



# Chapter One

## 1

This is the book (*BIBLOS*) of the 'descent of Jesus Christ'. In Greek that is the *BIBLOS GENESIS* - the book of the origins of Jesus. The first book of the Bible is Genesis, the origins of life and Adam/Man. Now we have the origins of the New Adam, the Man who would save the world.

Jesus is called the Son of David and the Son of Abraham; hence He is firmly aligned in the *KINGLY* family (of David) and also in the *FAITH/PROMISE* family (of Abraham)

## 2

Abraham 'begat' Isaac (AV), Abraham fathered Isaac. Now we see the line that comes from Abraham. To our English ears, here is just a list of names but each one has a meaning and together they tell a story (see next page).

Isaac fathered Jacob and Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers.

It is interesting that Matthew retains Jacob's original name, and does not refer to him as Israel. This may well be to highlight the fact that Jesus's grandfather was also Jacob, who fathered a Joseph who was the husband of Jesus's mother Mary. (see verse 16).

Judah is the son that appears in Jesus's family tree. He was not the oldest, that was Reuben, but he became the leading member of the family and his tribe was listed first in the Old Testament. It was also the tribe which remained faithful to David's family when the other tribes rebelled and became a separate nation. In Genesis 43:8-10 we read *Then Judah said to Israel his father, 'Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children may live and not die. I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life. As it is, if we had not delayed, we could have gone and returned twice.'* Here is a prophetic promise that Judah would rescue his brother(s) and bring him back to the father.

## 3

Judah fathers Perez, a son of his daughter-in-law Tamar and not of his wife (see Genesis 38). The 'line of promise' runs through some odd human failings. Tamar had tricked Judah into fulfilling his promise of a child for her after her husband died (Judah had promised her his other son, but reneged on it).

The promise of a son is a theme of scripture, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.

From Perez we get Hezron and from him Ram.

## 4

Then comes Amminadab, Nahshon and Salmon.

In Exodus 6:23 we read *Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.* We must remember that the genealogy we are reading in Matthew is tracing only the line that leads to Jesus, other important figures are not recorded here.



Abraham	Father of multitude
Isaac	laughs
Jacob / Israel	as he struggles. He wrestles with God.
Judah	He praises the Lord
Perez	as he breaks into
Hezron	an enclosure walled in
Ram	to great height.
Amminadab	My noble kinsman,
Nahshon	a prophet
Salmon	clothed
Boaz	with strength
Obed	who serves
Jesse	is here,
David	one well loved,
Solomon	peaceful
Rehoboam	who enlarges the people
Abijah	My father is the Lord
Asa	the healer
Jehoshaphat	him the Lord judged
Jehoram	and the Lord raised up
Uzziah	My strength is the Lord
Jotham	The Lord is perfect
Ahaz	I took hold of
Hezekiah	the strength of the Lord
Manasseh	it made me forget.
Amon	Truly the master builder
Josiah	the Lord healed
Jeconiah	the Lord appointed
Shealtiel	I asked the Lord (about)
Zerubbabel	the exiles in Babylon
Abihud	My Father is glorious
Eliakim	My God will raise up
Azor	a helper
Zadok	the Just
Akim	will the Lord raise up
Elihud	My God is my praise!
Eleazar	God will help
Matthan	May the gift of
Jacob	Jacob (the one who struggles)
Joseph	increase
Emmanuel	For God is with us,
Jesus	Salvation!

This is taken, with editing, from  
[www.bible-codes.org](http://www.bible-codes.org)

You are recommended to cross-check the meanings of the names. A good place to start is [www.abarim-publications.com](http://www.abarim-publications.com) (click 'browse names and categories')

Aaron and Elisheba come at the end of Israel's sojourn in Egypt, which began with Jacob and his family. The Bible tells us that 430 years pass between the time of Jacob and Joseph and the Exodus led by Moses with Aaron.

430 years but only 5 or 6 generations? Some have therefore concluded that this list is incomplete, and that other names are missed out.

However, we should not forget that there were much longer lives at the time. Moses himself did not begin to lead the Exodus until he was 80 years old, Aaron was slightly older and he may well have been younger than Elisheba.

If the list is incomplete, then there has to be a question about why some of the obscure names that it does include are there at all.

Perhaps the answer to that is in the message that the included names give us.

Whilst I personally prefer to believe that the list is complete that does make for complications, as we shall see in verse 5.

It is not a list of the Kings of Israel or Judah, because that includes brothers or uncles on occasions, but a list of the 'descent of Jesus Christ' from Abraham. It is a list which puts Jesus firmly in history and clearly in the line of King David as well as Abraham.



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5

Salmon apparently marries Rahab (or at least 'goes with her'). Rahab, the prostitute of Jericho, saved because she recognised God was with Israel and put her faith in Him. She thus becomes part of the ancestry of Jesus: not just Jewish but Gentile blood too flowed in His veins; the blood of a prostitute.

Salmon fathers Boaz, who appears large in the book of Ruth where his genealogy matches that given here. Boaz and Ruth are the parents of Obed.

Ruth is another foreign woman, not a Jew, who is brought into the line of promise through her faith.

Obed sires Jesse and he is the father of David who becomes the King of Israel.

According to modern presumed dates, about 400 years though elapse between Rahab and David, and we have only 4 generations so we do have to once more wonder about the names that are missing. Nothing is in the Bible without a reason, so surely too that which is excluded must be for a reason. The names are not only missing in Matthew, but also in the account in Ruth. In Ruth the list starts at Perez and reads (in English):

*...as he breaks into an enclosure walled in to great height. My noble kinsman, a prophet clothed with strength who serves is here, one well loved.* Were the generations recorded in order that this message would be given? Was there some other reason? What is definite, this is not a mistake. There are no errors in Scripture. Often when something appears wrong, confused or out of place it is something that needs to be dug into to find a greater revelation. Solomon said *"It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings."* (Proverbs 25:2). As heirs of God and a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) we are seen as kings so here is a matter we should spend some time searching out!

Whilst that is for another time, let us remember that the word translated 'father of' means 'brings forth' ('brought forth' in the tense we have here) and that can mean not just the immediate father but one who proceeds from someone else, so it can mean a descendant or possibly someone who takes on the characteristics of another: in 1 John 5:1 we read of God 'bringing forth' those who believe in Him.

The purpose of this 'genesis' or list is to prove beyond doubts to the recipients (originally Greek speaking Jews) that Jesus was of the line of David, himself of the line of Abraham. The list from Abraham to David is consistent with that found and accepted by the Jews in their scriptures (our Old Testament).

**BUT** 1 Chronicles 2 gives the broadest list, naming all sons of a person and then following the line of promise that will lead to the Messiah. It includes phrases such as *'the sons of Zerah: (names)... 5 in all'*. The commentary in my bible suggest these to be descendants and not sons but that means that it emphatically states Zerah (for example) had only five descendants. Surely the '5 in all' makes it clear that they were his direct sons and not descendants to follow?

**BUT** Unlike the early Genesis genealogy, no dates or lifespans are given.

My gut reaction is to take the list as complete at least in the sense that *these are all the ones we need to know about*. If there are missing names then these are not important to the Message of God's Word.



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**6**

David now fathers Solomon, whose mother was Bathsheba; adultery and murder now come into the line of Jesus's ancestors (see 2 Samuel 11). Jesus was born into a line of fallen human sinfulness.

**7**

Solomon - - - Rehoboam - - - Abijah - - - Asa

**8**

Asa - - - Jehoshaphat - - - Jehoram

Up to this point, Matthew has followed the line of kings as recorded in Chronicles, but next he jumps three from Jehoram to Uzziah.

**9-16**

We are left wondering why.

In all, 70 years are missed out; the missing kings (Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah) were a mixture of God-fearing and apostate. In short there seems no obvious reason why they should all be excluded (and they are father/son related, not brothers).

The difference here to the potential gaps discussed above is that in this case Matthew is *different* to the Old Testament record.

Matthew knows too that his readers were well aware of the correct genealogy, he could not afford to make a careless mistake as it would discredit the rest of his work (even if this were not scripture). He carefully includes the names Rahab and Bathsheba even those if any were to be left out it might be 'nice' for it to be those.

The three missing names mean:

Ahaziah *Yahweh (the LORD) has grasped*

Joash *God's fire*

Amaziah *God is mighty or God's strength.*

which do fit nicely between Jehoram and Uzziah but gets us no closer as to why Matthew excluded them. The table below shows the meanings of the names Matthew misses out up to the exile; unfortunately it does not seem to help us much in our understanding of *why*. His purpose seems to be to establish Jesus (or, rather, Joseph) firmly in the line of kingly descent and prophetic promise.

<i>Jehoram</i>	<i>The Lord raised up</i>
Ahaziah	THE LORD HAS GRASPED
Joash	GOD'S FIRE
Amaziah	GOD IS MIGHTY
<i>Uzziah/Azariah</i>	<i>My strength is the Lord</i>
<i>Josiah</i>	<i>The Lord healed</i>
Jehoiakim	THE LORD RAISED UP
<i>Jeconiah</i>	<i>The Lord appointed</i>
<i>Shealtiel ...</i>	from here on the lists diverge as they are tracing different branches of the family. Some names are the same, but people with the same names are common in family trees.

He could even have just have written something like '*we know that David's line continues through Solomon to Jeconiah*' in verse 11 before getting down to the less well known family tree that leads to Joseph himself.

He seems intent on getting exactly 40 names in the list between Abraham and Jesus altogether. It was a fairly common practice to telescope lists to reach a numerical symmetry or niceness, but this is



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not just one man's account, it is Scripture. Once more, here is something that needs time and energy to search out.

