure, spotless, undefiled, holy soul of Jesus was repulsed by the thought of becoming a sin offering and experiencing the equivalent of our hell on that cross.

"***Not as I will, but as thou wilt***" - When Christ became man, He totally subjected Himself to the will of the Father (Jn. 6:38 - "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*")

For Him to ever violate the will of the Father would be to sin. This was an impossibility for the Son of God.

Although Jesus wished not to be accursed for those three hours on the cross, severed for the first time in eternity from the presence and power of the Father, He was willing to do the will of the Father no matter what the cost!

Is such your desire? If so, you must be a man/woman of prayer.

V. 40

"***Asleep***" - Due to the intense pressures of the hour, the disciples gave in to the suggestion of the devil to sleep their problems away rather than pray their problems away.

V. 41

"***Watch and pray***" - stay awake and alert so as to pray.

"***That ye enter not into temptation***" - daily prayer is the only secret to overcoming the strong solicitations to evil that will come our way.

"*Deliver us from evil*" needs to be our daily prayer (Mt. 6:13).

Note: Proud self-confidence will always result in prayerlessness.

Is 59:16

There is a time for sleep and there is a time for prayer. This was no time for sleep. The biggest trial Peter would ever face was minutes away!

"***The spirit***" - a believer's inner regenerated spirit, which is the aspect of man (which separates him from the animal realm) which alone is eager ("***willing***") to commune with God.

"The flesh is weak" - Our bodies and old nature succumb and seek to gratify the impulses of the carnal body.

This war of "spirit versus flesh" is a real one (Gal. 5:17) which can only be won by the spirit if you daily feed the spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to control you.

Whenever the Spirit prods you to do something, do it. This is the secret to the Spirit-filled life.

V. 42

"O my Father" - the depth of Christ's intimacy with the Father and agony at the thought of His being separated from the Father drives Him to plead a second time.

V. 43

"Asleep again" - They woke up momentarily only to fall back into slumber.

When the temptation to sleep conflicts with your doing the will of god, fight it! Fight it out of love for Christ and His will!

V. 44

Christ intensely requested that the Father remove the bitter, hellish cup of spiritual suffering and separation. Although an angel was sent to strengthen Christ (Lk. 22:43), *"being in agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground"* (Lk. 22:44).

V. 45

"Sleep on now, and take your rest" - The verb endings could be translated as imperative (KJV) or indicative (NASV; NIV). The context of the second half of verse 45 proves that the indicative is correct. The statement should be translated as a question, "Are you still sleeping now and taking your rest?"

"The hour is at hand" = the hour of the power of darkness (Lk. 22:53).

III. PRESUMPTION (v. 47-55)

(Never do for Christ what He did not tell you to do)

V. 50

Jesus calls Judas "***friend***" (comrade or companion).

V. 51

"***One of them***" - John specifically identified this "*one*" as "*Simon Peter*", who "*having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus*" (Jn. 18:10).

The 10 disciples actually asked Jesus, "*Lord, shall we smite with the sword?*" (Lk. 22:49), but Peter didn't even wait for an answer. He just hacked away! (Lk. 22:50; Jn. 18:10).

"***Smote off his ear***" - Just as quickly as it came off, Jesus put it back on again! "*And He touched his ear, and healed him*" (Lk. 22:51).

V. 52

"***They that take the sword shall perish with the sword***" - The principle of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7) is implied. (cp. *'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword...*" - Rev. 13:10).

V. 53

Proud self-confidence will always lead to prayerlessness, which will inevitably lead to presumption.

Jesus is saying to Peter, "I don't need you to defend me."

Peter may have meant well, but good intentions don't "cut the mustard" with God.

"***Twelve legions of angels***" - A Roman legion varied from 3000 to 6000; hence, 12 legions would be 36,000 to 72,000 angels. Jesus, who created the angels (Col. 1:16) could have called on any number of powerful angelic creatures ("*the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands*" - Rev. 5:11).

Any sword Peter had (Lk. 22:36-38) was to be used for self-defense (perhaps) but not to fight for Jesus.

Presumption is the sin of assumption based on "gut feeling" rather than Biblical precept and principle.

"Presumption" is basically caused by an over-confident, egotistical, big-headedness, which results in the audacity to do your own will, rather than the will of your superior.

To presume is to assume or take for granted you can do something even though you have no authority or Bible to back you up.

People often take liberties that aren't theirs; overstep boundaries they should not; intrude into areas they are forbidden; surge ahead like gangbusters down a path they should not be on!

Principle for Christians: Don't react, but act based on solid Bible truth. *Don't do anything you don't have full confidence in doing (Rom. 14:23).

If we would simply do what we are told rather than being innovative and "adding" to His Word through man-made "traditions," man-made creeds and self-induced visions and dreams, Christendom would not be filled with the confusion we see today among various religions.

"Peter rushed ahead and trusted the arm of the flesh. Had Jesus not healed the ear of Malchus, there probably would have been four crosses at Calvary!" (Wiersbe, p. 98).

To act presumptuously is to act independently of God's will and orders.

People who acted presumptuously:

1) Sarah in giving Hagar to Abraham to obtain a son (Gen. 16:1-f)
2) Moses at Egypt (Ex. 2:11-15)
3) False prophets (Dt. 18:20 - "*But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*")
4) King Saul (I Sam. 15:22)
5) Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1 - "*And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not.*")
6) Samson (Jud. 14:9)
7) Uzzah (II Sam. 6:6, 7)
8) The unnamed prophet (I Ki. 13) "The Man of God"
9) Josiah - a king who got involved in a battle that wasn't his (II Chron. 35:20-25)

Many presume that it is okay to:

1) Abort an unborn child
2) Date an unsaved boy or girl
3) Divorce one's spouse
4) Move to another location without considering God's will
5) Pursue the pastorate when God did not call
   --EX: women preachers (I Cor. 14:34; I Tim. 2:12)
   --EX: novice Christians (I Tim. 3:6)
6) That their works/religion etc. will get them into God's Kingdom

Sometimes the "Ooops, I shouldn't have done that" is too late!

V. 54

To fulfill (carry out to completion) the Scriptures was Christ's highest goal.

When it comes to doing your will or obeying Scripture, which do you choose?

V. 55

"***With swords and staves*** (clubs)" - Incidentally, this big band of men armed with "***lanterns and torches and weapons***" when they heard Jesus identify Himself as the "*I AM*" (Jn. 18:6; cp. Jn. 8:24, 58; 13:19), they "*went backward, and fell to the ground!*" (Jn. 18:6).

'Ye laid no hold on Me" - Because Christ's time had not come until now.

Jesus described this time in this words: "*This is your hour and the power of darkness*" (Lk. 22:53).

CONCLUSION:

Verse 56: *"Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled."*

Peter talked when he should have listened,
slept when he should have prayed,
and fought when he should have trusted.

What a contrast is seen between Jesus and Peter (and the others) in this chapter!

Humility even to death vs. pride
Prayer vs. prayerlessness
Submission to God's will vs. resistance to God's will

"Each of us must decide: Will it be the sword or the cup? Will I resist God's will or submit to God's will?" (Wiersbe, p. 98)

"THREE BIG MISTAKES

On the Night of the Betrayal"

Matthew 26:31-56

11/6/94

INTRODUCTION: Verses 31-32

***Don't make the same mistakes Peter did!**

Three big mistakes:

I. PROUD SELF-CONFIDENCE (v. 33-35)
(Never say, "I will never. . .")

II. PRAYERLESSNESS (v. 36-46)
(Never sleep when you should pray)

III. PRESUMPTION (v. 47-55)
(Never do for Christ what He did not tell you to do)

CONCLUSION:

Verse 56: "*Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled.*"

dying *Jesus was praying* for those who persecuted Him. The other evangelists say Jesus went on a mount and He was transfigured–Luke says it was *while He was praying* that He was transfigured. There's nothing more transfiguring than prayer.

The Scriptures say that the disciples went *to bed,* but Jesus went *to pray*–as was His custom. It was His custom to pray. Now Jesus was the Son of God–He was definitely anointed for His ministry. If Jesus needed all that time in prayer, don't you and I need time in prayer? If Jesus needed it in every crisis, don't you and I need it in every crisis?

The story goes that a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village saw an old man sitting by a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one of the visitors asked, "Were any great men born in this village?" Without looking up the old man replied, "No, only babies." The greatest men were once babies. The greatest saints were once toddlers in the things of the Spirit.

C.H. Spurgeon was converted at the age of 16 and began preaching in London at the age of 19. When he was 27, they built him a tabernacle seating 6,000 which he packed twice on Sundays–that's 12,000–and once on Thursday nights. How? He waited on God. He got alone with God. He studied . . . and he prayed.

Desperate Prayer

God makes all His best people in loneliness. Do you know what the secret of praying is? **Praying in secret.** *"But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door . . . " (Matt. 6:6)* You can't show off when the door's shut and nobody's there. You can't display your gifts. You can impress others, but you can't impress God.

I Samuel 1:1-15 gives an account of the yearly trip Elkanah and his wife, Hannah, made to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the Lord. During this time, Hannah had been distressed that she was not able to bear a son for her husband. This passage of Scripture gives quite a descriptive account of her time in prayer concerning the barrenness of her womb. It says that Hannah wept. More than this, she wept until she was sore. She poured out her soul before the Lord. Her heart was grieving; she was bitter of soul, provoked, and of a sorrowful spirit.

Now that's a pretty good list of afflictions–sorrow, hardship, and everything else that came upon this woman. But the key to the whole situation is that *she was a praying woman.* In verse 20 it says that she reaped her reward. *"And it came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I have asked him of the Lord.'"*

Now I say very often–and people don't like it–that God doesn't answer prayer. He answers *desperate* prayer! Your prayer life denotes how much you depend on your own ability, and how much you really believe in your heart when you sing, "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling . . ." The more self-confidence you have, the less you pray. The less self-confidence you have, the more you *have* to pray.

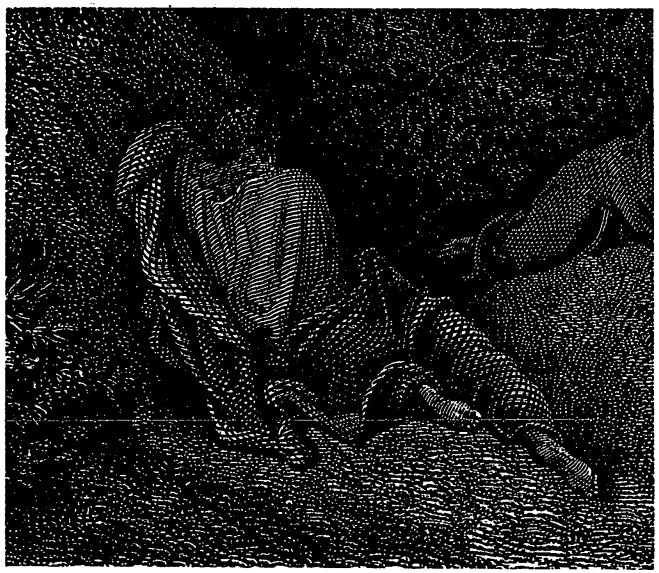
What does the Scripture say? It says that God takes the lowly, the things that are not. Paul says in I Corinthians 1:28 that God takes the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are, so that no flesh should glory in His presence. We need a bunch of "are nots" today.

The Language Of The Poor

Prayer is the language of the poor. Over and over again David, the King of Israel, says, *"Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and answer me; for I am afflicted and needy." (Psalm 86:1)* And do you remember that one of the greatest psalms he wrote says, *"This poor man cried and the Lord heard him . . . " (Psalm 34:6)*

The apostle Paul overwhelms me with his spirituality, his pedigree, his colossal intellect. Yet he says that he's very conscious that when he's weak, he is strong. He was always trying to prove to himself and to others that he was a nobody.

True prayer is a two-way communication. I speak to God and God speaks to me. I don't know how the Spirit makes communication–or why God needs me to pray–but that's how God works.



"Get Up And Pray!"

One day I was at a conference with Dr. Raymond Edmond of Wheaton College, one of the greatest Christian educators in this country. He told us of an experience he had while he was in Uruguay as a missionary. He hadn't been there long before he was sick and dying. He was so near death that they had already dug his grave. He had great beads of sweat on his brow and there was a death rattle in his throat. But suddenly he sat straight up in bed and said to his wife, "Bring me my clothes!" Nobody knew what had happened.

Many years later he was retelling the story in Boston. Aterward, a little old lady with a small, dog-eared, beaten-up book, approached him and asked, "What day did you say you were dying? What time was it in Uruguay? What time would it be in Boston?" When he answered her, her wrinkled face lit up. Pointing to her book, she said, "There it is, you see? At 2 a.m. God said to get up and pray–the devil's trying to kill Raymond Edmond in Uruguay." And she'd gotten up and prayed.

Duncan Campbell told the story of hearing a farmer in his field who was praying. He was praying about Greece. Afterward, he asked him why he was praying. The man said, "I don't know. I had a burden in the spirit and God said, 'You pray, there's someone in Greece that is in a bad situation.' I prayed until I got a release." Two or three years later the farmer was in a meeting listening to a missionary. The man described a time when he was working in Greece. He had been in serious trouble. The time? Two or three years ago. The men compared notes and discovered that it was the very same day that God had burdened a farmer, on a little island off the coast of Scotland, to pray for a man in Greece whose name he didn't even know.

It may seem the Lord gives you strange things. I don't care. If the Lord tells you something, carry on with what the Lord tells you.

"Who Shall Ascend To The Hill Of The Lord?"

There's another experience Duncan Campbell told about when he was working in Scotland.

"I couldn't preach," he said. "I couldn't get through to God. The heavens were solid. It was as though there was a 10 ft. ceiling of steel." So he quit trying to preach. He asked a young man named John Cameron to pray. The boy stood up and said, "What's the use of praying if we're not right with God?" He quoted the 24th Psalm, *"Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord?"*

ANYTHING BUT A PRAYER MEETING....

I was recently blessed to hear a pastor during a testimony time, share very honestly with his people. It was the closing night of one of our revival crusades in Illinois. The pastor told the people that he had appreciated the emphasis on the ministry of prayer during the crusade. He then shared his concern about the midweek service in their church. Several years ago this good church began several major programs for teenagers and children and scheduled them for Wednesday night. This involved many of the adults and these programs became the major events on that night. The pastor then went on to share how God had impressed him with the need to return the midweek service again to a prayer meeting **only**. He then asked for the people to pray for guidance as they restructured the schedule, moving these programs to other times. I was so thrilled! I wish more pastors would get that honest about the needs of their church. It is easy to sacrifice the **best** on the altar of that which is **good**.

It is sad that the most poorly attended meeting in any church schedule is the prayer meeting. In fact in many cases the prayer meeting has been replaced with a preaching meeting. Have we forgotten the priority place that prayer ought to have in our ministries? There are many things you can do after you pray, but very few things you can do until you pray. Prayer ought to be our first resource, not our last resort.

May God burden the hearts of pastors to see the need to again establish the prayer meeting as a meeting for prayer.

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Thank you for Praying!

Several months ago we shared the need for purchasing a travel trailer for our family. Though we have not solicited funds for this project, around $3000 has been generously given by several individuals and one church. Another individual has offered a large, interest-free loan. We praise the Lord for His provision at this time.

Please continue praying. If God so guides and provides we would like to purchase a trailer early in 1994. With a growing schedule of meetings for next year, this would be a great blessing.

We are interested in a large fifth-wheel type trailer. If you know of a good contact where such a trailer was available, please let us know. Thanks for your prayers and gifts.

THE DEATH OF MRS. PRAYER MEETING

Mrs. Prayer Meeting died recently at the First Neglected Church on Worldly Avenue. Born many years ago in the midst of great revivals, she was a strong, healthy child, fed largely on testimony and scriptural holiness, soon growing into world-wide prominence, and was one of the most influential members of the famous church family.

For the past several years, Sister Prayer Meeting has been in failing health, gradually wasting away until rendered helpless by stiffness of knees, coldness of heart, inactivity, and weakeness of purpose and will power. At the last she was but a shadow of her former happy self. Her last whispered words were inquiries concerning the strange absence of her loved ones, now absent from her presence, busy in the marts of trade and places of worldly amusement. Her older brother, Brother Class Meeting, has been dead for many years.