I'll repeat what I said earlier, the Bible does not contain mistakes. These differences are there to teach us something, they are below the surface (a casual reader would not notice them) so they call us to go deeper into the study of God's word. What is God teaching us here? That is the question, even if right now we are moving on and leaving it for another day.

### **16**

Note that the text does not say "Joseph was the father of Jesus" in the same way that it has listed the previous names. We know that he wasn't, but he was betrothed to Mary the mother of Jesus and, in human terms, he became the legal father of the child born in Bethlehem; presumably the name of Jesus would have been included in the great register or census of names that was the very reason they had travelled to Bethlehem in the first place.

Legally, therefore, the Royal line passes through Joseph to Jesus. In Luke's account it is the line of 'Hebrewness' or descent from Abraham, which passes through Mary, that is recorded.

### **17**

Now, why say this? Isn't it making a mockery of scripture? We can see there were more generations as Matthew has missed some out. Why emphasise this?

Matthew was a tax collector and he would have liked balanced books kept in order. The symmetry with which he presents the 14-14-14 generations would have been neat to his mind, with 40 in between the great exalted father Abraham and the Saviour Jesus.

But again to accept that seems to be accepting an error in scripture and *scripture cannot and does not contain errors*. This is more than just an accountant balancing books and figures. It has been said that Matthew put in this line to stop a later revisionist simply copying the missing names back in. He was underlining the fact that the missing names had to remain missing in this list at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, and therefore also as it turned out, at the beginning of the New Testament. *He knew what he was doing!*

One possible reason that I have read is that there were sins recorded against King Jehoram which, although recorded in God's word, meant that his sons could not be recorded in the royal lineage for three generations. The following is from "Contradicting Bible Contradictions" website (with a few additions to make it more understandable):

#### *Omissions of Ahaziah, Joas, Amaziah*

*We may reckon with a punishment. The ungodly king Joram (or Jehoram) was not permitted to register Ahaziah; Ahaziah was not permitted to register Joash, Joash did not register Amaziah. Amaziah (2 Kings 14:3) was permitted to continue the old tradition of registering his sons in the temple archives. It is not acceptable to suppose that it was the initiative of Joram, Ahaziah and Joash to not register their sons. As kings they should have done so. This is especially true for Joash who was a pious king in the beginning of his reign.*

*So what was the reason that these three kings didn't register their sons? King Joram killed his brothers, six in number, as soon as he became king. This had never occurred earlier in Israel and it never occurred later in the royal house of David. We have to consider the probability that priests denounced these murders with a ban on registering the names of three royal generations in the temple archives. A possible guide that they had for this was that after the exodus out of Egypt, the Israelites got the commandment to not allow Egyptians to enter into the assembly of the Lord during three generations (Deuteronomy 23:8). Maybe a comparable punishment was laid on the royal family of David by the*

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*priests right after Joram's murders. The gap of the three excluded royal generations remained visible forever in the documents of identification circulating in the royal family: a shame forever. It would therefore be the same in the document Joseph owned proving his own lineage from which Matthew wrote his genealogy.*

**Omission of Jehoiakim**

*Jehoiakim (in the list of Chronicles) being the father of Jeconiah belonged to the biological lineage of Joseph, however he was not listed in Joseph's document. Why? We can only give an assumption. He was the man who destroyed the role of king with Jeremiah's prophecies and led to the exile. Also, as a young prince, he probably committed incest with Hamutal, a wife of his father Josiah. Maybe these were reasons for the writers of Joseph's identification document to also omit the name Jehoiakim.*

Considering the above, it is probably worth also remembering that several times God told Moses that "The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." (Numbers 14:18, NIV)

Point - the text says *there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.* (NIV). Abraham to David, in which Matthew agrees with the Old Testament record, he says were 'in all 14 generations' but in the other two sections he does not say 'in all', allowing perhaps for the missing generations. We get the sense that there were 14 generations 'that counted'.

Both Chronicles and Luke agree with Matthew's account from Abraham to David, but Luke takes a different route for the later bits (because of 'direct descent' as opposed to 'legal title' or perhaps looking at Mary's father's family and not Joseph - though in that case there was a clear family kinship between Mary and Joseph, itself not unusual for betrothals at the time).

Matthew has firmly established at the beginning of his book that the coming Messiah has all the credentials he needs, and that Jesus is the person all Israel has been waiting for. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, he has opened his book and the New Testament with words that call to mind the very beginning of the Bible: *biblos geneseos Jesou christou - The Book of the lineage of Jesus the Messiah.*

**18**

Whatever the reason for the genealogy being as it is, it established to the Jew beyond doubt that Jesus was 'of David's line' as the Messiah had to be.

So Matthew goes on to tell us his version of the world's greatest story. (It is amazing to realise how many stories and tales in literature and film are really based on the story of a fallen world needing a saviour).

Mary, pregnant. Yet she and Joseph had not had intercourse. Matthew states clearly that this was 'by the Holy Spirit'.

**19**

Joseph wanted to divorce Mary and end the betrothal yet to do it quietly so as not to bring Mary dishonour. He did not want her to be treated as an outcast; he knew he had not had sex with her and despite her being a sincere and devout woman he had to conclude she had gone with someone else



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### **20**

So it took an angelic appearance to stop him and to protect both Mary and the child. He came to see that the Holy Spirit had planted Jesus in Mary.

### **21**

Joseph was told it would be a boy and what he would be called: 'the Lord saves' - *Joshua* or *Yeshua* (Hebrew), *Jesus* (Greek)

### **22**

This was we are reminded as prophesied

### **23**

A virgin will be pregnant and a son will be born and named Emmanuel (God with us) and indeed Jesus was God with us by nature

### **24**

Joseph believed the angelic dream and took Mary as his wife.

### **25**

They did not have sex until Jesus was born; she was a virgin until then.  
How they must have marvelled together!



# Chapter Two

## 1

Time and place set in history. Though not finely detailed (not the third year of Herod's reign for instance) yet historical nonetheless.

Magi (MAGOI) : WISE; derived from 'Median' meaning 'of the Medes', Persian-based and meaning also Sorcerer. The word is also used in the Septuagint version of Daniel 2:2,10 when speaking of the enchanters and astrologers of Babylon.

These Magi came from the place of exile of Israel, God's people had been there and perhaps had left traces of biblical faith and understanding behind. Hence leading representatives of the pagan religion recognising in Jesus something more than they had in their own beliefs, a sense of paganism coming to true worship.

Also considering the pagan assault on God's people in the Old Testament (for instance in the book of Daniel, or under Pharaoh, or Baal worship etc.) we see here a bowing of the knee to the One Power of the universe.

Interesting too that they came from Persia for it was the Prince of Persia who fought with Michael in Daniel and who seems to be against the Jews throughout history.

## 2,3

Herod was a usurper of the Jewish throne, he was not 'of David line'; his position was therefore threatened by the announcement of the birth of a king of the Jews.

His birth announced by a sign in the heavens, a star. What it was (angelic appearance maybe, comet maybe, conjunction of planets or a new star) is unknown but see box to right; but it was significant enough to make the stargazers perhaps even star worshippers travel and it was definite enough to say to them Israel, Judea.

Herod, and all his court ("all Jerusalem") were troubled. The Greek word is EKTARASSO - *thrown into great trouble/agitated*

## 4

He recognised this to be Messiah King, not just anyone; so he, a non-Jew, called the Jewish priests and asked for the lowdown: where

### What was the Star that the Magi saw?

Perhaps instead of trying to work out conjunctions of planets or movement of known comets we should read what the Bible itself says happened above Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Turning briefly from Matthew to Luke we read: *there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. .... Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God.....* (Luke 2:8,9,13 NIV).

The Bible says that the glory of the Lord was visibly shining over the hills around Bethlehem that night.

I am convinced that that is what the Magi saw from hundreds of miles away as they looked into the night sky which, presumably, was their regular practice. They immediately recognised that this was no ordinary star.

In the Old Testament we read of the "Shekinah Glory" of God glowing visibly, for instance: *To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.* (Exodus 24:7)







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would the Messiah be born?

### 5

Bethlehem as told by the prophets

### 6

Bethlehem, small, despised; yet from here God would raise up a ruler, the Ruler, just as Micah wrote 700 years before Jesus: *'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.... He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.'* (Micah 5:2,4).

Note, the coming Messiah will be ruler and shepherd.

Both parts of his role were seen in this prophecy; just as David of Bethlehem was a Shepherd first and a King second so too with Jesus.

Just as David was anointed king but had to wait whilst the 'king of the world' - the man Saul - fallen from Grace fulfilled his time, so to Jesus is waiting between His anointing whilst the 'Prince of this age' fulfils his time.

### 7

The Bible study over, Herod recalls the Magi in private. He does not want anyone else to know his plan, perhaps too he does not want too many to know the Messiah may have come. He believes he can thwart God's purposes.

He finds out how long it has been since they saw the star (perhaps up to 2 years since, verse 16 suggests although it may just be that Herod added many months to the time they gave in order to be sure he 'got' the right baby).

### 8

He pretends he too would go to worship - they would find him for him and come back and tell him

### 9

Why they had not followed the star *all the way* in the first place is unclear; probably, like for so many of us! We get to a point where we think we can see where God is leading us and then we head off on our Matthew 7:7)own, no longer relying on him to guide us. Only when we get there do we realise it's not where we're supposed to be and "He is not there".

If we did not assume "Jerusalem" instead of following all the way to "Bethlehem" we would probably have gone to some large house in Bethlehem when we got there; at some point we nearly always take our eyes off God's leading and make assumptions. Only by carefully listening and following would we ever have found the place where He was. The potential for damage on the way caused by our taking our eyes off Him is large: *their* folly cost the lives of all the young boys in Bethlehem (verse 16).

### 10

This is it! We found the place, we were right to leave home and look!



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## 11

And then they saw Jesus. "Seek and you shall find" (Matthew 7:7). He is always willing to be found by those who seek him diligently, pressing on even after disappointing blind alleys have been followed.

**Gifts: GOLD**

Kingly riches

**INCENSE**

Holiness, Godliness,  
Purity

**MYRRH**

Oil, again for purity  
& anointing (see  
Exodus 30:23)

All three were used in the temple decorations, ceremonies or practices to give honour and worship to God

## 12

And now God again divinely intercedes to give time for the family to escape, Herod was not to be told; the visitors left directly - not via Jerusalem - and went home. We hear no more of them but they had been to worship the One true God; their lives would now be different!

## 13

Another angelic intervention; Jesus was important, Mary and Joseph must have known that beyond doubt by now. Now they had to flee to leave Israel, the promised land, and go to Egypt. Egypt! They must have recounted the stories of the other Joseph and how God sent him to Egypt, of the period Israel spent there and also of Moses and the exodus. In some way it might have been reassuring too: there seemed to be a purpose in the Genesis account of Joseph going to Egypt.

Why go? Because the king wanted to kill their son! A young child, surely no threat to anyone, but somehow the king knew of him and wanted him dead. Jesus was important.

Joseph and Israel went to Egypt for protection in a time of famine, now they are fleeing there for protection. Later, Pharaoh the king tried to kill all the children to protect his own dynasty; something that Herod was about to repeat in this story too.

## 14

No time for hesitation, the family got moving during the night. The Lord of light moves off under the cover of darkness and flees.

The God of heaven and earth flees from a human power because he had chosen the frailty of flesh for a season. Having known the poverty and ignomy of His birth He is now a fugitive too. Surely He lived through the worst of human suffering; now he is a refugee in a strange, foreign land

## 15

Herod died in 4BC. Since Jesus was perhaps two years old at the time of playing and it is believed he was born about 6BC the length of exile in Egypt would have been weeks or months not years. Just like Israel was called from Egypt so too would be Jesus.

## 16

Herod, meanwhile, goes berserk; possibly this rage and tantrum is what led to his eventual death, he was after all seeking the downfall of the Lord and giver of life. You cannot seek to destroy life Himself and expect to live yourself. He would kill all the boy toddlers in Bethlehem, perhaps a dozen, maybe more.



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## 17, 18

Perhaps, however, many more; it depends what 'Bethlehem and its vicinity' means. Ramah is north of Jerusalem about 5 miles, Bethlehem a similar distance south. That Matthew quotes this passage suggests there was considerable mourning at the time over a large area.

The quotation itself comes from the time of the exile; the weeping was because families suddenly were uprooted and torn from their land and ancient homes. Rachel (Jacob's favoured wife) was buried in Ramah. Jeremiah 31, from which the quote comes, concludes with the hope of restoration. Matthew doubtless uses the quotation not just to emphasise the appalling nature of Herod's actions but also to say that, as we shall see, out of despair will later come hope for all the world.

It is interesting to note how Matthew and the other New Testament writers use Old Testament scriptures in an almost cavalier manner. Ripped from its context, the verse is made to say something that it seemingly was never meant to; modern preachers and Bible teachers are warned in training never to do this sort of thing! The Holy Spirit, however, is leading Matthew to reveal something that was always part of His intention with Jeremiah's words. We have to accept that the quoted verse is here for a reason, that it prophetically foretold not only the coming exile but also the later coming Messiah. After all, all scripture at its roots is teaching us about that Messiah, whom we now know to be this child Jesus that Matthew is writing about.

## 19, 20

Herod dies, the family are recalled, doubtless in the turmoil of State the existence of a possible Messiah was forgotten. In any case Herod was no longer a threat, he had opposed God and paid the price for it.

## 21, 22

However it seems sensible to live in a Herod free zone and to go back to Galilee (where Joseph and Mary lived before the census); after another warning in a dream and that's where they go.

Actually, not quite Herod free for another of his sons now ruled in Galilee, but Archelaus was clearly the one to avoid. In any case, moving from Bethlehem they would be out of sight; it is unlikely they would be traced.

The word for the *warning* Joseph received is CHREMATIZO from *chrema* meaning business affair, literally a business transaction and it came to mean 'advice given to enquirers'. The word came to mean admonished as it does in Hebrew 8:5 or a warning as it does here.

It suggests Joseph was a praying man who asked for guidance. His moves were made after God spoke, unlike the wise men who thought they knew where to go!

## 23

Nazareth - home! This quote is not overtly in the old Testament. But Nazarenes were despised (see John 1:46), and Psalm 22:6 and Isaiah 53:3 says Jesus would be despised. The word *NESER* means *BRANCH* and it could be that this verse is a pun-like reference to Zechariah 3:8 where God says *I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.*

*Matthew chapter 3*



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# Chapter Three

## 1

"In those days", well a good few years after John, Jesus was born.

In those days refers to the time while Jesus and his family were living in Nazareth, and it was during that time that John started his ministry. There is though quite a long time leap between chapter 2 and chapter 4, chapter 3 fits in towards the end of that period.

The Greeks use the word for *Baptise* to mean dyeing a garment, changing its colour; or also the means of getting water by dipping a cup into a bowl. John, alone in scripture, is described as a Baptist.

The wilderness of Judea: perhaps prophetic itself in that he did not go preaching in the towns but the open country. Spiritually the nation was dry and in need of water. John's job was to dip the cup and water the land. He did this through preaching and baptising his converts.

At this point in Matthew we begin the 'teaching part' of the book, this is the start of the first of five discourses in this Gospel and this first is the 'God is One, the Father is Supreme, Unity' discourse.

## 2

Repent, the Greek word is *METANOITE*: to perceive afterwards, to change your mind

Kingdom of heaven - God's rule. A timely reminder that God was King of Israel, and that his kingdom stretches beyond death to eternity. Stop sloppy living! Live for God!

## 3

John himself had been prophesied as coming before the Messiah, before the Lord. He would call out in the desert for people to prepare for God.

## 4

John lived a basic life, eating the provisions of God through nature. He wore cheap clothing and showed that life is more than material wealth.

## 5

Despite this anti-high society approach he was a sought-after man; those who are crying out to God will always go anywhere/ do anything to find him. It was clear that God was with John. Israel at this time was crying out for God, the religious establishment was barren and lifeless and God was found in the desert.....because prophetically Israel was a desert.

## 6

John preached repentance, there was a great conviction falling on people, they needed to repent and be baptised. The Old Testament was already over; sacrifice was not part of John's message, for Jesus was soon to be the one sacrifice required.

People needed to be dipped, their colour and lifestyle changed. The cup had to be immersed in new wine.



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**7**

Not surprisingly, the religious establishment came to see what was going on. It does not say they came to repent, just that they came to the place to see. John is bold and uncompromising.

He calls them 'poisonous snakes', crawling all over each other yet destroying and killing the life of those who came near, the people of God. Their rules, regulations, hypocrisy and dogma stifled all life in the people. John tells them that there is a coming wrath and they are in for it!

**8**

Bluntly, their lives should be clearly penitent; they should bear fruit that demonstrates they are a repentant people.

**9**

They claim sonship, descent from Abraham and, therefore, they are okay. The modern equivalent is 'of course I'm a Christian, I'm British'. Yet that does not lead to salvation. Indeed, descent of Abraham is of God's choice, not a natural birth.

**10**

John points out that it is good fruit God is looking for. He uses a vivid picture to say what it is God requires.

**11**

Baptism was not in itself the act of repentance but a symbol of it. Jesus would come, holy, and baptise in the Holy Spirit and power. John could bring repentant baptism for he himself was repentant; only Jesus could bring Holy Spirit baptism, for only Jesus is holy.

**12**

Once done, Jesus will 'clear out the barn', and only the holy, pure "wheat" will be kept; the rest will be burnt and great will be the burning of it.

**13**

Then one day Jesus came, all the way from Galilee. He's grown up now, over 30 years old we understand; his time of preparation over, John's time of preparing for him fulfilled. He came to be baptised, to submit; though He had no sin he was willing to humbly submit to John's ministry.

**14**

John testifies to Who Jesus is, he recognised his own needs of Jesus's power in his life. John did not understand why Jesus came to him. For more on this see the LUMIN PAMPHLET "Brides of Christ" in the Archive Resources/Discipleship section of [www.lumin.org.uk](http://www.lumin.org.uk) for more on the Baptism of Jesus. (Full url [https://www.lumin.org.uk/archive\\_resources/Disciple-pdf-pages/brides.html](https://www.lumin.org.uk/archive_resources/Disciple-pdf-pages/brides.html) )

**15**

Yet it was a sign of Jesus's consecration to God, that all righteous things were done by Jesus; that He identified Himself with human sin at the start of His ministry, just as He would become its answer at the end.

**16**

Once baptised, The Holy Spirit comes to rest on Jesus; His anointing is visible, awesome.



originally written in 1994

Isaiah 61 says *the spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me*. As a man Jesus needed Him just as we do.

## 17

And the Father spoke: all three members of the Trinity were involved here at the outset of Redemption just as they were at Creation. Jesus is beloved and pleasing to the Father. How father-like, He loves Him and is proud of Him.