Experts, including Dr. Works, Dr. Emotion, and Dr. Excitement, disagreed as to the cause of her fatal illness, administering large doses of organization, social activity, contests and drives but to no avail. A post mortem showed that a lack of spiritual food, coupled with lack of fasting, faith, heartfelt religion, shameless desertion and non-support, were contributing causes. Only a few were present at her death, sobbing over memories of her past beauty and power. Carefully selected pallbearers were urged to tenderly bear her remains away, but failed to appear. There were no flowers. Her favorite hymns, "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and "Teach Me to Pray" were not sung. Miss Ima Modern rendered "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere", but none had any idea where this fancied place might be. The body rests in the beautiful cemetery of By-Gone Glories, awaiting the summons from above.

In honor of her going, the church doors will be closed on Wednesday night save on the third Wednesday of each month when the Ladies Pink Lemonade Society serves refreshments to the members of the men's handball team.

-Source Unknown

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PRAY FOR REVIVAL

12:00 NOON

"Evening, and at morning, and **AT NOON** will I pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.
Psalms 55:17

"HE ENDURED INJUSTICE PATIENTLY"

(The Night Jesus was Unjustly Condemned to Death)
Matthew 26:57-75
11/13/94

INTRODUCTION:

We are so prone to think too much of ourselves, demand our rights, plot to get even, etc., when treated unjustly.

SEE: Philippians 2:5-8

He, who was and is God, humbled Himself so low as to allow puny mortals to unjustly condemn Him to death.

"*His judgment was taken away*" (Acts 8:33; cp. Is. 53:8)

"Matthew 26:57-68 reveals at least five aspects of that illegal and unjust treatment of our Lord: the convening of the Sanhedrin (vv. 57-58), the conspiracy to convict Jesus without evidence (vv. 59-61), the confrontation to induce His self-incrimination (vv. 62-64), the condemnation based on false charges and testimony (vv. 65-66), and the conduct of the court in the physical and verbal abuse of Jesus (vv. 67-68)." (MacArthur, p. 202).

***The King of the universe patiently endured much injustice and mistreatment on a dark Passover night long ago.**

I. He Endured False ARREST (v. 57-58)

(His enemies seized Him by force)

V. 57

Since God's timetable had now come for His Son to be crucified, Jesus for the first time allowed Himself to be grabbed, tied up, and led away.

John records that they not only seized Jesus, they "*bound Him*" (Jn. 18:12).

They tied His hands, like hand cuffs on a criminal.

Before appearing before Caiaphas, they "*led Him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year*" (Jn. 18:13).

"***Caiaphas***" - On an earlier occasion this same man did not even realize the significance of the words that came out of his mouth when he had actually foretold the impending substitutionary death of Christ (SEE: John 11:45-52; cp. Jn. 18:14).

"***Scribes and elders were assembled***" - like hungry, salivating wolves, these religious leaders were awake and gathered in a pack in the middle of the night to devour Christ any way they could.

V. 57-58

The whole trial was a sham. "The Sanhedrin was permitted to hold a trial involving capitol punishment only in the Temple and only in public. The private meeting at Caiaphas' house (after midnight) clearly violated both stipulations (MacArthur, p. 204).

V. 58

Even though all the disciples had previously scattered (v. 56), Peter (remembering his promise to go with Christ both to prison and death) followed Christ at a distance to the high priest's palace.

"***He went in***" - Because John (who humbly doesn't mention himself by name) was "*known to the high priest*" and was permitted entrance along with Peter (Jn. 18:15-16).

"***Sat with the servants***" - Peter sat with the enemies that night and would warm himself at their fire (Mk. 14:54).

II. He Endured False WITNESS (v. 59-62)

(His enemies lied about Him)

V. 59

"***The council***" = The Sanhedrin (the Jerusalem Sanhedrin was a judicial committee "composed of 70 chief priests, elders, and scribes, with the High Priest making a total of 71" - MacArthur, p. 198).

The Sanhedrin's stated purpose was "to save, not destroy life." Such intentions were not present in the trial of Jesus.

The Law of Moses warned against bearing false witness against someone (Ex. 20:16; Dt. 19:15-21).

In our Law system (as in the Mosaic Law), a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Christ, however, was presumed guilty and they were not interested in any evidence to prove otherwise.

"They had already determined that He was guilty, but they wanted to go through the motions of a legal trial" (Wiersbe, p. 98).

V. 59-60

Why do Satanically inspired people today seek to extinguish public awareness of who Jesus is and what He did for the world?

1) They love darkness rather than light (Christ's light is a rebuke to the world's darkness)

2) They are controlled by Satan and do His bidding (Satan seeks to keep people as far away from Jesus as possible)

V. 60

"***But found none***" - They invited everyone who had any "dirt" on Jesus to come and testify against Him, but no charge would stick.

Either the ones who came didn't have the required two or three witnesses with them to substantiate their allegations (Dt. 17:6, 19:15) or their testimonies contradicted (and didn't agree with) each other (Mk. 14:59).

A valiant effort was made to find Jesus guilty of some sin, some heresy, some failure to keep the Law, some disobedience to government, etc. but they "*found none.*"

The best of Israel's liars, con artists, town gossips, etc., could not pin anything on Christ that merited punishment or death.

"***Many false witnesses came***" -Who knows how many liars paraded in and out of Caiaphas' palace?

"***Yet found they none***" - Although the "judge" and "jury" desperately wanted to nail Christ with some felony, they couldn't find even a trace of iniquity in Him.

Christ lived a sinless (impeccable) life!

Jesus bolding asked His enemies: "*Which of you convinceth me of sin?*" (Jn. 8:46).

Paul testified: Christ "*Knew no sin*" (II Cor. 5:21).

The writer of Hebrews testified that Christ, our High Priest, "*...was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*" (Heb. 4:13).

Again the writer of Hebrews states: "*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*" (7:26)

peter, who intimately knew Christ for 3-1/2 years, said in I Pet. 2:22, "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*"

Not even a demon could find in Jesus the least transgression of God's moral or spiritual law. "His only transgressions had been against the man-made, legalistic, and unscriptural rabbinic traditions." (MacArthur, p. 206)

V. 61

"***This*** [fellow] ***said***" - With disrespect for Jesus, they don't even use His name, but say, "This [one] said."

They misquote Jesus.

> He did not said the words "*I am able to destroy*" nor did He qualify the temple with the words "*of God*" "*Temple that is made with hands*" (Mk. 14:58). Rather He said, "*Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*"

They misinterpret what Jesus said.

> When He said this, He was not referring to the physical religious place of worship, but to "*the temple of His body*" (Jn. 2:21).

V. 62

"***Answerest thou nothing***" - Jesus didn't need to verbally defend Himself; His testimony spoke for itself.

Don't be so quick and concerned to defend yourself; let your life speak for itself. And let God defend you! David said, "*God is my defense*" (Ps. 59:9).

The best Lawyer is God. Psalm 35:1 - "*Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.*"

III. He Endured Misplaced <u>VERBAL ABUSE</u> (v. 63-66)
(His enemies accused Him of blasphemy)

V. 63

"***But Jesus held His peace***" - Is. 53:7 - "*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*"

"***I adjure thee by the living God***" - Caiaphas didn't realize it, but he was standing in front of the "<u>living God</u>"!

"***I adjure thee by the living God***" - Caiaphas put Jesus under <u>oath</u> (Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2) to incriminate Him.

Sly Caiaphas knew that Leviticus 24:16 said, "*The one who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death*" If he could succeed in getting Jesus to affirm His own deity with His own mouth, he would steer Jesus into self-incrimination.

"***The Christ, the Son of God***" - the word "Christ" refers to Jesus' <u>Messiahship</u> (Jn. 4:25-26).

The phrase "Son of God" refers to Jesus' <u>deity</u> (Jn. 5:18).

V. 64

"***Thou hast said***" - "You said it." "It is as you said." (Jesus responded the same way to Judas - Mt. 26:25). Jesus actually also said a direct "*I am.*" (Mk. 14:62).

After Jesus attests to His Messiahship and deity, He gives a future validation to His claim as the Christ.

"***Hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting ont he right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven***"

This scene will be witnessed by all of the unsaved at the Great White Throne Judgment (SEE: Dan. 7:9-14).

Caiaphas was now standing as judge and Jesus as the criminal, but one day the tables will be turned and Jesus will be the Judge and Caiaphas the criminal.

"***Ye shall see the Son of Man***" - Although Caiaphas the High Priest will one day bow the knee before Christ (Phil. 2:9-10) and will meet Him at the Great White Throne Judgment (Jn. 5:22, Rev. 20:11-15), the "***ye***" may also refer to Jews like him, who, in the Last Days when Christ returns for the Rapture and wrath of God, will "*look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him. . .*" (Zech. 12:10).

V. 65

"***Rent his clothes***" - "An action expressive of grief, obligatory on hearing blasphemy" (Ryrie note).

"***Blasphemy***" - He accuses Jesus of slandering God by His claim to equality with God ("*sitting on the right hand*").

V. 66

If Jesus were not the Messiah, He would be guilty of blasphemy, but He was the Messiah -- but they didn't accept that.

IV. He Endured Undeserved <u>INSULT</u> and <u>INJURY</u> (v. 67-68)
(His enemies spit in His face, beat Him, and mocked Him)

V. 67

"***Spit in his face***" - To express disgust; spitting in one's face is a sign of humiliation and disgrace (Is. 50;6 - "*I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.*")

"To Jews, the supreme insult was to spit in another's face (SEE: Num. 12:14; Dt. 25:9) (MacArthur, p. 209).

EX: Absalom's tomb is still spit upon to this day because of His treacherous rebellion against his father, David) (MacArthur, p. 209).

"***Buffeted him***" - They violently abused Him by beating Him with their fists (treating the Son of God like a human punching bag).

"*He was bruised for our iniquities*" (Is. 53:5).

"***<u>Others</u> smote Him***" - These were the "servants" of the Temple (Mk. 14:65), with whom Peter had sat (v. 58). It's sadly amazing how people who see others doing something are quick to jump into the fray, like irrational, impulsive vicious animals.

They didn't just want to kill Christ, they wanted to make His last hours on earth as miserable as possible.

What depravity lies in the human heart! What an urge lies in the human heart to strike out against Jesus Christ.

--You are either "*for Christ or against Him*" (Mt. 12:30). You are not neutral toward Him. Which is it?"

The beating Christ received even before His crucifixion was so severe that Isaiah prophesied, "*As many were astonied at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.*" (52:14).

"***Prophesy unto us***" - They had blindfolded Jesus ("*covered his face*" - Mk. 14:65) and now were testing his ability to tell who was doing the punching. It was a mockery of His omniscience and insight.

V. He Endured the Denial of One He Loved (v. 69-75)

(His own disciple denied that he knew Him)

V. 69

"Peter sat without" - He who gave his word to go "*with*" Jesus (v. 35) event o death is now outside ("*without*") (at a distance).

V. 70-74

With each denial Peter gets more specific and serious:

> ***"I know not what thou sayest"*** (v. 70)
>
> ***"I do not know the man"*** (v. 72)
>
> ***"Then began he to curse and to swear saying, I know not the man"*** (v. 74)

V. 74

When Peter had denied the Lord for the third time, "*the Lord turned and looked upon Peter*" (Lk. 22:61).

Peter and Jesus locked eyes, and this triggered Peter's remembrance of Christ's words about a "*thrice*" denial.

Can you imagine the gripping emotion the Lord felt as He turned to look at Peter as he even swore that he didn't know who Jesus was!

How does the Lord feel in His heart about your life and testimony? Do you bring grief or joy to His heart?

"The look must have penetrated the disciple's very soul, burning deep into his heart and conscience the evil of his sin. Seeing his Lord standing there with His hands bound and His face covered with spit and bruises was more than Peter could bear" (MacArthur, p. 218).

V. 75

"And he went out and wept bitterly" **-** He wept because he knew the Lord knew what he had done. He, because of fear and intimidation, had lied about his relationship to Christ. The tears, however, reveal that Peter really loved Christ. Therefore, Peter will not be in the list of the doomed whose life was characterized as being "*fearful*" (Rev. 21:8).

Jesus had said: "*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.*" (Mt. 10:32, 33).

Peter would be "*converted*" from His fear (Lk. 22:32) and become one of the mightiest preachers for Christ (Acts 4:13).

It is easy for us to criticize Peter for his denial of Christ.

But stop for a minute and compare his situation with yours.

> --He didn't have the baptism of the Spirit (until Pentecost - Acts 2) . . . you have the Spirit
>
> --He had faithfully left all to follow Christ for 3-1/2 years (and would for the rest of his life). . . what have you left for Christ?
>
> --His life was on the line; Golgotha could just as easily have had four crosses on it that afternoon instead of three. . . Have you ever been threatened or beaten for your faith?

CONCLUSION:

He endured "*such contradiction of sinners*";
what are you willing to endure for Him?

Remember, what they did to your Master, they will do to you (Jn. 15:20 - "*Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*")

If He endured such mockery and abuse for you, should you be willing to endure the same for Him? (Heb. 12:3 - "*For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*")

Christ was misjudged. "The irony is that all who misjudge Jesus will themselves be rightly judged by Him one day" (MacArthur, p. 210).

Isaiah 53:3 - "*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not.*"

Don't hide from Jesus Christ any longer! Come to Him today for salvation!

"HE ENDURED INJUSTICE PATIENTLY"

(The Night Jesus was Unjustly Condemned to Death)
Matthew 26:57-75
11/13/94

INTRODUCTION:

***The King of the universe patiently endured much injustice and mistreatment on a dark Passover night long ago.**

I. **He Endured False <u>ARREST</u>** (v. 57-58)
(His enemies seized Him by force)

II. **He Endured False <u>WITNESS</u>** (v. 59-62)
(His enemies lied about Him)

III. **He Endured Misplaced <u>VERBAL ABUSE</u>** (v. 63-66)
(His enemies accused Him of blasphemy)

IV. **He Endured Undeserved <u>INSULT</u> and <u>INJURY</u>** (v. 67-68)
(His enemies spit in His face, beat Him, and mocked Him)

V. **He Endured the <u>Denial</u> of One He Loved** (v. 69-75)
(His own disciple denied that he knew Him)

CONCLUSION:

He endured "*such contradiction of sinners*";
what are you willing to endure for Him?

"THE INNOCENT WAS CONDEMNED FOR THE GUILTY"

Matthew 27:1-26
11/20/94

INTRODUCTION:

The Martin Scorzese film "The Last Temptation of Christ" was total blasphemy, picturing Jesus as having a lustful heart toward Mary Magdalene and longing to marry her and have children by her.

Christ's sinlessness:

He was called The "*Holy Child*" (Lk. 1:35)

He entered the Temple often, but never had to offer a sacrifice for Himself (Heb. 7:27)

Jn. 8:29, 46 - "*I do always those things that please Him. . . Which of you convinceth Me of sin?*"

II Cor. 5:21 - "*Who knew no sin*"

I Pet. 1:19 - "*a Lamb without blemish and without spot*"

I Pet. 2:22 - "*Who did no sin*"

Heb. 4:15 - "*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*"

Heb. 7:26 - "*Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*"

I Jn. 3:5 - "*in Him is no sin*"

Christ was acknowledged as innocent eleven times during His trials and crucifixion (Mt. 27:4, 19, 24, 54; Lk. 23:14, 22, 41; Jn. 18:38, 19:46).

Psalm 94:21 - "*They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.*"

In Mt. 27:1-26, Matthew systematically proves the innocence of Jesus Christ.

"*The eternal God is thy refuge*"—Deut. xxxiii. 27.