# Chapter 4

## 1

The desert/wilderness: God's testing ground; deprived of all physical comforts Jesus shares the Israelites' wanderings of Exodus. Though they stayed in the wilderness for 40 years that was because they failed the test at first and were sent back; the purpose was to humble them and to "know what was in their heart". Jesus had to face the same: deprived of food, what would be more important: physical or spiritual needs?

Not that there was any doubt, but He had to be tested in order that He could be seen to be holy, especially by Satan.

The Spirit led him to be tested (tempted by Satan). He was not cushioned from the trial but led in to it. God does not make our path easy when the hardship is to prove us.

All this happen straight after the anointing.

## 2

Jesus was very much a human being; He was hungry after his fast. This is the only place in scripture where we read that He fasted; there probably were other occasions, but here we are told of it. It was both His response to the baptism and preparation for all that was to come in the desert and the ministry to follow.

## 3

Satan's first attack is to our physical needs; "put the physical first" he is saying; use your gifts for yourself, put your own needs as priority.

Note: Satan did not really doubt who Jesus was, the 'if' was part of the goading, not a question.

## 4

Jesus, recognising the parallel with Israel in the desert, quotes Moses's words of Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 3: bread, physical sustenance, is not the source of life. That which God speaks is; to reject that is to reject life: Jesus would not do that!

## 5

Jesus did not succumb to physical temptation, so now He is taken to the spiritual centre of the nation.

## 6

If He gave into this, then people would marvel at him and follow him as a sort of "superman"; yet He would be Satan's property (there are many people who have fallen into just such a temptation).



### originally written in 1994

The sin would be rebellion: "If God is with me" is the parallel Sim of doubt/rebellion expressed by Israel in the desert: "If God is with us we want water!" It's not an expression of faith (God is with us so He will provide) but of mocking.

Satan uses scripture, misapplied in the situation, to tempt Jesus; he still twists scripture today. Beware!

### **7**

Jesus, recognising the nature of the temptation, rebukes it. God will protect us in danger, but that is not a signal to "jump into danger" in order to see Him protect us.

### **8**

Now Satan parades worldly power before Jesus.

### **9**

What Satan desires is worship; he would give up power on earth to be worshipped by God Himself. Since Jesus came to save the world, it almost seems as if this was a way to do it; but it would be a sham, co-operating with Satan is always wrong and disastrous.

### **10**

The truth is, only God is to be worshipped; we must never forget that.

### **11**

Once the temptation was over, then the help came. We can expect God to be with us at all times, and to repair us after hard times.

Angels attended Jesus too, for he is God.

### **12**

John is imprisoned, his ministry is over; he had prepared the way, now Jesus moves to start His ministry, in Galilee. He would end it in Jerusalem, but it was starting 'up country' in the old Northern Kingdom.

### **13**

He moves to the lakeside from where he would draw his disciples and where so much of his teaching and miracles would take place

### **14**

Prophecy, of course, foretold this.

### **15,16**

Isaiah 9 is quoted. In the past, Zebulun and Naphtali had been humbled, Isaiah said; but now, from there, in "Galilee of the Gentiles", there would be a great light.

Moses (Deuteronomy 33: 23) had said Naphtali was "abounding with the favour of the Lord": which is proven by the time of ministry Jesus spent there.

Galilee was a sort of Jewish Peninsula surrounded by Gentile lands; hence Jesus ministered to the people of God in the midst of the non-godly. This is a picture of the church which would be the people of God surrounded by the non-godly.



originally written in 1994

## 17

“Repent”, to “after perceive” and change course because of doing so. The reason to ‘perceive anew’ is that the kingdom of heaven is near.

## 18

A human activity, walking. Two brothers, at work. What about them made Jesus choose them? Why not use people He’d passed earlier? God is sovereign and He calls these two to a special place (training to be apostles) - and martyrs!

## 19

No great sermon! Yet the essential message is there: come to Jesus. Follow Him, make Him Lord, Sovereign of your life. The two have to go together to be truly in and of God: to be spiritual. The focus has to be coming to Jesus; receiving Him and being received by Him. Then following....

## 20

At once. There is no room for delay. We must ‘leave our nets, all our old life stands for, and follow Him. Their following involved complete giving up of the old ways (as far as they were concerned at that moment - later they would continue fishing but that wasn’t clear at the time).

## 21,22

Again, two more fisherman. Did Jesus call Zebedee too? Or did he choose only the brothers? Which ever, He did call them and they followed

Here we see too that leaving family was part of the cost. They just went!

## 23

The disciples gathered (others followed too!) Jesus starts His ministry proper. The disciples would be the ones who would learn most, because they would see most. Jesus was demonstrating the kingdom of heaven even as he taught it.

*Every disease and sickness.* Nothing was beyond His Kingdom power. “Injuries”- NOSOS “softness” - MALAKIA : all was touched and overcome by Jesus.

## 24

Of course, such things are noticed; more came from other throughout the regions They would hear his teaching too (see 5: 1). Look at the list he ministers to

KAKOS – bad, illness

NOSOIS – injuries, disease

BASANOS – physical disease “testing of metals”

DAIMONIZOMAI – demonised

SELENIAZO – epileptics

PARALUTIKOS – Paralytics

ALL were healed

## 25

So His fame grew and spread; large crowds came from all directions.

If you want to preach a sermon this is a good method of bringing in the crowds!





originally written in 1994

# Chapter 5

## 1

The crowds came because of the healings; they wanted to see more. Having drawn them, Jesus starts to teach them; first he goes up a mountainside and sits. Those who would learn from him and follow him came to learn.

## 2

Jesus taught them:

## 3

Blessed - MAKARIOS - "lengthy"

Poor in spirit - to beg, a croucher, a cowerer, poverty stricken.

Those who are poverty stricken in *PNEUMATIKOS*: in power. Nothing keeping them inflated, they are empty. They shall have the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the opposite to being puffed up or proud or arrogant spiritually.

## 4

Mourn – lament

Perhaps over a loved one, or maybe due to spiritual deadness in Israel or the church.

Comforted – God the Holy Spirit will be their Comforter.

The first of these two is addressed almost against the religious bigots of the day, it isn't them that are blessed, they aren't the sharers in eternal life. Instead, those who aren't puffed up with themselves are blessed.

Secondly: widows were almost outcast in society; yet Jesus says they are blessed and will be comforted too.

Exciting!

## 5

Next – the meek or humble: PRAUS - "inward grace of the soul, chiefly towards God". An acceptance of God's dealings towards us as good – not resisted or argued with. It's linked with humility. It's the fruit of power, sourced in God. It's not selfish, it's rooted in God.

Such people: sourced in, dependant on God – will inherit the kingdom of earth at the second coming.

## 6

Hunger and thirst for righteousness equals right-wiseness. Quality of being just/right.

It's a hungering for God's justice, for men to act in accordance with God's ways.

Such hungering is filled – satisfied. For God's way prevails and is seen to do so by those seeking Him.

## 7

Merciful – the outward manifestation of pity/sympathy. Those who are merciful will receive mercy. It is to be actively compassionate.



### originally written in 1994

Note, this goes with a hunger/thirst for righteousness and justice. The one who wants to see justice done is also the merciful. This is best join together in God himself, Whose demand for justice and love of mercy led him to the cross.

### 8

Pure in heart – cleansed (literally) of heart. Those who have been made pure by Christ, only though so cleansed can see God.

### 9

Peacemakers – literally: those who bring, make, peace, harmony; such will be called sons of God.

### 10

Persecuted – driven away, put to flight. Such are blessed when this happens because of their faith and righteousness (demand for God's rule). They receive the Kingdom of Heaven which is an eternal inheritance.

Thus Jesus is drawing together key elements of the Gospel: a picture of true Christian life, a people based on God, built on God, desiring the things of God, demonstrating and reflecting God. Such are the people who are "blessed" – "made lengthy" in God's purposes.

### 11

Highlighting this further: Blessed are the reproached/insulted as well as the persecuted. Also when evil, untrue things are said against us (lies). When they do this because we follow Jesus then we are blessed by Him.

### 12

Remembering this we should rejoice and be glad (Grace acceptance) for we have great reward in heaven. We follow the prophets!

### 13

Salt, in OT, used as a covenant (Numbers 18: 19, 2 Chronicles 13: 5). It is still used as such in the Arab world. Also, clearly, the preservative and seasoning qualities of salt are alluded to here; salt that loses this quality is useless, it can only be thrown away.

Prophetically: Israel is the salt of the Earth, by rejecting the Messiah it lost its saltiness; it was thrown out (of the land) and both the people and the land were trampled by Gentiles for 1900 years.

The message is to all who would follow God: keep salty! Keep the flavour of heaven and let that be 'salt in the wound' of the sinful around you.

### 14

Light (the very first part of creation) and we are it: spiritual light, spiritual understanding, through us to others. Like a city on a hill (Jerusalem?) it can't be hidden. It must not be hidden. It is 'not able' to be hidden (literally).

### 15

We don't light lights and put them inside a bowl or grain bucket. It would go out as well as being useless, it is to be held up to bring light to all who approach. That is the job of Christians! The churches in Revelation 1 are called lampstands, the light goes on the stand and we are to lift Jesus on high so that He might be seen by all the house (world).



originally written in 1994

## 16

'Your light' is Jesus shining in you; we must show forth the good works, not our good works necessarily but the good works done in us and through us by God. Then He gets the glory.

## 17

An important teaching at the start of His ministry: Jesus is not doing away with the Jewish law, He is neither abolishing it nor overriding it. It stands. More, he fulfils it *PLEEROO* - to make full. He came to live a life that kept all the law and never ever broke it, to demonstrate God's way entirely. He came to fulfil the words of the prophets, to do and be the Person they spoke of. Everything in the NT has to be seen in the light of the OT.

## 18

The law stands: it is God's standard for life; the 10 Commandments hold good. We are exempt from the marks of Judaism (circumcision, sacrifices etc.) but not from the requirements of the commandments; neither will the prophecies change or be forgotten, all will be accomplished.

## 19

From such we see we have to keep the Law. There is no other way, we will be great in heaven if we do so. [Aside: We do not do it to be made right with God, for Jesus did that for us on the Cross. We keep the Law in order to *proclaim* God to the world.]

## 20

Righteousness is an inner thing (see verse 6), not an external one. Keeping the law starts in righteousness, it is of the heart not just an activity.

## 21

Murder! The wilful killing of humans; a commandment, do not!! The murderers will come to judgement.

## 22

But more: judgement comes on all who are even angry with someone. The word used for anger here (*ORGE*) includes long-term seeking of vengeance.

As an example Jesus quotes two verbal abuses; He points out that one is no less than the other, even though one (*RACA* – empty head) is answerable to human authority and the other (*MORE* – fool) is not; both are liable to God's judgement. Even though the second was humanly worse than the first both are judged by God.

## 23, 24

So mercy and forgiveness are important, don't come to God to make sacrifices (or anything) if there are matters of forgiveness to deal with. Show mercy, seek forgiveness, hold no grudges; deal with the *ORGE* (anger/vengeance) and get right with others then you can in honesty get right with God. This is similar to the peace in a communion service being before the communion itself.

## 25

Not only with your brother, but also with your "enemy".

Adversary / accuser: this is someone who is after you. The literal meaning of the word used for adversary is 'in place of justice'; someone acting outside of justice or instead of justice bringing you to the judgement themselves.



### originally written in 1994

Make peace with them, settle it. Don't hold things against them! Make it good, or you may end up in prison! Parabolically Jesus could here say that we have to make peace with God before we reach judgement.

### 26

For we will not get out until all is settled if we end in the hands of the courts.

### 27

Again the commandment is quoted: no adultery, no sex with a person when one or other of you is married to someone else.

### 28

Yet, Jesus teaches the depth of this is more than just the legal requirements of the law. 'Even' lust is included in the commandment, we are not to lust after that which is not ours. If married, our desire is for our spouse; if not, then we must be in control until we are. Lust is equal to adultery in Jesus's eyes.

### 29, 30

Gehenna was the ever burning city dump outside Jerusalem

It was

- 1) outside the city, and
- 2) the destiny of all rubbish deemed useless and unmendable,
- 3) constantly smouldering and, finally,
- 4) used by Jesus as a description of hell.

Here He teaches that we must be careful not to become 'completely worthless' ourselves. Better to throw away and declare useless that part of us which is already useless; He uses "right eye" and "right hand".

Eye: the bringer of light or revelation to the body. If it is bringing corruption get rid of it! (Not literally, but whatever brings in the corruption must go).

Hand: creativity, works. If what we do leads to sin then we must stop and do other things.

Note: things thrown in to Gehenna did not burn for ever. The dump did (because it was constantly being re-fuelled); what was thrown into it was consumed, it was eternally lost, it could not be brought back. There is much discussion about whether hell is eternal torment or whether people cease to exist when thrown there; you cannot decide the answer to that based just on this passage but have to reflect on scripture's full teaching on the subject first.

### 31

Divorce: not something God wishes; but, when it happens, it must be done "properly". The OT said there had to be a certificate of divorce, the couple have to publicly announce the end of the marriage; there had to have been indecency / fornication / adultery - these were the only acceptable reasons.

### 32

Jesus now gets behind the meaning of that: divorce is not good. Marriage is for life, if you do divorce and a new marriage is entered into then that is adultery. The word use for such a break of contract is *APOSTASIS*. Apostasy is one of the things God hates most. Marriage is supposed to be an unbreakable picture of God's commitment to us; if one partner is already an adulterer then the one divorcing them is not guilty of making them such.



originally written in 1994

### **33**

More broadly, God is against oath breaking at all times. Literally, we must repay the oaths we have made as if we have made them to God

### **34, 35**

Yet we should not be oath makers. We should not be calling down curses on ourselves for not keeping Vows. It is blasphemy to use God in this way

### **36, 37**

And it is foolishness to curse ourselves. Instead, we should be known as people of honour and of our word. Yes is yes and no is no, we should see that we are respected enough for that to be all we need to say

### **38**

Jesus continues to expand scripture. 'An eye for an eye' and 'a tooth for a tooth': the OT restriction on retaliation, thus far and no further may you go when you seek retribution.

### **39**

Jesus now further teaches: do not stand against/resist/oppose the malevolent person. Do not use violence to stop violence. The context here is clearly personal. Does it extend to national?

"Allow someone to walk over you" is essentially what He says. In His life, especially His trial, Jesus did just that; He offered no resistance and chided Peter for using a sword (and healed the damage done!)

### **40**

Be generous towards your accuser/aggressor; do not make excuses or stand your ground. Let them have what they want and more!

### **41**

Give more than the oppressor demands, give them out of love not just because of their force, when they let you go say "I'll help you some more!"

### **42**

Give to those who ask. All beggars? Did Jesus turn to all? Scripture does not say either way; He gave money to no one (neither do we read of the Apostles doing so, interestingly!) but He gave of Himself to all who asked. That is what this passage teaches us, not to hold ourselves as important but to give— even to those who would take/demand what is not theirs.

### **43**

An often twisted piece of scripture. God says love your neighbour but people have added "hate your enemy".

### **44**

Jesus goes on to say that all people, even our enemies, are our neighbours. We should take care of them and pray for those who persecute us.

### **45**

That we that way we truly reflect God's character as His children; He does not stop good things to those who oppose Him, for instance.



originally written in 1994

## 46

We must do more than just “love back”. We must love all, even social outcasts.

## 47

We must be ‘more than pagans’ in our love, we must love all.

## 48

And we must be perfect in our love and in these matters as our Father is perfect. We must be perfecting them: *TELEIO* – be complete, finished in these things. Get it right!

### **SUMMARY OF 38 TO 48:**

Don’t put yourself first. Lovell, especially those you are in contact with even if they’re against you or hurting you. Do more for them than they expect. Let Love Rule.

# Chapter Six

## 1

The chapter starts by looking at ‘acts of righteousness’: giving, praying, fasting.

We must make sure that such things are not done to promote ourselves, showy, looking for praise from others. Instead: they should be secret, known by us and God only. If we seek a reward among men, from them we will get it. If we seek it from God, from Him we will get it.

## 2

Firstly, giving. Notice when you give, not if you give; it is part of what Jesus expects (part of the Law Moses gave to God’s people). Yet it is not to earn congratulations, we should not be telling others we have done it! Getting ‘well dones’ off our neighbours is not what it’s all about.

## 3

Instead, we should do it quietly, unobtrusively, secretly. It’s impossible, of course, to always be completely secretive; you either give cash and are seen doing so, or pay by cheque or standing order and your name/account number gets attached to the payment; but that is not the same as deliberately proclaiming it.

## 4

God knows all we do, even the secret bits, the private things, and He honours us when and where man cannot. The promise too is that He will reward.

The Greek of verse one says ‘be careful not to parade your righteousness with the aim of it being seen by men’; that seems to sum up the teaching here. We will be seen sometimes, but what is our aim?

A famous person cannot hide from the press, but that does not disqualify her since her aim is to do things quietly. Her giving will be noticed, but she does not have to ‘parade it’.

## 5

When you pray! This is not a public, showy thing in order to declare our religiosity. It is not to draw attention to ourselves, that brings its own rewards (public recognition), it is false piety



originally written in 1994

**6**

But when you pray it should be unseen, secret, hidden; the Father is hidden from view so should be our prayer. We pray to Him in accordance with His nature, He does not 'show His face' in such a way that all will honour Him. We must approach Him where He is, hidden in the heavenlies and so be hidden with Him (Colossians 3:3 – *you died, and your life is now hidden in Christ with God*) the word used for hidden in that verse is KRUPITAS.

The Father is KRUPTO (hidden), He sees that which is KRUPTO (in secret).

The Father will reward those secret intimate times of prayer.

**7**

When. Not lots of words, not babbling, not noisy or showy.

**8**

Come in confidence. Father knows your needs, your thoughts, your feelings, desires, wants, even before we ask! *With thanksgiving let your requests be known* (Philippians 4:6)

Come to a Father who longs for intimacy and longs to answer.

## **9 TO 13**

'This is how you pray'

Adoration

Intercession

Petition

Confession

Protection

Worship

Simply, with childlike trust. "Daddy! Help!", "Daddy do something!", "I love you Daddy".

Knowing He is able, that He wants to do something and that He will.

Also it is 'our' Father; acknowledging the family we are part of, the Body of Christ.

## **14, 15**

Forgiveness: we need to forgive as well as ask for it, to hold no grudges. We pray having forgiven all wrongs done against you; if you do not, your Father will not forgive you the wrongs you have done. Awesome.

As so often, Jesus is painting God in a harsher light to make a point. God has forgiven all, for He did so at the Cross when Jesus took all sin from all people and paid the price. However, if we are unforgiving then we are blocking God's forgiveness, we become unable to receive it. It is not actually that God has not forgiven but that we refuse that forgiveness. The parable of the unmerciful servant teaches this, he was originally forgiven his great debt but then when he chose not to forgive the small thing he was owed he lost the forgiveness he had already received (see Matthew 18:21-35).