THE word refuge may be translated "mansion," or "abiding-place," which gives the thought that *God is our abode, our home.* There is a fulness and sweetness in the metaphor, for dear to our hearts is our home, although it be the humblest cottage, or the scantiest garret; and dearer far is our blessed God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. It is at home that we *feel safe:* we shut the world out and dwell in quiet security. So when we are with our God we "fear no evil." He is our shelter and retreat, our abiding refuge. At home, *we take our rest;* it is there we find repose after the fatigue and toil of the day. And so our hearts find rest in God, when, wearied with life's conflict, we turn to Him, and our soul dwells at ease. At home, also, we *let our hearts loose;* we are not afraid of being misunderstood, nor of our words being misconstrued. So when we are with God we can commune freely with Him, laying open all our hidden desires; for if the "secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," the secrets of them that fear Him ought to be, and must be, with their Lord. Home, too, is the place of our *truest and purest happiness:* and it is in God that our hearts find their deepest delight. We have joy in Him which far surpasses all other joy. *It is also for home that we work and labour.* The thought of it gives strength to bear the daily burden, and quickens the fingers to perform the task; and in this sense we may also say that God is our home. Love to Him strengthens us. We think of Him in the person of His dear Son; and a glimpse of the suffering face of the Redeemer constrains us to labour in His cause. We feel that we must work, for we have brethren yet to be saved, and we have our Father's heart to make glad by bringing home His wandering sons; we would fill with holy mirth the sacred family among whom we dwell. Happy are those who have thus the God of Jacob for their refuge!

"*It is enough for the disciple that he be as His Master.*" Matthew x. 25.

NO one will dispute this statement, for it would be unseemly for the servant to be exalted above his Master. When our Lord was on earth, what was the treatment He received? Were His claims acknowledged, His instructions followed, His perfections worshipped, by those whom He came to bless? No; "He was despised and rejected of men." Outside the camp was His place: cross-bearing was His occupation. Did the world yield Him solace and rest? "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." This inhospitable country afforded Him no shelter: it cast Him out and crucified Him. Such—if you are a follower of Jesus, and maintain a consistent, Christ-like walk and conversation—you must expect to be the lot of that part of your spiritual life which, in its outward development, comes under the observation of men. They will treat it as they treated the Saviour—they will despise it. Dream not that worldlings will admire you, or that the more holy and the more Christ-like you are, the more peaceably people will act towards you. They prized not the polished gem, how should they value the jewel in the rough? "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?" If we were more like Christ, we should be more hated by His enemies. It were a sad dishonour to a child of God to be the world's favourite. It is a very ill omen to hear a wicked world clap its hands and shout "Well done" to the Christian man. He may begin to look to his character, and wonder whether he has not been doing wrong, when the unrighteous give him their approbation. Let us be true to our Master, and have no friendship with a blind and base world which scorns and rejects Him. Far be it from us to seek a crown of honour where our Lord found a coronet of thorn.

V. 1

"***When morning was come***" - the unjust arrest, trials, mockery and beatings Christ endured took all night. Now, the sun is coming up, the rooster has crowed (26:75), and the mob of blood-thirsty Sanhedrin come to a decision as to how they would rid themselves of the righteous Jesus.

V. 2

The reason the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate was to seek the death penalty.

"The Sanhedrin could condemn a man to death, but the Roman government had to approve and execute the sentence" (Ryrie note)

Pilate said, "*Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law; the Jews, therefore, said unto Him, It is not lawful* [according to Roman law] *for us to put any man to death.*" (Jn. 18:31).

From God's standpoint, however, Jesus' being brought to Pilate was to fulfill the words of Jesus, who predicted that He would be crucified (Jn. 18:32; cp. Mt. 20:190.

***Jesus Christ was condemned to death, although He was innocent, to die for the guilty.**

Five indications of Christ's innocence:

I. The <u>REGRET</u> of Judas (v. 3-10)

V. 3

"***When he*** [Judas] ***saw that He*** [Jesus] ***was condemned***" - Judas actually did not want Jesus to be condemned. This outcome was not what Judas had in mind. He never really expected Jesus to be condemned and sentenced to death.

Judas, motivated by self-seeking motives, thought that his betrayal would be the catalyst to incite Jesus to assert His Messiahship, rebel against the system, usurp the government, set up His Kingdom, and give the Twelve an exalted position judging the 12 tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28 - "*And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*") This promise was Judas' motive.

Judas obviously did not want Jesus to think less of him, which is why when he betrayed Jesus he did so with a kiss.

For Judas there was more to the betrayal than the motive for money. Most likely Judas thought that by betraying Christ he would force Jesus' hand and provoke Him to defend Himself, rebel against Rome and set up a new political government with Judas as treasurer or some other high position.

Judas is like all people who attempt to force the will of God. They do something they know is wrong because they selfishly want something to suit them or their timetable, even though it is clearly against God's Word.

"Repented himself" - The word translated "repented" is not the normal word for repentance, which means a "change of mind" (*metanoeo*), but is *metamelomai*, which means to have a "change of interest or concern." It means to regret, to wish it were undone.

Judas was called "*the son of perdition*" (Jn. 17:12) because he would (as his title means) be destroyed.

Judas returned the money in an attempt to undo what he had done.

Sometimes, what we do can never be undone. It can be genuinely repented of and forgiven, but its scars may remain a lifetime. The effect of the wrong we did against someone may be reaped in the lives of others.

V. 4

Judas is going to the wrong place with those words, "*I have sinned.*" No human high priest (v. 3) can do a thing to remove your sin.

Judas should have gone to God with his confession of guilt, but his heart was too hardened and his doom was settled.

Such regret or confirmation of Christ's innocence meant absolutely nothing to those who wanted Christ's blood.

"What is that to us? See thou to that" - That is no concern to us! That's your problem, not ours!

"Innocent blood" - The blood of Christ did not deserve to be shed. He should not have been punished for any transgression of His own. He was innocent of the charges laid against Him. Other than the eleven, no one could attest to the sinlessness of Christ like Judas could.

V. 5

"***He cast down the pieces of silver***" - That which he had loved and lived for now became an abhorrent thing to be discarded and rid of. That silver was a perpetual reminder of his betrayal. When he looked at the 30 pieces, all he could think about was "*innocent blood*"!

I can imagine that Judas, in hell now, is still tormented by his betrayal, still trying to get rid of that bag of silver. The memory lingers on (Lk. 16:25).

Throughout eternity, people engulfed in darkness and lostness will be trying to rid themselves of whatever it was that kept them from a saving knowledge of Christ.

The boozer will forever attempt to rid himself of the liquor that so often intoxicated him and made him oblivious to his need for Christ. The same goes for the adulterer, drug user, thief, liar, etc.

But the haunting thought will remain! Oh the regret of those who reject the innocent Son of God!

"***Hanged himself***" - For Judas, the only way of escape was suicide. In an attempt to rid himself of the deep regret, torment, and unrest, he ended his life. . . only to find that this really did not end his misery. It goes on!

V. 6

What inconsistency! What duplicity! What hypocrisy!

These "chief priests" refused to put the silver "blood money" into the Temple treasury because they were concerned not to defile or pollute it, and yet they could without conscience condemn an innocent man!

They worry about keeping the Law at one point and yet totally violate the Law at another point. (the Law condemned "*false witness*" [Exod. 20:16] yet they hired them [Mt. 26:59]; the Law condemned the execution of "*innocent blood*" [Dt. 19:10] yet they could care less.

Many today have a "pick and choose" theology where they pick to obey what they want to obey and completely ignore the rest.

V. 9

"***Spoken by Jeremy***" - "These words are found in Zech. 11:12-13 with allusions to Jer. 18:1-4, 19:1-3. They are ascribed to Jeremiah since, in Jesus' day, the books of the prophets were headed by Jeremiah, not Isaiah as now, and the quotation is identified by the name of the first book of the group, rather than by the name of the specific book within the group" (Ryrie note)

"***The price of Him that was valued***" - The innocent Lord Jesus was betrayed for silver, that He according to God's sovereign plan might save us from perishing.

Another young man was sold for silver (20 pieces, the price of a slave back then), who also according to God's plan ended up saving his brethren and people from perishing --- His name was Joseph (Gen. 37:28).

II. The <u>SILENCE</u> of Jesus (v. 11-14)

V. 11

"***Thou sayest***" - You said it! It is as you said.

Although Jesus as the Messiah was the "***King of the Jews,***" He was more than that: He is "*King of kings and Lord of lords!*" (Rev. 19:16)

However, His Kingdom was not the wicked, evil society (the *kosmos*) of the days of the Roman Empire. But His Kingdom is yet to come (Mt. 6:10).

John 18:36 - "*Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*"

V. 12

"***The chief priests and the elders***" - They made accusations while standing outside the "***Judgment Hall.***" "*. . . and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover*" (Jn. 18:28).

The multitude falsely accused Jesus before Pilate by saying: "*We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute* (taxes) *to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King*" (Luke 23:2).

"***He answered nothing***" - Jesus didn't have to defend Himself, even before the governor. His perfect life substantiated His innocence of the false accusations made against Him.

For Jesus to answer would show His accusers as worthy of a response.

Jesus would have lowered Himself down to their game by verbally defending Himself. Their statements were not even worth rebutting.

"*. . . As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth*" (Is. 53:7).

Cp. Psalm 38:13 - "*But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not His mouth.*"

V. 14

Pilate was greatly amazed that Jesus did not respond to a single charge.

Usually, you can tell a man is guilty by how much he desperately tries to convince you of his innocence. Because of the verbosity of his mouth, his own defense usually ends up contradicting itself and thereby incriminating him.

Although Pilate asked Jesus "*What is truth?*" (Jn. 18:38), he didn't realize that he was standing in front of the One who was "*the Truth*" (Jn. 18:37; 14:6).

Jesus always told the truth, lived the truth, upheld the truth, revealed the truth, and fulfilled the truth, because He is the Truth.

"*No lie is of the truth*" (I Jn. 2:21).

After Pilate's amazement at Christ's silence, he (passing the buck) sends Christ to King Herod, since Christ was a Galilean.

Hoping to see a sign or miracle from Christ, Herod was glad to see Him.

Even Herod's numerous questions went unanswered (Lk. 23:6-9). After a time of contempt and mocking, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate and on this occasion became friends with Pilate (Lk. 23:10-12).

III. The ENVY of the Jews (v. 15-18)

V. 15

At the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, Pilate had a custom of releasing someone the Jews requested. Very picturesque of the release of bondage from Egypt, but especially of the release Jesus provided by giving His life on this feast day.

V. 16

Barabbas actually was a rebel and a murderer. He "*committed murder in the insurrection*" (rebellion) (Mk. 15:7).

V. 17

"***Barabbas or Christ***" - Which do you want? It's like asking:

A sinner or a righteous man - whom will you pick?
A law breaker or a law-abiding man?
A murderer or a life-giver?

It's sad to see which the world chooses.

If they chose Barabbas over Christ, it's no wonder that many choose abortion over life, A communist-liberal over a for-the-people conservative, Led Zeplin or Michael Jackson over Ron Hamilton, "NYPD Blue" over "Little House on the Prairie."

V. 18

"***Envy***" - "the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others" (Vine, p. 37).

They were envious of Christ because:

1) He had a moral excellence which they did not have
2) He had a Biblical intelligence which they did not have
3) He had an impeccable righteousness which they did not have
4) He had a Kingdom which they were not part of
5) He had a following which they did not have

--Christ's moral excellence was a rebuke to their sinfulness.
--Christ's Biblical insight and wisdom was a rebuke to their ignorance and tradition.
--Christ's perfect life was a rebuke to their vanity.
--Christ's Kingdom was something they would never see without the new birth.
--Christ's large following made them worry about losing theirs. Their fears and selfish concerns are evident in John 11:47-48 - "*Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*"

IV. The DREAM of Pilate's Wife (v. 19)

"***Have thou nothing to do with that just man***" - i.e. Don't have any part in His sentence and execution.

"***That just man***" - righteous man

Christ was the only just man to ever walk on the earth (Eccles. 7:20 - "*For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not*"; cp. Rom. 3:10, 23).

The just died for the unjust (I Pet. 3:18).

"***In a dream***" - Evidently a supernaturally-sent dream whereby God directly communicated a message to her, like He did to other pagans prior (cp. Gen. 20:3; Dan. 2, 4)

I can imagine Pilate's wife suddenly waking up, head dripping with sweat, heart pumping, eyes widely opened, hands shaking. We don't know the contents of that dream. Maybe it was a dream of her husband standing before God at the Judgment or perhaps of her husband engulfed in flames.

V. The WASHING of Pilate's Hands (v. 20-25)

V. 20

"***The multitude***" - which on Sunday was praising Christ and throwing palm branches in His path (Mt. 21:8), would now on Friday swing to the far left and be persuaded that Jesus should be destroyed. How fickle people can be.

V. 23

"***What evil hath he done?***" - Pilate further said, "*I find in him no fault at all*" (Jn. 18:38).

V. 24

Neither Pilate nor Herod found anything worthy of death in Christ (Lk. 23:14-15 - "*Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have no fault in this man touching those things where of ye accuse him: No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.*"

"***Tumult***" - A riot, an enormous uproar.

They --on one of the holiest holidays of their year-- became a mob of wild, frenzied, blood-thirsty wolves.

"***Washed his hands***" - symbolizing how he viewed himself as being clean and guiltless of whatever was done to Jesus.

"***See ye to it***" - Whatever happened to him is your responsibility.

Since Pilate had the authority to release Jesus but did not, he himself has bloody hands.

"Had Pilate been a man of real courage, he would have released Jesus no matter what the consequences. But the crowd roared and Pilate buckled. We are like Pilate when we know what is right, but decide not to do it. When you have a difficult decision to make, don't discount the effects of peer pressure. Realize beforehand that the right decision could have unpleasant consequences: social rejection, career derailment, public ridicule" (Life Application Bible note, p. 1886).

V. 25

"***His blood be on us, and on our children***" - The Jewish crowd claims responsibility for what they did (Acts 4:10; Zech. 12:10). Rejecting Christ has come back to haunt them over and over again (since 70 A.D.).

CONCLUSION:

V. 26

The release of sinful Barabbas in the place of innocent Jesus illustrates the substitutionary sacrifice which Christ made on behalf of all sinners.

"***Scourged Jesus***" - Pilate thought that by "*chastising*" Him he would appease the crowd, and then could "*release Him*" (Lk. 23:16).

"***He released Barabbas***" - In the release of Barabbas in the place of Jesus, who would experience crucifixion, we see an amazing illustration of the substitutionary death of Christ and the redemption it provides.

One man came out of a prison sentence he deserved, while Another would be executed for a reason He didn't deserve.

One man would be free from the judgment he should have paid, because the Other would be condemned to a judgment He shouldn't have had to pay.

More went on the day Christ was crucified than the people who had part in that crime realized.

Christ (as the spotless Lamb of God) would give His innocent life to be a substitute payment for the sins and crimes of the world.

The <u>Substitutionary Death</u> of Christ

a. Christ's death for sinners was a <u>predicted</u> event

1) Abraham by faith said to his son Isaac: "God <u>will provide Himself</u> a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:8). Note: Abraham's offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah was not only a test of faith (Heb. 11:17-19), it was a <u>foreshadowing</u> of God offering up His "only begotten Son" (Heb. 11:17; Jn. 3:16).
2) Isaiah, who lived over 700 years B.C., foretold of Christ's substitutionary death with these words:
   "*But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*" *(53:6)*

   "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6)
   "For the transgression of my people was he stricken" (v. 8)
   "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (v. 10)
   "He shall bear their iniquities" (v. 11)
   "He bare the sin of many" (v. 12)
3) Daniel, speaking of the Messiah's death, said: "Messiah [shall] be cut off, but not for himself" (Dan. 9:26).

By "substitute" we mean that Christ "took the place of us." The death we deserved, He died; the penalty we should have paid, He paid.

Two New Testament Greek words emphasize the substitutionary death of Christ:

1. ἀντι (anti) - meaning:
   To take the place of someone else

   Mk. 10:45 - "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (cp. Mt. 20:28)

2. ὑπερ (huper) - meaning:
   To do something on behalf of someone else

   Scriptures emphasizing the fact of Christ's substitutionary death (using the word huper):

   "This is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22:19)
   "This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you" (Lk. 22:20)
   "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51)
   "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (Jn.10:11)
   "I lay down my life for the sheep" (Jn. 10:15)
   ". . . He (Caiaphas) prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. . . and not for that nation only . . ." (Jn. 11:51-52, cp. 18:14)
   "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6)
   "Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)
   "He . . . delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32)
   "Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3)
   "For he hath made him to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21)
   "Christ . . . gave himself for our sins" (Gal. 1:4)
   "Christ . . . loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20)
   "Christ [was] . . . made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13)
   "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2)
   "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25)
   "Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . died for us" (I Th. 5:10)
   "Who gave himself a ransom for all" (I Tim. 2:6)
   "He by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9)
   "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).
   "Christ also suffered for us" (I Pet. 2:21)
   "Christ also hath once suffered for sins" (I Pet. 3:18)
   "Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh" (I Pet. 4:1)
   "He laid down his life for us" (I Jn. 3:16)

b. Christ's death for sinners was an <u>important</u> event

The crux (key truth) of the Gospel message is the substitutionary ("vicarious") death of Christ (I Cor. 15:3; cp. I Cor. 2:2).