## **16**

When you fast. Note *when*, not *if*; fasting is to be part of the Christian life. It was part of Jewish culture and custom; there were fasting days in the calendar. Jesus's Jewish listeners would be fasters, so the 'when' was appropriate.

Is it a command to all Christians? My experience: it helps to keep the flesh desires in check, it can be tiring and bring on nausea. But it is not to be hypocritical, with lots of show and appearance of piety.

Also, all forms of self-denial are a type of fast, it is not just about food although that was the context Jesus was speaking about.



originally written in 1994

### **17**

Instead 'life as normal' in terms of looking just like you do any other day.

### **18**

Then it is between you and God alone and there is a promise: God will reward you if you keep it a secret, hidden thing (see verse 4 and verse 6).

There is a reward for what is done in secret: APODIDOMI- to give back, restore, return, recompense.

In secret we give, we pray, we fast. This threefold rewarding leads us to treasures in heaven:

### **19**

God's rewards: yes, they are on Earth, but largely in heaven; that is where we should be 'storing up' our treasures (it's where we'll be spending 99.9%+++ of our existence!)

Our earthly treasures do not last, they grow old and perish or are stolen; we cannot keep them.

### **20**

So we must store up treasures in heaven, reaping God's promised rewards since our Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. The reward may well be in secret for now but it is a reward of a very valuable sort!

Heavenly treasures do not wear out, they will be ours for ever; neither will they be stolen, there are no thieves in heaven!.

### **21**

The importance of all this is that it determines where our heart and our desires or our focus is; if we are keen on earthly goods then that will be our driving force; if we are keen on heavenly treasures then that will be our life's focal point.

### **22**

The Eye (that is, what we look at) give us our light. If your eye is focused on Jesus, your eye is good and So your whole body is filled with His light.

### **23**

If your eyes are focused on worldly things they are bad and you are filled with darkness. You are not letting God's light into your life. How great is the darkness if all you ever let in is dark not light.

### **24**

Our service is either to God or to worldly goods, we cannot serve both; either we are concentrating on treasures in heaven or those on Earth, both cannot be our aim. You will either serve one or the other, sadly many try to oscillate between both. Our devotion needs to be to God not 'mammon' (MAMONA – riches that we trust in).

### **25**

So do not worry, do not be anxious (drawn in different directions) about your life. "Cast your burdens onto Jesus for he cares for you".

Specifically mentioned here are:

food and drink,

body and clothes.

Life is more than these things.





originally written in 1994

**26**

Food: birds have enough! God provides and we are more valuable than they are.

**27**

Anxiety adds nothing to us!

**28**

Flowers have beauty bedecking them for God provides it

**29**

Even the finest human dresser is under-dressed in comparison.

**30**

Yet plants do not last long, even so God gives them beautiful clothing whilst they are around. He will provide, have faith!

**31**

So do not worry

**32**

Non-believers do all this, you have far more than they do! The Father knows you need life's necessities, so do not anxiously trouble yourself over them, it's His business!

**33**

Your job is to seek – earnestly desire, set your heart on –  
the Father's Kingdom. This is God's rule in your life and on earth, and  
righteousness - the quality of being just and right in your life.

That should be your goal, that which you want more than anything else.

'All these other things' (mere triflings in comparison) will be 'added to you', given to you, heaped on you *in addition* to the Kingdom and Righteousness as you make those two your aim.

**34**

So do not carry thoughts of tomorrow's needs around with you; seek God today, let Him meet today's needs today. That's enough!



# Chapter Seven

## 1

Do not judge. Jesus goes on in this chapter to show that we have to be able to discern those who are 'dogs or pigs' (verse 6) or 'false prophets' (15), and to beware of such. Here, he is however saying we must not set ourselves up as the one to judge them and condemn them.

## 2

If we judge and condemn we too will be so judged; if we measure out tough retribution we too will receive the same. The teaching is not to treat others as dirt, not to condemn them as worthless; that is God's business, that is not to say we should either accept all that they say (15) or spend a lot of time on them (6) if they are not responding.

## 3

Often what we judge in others is but a small reflection of what is wrong with us.

## 4

Hypocritically, we want to spend a long time dealing with their problem whilst totally ignoring our own.

## 5

So we should always be 'seeking righteousness' (chapter 6: 33) in our own lives in order to be able to help others. If we do this, we will not come to them in judgement but as pointers to Jesus.

## 6

We must discern those who are unclean spiritually, however; those who will not listen and are not receivers of grace; here is no point giving them pearls of spiritual truths, they will not be able to use them.

In context 'do not judge' follows 'do not worry' and so we should especially not judge those who are worrying. Many will be unable to receive this truth of 'trust God' in the face of their 'lot'. We should not judge them or cast the pearl of this teaching before them.

## 7

And, without worrying, we can come to God, our father who 'knows that we need food, clothes etc.' (6: 32). We should come as those who 'seek first his kingdom and his righteousness' (6: 33) and without looking around to condemn or judge others.

Then we can ask Him, confident without worry that He will provide.

Seek:

His face  
Kingdom  
Righteousness

Knowing we will find and knocking on the door to heaven (Jesus), knowing He will open a way for us.

## 8

The promise is for everyone who asks, seeks, knocks.



originally written in 1994

## **9 TO 11**

We give to our children in accordance not only to their needs such as food but also desires. We give good gifts (beneficial, undeserved) and so if as sinners we do that how much more will God do it.

## **12**

Our love for others must be based on the creed of 'treat them as you would like to be treated'. That is the whole thrust of the teaching of scripture on our attitude to each other.

## **13, 14**

The narrow gate, the narrow way. 'Constricted' is a good translation of the Greek; the way of God is constricted, there is less way of deviation. A broad road allows many paths, a constricted way gives you but one choice: forward or back. Only this path leads to life.

So: treasures should be in heaven not on Earth

No worrying

Don't judge others

Trust God, seek God, follow God.

## **15**

False prophets: those who point out the path on a broad way, they dress like Christians (sheep) but they are of the devil (wolves).

## **16, 17**

Recognise them by the fruit of their lives, what is their heart set on? It will be evidenced by the visible side of their lives. If that is peace, joy, strength, righteousness, love then you will recognise the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If instead it is turmoil, sexual wrongdoing, materialism etc. you will recognise a heart set on worldly things and not on Jesus.

## **18**

Jesus says a good tree is not able to bear bad fruit, nor vice versa; clearly even very spiritual people still sin. Jesus is not classifying the same as fruit but rather the fruit is the general view of the person. What they are producing mostly, what you see mostly in their lives; the results of their labours/life.

## **19**

This is a strong statement. Since 'tree' is identified as being a leader in Christian circles (Jesus is in the middle of talking about false prophets - those who lead the people in a certain way), the promise here is that they will fall if they are not bearing good fruit.

In these days it is vital that Christian leaders are Godly, those that aren't will fall.

## **20**

Even before they do fall, we must recognise them by their fruits.

## **21**

There will be Christian leaders who don't enter the Kingdom of Heaven! They will have been doing their thing, their programme, their will. Only those doing the Father's will have a place in the Kingdom.



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**22**

They will even have had power, speaking God's word and performing miracles, yet they were not with God.

**23**

And they never knew Jesus. That is tragic.

**24**

In the light of all that, wisdom is defined as hearing and doing Jesus's teachings. It's not our own views but His. It is building on a rock.

**25**

When problems come, the storm that rages against God's Kingdom, the person secure on the Rock will be safe.

**26**

But hearing only is not enough, we have to do what Jesus says, we have to put his teaching into practice (and the sermon on the Mount is being referred to specifically here). Just hearing, yet still doing our own thing, is like building on shaky sand.

**27**

When the trials come, the life – house built this way will crash.

See the number of Christian leaders who have fallen in sin, had they done things Jesus's way their sin would not have occurred (or they would have soon repented), they would have been secure on the Rock, and their ministries survived. (See Psalm 62).

**28**

A teacher who amazed! His words cut into their lives.

**29**

There was authority and power in what he had to say unlike the other teachers of the day. Jesus knew what (and Who) He was talking about!

## Chapter Eight

**1**

Such a teacher attracts a large following, large crowds followed; this man was electric!

**2**

A leper comes, he has heard of the other healings; perhaps he had been listening to the sermon. He has faith, he says "I know you can heal me if you want to".

He doesn't demand, he accepts Jesus's will.

He doesn't doubt, he puts his faith in Jesus totally.

He doesn't show shame, he kneels in humility and worship.

Jesus is looking for worshippers with faith, who humbly accept His will.



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**3**

Jesus responds to the worship and the faith: 'I am willing'. The words are simple: be healed; He does not pray, He does. The leprosy flees from the man, the Kingdom of God is restored in his body.

**4**

Jesus tells the man to keep it quiet, He does not want to be advertised by miracles. It is the teaching that must be told to others, not the miracles. Now the man must fulfil what the Mosaic law said. He now had to be declared clean by the priests and a sacrifice of thanks was still required. After any healing it is good to get a doctors certificate!

**5**

The might of Rome could only go so far, it was conquered by sickness! Yet this centurion hears of Jesus, recognises "someone greater than Rome is here" and asks. Jews were supposed to have nothing to do with Gentiles, so to get help from one would be unlikely.

**6**

This Roman officer called Jesus Lord. The Officer was concerned about his servant, literally child, but the word *PAIS* often meant servant or attendant.

**7**

Jesus responds to the Centurion's compassion, He offered to go to heal the servant. He says "I will go and I will heal".

**8**

Hearing that Jesus was going to heal, the officer says it is unnecessary for Him to go in person. Perhaps He recognised the outcry of the Jews if Jesus entered his house and did not want to cause trouble.