Christ's death for (in the place of) sinners is the <u>most essential element</u> of God's plan of salvation (In I Cor. 15:3, the words "first of all" mean "first in importance" - showing Christ's substitutionary death and bodily resurrection to be the most essential contents of the Gospel message).

c. Christ's death for sinners was a <u>blessed event</u>

Christ became the sinner's substitute so that we would:

1) Have <u>life</u> (Jn. 6:51)
2) Be made <u>righteous</u> (II Cor. 5:21)
3) Be <u>delivered</u> from this present evil world (Gal. 1:4)
4) Be <u>redeemed</u> from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13)
5) Be <u>resurrected</u> and <u>raptured</u> to live together with him (I Th. 5:10)
6) Be <u>redeemed</u> from iniquity, purified and zealous (Titus 2:14)
7) Be <u>brought to God</u> (I Pet. 3:18)

"THE INNOCENT WAS CONDEMNED FOR THE GUILTY"

Matthew 27:1-26
11/20/94

INTRODUCTION:

***Jesus Christ was condemned to death, although He was innocent, to die for the guilty.**

Five indications of Christ's innocence:

I. The <u>REGRET</u> of Judas (v. 3-10)

II. The <u>SILENCE</u> of Jesus (v. 11-14)

III. The <u>ENVY</u> of the Jews (v. 15-18)

IV. The <u>DREAM</u> of Pilate's Wife (v. 19)

V. The <u>WASHING</u> of Pilate's Hands (v. 20-25)

CONCLUSION:

Verse 26 -- The release of sinful Barabbas in the place of innocent Jesus illustrates the substitutionary sacrifice which Christ made on behalf of all sinners.

"THEY INSULTED THE KING!"

Matthew 27:27-44

11/27/94

INTRODUCTION:

"The crucifixion of Christ was the climax of redemptive history. . . It was also the apex of man's depravity." (MacArthur, p. 246)

***He allowed Himself to be humiliated so that you could be honored!**

I. They Insulted His Claim to be KING (v. 27-38)

V. 27

"***The soldiers of the governor***" - Roman soldiers under Pilate's command

If Pilate had paid attention to his wife (v. 19) and if he had respected Christ as an innocent man (v. 24), he should have restrained his cohort of soldiers from mocking Christ.

When you are in a position of authority, you are responsible for the actions of those under your authority.

"***The common hall***" + The Praetorium. A hall outside of the Judgment Hall, where matters of justice were dealt with.

"***Whole band of soldiers***" - A cohort, one-tenth of a legion, which could have been anywhere from 300 to 600 men (it was 300 to 1).

Earlier that night the Jewish High Priest's servants had mocked Him as "*prophet*" (26:67-68); now these mock Him as king.

They made public sport of Jesus; they had a time of cold-hearted entertainment at Jesus' expense. With merciless cruelty, they made Jesus the object of a fiendish game.

A. They mocked Him with an old scarlet robe (v. 28)

"They stripped Him" - How humiliated it was to have all clothes of modesty ripped off.

"A scarlet robe" - A mockery of the Kingly red robes a monarch would wear

"Jesus' face was swollen from the slaps and beatings He received from the Temple police and was covered with spittle from His Jewish tormentors. He was bleeding profusely from the scourging, with terrible lacerations from His shoulders down, exposing muscles, ligaments, blood vessels, and perhaps even internal organs. Because He had not spoken for the past hour or so, the soldiers may have considered Him mentally deranged and worthy only of ridicule. They played Him as the fool, making sport of the comments they had overheard about His claim to kingship." (MacArthur, p. 248)

B. They mocked Him with a crown of thorns (v. 29a)

"Plated a crown of thorns" - A King needs a crown, they jeered, so they cut a thorn bush and weaved a crown out of thorns to mock Jesus further.

As the "*thorns*" were pressed over His precious brow, no doubt the sharp points pressed into His skin, drawing blood out to cover His already black-and-blue face from the beating received earlier (26:67-68).

C. They mocked Him with a reed for a scepter (v. 29b)

The jeering crowd of disrespectful Roman fighting men then figured that a king needs a scepter, so they found a reed and had Him hold it so as to get a bigger laugh out of the "king" they were dressing up.

D. They mocked Him with a bow of insincere homage (v. 29c)

They then, with scorn and ridiculous laughter, fall down in front of the beaten, bloodied, costumed King, and pretend to worship Him (Mk. 15:19).

"Hail" - To stretch out the two hands so as to salute the king

E. They mocked Him with spit in His face (v. 30a)

"***Spit upon Him***" - The height of contempt and ridicule. The insult of insults to a Jew.

Jesus, who face had now dried from the former spitting (26:67), now becomes the target of the saliva of 300 men.

F. They mocked Him with physical violence (v. 30b)

"***Smote Him on the head***" - To grab the King's scepter and to strike Him with it is really humiliating for the Son of God.

By beating Him with His own scepter, it is as if they said: "Your kingliness is a joke. Look how easily we strip you of your dignity and your authority. We beat you with your own scepter. Where is your power?" (MacArthur, p. 250).

V. 28-30

Why such horrible treatment? Why such a wild, frenzied, painful, and insulting time?

Answer: Satan hates Jesus Christ.

This was Satan's last and final chance to strike out at Jesus.

This was the hour of the "*power of darkness*" (Lk. 22:53).

Satan's captive servants, who are responsive puppets to do His will any time he chooses (II Tim. 2:26), were gleeful to carry out his wish to mock and humiliate the Son of God.

They did to Jesus what no person would ever do to a King.

They didn't realize that He was King of kings and Lord of lords (I Cor. 2:8 - "*Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they know it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*").

Christ's willingness to take the mocking was not a sign of weakness but strength. It takes strength to control your emotions and reactions when you know people are treating you wrongly. "*He that is slow to anger if better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city*" (Prov. 16:32).

Jesus didn't enjoy the shame; He "*despised the shame*" (Heb. 12:2); yet He had the self-control not to retaliate in like manner, but delivered His life over to the will of the Father.

V. 28-29

What is interesting is that the mock costume they were dressing Christ up with will one day be His real garb.

Except then He will not have a cheap scarlet robe, but a red vesture dipped in the blood of His enemies (Rev. 19:13).

The crown of thorns will be replaced by a golden *stephanos* (victor's crown) at the time of Rapture reaping (Rev. 14:14), and replaced by many *diadematas* (king's crowns) at the time for Armageddon (Rev. 12:12).

The "*reed*" will one day be replaced by a "*rod of iron*" with which He will rule the nations and dash them to pieces like pottery (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 19:15).

The mock bowing will be replaced with people falling down to worship Him (Rom. 14;11).

And the mockery "Hail King of the Jews" will be replaced by their tongues confessing that "*Jesus Christ is Lord.*" (Phil. 2:10).

*SEE: Rev. 19:11-16 for a glimpse of Christ's future glory.

G. They mocked Him with <u>death by crucifixion</u> (v. 31-37)

V. 31

So as to cover up and hide the shameful treatment they gave to our Lord (so as to retain any dignity they may have had in the minds of the populace), they put His own clothing back on Him.

It's amazing what people will do behind closed doors which they would never do out in public.

As Jesus walked toward Golgotha, many Jewish women wept for Him (to which He replied, "*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*")

V. 32

Jesus, whose deity was housed in mortality and human flesh and blood, was now so physically weary that He could not bear the cross.

Normally, the one to be crucified would carry his own cross to the place of execution, but Jesus was drained from the torturous, inhuman pummelling and blood loss He had already endured.

"***Simon***" was from Cyrene, North Africa. "He had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and now he was humiliated by being forced to carry the cross of an unknown criminal" (Wiersbe, p. 102)

If Simon knew who Jesus was, he would have viewed anything done for Him as a great honor.

"Mark referred to Simon as though people reading his gospel would recognize him: "*the father of Alexander and Rufus*" (Mk. 15:21). Apparently these two sons were well-known members of the church. It seems likely that this humiliating experience resulted in Simon's conversion as well as the conversion of his family.

Simon came to Jerusalem to sacrifice his Passover lamb, and he met the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for him (Wiersbe, p. 102).

It is possible that Simon's wife (the mother of Rufus) is the woman who became like a mother to Paul (Rom. 16:13).

"It was required that the prisoner carry his own cross (or at least the cross beam), and that he wear a placard around his neck announcing his crime. That placard was then hung over his head on the cross for all to see" (Wiersbe, p. 102).

Christ's only "crime" was claiming to be the "***King of the Jews,***" so this is what He was condemned for. And yet He really was and is the King of the Jews!

Are you willing to bear a cross for Jesus? "*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*" (Lk. 9:23)

V. 33

"***Skull***" - Greek = *kranion* Latin = *calvaria* (cranium; Calvary)

"***Golgotha***" - The Aramaic word for "skull," perhaps indicating that the place where Jesus was crucified had the appearance of a skeleton head. It had the semblance of death.

Such a place exists today, just outside the old city walls of Jerusalem (often referred to as "Gordon's Calvary"). Jesus hung "*outside the gate*" (Heb. 13:12).

V. 34

"***Vinegar***" - lit. wine

"***Mingled with gall***" - gall was a narcotic that was mixed into the wine so as to help deaden the pain.

"***He would not drink***" - Our Lord, however, refused the drugs this world offered Him.

He would not allow any mind-altering substance to enter His body! Neither should you!

Jesus intended to accept the full brunt of the world's punishment and wrath without impairing His faculties.

Evidently the offering of this "gall" mixture was not an act of mercy on the part of the soldiers, but an act to ease the pain so that the victim would not by struggling violently jar a hand or foot loose from the cross, which would require more work on the part of the soldiers to re-nail the loose limb.

V. 35

"***They crucified Him***" - The most humiliating way to die. A method used for the scum of society.

The Jewish law viewed such a one hanging on a cross as a curse (Gal. 3:13 - *"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."*; cp. Deut. 21:23).

VINNY, SEE: PHOTOCOPY OF MACARHTUR, P. 255

Christ's only physical possessions were taken and gambled off so as to fulfill Psalm 22:18.

He had next to nothing as He lived on this earth (Mt. 8:20 - "*And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.*"), and He had nothing at His death. . . And yet His impeccable life and His substitutionary death gave Him the right to purchase the greatest treasure of all! --His Church, the Bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9).

V. 36

They "***watched***" Him primarily to guard Him (they were well aware of His miracles and powers).

"***They watched Him***" - looking to see what He would do, whether He would come down from the cross or whether Elijah would come to save Him (v. 49), etc.

V. 37

The accusation written by Pilate (Jn. 19:19) and placed above His cross actually said: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (cp. Jn. 19:19), and it was written in the three languages of the day - Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (Lk. 23:38).

The Jewish religious leaders, not believing that the accusation was true, asked Pilate to change it (which he did not) (Jn. 19:21-22).

"In one sense, this title proved to be the first 'Gospel tract' ever written" (Wiersbe, p. 103). One thief read it and was saved!

H. They mocked Him with association with two criminals (v. 38)

Christ was further humiliated by being associated with two thieves. One wicked man on His right and another on His left, and Perfection placed in the middle.

"*He made His grave with the wicked*" (Is. 53:9).

II. They Insulted His Power to do MIRACLES (v. 39-40)

V. 39

"***Reviled Him***" - hurled verbal abuse at Him; used insulting language to describe Him.

"***Wagging their heads***" - Again, a mockery. No doubt, with their eyes lifted up, a smirk on their faces, perhaps arms crossed or finger pointing at Him -- they shook their heads back and forth to express their disbelief at one who supposedly was so awesome, so powerful, so mighty, and yet He just hung there like a helpless, hoopless common criminal.

V. 40

They mocked, "If you could do what you said you could do, then why not prove it, and prove it now!"

Could Jesus come down off of the cross? Of course He had the spiritual power to do so. However, He did not for at least three reasons:

1. His coming down at their request would be to submit to their wishes, thus making Christ subordinate to their will

2. His coming down would be to fail to fulfill the will of the Father (Lk. 22:42) and to fail to fulfill the whole purpose for which He came to earth (Mt. 20:28)

3. His coming down would be to fail to purchase your salvation

Can you imagine the hardness of heart to insult a man as His life is being poured out?

Many would no doubt insult a convicted criminal, but not even the hardest of hearts would insult him as he fries in the electric chair right before one's eyes.

"Jesus enemies so hated Him that even His death seemed to be a disappointment, because it ended their opportunity to spew venom on Him" (MacArthur, p. 246).

[ILLUS: Bill Murray's testimony of how his mother's (Madaline Murray O'Hair) hatred of Jesus Christ proved His reality and existence to Bill, who recognized that no one hates someone who does not exist.]

III. They Insulted His Ability to SAVE (v. 41-42)

V. 41

Those religious Jews never stopped opposing Christ right up until His final breath on the cross.

*Don't tell me all religions lead to Heaven!

V. 42

"***He saved others***" - And He did! EX: Jairus' daughter (Mt. 9:18); Lazarus (Jn. 11; v. 24-26 - "*Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*").

"***Himself He cannot save***" - It's not that He could not. It's that He would not.

If He chose to save Himself, He could not have saved the world.

His death means life to you and me.

"***And we will believe Him***" - Christ did more than enough miracles to authenticate Himself. He would never succumb to this request.

Would they really believe? These same people knew how Christ raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn. 11:47-48 - "*Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*"). Yet rather than believing the evidence, "*they took counsel together for to put him to death*" (Jn. 11:53).

The rich man in hell thoughts that a miracle would save his five brothers (Lk. 16:30, 31).

If people will not believe God's Word and submit to the working of the Holy Spirit, neither will they be persuaded by a miracle (EX: Judas).

Jesus was their "Brand of Messiah." They were all looking for a different type - a political deliverer, not a Savior from sin.

Beware of demanding to have things your way. Accept God's way!

IV. They Insulted His Relationship With the FATHER (v. 43-44)

V. 43

"Let Him deliver Him now" - They not only put the Son of God to a test, but God the Father also.

They in effect say, "Where is that mountain-moving faith now, Jesus?!"

Of course, Jesus didn't need "faith," because faith is believing the unseen. Jesus of course saw everything; had been in the Father's presence in eternity past, and was in essence "*one with the Father.*"

The hymnwriter said; "...He could have called 10,000 angels to destroy the world and set Him free...but He died alone for you and me."

V. 44

Out of their mouths came the same insults the rest had given; however, one of the thieves saw the error of his words and repented, rebuked the other thief for insulting Christ, and came to faith in Christ (Lk. 23:39-43).

CONCLUSION:

In this text, there is a message to the saved and unsaved alike.

The message to the saved is that you should "*follow in His steps*" (SEE: I Peter 2:19-24 *V. 21).
How do you respond to unjust treatment?

I Peter 2:18-25
Keep doing right when you are treated wrong!

I. GOD IS MY MOTIVE
To keep doing right even when I'm treated wrong (v. 19-20)
- A. A clean conscience toward God (v. 19)
- B. A clear testimony for God (v. 20)

II. CHRIST IS MY EXAMPLE
To keep doing right even when I'm treated wrong (v. 21-25)
- A. He suffered unjustly
  though He was sinlessly perfect (v. 22)
- B. He suffered unjustly
  and did not retaliate (v. 23)
- C. He suffered unjustly
  to pay for our sins (v. 24a)
- D. He suffered unjustly
  so that we would live righteously (v. 24b-25)

The message to the unsaved is this: Although Christ had the power to come down from the cross, He stayed there to bear yours ins in His own body and pay the price to ransom you.

"THEY INSULTED THE KING!"

Matthew 27:27-44

11/27/94

INTRODUCTION:

***He allowed Himself to be humiliated so that you could be honored!**

I. They Insulted His Claim to be KING (v. 27-38)

A. They mocked Him with an old scarlet robe (v. 28)

B. They mocked Him with a crown of thorns (v. 29a)

C. They mocked Him with a reed for a scepter (v. 29b)

D. They mocked Him with a bow of insincere homage (v. 29c)

E. They mocked Him with spit in His face (v. 30a)

F. They mocked Him with physical violence (v. 30b)

G. They mocked Him with death by crucifixion (v. 31-37)

H. They mocked Him with association with two criminals (v. 38)

II. They Insulted His Power to do MIRACLES (v. 39-40)

III. They Insulted His Ability to SAVE (v. 41-42)

IV. They Insulted His Relationship With the FATHER (v. 43-44)

CONCLUSION:

struggling violently as the nails were driven into his hands and feet.

From extrabiblical sources it is known that wealthy Jewish women would often provide wine mixed with myrrh to those about to be executed, especially by crucifixion. Contrary to the soldiers, their purpose was to ease the pain of "him who is perishing," following the admonition of Proverbs 31:6. It may have been that such a group of women also offered Jesus the stupefying drink.

But Jesus did not want His senses dulled, **and after tasting** the mixture, **He was unwilling to drink.** As He had already declared in the garden, first in prayer to His heavenly Father (Matt. 26:39) and then to Peter as He was being arrested (John 18:11), He was determined to drink the cup the Father had given Him. He would endure the full measure of pain—physical, emotional, and spiritual.

When they had crucified Him does not refer to the finished execution but to raising Him upright and placing the vertical beam into the hole prepared for it. It was at that point that the actual crucifixion began.

Crucifixion originated in Persia, where a deity named Ormazd was believed to consider the earth sacred. Because a criminal who was executed had to be raised above the earth in order not to defile it, he was suspended on a large pole and left there to die. The practice was picked up by the Carthaginians and then by the Greeks and especially the Romans, whose extensive use caused it to become identified with them. It is estimated that by the time of Christ the Romans had crucified some 30,000 men in Israel alone, primarily for insurrection. The crucifixion of only three men outside Jerusalem was therefore virtually insignificant in the eyes of Rome.

None of the gospel writers describes the procedure for securing Jesus to the cross. The literal Greek text is even less revealing than most English renderings, saying simply, "The having crucified Him ones parted His garments." It is only from Thomas's comments several days after the resurrection that we learn about Jesus' being nailed by His hands and feet (John 20:25), rather than being tied with cords or thongs as was often the case.

Judging from nonbiblical descriptions of crucifixion in New Testament times, Jesus was placed on the cross as it lay flat on the ground. First His feet were nailed to the upright beam and then His arms stretched across the horizontal beam and nailed through the wrists just above the hand, allowing a slight bend at the knees when the body was extended. The cross was then picked up and dropped into the hole, causing excruciating pain as the weight of His body pulled at the already torn flesh around the nails.

In his book *The Life of Christ,* Frederick Farrar describes crucifixion as follows:

> A death by crucifixion seems to include all that pain and death can have of the horrible and ghastly—dizziness, cramp, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, traumatic fever, shame, publicity of shame, long continuance of torment, horror of anticipation, mortification of intended wounds—all intensified just up to the point at which they can be endured at all, but all stopping just short of the point which would give to the sufferer the relief of unconsciousness.
>
> The unnatural position made every movement painful; the lacerated veins and crushed tendons throbbed with incessant anguish; the wounds, inflamed by exposure, gradually gangrened [when a victim took several days to die]; the arteries—especially at the head and stomach—became swollen and oppressed with surcharged blood, and while each variety of misery went on gradually increasing, there was added to them the intolerable pang of a burning and raging thirst, and all these physical complications caused an internal excitement and anxiety, which made the prospect of death itself—of death, the unknown enemy, at whose approach man usually shudders most—bear the aspect of a delicious and exquisite release.
>
> One thing is clear. The first century executions were not like the modern ones, for they did not seek a quick, painless death nor the preservation of any measure of dignity for the criminal. On the contrary, they sought an agonizing torture which completely humiliated him. And it is important that we understand this, for it helps us realize the agony of Christ's death. (Vol. 2 [New York: E. P. Dutton, 1877], pp. 403-4)

Dr. Truman Davis gives an additional description of Jesus' crucifixion:

> At this point another phenomenon occurs. As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically He is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. . . .
>
> Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber; then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.
>
> It is now almost over . . . the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues. The tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. ("The Crucifixion of Jesus; The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View," *Arizona Medicine,* vol. 22, Mar. 1965, pp. 183-87)

"THREE MIRACULOUS SIGNS AT CALVARY"

Matthew 27:45-54

12/11/94

INTRODUCTION: Matthew 27:27-44

V. 45-54

These verses are among the most awesome in the Bible.

God is making a powerful statement by three supernatural events that occurred ont he day Christ died.

The crucifixion lasted a total of six hours (from 9:00 a.m. [Mk. 15:25} until 3:00 p.m.). Verses 45-54 focus on the last 3 hours.

Whether Wednesday or Friday, this was no normal day in human history.

I. Sign # 1 DARKNESS (v. 45-50)

(The Sin of the World Had Been Paid For)

V. 45

The last 3 hours of Christ's death on Calvary are the most important and significant moments of human history.

During these short 180 minutes (or 10,800 seconds), the most vital work for humanity was accomplished.

After the scorning of the crowd and after the saving of the penitent thief (Lk. 23:43), a mysterious, eerie darkness started to fall upon the earth.

A "shepherd stands staring at the now blackened sky. Only seconds before he had stared at the sun. Now there is no sun. The sky is black. No thunder. No lightening. No clouds. The sheep are restless. The feeling is eerie. What is this hellish darkness? What has happened?" (Max Lucado)

Perhaps a scream is heard in the distance. Many, pointing to the sky, momentarily forget about those on the crosses. Then the crowd begins to break up and hurry toward the gates. The men cease their work, and the women fling their shawls over their heads and run with their children to get shelter from what seems to be a brewing storm.

People in fear say: "What is this? What's going on?"

What is amazing is that noon time is the time that the sun is at its highest point, at its zenith.

The means God used to darkness the earth is uncertain. We know that "*the sun was darkened.*" (Lk. 23:45)

Impossible

A prolonged eclipse is one answer, or a miraculous Heaven-sent darkening of the sun is another.

"***Over all the land***" - the word "*land*" can also mean "earth" (SEE: quote from Jim Bishop, "*The Day Christ Died*", p. 327).

This darkness "was as though all of creation was sympathizing with the Creator. There were three days of darkness in Egypt before the Passover (Ex. 10:21-23) and there were three hours of darkness before the Lamb of God died for the sins of the world" (Wiersbe, p. 103).

The darkening of the sun marks the time of God's Judgment. God's Son was judged for our sin! (NOTE: The "Day of the Lord" will be initiated by darkness! - Joel 2:31; Rev. 6:12, 17; cp. Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1;14-15).

God's judgment of those in hell involves darkness (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Mt. 8:12).

"*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" - This is a quote from Psalm 22:1; read Ps. 22:1, 7-8, 13-18).

From 12:00 - 3:00, Christ fully drank of that bitter cup He so much dreaded. (SEE: Mt. 26:36-42).

The phrase "*exceedingly sorrowful*" (mt. 26:38) indicates an unfathomable depth of anguish and sorrow.

What was that "*cup*"? It was the spiritual suffering (the "*travail of his soul*" - Is. 53:11) as He took upon Himself the full brunt of the sin of the world (Is. 53:4-6).

The contents of this cup involved the poisonous, toxic, dark, putrefying, cursed sin of the world that Jesus took upon Himself (II Cor. 5:21).

This horrible cup of agonizing pain and suffering was a cup given by God the Father. Jesus was "*smitten of God, and afflicted*" (Is. 53:4).

"*The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all*" (is. 53:6)

"*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; he hath put him to grief. . . [the Father made] his soul an offering for sin*" (Is. 53:10)

The most horrible contents of the cup of which Jesus drank was the momentary yet infinite separation between He and the Father.

As Jesus "*bore our sins in his own body ont he tree*" *(I Pet. 2:24)*, the Father as it were turned His back on His Son and forsook Him. For the first time in eternity, a split, a schism, a separation between the Father and the Son occurred.

At no time in history or eternity past had the Son ever been abandoned. from the Father.

Christ experienced not only a physical death, but during those 3 hours on the cross He "tasted" a spiritual death (which involved the separation of his soul from the Father.

God the Father and the Son had known perfect intimacy in eternity past. Together, the triune Godhead planned creation. "*Let us make man in our image.*"

Together, the Father and Soon created the universe - "*by whom also he made the worlds*" (Heb. 1:2; cp. Col. 1:16; Jn. 1:3)

The Father and Son both confused the languages at Babel (Gen. 11:7); the Father and Son both desired that a prophet be sent to preach to Israel - Is. 6:8).

Together the Father and Son had an unfathomable love (Jn. 17:23-24, 26). Since they shared the same nature, they knew each other more fully and completely than any other could (Mt. 11:27). While on earth, Christ desired nothing more than to please the Father (Mt. 3:17; Mt. 17:3; Jn. 8:29).

The Father and Son had a unity that was so personal and intimate (Jn. 17:21, 23) because together they were one in essence and nature (Jn. 10:30).

Yet on the cross an abandonment occurred.

Jesus "*endured the cross despising the same*" (Heb. 12:2)

He was made a "*curse for us*" in order to remove us from "*the curse of the Law.*" (Gal. 3:13).

"The Bridge Story"

V. 50

What did Jesus cry out with a loud voice? Two cries -

1) "*It is finished*" (Jn. 19:30)

2) "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*" (Lk. 23:46)

II. Sign # 2 THE TORN VEIL (v. 51a)

(A New Covenant Had Been Provided)

As the sun begins to shine again, a man rushes into his house. His wife, huddled with her children and about to blow out the flame in her lamp, hears him breathlessly say: "*The temple curtain. . . torn!*"

V. 51

"*Behold*" - Look! See! God is grabbing our attention to a significant fact.

Each year on "Yom Kippur" (the Day of Atonement) the High Priest would enter where no one else was allowed. He would go into the Holy of Holies with blood to make atonement for Israel. This was the most somber of all Jewish holy Days. (Lev. 23:26-32). Such mourning and gloom over their sin perfectly corresponds to the dark and somber day Christ died.

The "*veil*" - was the curtain which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place and the rest of the Temple (In the holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat).

"Josephus reported that the veil was four inches thick, was renewed every year, and that horses tied to each side could not pull it apart. (cited by Ryrie).

It shows God tore it & not Man

"***top to bottom***" - this phrase shows that the Old Testament priesthood was completely and totally done away with and that we now have complete and total access into God's presence.

The tearing of the Temple veil symbolized the fact that believers (after Christ's one, final, and complete sacrifice) now have direct access into God's presence through Christ (SEE: Heb. 10:19-22)

III. Sign # 3 EARTHQUAKE (v. 51b-53)

(God's Power Over the Grave Had Been Promised)

V. 51

The third climactic sign that occurred was "*The earth shook and the rocks split open.*"

One of the most powerful ways for God to make a statement is to send an earthquake.

The timing of this quake has great significance. It occurred at the same moment Christ "*yielded up the ghost.*"

So as the draw people's attention to the great significance of Christ's death, God sends an earthquake marking the finality and completion of Christ's work on earth, and marking Christ's grand exit from this world. (EX: the noise and power of the thrust a rocket makes when it launches off of the earth).

The New Covenant had been provided!

Note the parallel: The earthquake at Mount Sinai (when the O.T. Covenant was given - Ex. 19:16ff).

The earthquake at Calvary (when the N.T. Covenant was provided)

V. 52

"***The graves were opened***" - The earthquake caused the stones to roll away from the burial caves.

NOTE: the connection between this earthquake and the graves opening, and the earthquake and Christ's grave opening (Mt. 28:2).

The last clause of V. 52 must be connected to v. 53. Although the graves were opened at Christ's death, this resurrection of many saints did not occur until after His resurrection. (since Christ is the "*firstfruits of them that slept*" - I Cor. 15:20).

CONCLUSION: (v. 54)

All of Christ's life on earth had been building up toward this great climax. This 3 hour period (a "baptism" of death) was the goal and purpose of His entrance into the human race (Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15).

What do you do with that day in history? What does it mean to you?

If God sent darkness and turned his back on his one-of-a-kind Son, if God ripped the Jewish temple veil in two; if God split the earth's rocks open and flung open the graves, then this was the most critical moment in history!

1. Have you accepted the fact that your sins were paid for on Calvary?

2. Have you understood that a new and living way has been provided for you?

3. Have you trusted in the finished work of Jesus Christ and his promise off life after death?

The Bridge - Gus was the proud operator of a draw bridge over a busy river. Each day, he yanked the levers that would elevate the old railroad bridge to allow the ships below to pass through. One Saturday several years ago, Gus invited his 10 year old son Peter to spend the day with him at the bridge. Peter whooped with excitement. He'd always marveled at the bridge and its levers and big gears. His dad had the best job in the whole world, he figured. An old fishing boat eased up the river toward the bridge that morning, and Gus showed his son how the levers performed. Peter watched with delight as, with a grinding hum and a few creaks, the old bridge separated and rose toward the sky. Gus began watching his gauges and jotting notes in his report book. Then came the unmistakable sound that sent Gus back to his levers: the piercing whistle of the 10:05 southbound train. The 10:05 was a little early, and a little late in blowing its warning whistle. Gus knew he must the lower the bridge quickly to avoid a tragic train crash. As Gus' big gloved hands grasped the levers and pulled, he looked over his shoulder for Peter. Where was the boy? *"Peter!"* Gus' stomach knotted as his eyes nervously darted up and down the bridge. *"Peter!"* The bridge began its descent so that the train could cross. *"Daddy! Daddy!"* Frantic with worry, Gus peered over the edge and saw his son atop the huge bridge gears. The giant teeth of the rotating machinery had consumed the boy's jacket. Now his hand and arm were being devoured, slowing pulling his entire body into the grinding gears. Gus reached for the levers to stop the machinery. But there came the 10:05 train loaded with passengers, whistle howling, roaring toward the bridge. *"Daddy! Help me!"* The terror of the boy's voice seemed to pound within every muscle of his father's body. Gus glanced at the train, then at his helpless son. In that split second, Gus was faced with deciding between the life of his pleading son, or the hundreds of lives aboard the rushing train. Gus pulled firmly on the levers. The bridge continued its merciful descent for the passengers of the train. Gus wept as the machinery squeezed the life from his only son. As the boy's shrieks melted into echoes, the 10:05 sped across the old bridge. The vacationing passengers had no idea what had just transpired below the bridge. In air-conditioned comfort, they waved and smiled at Gus as they whizzed by.

Two thousand years ago, a similar situation faced a loving Father. Much more was at stake back then. But confronted with that awesome decision, the Father chose to allow His Son to die so that we could live.

OLD TESTAMENT ANNUAL SACRIFICES

(One Time Per Year)

Two Key Days which illustrate the perfect Sacrifice - Jesus Christ, who cleansed us once and for all time

NAME	RITUAL	SACRIFICE	MEANING	SYMBOL
Passover (Lev. 23:4-5; Exod.12:1-13)	Celebrated on the 14th day of first month. 1) The lamb was w/out blemish (Exod.12:5; I Pet.1:19) 2) The lamb was killed (Exod.12:6; John 12:24,27) 3) The lamb's blood applied (Exod.12:7; Heb.9:22)	Sacrifice was roasted in fire and totally eaten by offerers and families. The blood was sprinkled on the door posts.	The deliverance of Christ's sacrifice	Christ is our **Passover Lamb** (Jn. 1:29; Mt. 26:17-29; I Cor. 5:7)
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) (Lev. 16:1-34)	Celebrated on the 10th day of the 7th month. 1) The priest did all the work (cp. Heb. 1:3) 2) The priest offered for himself (v. 11) (Christ didn't need to - Heb. 7:26, 27) 3) Two goats for sin offering: a) 1st goat - slain (v.15-19) b) 2nd goat - sin-bearer (v. 21-22) Christ became our Sin-bearer (Is.53:4,12; I Pet.2:24; Jn.1:29) 4) The blood sprinkled in Holy of Holies (v. 27) (Heb. 9:7, 11-14)	One goat was sacrificed (bearing the penalty of sin). The other goat was led into the wilderness never to be seen again (picturing the removal of sin).	The forgiveness of Christ's sacrifice	Christ is our **scape goat** who removed our sin II Cor.5:21

NOTE: The word "atonement" found 16 times in Lev. 16 means to cover (cp. Gen. 6:14; Lev. 17:11). The Old Testament saints were saved "on credit" in anticipation of the cross (Heb. 10:4, 11). Old Testament sacrifices covered sin; Christ's blood cleanses from (removes, takes away) sin (Jn. 1:29; I Jn. 1:7)

proportions over Jerusalem."*

The darkness lasted for the rest of the day.