He demonstrates great faith "just say the word".

**9**

He explains that he understands authority and a word of command is enough to bring action; he thereby states he believes Jesus is a man with authority.

**10**

Jesus is amazed! No Jew had thus far expressed such confidence in Him.

**11**

And so He prophesied that many Gentiles will be added to the 'feast' in heaven with Abraham through faith (i.e. Christians).

**12**

Yet the subjects of the kingdom (many Jews) will be left out, even thrown out; they will have no part because they did not have faith in Him.

**13**

So Jesus issues the command as tersely as a Roman one: "it shall be done". And it was, God does as He says, there is no guile or variation; the Word of God and the Action of God are as one.



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**14**

The day was not over, the party arrived at Peter's house; Peter's mother-in-law was sick.

**15**

Jesus reached out in compassion and love, she was healed and in response waited on Him.

We are to wait on Jesus too, our waiting is to be our response to His love. [NB. Note the context of the word 'to wait' here. It is not idle doing nothing, it is active service].

**16**

That time of ministry to Jesus over, many now came that evening; many were demonised, afflicted by and affected by Demons. He freed them all with a word.

Many were sick and He healed them all

Jesus is the word of God, He heals with the word.

"Go" it shall be done (13)

He heals with a touch (15)

It is not a big thing, He is the Author of Life and the Life He gave "was good" (Genesis 1).

**17**

And Isaiah, viewing all this through the centuries ahead of him put it succinctly "He took up our infirmities and carried out diseases"

Infirmities - *ASTHENEIA* - weakness or without strength

Cast your burdens onto Jesus for he cares for you!

**18**

Jesus was not a follower of crowds, they followed Him. He was not after cheap fame, He knew the time to be with them and the time to be alone; so now He decides to leave.

**19**

First, he has approached by two who would follow Him. The Bible teacher first - *GRAMMATICUS* (scribe, town clerk) - who recognise Jesus as a teacher - *DIDASKALE* (teacher)

**20**

Jesus's reply is that the wherever to which He is going will always be a move, never a rest. He has nowhere which is His own, to lay His head. A follower must not mark out part of this world as 'his own'.

**21**

Another would-be follower wants to put first his family, time to draw that aspect of his life to a conclusion.

**22**

In contrast Jesus says just "follow Me"; it means leaving behind the old dead life, coming to a new life. Those without Christ can do the things of the Earth, those with His life must set their mind on things above.

**23**

Nowhere to rest, must keep going; and his disciples did follow.



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## 24

On the lake; Jesus has fallen asleep – this was a sudden storm.

## 25

The disciples, many experienced boatman and who knew the lake well, were scared; they knew storms like this were killers. Their skills could not save them, they knew no one else to turn to but Jesus; they were in full belief of death's imminence (literally "we are perishing" - APOLLUMETHA)

Yet Christ brings life and rescues us. No one with Christ is *apollumetha*. See 1 Corinthians 1.

## 26

Yet Jesus rebuked them because He had said "We are going to the other side" and they had not trusted that; so now He assumes his Kingly majesty and calms the storm.

## 27

The men are amazed; they recognise Jesus to be a different kind of man so they begin to see Him as the One who holds all things together.

Psalm 65 verse 7 says 'God our saviour is the One who stilled the roaring of the seas' see also Psalms 89 verse 9 and 107 verse 29. In all of this we see a declaration that Jesus is God.

## 28

Demonised men met Him, they had to come for He had come for them; God enters the region dominated by Demons a power contest has to follow, in fact it already had begun for the violent storm was probably their doing (the god of the region was a wind/weather god). But now He was here. These demons controlled the area through these men's violence.

## 29

They knew who He was, the Son of God, no doubt. "Why have you come for us?".

They knew their destiny: torture (hell) at the appointed time (day of judgement).

Demons recognise and acknowledge what they spend ages trying to convince men is untrue.

They recognised:

i/ in the end they would suffer be tortured and conquered;

ii/ this was not yet the end;

iii/ Jesus is the Son of God.

We have in this verse yet another declaration that Jesus is God.

## 30

Pigs! Uncleaness to Jews (this encounter is not in the land of Israel/Judea). Demons. Uncleaness.

## 31

Rather than go to be bound in hell now, they wanted to freely inhabit the pigs; symbolically then the uncleaness is banished to the pigs.

## 32

Jesus, with one word of command, tells them to go to the pigs; but He was not just cleansing and delivering the men; He was also redeeming the area. The god of that region had confronted Him and lost, so now it was driven out; the pigs all drowned. The area is cleansed; actually - by the dealing with the demons and symbolically - by the dealing with the pigs.

What is not of God likes the places where God is not. Jesus allows them to go where they want (actually they were doing what he wanted and ordained). The pigs – a whole herd, there were



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many Demons in these men – were drowned. The Demons had wanted to possess living animals but they had to fell from the Holy One.

### 33

The pig-herders run too, to tell, to declare what they had seen. God had come. News spread, God was at work. The Demoniacs were freed!

### 34

But this town was not a holy place. Jesus could not remain here. 'Leave please!' Sadly, many still treat him so. All the town comes out, but not to welcome; God had cleansed their area and they had lost their sin and filth. They were naked [no longer covered with the filth they had wallowed in] and wanted to hide from God (cf Adam and Eve in Genesis 3), they beg Him to leave for they want nothing to do with God.

"Show me a miracle and I will believe" says the cynic, but these men didn't.

## Chapter 9

### 1

Mission accomplished, Jesus did not stay long on "enemy territory"; He had raided the demonic territory and, unwelcomed by the locals, returned home. Jesus had had a special appointment on the eastern shore; that was done now it's time for home..

### 2

A paralysed person is brought, the people who brought him were exercising faith. "We bring him so that you will heal him!" Jesus sees faith in their actions (faith without works is dead – James).

Jesus recognises the need to build up the faith of the paralytic: He counters the (false) belief that sin causes sickness, not by theology ("sickness is not the direct result of your sin") but by forgiving the man's sin. Irrelevant that sin does not directly causing/sickness –It still needs forgiving! It would seem the man was guilt ridden, perhaps believing himself that his sickness was sin inspired. Jesus's words "take heart, cheer up, take comfort" were to wash him in order that he could receive more. Knowing sin is forgiven enables our spirits to rise to claim all that Christ provides.

### 3

Yet forgiving sin is God's prerogative and so by doing so Jesus is once more saying He is God. Another confirmation.

There were always the religious know-alls around! They must have hounded Jesus looking for ways to trip Him up, but they were always unable to. Of course if He was not God, then this would be blasphemy; but He is, and went on to demonstrate it again.

### 4

He did this firstly, by knowing what they were saying and declaring their thoughts to be evil (painful thoughts) worthless, toilsome; they are calling the work of God sinful. Jesus knew their thoughts, that must also have shaken them. How sad that it is the Bible teachers who do not recognise Him, and that is true today often too.





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**5**

Secondly by showing He did have authority for this. How? Well it is easier to say “your sins are forgiven” than “you are healed” because the second one is clearly measurable in terms of effect. Yet it is also of God, so if God backed Him up on the second, He could not have been blaspheming in the first. Anyone can say ‘your sins are forgiven’; it may be blasphemy, but it is not provable either way whether it has happened or not. But to say ‘you are healed’ is harder because it is demonstrable.

**6**

Jesus goes on to declare healing to the man who by now will have soaked in the forgiveness which was spoken with such authority that he knew it was of God. His faith had risen as his spirit leapt and he was ready for his body to be able to leap to!

Jesus speaks the harder thing too, this gives weight to His right to forgive sin – because the healed person has been freed of the effects of sin (as they believed).

In Isaiah 35 verse 6 God promises the lame will leap for joy in the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus brings that Kingdom to this man.

**7**

So he got up and went home. Doubtless rejoicing.

**8**

And the crowd, unlike the Bible teachers, give glory to God and recognise him as a giver of this authority; authority to forgive sins (as Jesus passed onto disciples in John 20 verse 23 as well as to heal.

**9**

Jesus did not call everybody, He called those He chose to call. Why? Doesn’t God want to save everyone?

Yes, of course; but so far in this gospel we have met many who refused to believe. Jesus did not call them because He knew they would not follow. Here He is choosing one to be a leader, an apostle. So he knew first that he would respond and also that he was right to be a leader in the Kingdom. When Matthew was trained then he would take the gospel to many more than Jesus could. He had to choose the right people (and Matthew would write it down to!)

Those not called had no grounds for complaint. Had they been called, they would have refused to follow. Matthew is called and Matthew follows.

**10**

When we let Jesus into our lives he comes in to sup with us (Revelation 3: 20).

Matthew has already begun the gospel spreading, he invites many of his former colleagues to eat with and hear Jesus.

**11**

The Bible teachers object “what is he doing eating with outcasts?” they ask “proves he can’t be from God!”

**12**

But Jesus points out He has come to restore the broken, to restore the hurting.



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### **13**

And he accuses them of missing the mark to, of not knowing scripture truly. Hosea 6:6 says God desires mercy not sacrifice. In other words, He would rather we acted in love to Him and others than acted in a religious way. And Jesus said He had come for the unholy, to call them, not the 'righteous' – those already justified by their religion. [Not that He was saying that they were thus justified, but that He was looking for those who would be penitent, not self righteous.]

### **14**

Why? The question we all love to ask, instead of seeing all that God is and gives we ask 'why?' about details.

John's disciples asked why they fasted but Jesus's disciples did not. Their implication, more generously their searching, was that there was something unholy and wrong about Jesus's disciples.