1 p.m.

TRAFFIC on the two main roads was lighter now. One or two caravans came plodding down from the north, pausing to ask questions and to gesticulate at the three men on trees. None left the city except pagan merchants going west to make connections with a ship at Joppa. A Persian astride a camel rocked through the gate, outward bound, despite the stronger weather, glancing disdainfully at the wretches on the stony hill.

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* The darkness, which was like looking through extra-strong sun glasses, seems to have pervaded the world at this hour. Phlegon wrote that in the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, there was a great darkness over Europe, surpassing anything that had ever been seen. At mid-day, he said, the stars could be seen. At the same time an earthquake caused much damage in Nicaea. Tertullian said later that he found in the records of Rome a notation of world-wide darkness which the statesmen of the Empire could not explain. Apparently the people of Jerusalem were accustomed to sudden changes in the weather, or there would have been a very wide sense of alarm or wonder at this time.

"THREE MIRACULOUS SIGNS AT CALVARY"

Matthew 27:45-54

12/11/94

INTRODUCTION: Matthew 27:27-44

I. Sign # 1 <u>DARKNESS</u> (v. 45-50)
(The Sin of the World Had Been Paid For)

II. Sign # 2 <u>THE TORN VEIL</u> (v. 51a)
(A New Covenant Had Been Provided)

III. Sign # 3 <u>EARTHQUAKE</u> (v. 51b-53)
(God's Power Over the Grave Had Been Promised)

CONCLUSION: (v. 54)

"TRULY, JESUS IS ALIVE!"

Matthew 27:57 - 28:15
12/18/94

INTRODUCTION:

SEE: MacArthur, p. 317-319 on the theories which deny Christ's resurrection.

Christianity is irrefutable; it can't be explained away, because of one simple fact of history: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

***Christ's resurrection is an irrefutable fact of history!**
(a fact which has practical ramifications for you!)

Evidences for Christ's resurrection:

I. The FACT of His BURIAL 27:57-61

V. 57
"***Even***" - the end of the day, which was from 3:00 until 6:00. 6:00 began the new day.

Christ had died at 3:00, and it was unlawful for a corpse to stay on the cross past 6:00 when the Sabbath began (Jn. 19:31).

Joseph of Arimathaea was an "*honorable counsellor, who waited for the kingdom of God*" (Mk. 15:43). He is called "*a good man, and a just*" (Lk. 23:50).

Although he was a member of the Sanhedrin (a "*counselor*" - Lk. 23:50), he did not consent to what the Sanhedrin did to Jesus (Lk. 23:51) (He stood alone for what was right).

Both Joseph and Nicodemus were secret followers of Christ. They did not openly testify of Christ because of fear (SEE: *John 19:38-40).

"***Jesus' disciple***" - Joseph had been a secret believer, who for a while hid his faith in Christ.
Now, however, he was bold (Mk. 15:43) and unashamed of his Lord. He no longer would remain a closet Christian. His bold stand no doubt began when he would not comply with the decision of the Sanhedrin to condemn Christ.

"***A rich man***" - Although it is very rare for a rich person to be saved (Mt. 19:24), it is not impossible for God (19:26).

V. 58

"He went to Pilate" **-** This Roman governor, who "washed his hands" of the crucifixion of Jesus was very surprised to hear from Joseph that Jesus was dead already (Mk. 15:44).

Knowing Christ's powers and reputation, Pilate never expected Christ to expire so soon. Christ, however, *"gave up His spirit"* (Mt. 27:50).

V. 59

By handling the body, Joseph and Nicodemus defiled themselves and would not be able to continue the Passover feast. But what difference did it make? They had found the Passover Lamb of God! (Wiersbe, p. 104).

Joseph took a clean strip of cloth and wound it around Jesus body. Imagine the great emotion and grief in Joseph's heart as he (alone) prepares Christ's body for burial (all the disciples had forsaken Him and fled for fear of their own lives).

V. 61

Matthew mentions the two Mary's both to show their loyalty to Christ, and to provide the two or three witnesses to attest to the fact that Christ was literally buried.

The women of Galilee followed Joseph (Lk. 23:55) as he took the body down from the cross (Lk. 23:53). He then placed it in a sepulchre in which no corpse ever had entered (Lk. 23:53).

V. 57-61

Christ's burial was evidence of His death (He didn't "swoon," lose consciousness and then recover). He really did die.

And His burial sets the stage for the validity of His coming alive from the dead.

II. The GUARDING of His TOMB 27:62-66

V. 62

"***The next day***" - Saturday

V. 63

"***That deceiver***" - They terribly maligned the perfect Son of God, who alone was the Truth! (Jn. 14:6).

He was not a deceiver! They were deceivers and were victims of the greatest deceiver, Satan (Jn. 8:44).

"***After three days I will rise again***" - These wicked religious pagans remembered something even Jesus' own disciples had forgotten (Lk. 24:6-8; Mk. 16:14).

V. 64

"***The last error* [deception] *shall be worse than the first***" - They are saying: The deception of the disciples stealing His body and saying He is risen will be worse than His deception of saying that He would arise on the third day.

V. 65

"***A watch***" = a guard

"***Make it as sure as ye can***" - Secure the tomb as best as you are able

V. 66

"***Sealing the stone***" - This was likely done by connecting the stone to the tomb with a cord and sealing clay so that any tampering could easily be detected (Ryrie note).

The sealing of the tomb made it impossible for anyone, friend or foe, to steal the body. Without realizing it, the Jewish leaders and the Roman government joined forces to help prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Wiersbe, p. 104).

"***A watch***" - this watch involved more than one guard (v. 4 - "*keepers*" - plural).

*The fact that Christ's tomb was sealed and guarded by His enemies supports the validity of His resurrection!

III. The TESTIMONY of an ANGEL 28:1-8

V. 1

"***In the end of the Sabbath***" - As the Passover Sabbath (14th Nissan) and the Saturday Sabbath (15th Nissan) came to an end.

"***The first day of the week***" = lit. "*the first [one] of the Sabbaths*"

Some use this reference to the "first of the Sabbaths" to attempt to prove that Sunday became the new Sabbath. This is not what the text is saying. The Jews, who did not count the days of the week like we do ("Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc.), rather counted the days in their relationship to the Saturday Sabbath.

"***The first of the Sabbaths***" - refers to the Sabbaths for the new week.

The Old Testament Law required the Jews to celebrate 7 days of rest after Passover in connection with the Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits (Lev. 23:7-8; Ex. 12:16).

This text is not a cryptic way for God to reveal a Sunday Sabbath, but is a disclosure of the Jewish week of rest and celebration.

"***To see the sepulchre***" - They came hoping to get someone to remove the stone (Mk. 16:3) so that they could anoint the body of Jesus with some "*sweet spices*" (Mk. 16:1).

V. 2

"***Earthquake***" - Reminiscent of 27:51

The angel did not roll away the stone so Jesus could get out. He was already out (and could walk through walls - cp. Jn. 20:26).

The angel rolled away the stone so that people could see for themselves that the tomb was empty, that Jesus was not there!

V. 3

The dazzling, brilliant glow of this angel must have been a terrifying sight to behold.

V. 4

The guards shuddered in fear and became powerless like dead men, unable to move a single limb. Such a phenomena occurs when a mortal comes face to face with a powerful supernatural being (cp. Dan. 10:8, 10).

V. 5

After the guards fled the scene, this angel along with another angel (Lk. 24:4), greet the two Mary's as they come to the tomb and find the stone rolled away.

V. 6

"***He is risen***" - This short statement is the basis of the Christian faith.

"***He is risen, as He said***" - i.e. as He had promised you.

The Lord is always faithful to His promises. Trust Him!

IV. The PHYSICAL APPEARANCE of CHRIST 28:9-10

V. 9

"***All hail***" - Grace to you

"***Held Him by the feet***" - Christ had a literal body which could be clung to (Jn. 20:17).

"***Worshipped Him***" - the immediate response of anyone who enters the presence of the resurrected Christ.

Jesus appeared to:

--Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9)

--The two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-35) and ate with them in their home (Lk. 24:30)

--Peter (Lk. 23:34)

--The eleven disciples (Mk. 16:14). They also handled Him, saw His hands and feet, and saw Him eat in their presence (Lk. 24:36-43).

* At His first appearance, Thomas was missing (Jn. 20:19-25), then again He appeared with Thomas present (Jn. 20:26-31)

* Then to seven of the disciples up in Galilee (Jn. 21:1ff)

--Then to over 500 brethren at once (SEE: I Cor. 15:1-8)

--Then to Stephen (Acts 7:55-56)

--Then to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:5)

V. The BRIBE of the JEWS 28:11-15

V. 11

"***Some of the watch***" - Some of the guards w ho had experienced the encounter with the angel (v. 4).

V. 12

Rather than accepting the testimony of the guards, and not having the character to examine the validity of Christ's resurrection, they in hardened unbelief muzzled the mouths of the soldiers with money.

In order to cover up the resurrection, they bribed the guards with that which most godless heath would gladly take to keep their mouths shut.

Could you ever be bought off if a "***large sum of money***" was offered to you? What would it take to silence your witness?

They had given money to Judas to betray Christ, and now they give money to cover up His resurrection.

V. 13

"***While we slept***" - If they were sleeping, how did they know what happened?!

What a haphazard, ill-planned alibi! How would sleeping people know who it was that stole the body!?

Guards were not allowed to fall asleep on the job anyway. They could lose their lives for such irresponsibility.

Since the Pharisees and chief priests had hired the guards, their fate would be determined by this Jews rather than by Pilate.

Their story was self-contradictory.

Oh, the hardness of man's heart! These people were stubbornly unwilling to at least say: "Maybe there is something to this Jesus of Nazareth." There had been so many attestations to His Messiahship. This was the ultimate!

Maybe deep down inside they know what the soldiers say is true. They don't deny or question their story; they just seek to cover it up.

V. 15

"They did as they were taught" - Rather than doing what was right, they violated the truth, violated their own conscience, violated what they saw, heard, and experienced. All for the sake of filthy lucre.

Their lie became the common belief among the Jews.

"Until this day" - It is sad how false doctrine has a way of continuing from generation to generation. The lies go on and one, to those who have their heads in the sand.

"Mark Twain once wrote that a lie can go around the world while truth is still lacing up her boots. There is something in human nature that makes it easy for people to believe lies" (Wiersbe, p. 106).

CONCLUSION:

Other proofs of Christ's resurrection:

1. The grave clothes were left behind (Jn. 20:5-7)
   (If Christ's body had been stolen, there is no way they would have wasted the time to unwrap Him)

2. The cowardly disciples were transformed and were even willing to all die as martyrs for their faith

3. Even Saul of Tarsus, an enemy of Christ, was compelled to believe in Him when he saw the resurrected Savior

4. Jesus is transforming people today, as He has for nearly 2,000 years
   Hymn: "You ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart"

Because Jesus arose from the dead. . .

1. He is proven to be the Son of God
   (Rom. 1:4 - "*And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*")

2. His promises are trustworthy
   (Jn. 10:18 - "*No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have i received of my Father.*") (cp. Mt. 12:40, 16:21, 17:9, 23)

3. He has power over life and death
   (Rev. 1:18 - "*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*")

4. He can now give eternal life to all who believe
   (Jn. 10:28 - "*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*") (cp. Rom. 10:9-10)

5. He can intercede as our High Priest
   (Heb. 7:25 - "*Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them*")

6. He can empower us to live victoriously
   (Rom. 6:4 - "*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*")

7. Our labor for Him is not in vain
   (I Cor. 15:14 - "*And if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain*") (I Cor. 15:58 - "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*")

8. We are assured that we, too, shall rise from the dead
   (Jn. 11:25 - "*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live*") (Jn. 14:19 - "*Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also*")

9. He is coming back again
   (I Th. 4:13-18)

10. He will one day judge the world
    (Acts 17:31 - "*Because He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he ordained;; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*")

HYMN: "Christ Arose"

"TRULY, JESUS IS ALIVE!"

Matthew 27:57 - 28:15

12/18/94

INTRODUCTION:

Christ's resurrection is an irrefutable fact of history!
(a fact which has practical ramifications for you!)

Evidences for Christ's resurrection:

I. **The <u>FACT</u> of His <u>BURIAL</u>** 27:57-61

II. **The <u>GUARDING</u> of His <u>TOMB</u>** 27:62-66

III. **The <u>TESTIMONY</u> of an <u>ANGEL</u>** 28:1-8

IV. **The <u>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE</u> of <u>CHRIST</u>** 28:9-10

V. **The <u>BRIBE</u> of the <u>JEWS</u>** 28:11-15

The Lie That Proves the Resurrection (28:11-15)

25

Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day. (28:11-15)

Some years ago the Canadian author G. B. Hardy wrote a book about life, philosophy, and destiny entitled *Countdown: A Time to Choose* (Chicago: Moody, 1971). He noted that there are really only two questions to ask with regard to destiny: (1) Has anyone ever defeated death? and (2) If so, did he make a way for us to do it also? Hardy then explains that he found the answer to both questions in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and that with that answer he also found salvation and eternal life (pp. 31-32).

But despite the fact that the resurrection is man's only hope for

> As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidences for the events of the first Easter Day. To me the evidence is conclusive, and over and over again in the High Court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling. Inference follows on evidence, and a truthful witness is always artless and disdains effect. The Gospel evidence for the resurrection is of this class, and as a lawyer I accept it unreservedly as the testimony of truthful men to facts they were able to substantiate. (Cited in J. R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1971], p. 47)

In a similar statement, the noted historian and Oxford professor Thomas Arnold wrote:

> The evidence for our Lord's life and death and resurrection may be, and often has been, shown to be satisfactory; it is good according to the common rules for distinguishing good evidence from bad. Thousands and tens of thousands of persons have gone through it piece by piece as carefully as every judge summing upon a most important case. I have myself done it many times over, not to persuade others but to satisfy myself. I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead. (Wilbur M. Smith, *Therefore Stand: Christian Apologetics* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965], pp 425-26)

HOPE

Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they shall see Me." (28:10)

Jesus repeated the angel's message, saying, "**Do not be afraid; go take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee.**" Despite the disciples' lack of faith, their cowardice, and their defection, the Lord graciously spoke of them as His **brethren.** When they arrived in **Galilee,** they would **see** Him again, and there they would experience a great convocation and commissioning by the Lord.

Matthew's brief glimpse of the resurrection is artless and unadorned, completely lacking pretense or exaggeration. He does not argue or beg the issues but simply places the truths before the reader to be accepted for what they are.

The basic truth of the resurrection undergirds a number of other truths. First, it gives evidence that the Word of God is totally true and

reliable. Jesus rose from the dead precisely when and in the way He had predicted (see Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:9, 23).

Second, the resurrection means that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, as He claimed to be, and that He has power over life and death. Third, the resurrection proves that salvation is complete, that on the cross Christ conquered sin, death, and hell and rose victorious. Fourth, the resurrection proves that the church has been established. Jesus had declared, "I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matt. 16:18). "The gates of Hades" was a Jewish colloquialism that represented death. His resurrection proved that death itself could not prevent Christ from establishing His church.

Fifth, the resurrection proves that judgment is coming. Jesus declared that the heavenly Father "has given all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22), and since the Son was now risen and alive, His judgment is certain. Sixth, the resurrection of Christ proves that heaven is waiting. Jesus promised, "In My house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Because Christ is alive by the resurrection, believers have the assurance that He is now preparing a heavenly dwelling for them.

Like every piece of good literature, Matthew's gospel is not a random collection of facts or ideas or stories but has a specific plan and purpose. Chapter 28 is not simply a closing group of anecdotes about the life of Christ but is the powerful climax of everything else he has written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The central event of that climax, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is also the central event of God's redemptive history. The resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, and everything that we are and have and hope to be is predicated on its reality. There would be no Christianity if there were no resurrection.

The message of Scripture has always been a message of resurrection hope, a message that death is not the end for those who belong to God. For the believer, death has never been an end but rather a doorway that leads to eternity with God. Abraham willingly obeyed God's command to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, because, in faith, "he considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead" (Heb. 11:19). The psalmists declared, "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; for He will receive me" (Ps. 49:15) and that "with Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24). Isaiah proclaimed, "Your dead will live; their corpses will rise" (Isa. 26:19). Through Daniel the Lord assures His people that, although they die, one day they "will awake . . . to everlasting life" (Dan. 12:2). Hosea assures believers that the Lord will raise up all believers to live before Him (Hos. 6:2). Job asked rhetorically, "If a man dies, will he live again?" and then declared, "All the days of my struggle I will wait, until my change comes" (Job 14:14). That ancient man of God even foresaw the reality of resurrection, proclaiming to his three friends, Bildad in particular: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God" (Job 19:25-26).

Such has been the promised hope of God's people throughout history, a hope predicated on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is His resurrection that guarantees ours. "Now Christ has been raised from the dead," Paul declares, "the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

It is also tragically true, however, that throughout history many have denied, despised, and mocked the truth of resurrection, especially Christ's. But only a fool tries to explain away resurrection, because the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are man's only hope of salvation and eternal life.

An early Protestant missionary to the Ryukyu Islands in the western Pacific discovered a strange mass grave. The grave marker

revealed that more than 11,000 heads taken from bodies of Christians were buried there. On further investigation he learned that in 1637 the Japanese government, which then controlled the Ryukyus, ordered all Christians in the empire exterminated. Because they knew Christians believed in the resurrection, the heads of martyred believers were buried a great distance from the bodies, in the belief that their resurrection would thereby be prevented.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single greatest event in the history of the world. It is so foundational to Christianity that no one who denies it can be a true Christian. Without resurrection there is no Christian faith, no salvation, and no hope. "If there is no resurrection of the dead," Paul explains, "not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain" (1 Cor. 15:13-14). A person who believes in a Christ who was not raised believes in a powerless Christ, a dead Christ. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then no redemption was accomplished at the cross and "your faith is worthless," Paul goes on to say; "you are still in your sins" (v. 17).

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the first sermon on the day the church was born focused on the resurrection of Christ. After charging his hearers with Jesus' death, Peter declared, "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:23-24). Peter continued to preach the resurrection to his fellow Jews (Acts 4:10) as well as to Gentiles (10:40).

Paul preached the resurrection continually. In the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia he declared that "God raised [Jesus] from the dead" and "He whom God raised did not undergo decay" (Acts 13:30, 37). He proclaimed the resurrection before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem (23:6), before the governor, Felix (24:15, 21), and before King Agrippa (26:8). The resurrection is a central and strongly emphasized theme of Paul's epistles. He declared that Christ "was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:4), that "He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you" (2 Cor. 4:14; cf. Gal. 1:1), and that the Father "raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:20; Col. 2:12). Paul longed to know Christ "and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10).

Peter spoke of our "living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven" (1 Pet. 1:3-4). In his vision on Patmos, John beheld the Lord Jesus Christ, who declared, "I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (Rev. 1:17-18).

The foundation of all our hope is expressed in J[illegible]'s own words:

"He is also compelled to get the disciples out of Jerusalem before sunrise on Sunday because he holds that the women kept silence.

"Finally, to harmonize this with the fact that they did subsequently tell the story, with all its inevitable and logical results, he finds it necessary to keep the women in Jerusalem for several weeks while the disciples returned to their homes, had certain experiences, and came back to the capital." 46/10

8D. *John R. W. Stott* mentions the attitude of the women. They were not blinded by tears of remorse, but had a practical purpose for their early morning visit.

Stott says: "They had bought spices and were going to complete the anointing of their Lord's body, since the approach of the sabbath had made the work so hasty two days previously. These devoted and business-like women were not the kind to be easily deceived or to give up the task they had come to do." 63/48

9D. This was not a public cemetery, but a private burying ground. There was no other tomb there which would allow them to make such a mistake. *Wilbur Smith,* in commenting on this point, says: "The whole idea is so utterly fantastic that Professor A. E. J. Rawlinson, no conservative, in his epochal commentary on St. Mark's Gospel, felt compelled to say of Lake's suggestion, 'That the women went by mistake to the wrong tomb, and that the attempt of a bystander to direct them to the right one was misunderstood, is rationalization which is utterly foreign to the spirit of the narrative.' " 60/382

10D. *Merrill Tenney* says, "Lake fails to explain why the 'young man' [Mark 16:5] would have been present either in a public cemetery or in a private garden at such an early hour." 66/115,116

He asks, "What conceivable motive would have drawn a stranger there?

"If He were not a stranger, but one of the disciples making an independent investigation, why should his presence have frightened the women?" 66/115,116

Tenney further comments that "Mark's account, on which Lake relies, states that he was seated *inside* the tomb [vs. 5], so that he could scarcely have meant that they were at the wrong place . . ., but that Jesus was no longer there; they could see where He had been laid, but the body had vanished." 66/115,116

11D. Some identify the "young man" as a gardener. However, Frank Morison says that ". . . this theory, despite its appearance of rationality, has one peculiar weakness." 46/97

". . . If it was so dark that the women accidentally went to the wrong tomb, it is exceedingly improbable that the gardener would have been at work. If it was late enough and light enough for the gardener to be at work, it is improbable that the women would have been mistaken. The theory just rests upon the synchronization of two very doubtful contingencies. This is, however, only part of the improbability and intellectual difficulty which gathers around it." 46/97

Also, if the "young man" was the gardener, as some people assert, why didn't the priests secure his testimony as evidence that Christ's body was still in the grave? 46/101,102

He was not the gardener, but was an angel from heaven (Matthew 28:1-10).

Everyone *knew* that Christ's grave was empty — the real issue was *how* did it get that way?

12D. What are we to think of Professor Lake's theory that the people went to wrong tomb?

George Hanson says: "If I had any doubts about the Resurrection, Professor Lake's book would provide a most salutary counteractive to my scepticism. After reading it I am more than ever of the opinion expressed by De Wette in his 'Historical Criticism of the Evangelical History' (p. 229): 'The *fact* of the Resurrection, although a darkness which cannot be dissipated rests on the way and manner of it, cannot be doubted.' " 22/8

Wilbur Smith cites the verdict of the British scholar, Professor Morse: "Their theory that the women were approaching the wrong tomb arises, not from any evidence, but from disbelief in the possibility of the supernatural emptying of our Lord's tomb." 60/382

6A. CONCLUSION: HE IS RISEN, HE IS RISEN INDEED

John Warwick Montgomery says: "The earliest records we have of the life and ministry of Jesus give the overwhelming impression that this man went around not so much 'doing good' but making a decided nuisance of Himself.

"The parallel with Socrates in this regard is strong: Both men infuriated their contemporaries to such an extent that they were eventually put to death. But where Socrates played the gadfly on the collective Athenian rump by demanding that his hearers 'know themselves' — examine their unexamined lives — Jesus alienated His contemporaries by continually forcing them to think through their attitude to Him personally. 'Who do men say that I the Son of man am? . . . Who do you say that I am?' 'What do you think of Christ? Whose son is He?' These were the questions Jesus asked." 45/12

Christ made it very clear who He was. He told Thomas: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

The apostle Paul said that Christ ". . . was declared with power to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead . . ." (Romans 1:4).

Simon Greenleaf, famous Harvard professor of law, says: "All that Christianity asks of men . . . is, that they would be consistent with themselves; that they would treat its evidences as they treat the evidence of other things; and that they would try and judge its actors and witnesses, as they deal with their fellow men, when testifying to human affairs and actions, in human tribunals. Let the witnesses be compared with themselves, with each other, and with surrounding facts and circumstances; and let their testimony be sifted, as if it were given in a court of justice, on the side of the adverse party, the witness being subjected to rigorous cross-examination. The result, it is confidently believed, will be an undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability, and truth." 20/46

As *G. B. Hardy* has said, "Here is the complete record:

Confucius' tomb	—	occupied
Buddha's tomb	—	occupied
Mohammed's tomb	—	occupied
Jesus' tomb	—	EMPTY." 23

eternal life, the majority of people, including many who have studied it thoroughly, have rejected it. In doing so, they not only forfeit the future life but are left without true meaning or significance in the present life. Rejecting the resurrection is spiritual suicide.

Furthermore, denying the resurrection goes against the very grain of the human heart and soul. Solomon wrote that God "has also set eternity in their heart" (Eccles. 3:11). Something within man is not satisfied with present earthly living. He instinctively reaches out for immortality, for a life that transcends his present life and that will continue after he dies. Throughout history countless religions and philosophies have proposed means for man to achieve immortality, to find a better life beyond the grave.

Yet, strangely, there seems always to have been more religious than irreligious people who consciously deny the only hope for immortality. And through the years many theories have been propounded for the explicit purpose of explaining away the resurrection, especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The "swoon theory" proposes that Jesus did not actually die but went into a deep coma, or swoon, from the severe pain and trauma of the crucifixion. While in the cool atmosphere of the tomb and with the stimulating aroma of the burial spices, He revived and was somehow able to unwrap Himself and escape after the grave was opened. When He showed Himself to the disciples, they erroneously assumed He had been raised from the dead.

That theory was not dreamed up until around 1600, by a man named Venturini. But the idea flies in the face of many eyewitness reports, not only by Jesus' followers but also by His enemies. The Roman soldiers standing guard over Jesus at the cross were the first to report His death. They were experts at execution and would stand to forfeit their own lives if they allowed a condemned man to escape death. They were so certain He was dead that they did not bother to break His legs, and when the spear thrust brought forth blood and water, they had final proof of His death. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, with many women as witnesses and perhaps as helpers, worked with Jesus' body for an hour or so as they wrapped it in the linen and spices. They would easily have sensed any spark of life still remaining.

For that theory to be true, Jesus would have had to survive the massive loss of blood from the scourging, the nail wounds, and the spear thrust. He would also have had to survive being wrapped tightly in the linen cloths that were filled with a hundred pounds of spices. Besides all of that, in His extremely weakened condition He would have had to endure more than forty hours without food or drink, manage to unwrap Himself, singlehandedly roll the stone away from the inside of the tomb, walk out unchallenged by the guards, and then convince His followers He had actually been dead and miraculously raised. He would have had

to have developed the strength to travel countless miles in that condition to make the many appearances to His disciples over a period of forty days. Finally, He would have had to delude the apostles into thinking He entered a closed room without opening the door and ascended to heaven before their eyes. The absurdity of that theory is too obvious to be accepted by any clear-thinking person, believer or not.

The "no-burial theory" contends that there was actually no interment, that Jesus was never placed in the tomb and therefore would not have been in it on Sunday morning. His body was instead thrown into a mass grave for criminals, according to Roman custom. But neither the Jewish leaders nor the Roman guards would have bothered to secure and seal the tomb if they knew Jesus' body was not inside. Not only that, but to disprove Jesus' resurrection they would only have had to retrieve His body and put it on display.

The "hallucination theory" maintains that everyone who claimed to have seen the risen Jesus simply experienced a hallucination, induced by an ardent expectation of His resurrection. But Thomas was not the only believer who was slow to believe the Lord was alive again. Every gospel account makes clear that most of His followers, including the apostles, did *not* believe, either before or after the crucifixion, that He would be raised. Besides that, how could more than 500 people hallucinate in exactly the same way?

The "telepathy theory" proposes that there was no physical resurrection, but rather God sent divine telepathic messages to Christians that caused them to believe Jesus was alive. But that theory, among other things, makes the God of truth a deceiver and the apostles and gospel writers liars. And if such mental images did come from God, they were defective and slow to produce the intended result, because in a number of instances Jesus was not recognized when He first appeared to individuals and groups who knew Him intimately.

The "seance theory" suggests that a powerful spiritualist, or medium, conjured up the image of Jesus by means of occult power and that His followers were thereby deluded into thinking they saw Him. But if that were so, how did they hold onto His feet, put a hand in His wounded side, and eat a meal with Him? Seances deal strictly in the noncorporeal and ephemeral and are not made of such physical and tangible things as those.

The "mistaken identity theory" is based on the assumption that someone impersonated Jesus and was able to dupe His closest friends and companions into thinking he was really their Lord come back to life. But the imposter would have had to have himself scourged, crowned with thorns, pierced in his hands and feet, and wounded in the side to make such an impersonation even close to convincing. He would also have had to mimic Jesus' voice, mannerisms, and other traits to an unimaginable degree of perfection. He would have had to steal Jesus' body from the

of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the Resurrection. If they had died without making anyone else believe this 'gospel' no gospels would ever have been written." 37/149

J. N. D. Anderson writes of the testimony of the appearances:

"The most drastic way of dismissing the evidence would be to say that these stories were mere fabrications, that they were pure lies. But, so far as I know, not a single critic today would take such an attitude. In fact, it would really be an impossible position. Think of the number of witnesses, over 500. Think of the character of the witnesses, men and women who gave the world the highest ethical teaching it has ever known, and who even on the testimony of their enemies lived it out in their lives. Think of the psychological absurdity of picturing a little band of defeated cowards cowering in an upper room one day and a few days later transformed into a company that no persecution could silence — and then attempting to attribute this dramatic change to nothing more convincing than a miserable fabrication they were trying to foist upon the world. That simply wouldn't make sense." 3/5,6

John Warwick Montgomery comments:

"Note that when the disciples of Jesus proclaimed the resurrection, they did so as eyewitnesses and they did so while people were still alive who had had contact with the events they spoke of. In 56 A.D. Paul wrote that over 500 people had seen the risen Jesus and that most of them were still alive (I Corinthians 15:6 ff.). It passes the bounds of credibility that the early Christians could have manufactured such a tale and then preached it among those who might easily have refuted it simply by producing the body of Jesus." 45/78

Bernard Ramm writes:

"If there were no resurrection it must be admitted by radical critics that Paul deceived the apostles of an actual appearance of Christ to him, and they in turn deceived Paul about the appearances of a risen Christ to them. How difficult it is to impugn the evidence of the Epistles at this point when they have such strong validation as authentic!" 52/203

2D. The appearances of Christ in the lives of individuals:

To Mary Magdalene, John 20:14, Mark 16:9
To women returning from the tomb, Matthew 28:9,10
To Peter later in the day, Luke 24:34; I Corinthians 15:5
To the Emmaus disciples, Luke 24:13-33
To the apostles, Thomas absent, Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-24
To the apostles, Thomas present, John 20:26-29
To the seven by the Lake of Tiberias, John 21:1-23
To a multitude of 500-plus believers on a Galilean mountain, I Corinthians 15:6
To James, I Corinthians 15:7
To the eleven, Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Luke 24:33-52; Acts 1:3-12
At the ascension, Acts 1:3-12
To Paul, Acts 9:3-6; I Corinthians 15:8
To Stephen, Acts 7:55
To Paul in the temple, Acts 22:17-21; 23:11
To John on Patmos, Revelation 1:10-19

6C. THE ENEMIES OF CHRIST GAVE NO REFUTATION OF THE RESURRECTION

1D. They were silent

In Acts 2, Luke records Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. There was no refutation given by the Jews to his bold proclamation of Christ's resurrection. Why? Because the evidence of the empty tomb was there for anyone to examine if they wanted to disclaim it. However, everyone knew that the grave no longer held the body of Jesus Christ.

In Acts 25, we see Paul imprisoned in Caesarea. Festus "took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. And after he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him which they could not prove." Just what was it about Paul's gospel that so irritated the Jews? What point did they totally avoid in making their accusations? Festus, in explaining the case to King Agrippa, describes the central issue as concerning "a certain dead man, Jesus, whom Paul asserted to be alive" (Acts 25:19). The Jews could not explain the empty tomb.

They made all kinds of personal attacks on Paul, but avoided the objective evidence for the resurrection. They were reduced to subjective name-calling and avoided discussing the silent witness of the empty grave.

The silence of the Jews speaks louder than the voice of the Christians, or as Fairbairn says:

"The silence of the Jews is as significant as the speech of the Christians" (Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ, 357).*

Professor Day says, "The simple disproof, the effective challenging, of the fact of the Resurrection would have dealt a death-blow to Christianity. And they had every opportunity of disproof, if it were possible." 13/33-35

W. Pannenberg, cited by J. N. D. Anderson, states:

"The early Jewish polemic against the Christian message about Jesus' resurrection, traces of which have already been left in the Gospels, does not offer any suggestion that Jesus' grave had remained untouched. The Jewish polemic would have had to have every interest in the preservation of such a report. However, quite to the contrary, it shared the conviction with its Christian opponents that Jesus' grave was empty. It limited itself to explaining this fact in its own way. . . ." 2/96

The Church was founded on the resurrection, and disproving it would have destroyed the whole Christian movement. However, instead of any such disproof, throughout the first century, Christians were threatened, beaten, flogged and killed because of their faith. It would have been much simpler to have silenced them by producing Jesus' body, but this was never done.

John R. W. Stott has well said, the silence of Christ's enemies "is as eloquent a proof of the resurrection as the apostles' witness." 63/51

2D. They mocked

1E. In Athens

When Paul spoke to the Athenians about Christ, they had no answer for his claims: "Now when they heard of the

"BE A DISCIPLE-MAKER IN 1995!"

Matthew 28:16-20

1/1/95

INTRODUCTION: Verses 16-17, *verse 19a

When someone is dying or leaving us, his or her last words are extremely important.

Last words are important words. All four Gospels end with a command to evangelize and disciple the world (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:47-48; Jn. 21:15-17).

V. 16

"***Eleven***" - With unbelieving Judas having committed suicide, the eleven remaining disciples fulfilled Christ's prediction (mt. 26:32) and obeyed both the angels' (Mt. 28:7) and Christ's command (Mt. 28:10) to go up north into the region of Galilee for "fourth quarter" training.

"***Into Galilee***" - It was up in this northern region of Palestine that Christ for nearly 40 days taught His disciples many things "*pertaining to the Kingdom of God*" (Acts 1:3).

V. 17

"***They worshipped Him***" - They fell down prostrate in front of Jesus Christ and gave Him the honor, respect, and adoration He so rightly deserves. Because He is God, He must be worshipped! (Mt. 4:10)

"***Some doubted***" - It was so incredible that Christ had conquered death that some of the disciples found it difficult to believe their own eyes and ears. That is, until Christ "*opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures*" (Lk. 24:45). Lk. 24:46-47 - "*And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer,a nd to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*"

"***Some doubted***" - Not only were the 11 present, but "*more than 500 brethren at one time*" (I Cor. 15:6) were with Jesus at this point. I believe the doubters were among them.

V. 19

For the disciples to make disciples is to reproduce themselves. To pass on the revelation, principles, and precepts that Christ gave to them.

"***Teach all nations***" - lit. make disciples of all nations. The verb "*teach*" is the same root as the word "*disciples*" (v. 16).

A "disciple" is a disciplined one, one who is trained int he disciplines of His Master.

The obvious prerequisite of discipling someone is evangelizing them.

--They must hear the Gospel, and you and I are expected to give it (Mk. 16:15 - "*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*")

"In most churches, the congregation pays the pastor to preach, win the lost, and build up the saved--while the church members [stand on the sidelines and] function as cheerleaders (if they are enthusiastic) or spectators (if they lack all zeal)." (Wiersbe, p. 107).

How much faster churches would grow and how much stronger would believers be if each Christian was discipling another believer.

Which step are you on?

1. Saved

2. Saved and growing

3. Saved and growing and helping others become saved and growing

If you are a born-again Christian, the Lord Jesus Christ has a commission for you!

***Be a Disciple-Maker this year!**

I. Jesus Christ Gives Us the AUTHORITY to Disciple Others (v. 18-19a)

During His earthly ministry, Christ proved His authority over sickness and disease (Mt. 4:23; 9:35), over demons (4:24, 8:32, 12:22), over sin (9:6), and over death (Mk. 5:41-42; Jn. 11:43-44) (MacArthur, p. 339).

V. 18

"***All power [authority] is given unto me***" - After Jesus paid redemption's price and rose from the dead, He was given from the Father the same "power" (authority) He had and shared with the Father prior to His coming into the world (cp. Jn. 17:5, 24; Phil. 2:6).

"***Power***" - *exousia* - the absolute, unrestricted right to rule.

Jesus rules Heaven and earth! What He says goes. What He wants done gets done.

"*By Him all things consist*" (Col. 2:17).

By claiming to own all the authority of Heaven and earth, Jesus is either liar, lunatic, or LORD!

"***Therefore***" - In light of the fact that Christ has all the authority to command Heaven's angelic occupants and earth's mortals, Christ gives a command with total clout behind it.

I do not disciple others based on my authority, a church's authority, some other man's authority. . . but on the authority of Jesus Christ, my Command-in-Chief who sent me!

II. Jesus Christ Gives Us the ACTIVITY to Disciple Others (v. 19-20a)

Some people try to excuse themselves from following this Great Commission by calling it "the Disciples' commission" and saying that this imperative was only for the disciples to carry out.

This position is not correct for several obvious reasons:

1) It would be impossible for only 11 men to disciple "*all nations*"

2) The command is valid for as long as Christ presence is promised: "*even until the end of the world [age]*" (The eleven did not even see the end of the first century!)

3) Elsewhere, Scripture applies the responsibility of evangelism and discipleship to all believers

   a) The Early Church obeyed this Commission (Acts 8:4)

   b) We are all called "*ambassadors for Christ*" (II Cor. 5:20) II Cor. 5:18 - "*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,a nd hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*"

The Early Church carried out this Great Commission:
They "*went*" (Acts 8:4)
They "*baptized*" (Acts 2:41, 8:38, 10:45)
They "*taught*" (Acts 18:26)

Discipleship involves 3 key elements:

1) Going
2) Baptizing
3) Teaching

A disciple is "one who has <u>believed</u> on Jesus Christ and expressed this faith by being <u>baptized</u>. he remains in the <u>fellowship</u> of the believers that he might be taught the truths of the faith (Acts 2:41-47)." (Wiersbe, p. 107).

A. Discipling involves <u>going</u>

"Go ye" - As you go. . . make disciples. The "*go*" is not commanded but assumed. You can't disciple someone unless you get up and <u>go do it</u>!

Discipleship is to be woven into our "going" through life. As we "go" through life, we are to fulfill the responsibility of discipling others to maturity in Christ.

"Go ye. . . all nations" - Christ intends that there <u>not</u> be a country, a state, a tribe, etc., that is neglected or by-passed. All nations need the Gospel, need discipleship.

In Jesus' previous commission, which applied specifically to His first-century disciples, He sent His disciples only to the Jews (Mt. 10:5-6). From now on their mission would involve the Gentiles and be worldwide.

Going to people of all nations requires:

1. A <u>willingness to cross</u> language and cultural <u>barriers</u>

2. An <u>unprejudiced heart</u> toward others of diverse ethnic backgrounds and skin color

B. Discipling involves <u>baptizing</u>

"Baptizing them" = immersing them in water (Acts 8:38-39).

The same word "baptize" was the Greek word the rich man in Luke 16:24 used when He requested Lazarus to "<u>*dip*</u>" *(baptse)* his finger in water.

"Baptizing <u>them</u>" - the "<u>them</u>" refers to ones discipled. The day an infant is intelligent enough to be discipled is the day infants can be baptized.

Infant baptism is a violation of the Great Commission!

Only those who have repented (Mt. 3:2-6; Acts 2:38), believed (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 8:37) and received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47) can be baptized.

"***In the name*** (singular) ***of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit***" - This verse is proof for the unity of the Trinity ("name" - singular) and the equality of the Trinity (it would be blasphemous to put Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit on par with the Father if indeed they were not co-equal with the Father).

By baptism, a convert identifies with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(For a Jew, baptism in the name of the Father and Spirit was no big deal, but in the name of "Jesus" was the biggest test. Hence, the emphasis in the New Testament is baptism in the name of Jesus - Acts 2:38, 8:12).

Baptism is a picture of one's union with Christ and a proclamation of one's devotion to Christ.

C. Discipling involves teaching

"***Teaching***" - to impart Biblical instruction

This teaching is not designed to inform a mind or fill up a notebook but to transform a life" (Doug Finkbeiner)

This teaching is to be formal (Eph. 4:12) and informal (cp. Dtt. 6:7). It should be visual (modeling) and verbal (instructing)/

"***Disciple***" - IMPORT NOTES FROM DISCIPLESHIP LESSON

"***All things . . . I have commanded you***" -

*The whole counsel of God must be taught (like Paul did - Acts 20:27)

*Complete obedience is expected of disciples of Christ.

WHY SHOULD I DISCIPLE NEW CONVERTS?

I. BECAUSE GOD COMMANDS DISCIPLESHIP

A. DISCIPLESHIP IS THE GREAT COMMISSION (Mt. 28:18-20)

("Teach" = lit. "make disciples")

B. DISCIPLESHIP WAS THE PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

1. Discipleship is expounding "the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:23-28)

2. Discipleship is declaring "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:18-20, 26-27)

   For full discipleship to take place, you need:

   a. public teaching of the Word in a church (see Acts 11:26)

   b. private teaching of the Word in a home (see Acts 18:23-28)

   Personal discipleship does not contradict the ministry of a church--it complements it. You need both! Don't substitute one for another. A pulpit ministry does not substitute for personal evangelism and discipleship, and vice-versa.

3. Discipleship is giving to others what has been committed to you (II Tim. 2:2)

   a. Christ discipled the apostles (who were called His disciples (see the Gospels)
   b. The apostles discipled Barnabas (implied in Acts 4:36) encouraged/helped implied
   c. Barnabas ~~discipled~~ Paul (Acts 9:27) - He encouraged him & helped him. Paul did not learn it from man Gal. 1:11,12
   d. Paul discipled Timothy (I Tim. 1:2)
   e. Timothy discipled Ephesian saints (I Tim. 1:3)
   f. Paul discipled Aquilla & Priscilla (implied in Acts 18:2, 18)
   g. Aquilla & Priscilla discipled Apollos (Acts 18:23-28)
   h. Apollos discipled the Corinthian saints (Acts 19:1, I Cor. 1:12) ETC. ETC. ETC.

4. Discipleship is the goal of the ministry (Eph. 4:11-13)

II. BECAUSE NEW BELIEVERS NEED DISCIPLING

A. NEW BELIEVERS (like newborn infants) NEED LOVE, PROTECTION, FOOD AND TRAINING

1. They are more <u>vulnerable</u> than mature Christians

   a. More easily deceived by Satan (I Th. 3:5)

   b. More easily led astray by false religions, false movements, and false teachings (Acts 20:29-31)

2. They have a great <u>potential for growth</u> (change)

   a. Fastest growth rate is in early childhood (just as the early stages of growth are vital to an infant, the early stages are vital to a new convert)

   b. Patterns are established early that will continue

B. NEW BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW WHAT THEY HAVE IN CHRIST (II Cor. 5:17)

1. Teach him that he has a <u>new faith</u> (change in beliefs) (Acts 2:42 - "continued in apostles' doctrine)

Old dependance on Good works, Religion etc. is done away with in christ. This is why it is so important for a New convert to come out of the old, dead church.

Salv. is by Grace through Faith.

"Thy words were found & I did eat them" Jer. 15:16

2. Teach him that he has a <u>new food</u> (change in diet) (I Pet. 2:2; Mt. 4:4)
   - If a Baby doesn't eat it dies. (Starves) Permanent damage can be done.
   - Teach the Baby how to eat.

Ex. Feeding on Junk of the world - T.V., Movies, music magazines.

a New Convert has a
- New Father - God (formerly Satan) Jn 8:44, Acts 13:10
- New Brothers & Sisters

"Born Again"
I Pet. 1:3 "Heirs together of the grace of life"

3. Teach him that he has a <u>new family</u> (change in relationships) (Prov. 24:1; I Cor. 15:33; II Cor. 6:14-16)

The Bond of the Spirit gives us a <u>Oneness</u>

a local ch. should be like a Family.

4. Teach him that he has a <u>new fight</u> (change in conflicts) (Put on new man - Eph. 4:24; I Thes. 3:1-5; II Tim. 3:12; James 1)

Gal. 5:17 (2 Natures)

- Old Man & New Man Now Battle.
- Satan is now your enemy "we wrestle against principalities & powers"

III. Jesus Christ Gives Us the ABILITY to Disciple Others (v. 20b)

"***Lo***" - Listen, see or look!

An attention grabbing little word to point to a great truth.

It is a fact that Jesus gives us His:

1. Personal presence ("*with you*")

2. Perpetual presence ("*always*")

It is unheard of for a commander or king to give a subordinate a command and then go accompany that person on the assigned task. Yet this is what Christ our exalted King does!

Discipling others is the only specific New Testament command which is accompanied with a promise of Christ's presence!

Why does Jesus promise His presence?

--to relieve fears (EX: Acts 18:9-10)
--to provide enablement
(Christ empowers us, sharpens our mind, etc. when we are busy about His commission)

How would Jesus remain with us? Answer: In the person of the Holy Spirit; He is with us by His Spirit (Acts 1:4, Jn. 14:26)

The Holy Spirit is our power (Acts 1:8).

The end of the age marks the time when the Lord Jesus shall return from Heaven (The age of the Gentiles will come to an end and the Day of the Lord will begin)

CONCLUSION: We must give Him our AVAILABILITY!

This "passing on" of what Christ gave us is the ultimate duty of a disciple of Christ (II Tim. 2:2).

--Discipleship begins at home!

Parents are expected to disciple their children; saved husbands their wives

--Discipleship then extends to relatives, neighbors, co-workers, people whose path crosses yours.

What is called by many the "great Commission" has become by much of the pressing church the "Great Omission"

For a Christian to not disciple someone else is to . . .

--Live an unfulfilled life (incomplete; you are not fulfilling a major purpose for which you were saved; we must have an inlet and outlet, be a lake not a stagnant pond).

--Live in sin (the sin of omission; you are not right with God if you are not involved in the spiritual growth of someone else)

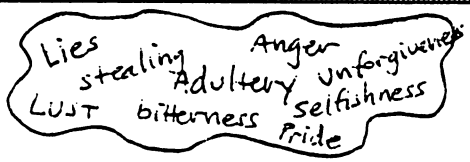
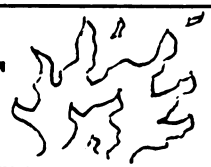
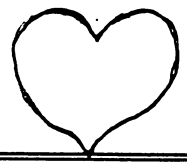
Are you willing to be a disciple maker?
--right now?

--Are you willing to be a missionary for Jesus Christ?

"Some years ago, a missionary went to a primitive, pagan society. She became especially burdened for a young wife and eventually was used to win the woman to Christ. Almost as soon as she was saved the woman told the missionary with great sorrow, "I wish you could have come sooner, so my little boy could have been saved." When the missionary asked why it was too late, the mother replied, "Because just a few weeks before you came to us, I offered him as a sacrifice to the gods of our tribe." (MacArthur, p. 347).

The Basic, Essential Elements of the Plan of Salvation

5 Facts that any unsaved person needs to understand & believe in order to be saved.

5 VITAL CONCEPTS A LOST PERSON NEEDS TO KNOW	AN EXPLANATION OF GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION	ROMANS ROAD	JOHN'S ROAD	Revelatn ROAD
Fact # 1 **SIN** 	***You have <u>sinned</u> against God.***	3:10,23	3:19-20	21:8
Fact # 2 **JUDGEMENT** 	***There is a <u>price</u> for sin. Your sin must be punished.***	6:23	3:36	20:11-15
Fact # 3 **CROSS** 	***Christ <u>died</u> and <u>paid</u> the penalty for you.***	5:8	3:16-17 (10:11)	5:9
Fact # 4 **GIFT** 	***Jesus lives, and wants to freely <u>give</u> you eternal life.***	6:23	10:28 (14:6)	22:17
Fact # 5 **BELIEVE** 	***If you will <u>trust</u> (accept, rely upon; put your faith in) Christ alone, you will be saved!***	10:9-13	1:12 (5:24)	3:20

* Facts #1 & 2 point to man's <u>need</u> for salvation (the <u>necessity</u> of salvation)
* Facts #3 & 4 point to God's <u>provision</u> for salvation (the <u>arrangement</u> of salvation)
* Fact # 5 points to man's <u>reception</u> of salvation (the <u>acceptance</u> of salvation)