Or maybe they wanted to be released from fasting themselves!

### **15**

Jesus reminds them of who He is: the Bridegroom. There is a wedding feast going on, or soon to start; you don't fast whilst the groom is there, only if he is taken away.

Jesus brought heaven (the Kingdom of Heaven) to earth; while He was here heaven was here. We won't be fasting in heaven. But between Coming One and Coming Two we fast and pray and see only glimpses of heaven.

### **16, 17**

He explains too that this is something new; the old 'wineskin' of Moses's covenant will not hold the new covenant without breaking. The New fulfils the Old (or rather Jesus fulfilled the Old to institute the New), and so the old practices were broken and stopped after Jesus sacrifice. So don't look for holiness in the old ways, see it in the vibrancy of the New.

### **18**

Having spoken of the kingdom He then actively proclaims it too. The man exercise faith, he believed, he came, he honoured, he worshipped (knelt), he asked. Faith in action

### **19**

God goes with us, especially in our hour of need.

### **20, 21**

The woman exercised faith; she believed, she came, she honoured, she worshipped (expressed belief in His power), she asked, (by touching, reaching out).

'Only touch his cloak' - God is invincible and mighty We do not need much from Him to satisfy all our needs.

### **22**

God notices us. Especially in our hour of need, she received all that she had asked for.

### **23**

Jesus came to the ruler's house; a funeral dirge was in process, this girl was dead and long enough for them to have told the neighbours.



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**24**

Jesus speaks. He is mocked (so often that is true today) yet the father's faith was in action, so he let Jesus continue. People prefer eye-evidence to faith-evidence.

**25**

The unbelief removed, Jesus brings the girl to life. He took her by the hand and held her, God gives life to us as well.

**26**

The mocking stopped! The gossip of the gospel starts! The dead girl lives! God has been here! The father received all that he had asked for.

**27**

"Have mercy!" these men were blind, but they had heard. The spiritually blind cannot see the Lord but they can hear of Him and they will come.

"Have pity that meets our needs" Son of David – Messiah, they expressed faith in who He is.

**28**

But Jesus does it behind closed doors, He is not about public showmanship. This is not the big miracle crusade. And first, a check: "do you believe in Me, my ability, who I am?"

Yes – they exercise faith in Him.

**29**

That faith is what provided them with the ability to receive the healing. It wasn't what healed them but what released the healing. Faith in the person of Jesus, in His goodness ('have mercy') and His ability.

**30**

Their sight was given, their 'eyes were opened'. The spiritually blind became believers, the physically blind became seers.

But – don't tell anyone. Jesus did not want to be a travelling showman. He did not want people to come for healing physical ailments. He wanted them to meet Him and to be put right with God, the physical would flow from that.

**31**

But – the gossip flowed: "Jesus did this". It's put Him at risk too, from the religious bigots who could not allow such things of God (see v34).

**32**

A dumb man, also a demoniac. The two problems were doubtless the same, the demon made him dumb. He was brought to Jesus.

**33**

Power encounter. Jesus V darkness. Darkness has to flee when the light comes. The man speaks, Jesus releases all our bondages. This man was free to speak, the crowd were astonished, they marvelled and wondered – this was new to them.

It was new to Israel, such miracles were not seen in the Old Testament (the dumb being healed, the demonised freed).



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### 34

But He was accused of being a demonised person by the Pharisees. Those who are supposed to know and teach the things of God had become so steeped in their experiential theology that they could not allow God to minister the supernatural, especially through an 'unordained' man. He wasn't even a Levite!

### 36

Jesus went on. His mission:

- To preach the good news
- To teach the Scriptures
- To heal the sick (NOSOS - sickness, MALAKIA - weakness)

### 37

He went with compassion, a taking on of their problems to prayer and action. They had problems (harassments), no-one to help and they were without direction. How like people today!

### 38

He recognises in them a harvest: for the Kingdom of God. They want a helper, they will respond to the gospel.

### 39

We need to pray that God will send out workers to reach such people today, to share Jesus's mission and go with His compassion.

## Chapter 10

### 1

Jesus has told them to ask the "Lord of the harvest" to send out workers into his harvest field. Presumably they do this, and now He sends them out! So often God tells us to pray, we pray, then He makes us the answer to our own prayer.

He gave them authority. When tempted by Satan, Jesus was offered power and rule of "all the kingdoms"; but power is not authority, it is a second rate imitation based often on fear. Authority is based on the person and their character, and their position; power is based on money, weapons, et cetera.

Jesus appoints His disciples with His authority; what they do He is doing through them. They are not basing their ministry on how many follow them, on how big the buildings are, on their fame, on power, but on Who commissioned them.

Authority comes from above (God's commission), power comes from below (people's subservience). This authority placed under their command evil spirits, disease and sickness.

With authority must go faith: faith that the Giver of Authority will honour His giving,, faith in Him, not fear of the problem being dealt with.

### 2-4

Names are important. It wasn't just a group of 12 that Jesus trained, it was 12 individuals. God knows us and we are never overlooked by him.



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Simon	Hearing
Peter	Rock/Stability
Andrew	Manly/Courageous/Brave
James	(derived from Jacob: Supplanter)
John	Yahweh has been gracious
Philip	Lover of horses (i.e. leans on military strength)
Bartholomew	Ploughman (son of ploughers)
Thomas	Twin
Matthew	Gift of the Lord (of Yahweh)
James	Supplanter
Lebbaeus/ Thaddaeus	A man of heart, courageous one that praises/breast
Simon the Zealot	Hearing
Judas	Praise the Lord

The panel gives the meanings of their names as recorded by Matthew. Some of them had alternative names, such as Thaddaeus who is called Jude elsewhere in the New Testament. In fact, in the Greek the text here says "Lebbaeus whose surname was Thaddaeus"; the AV includes that but later translations erroneously miss it out.

The names here do not seem to make a statement in the same way that the earlier names did.

## 5, 6

Their mission was to the Jews, who should have recognised Jesus as the promised messiah and accepted the message gladly; He describes them as lost sheep (Isaiah 53): all Israel had gone astray.

## 7

The message: the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Jesus brought heaven to earth, His people do the same. As the two touch, so earth is restored, people made whole and Jesus glorified.

## 8

As they proclaim, so the restoration follows. They were to heal, restore, and deliver. No charge, no payment, no limit. Freely they were to pour from themselves to others.

## 9, 10

Yet, though no charge neither were they to pay for themselves! Instead, they were to travel with a minimum of worldly goods and receive from those who gave. Not expected, but not refusing it either! A difficult balance to keep, and one that is always a tough test for a Christian. Does it imply that there will be Christians with wealth to share, in order to pay for those who go? Or that the ungodly who repent will want to give freely to those who told them the good news? In context the latter seems more likely. Yet in Acts we see Christians with their own homes and belongings, sharing them but nonetheless having them.

## 11

A worthy person (AXIOS - someone of weight and substance in goodness.) Stay there, align the gospel with such a person.

## 12

Having found him, where he lives, enter his house and bless it and his household with SHALOM, peace.



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### **13**

Now is the test: for if the worthy man and his family accept the peace, well and good; but if they reject peace do not leave it there.

Peace is from God; it is a central part of the gospel. Only those who receive God can know the peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4). Those who refuse it and do not welcome it cannot keep it.

### **14**

The point here is not to keep trying with someone who clearly rejects the gospel; leave them, move on. Those who will receive our important, those who do not must not be allowed to waste your time.

Clearly we need to see what God is doing and whether the person is responding in spirit even if with the outward signs they are rejecting. That is why we need to see what happens to the peace; someone can initially say "go away" whilst inwardly receiving and wanting more. Only when they are rejecting spiritually does the peace return to you; we need to have spiritual wisdom and discernment in this area.

### **15**

Some in Sodom and Gomorra (Lot and his family) received and accepted. Yet those who rejected did not have the full revelation of Jesus whilst any who rejected the disciples were rejecting Jesus's own commissioning of them.

### **16**

Jesus warned them "you are like sheep among wolves. They will want to devour you. You need to be shrewd" (PHRONIMOS: shrewd, wise, sensible.) Not going in to silly situations which are dangerous.

Yet also to be innocent as doves (AKERAIOS: harmless, single eyed, unmixed) only focusing on the things of God, not getting sidetracked into Godless ways.

### **17-20**

The message will meet opposition so we need that shrewdness, Yet we will be persecuted by:

- arrest,
- flogging

And also given opportunities to speak to

- World leaders

We will be given what to say as the Holy Spirit speaks through us.

### **21,22**

Betrayal by family members and death and hatred but with salvation in the end.

### **23**

We are not to be put off by all this but to press on; one persecution simply move us on to the next place and so on. History shows this is how the church is spread and grown.

### **24, 25**

Yet our persecutors are just like Satan, the 'Lord of the flies': they buzz around, they irritate but they are harmless - just a pest!



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**26**

So we must have no fear of the opposition (no phobias) they are pests but not to be feared. Flies, not wasps; hidden things will be made known in the end.

**27**

We must speak out what Jesus gives us to speak out, openly and publicly. What we hear from the Spirit quietly we must shout out aloud.

**28**

Yes, our bodies can be hurt by them but our souls cannot. Eternity is reality; the reality. Obey Him.

**29**

Yet God knows and values you so you do not need to be in terror of Him but in reverent fear. He knows every sparrow and where they are, without His knowledge and consent not even a sparrow dies.

**30**

He knows too how many hairs are on our heads. He knows us well, all about us, and cares for us.

**31**

We are worth so much more than sparrows, so do not fear; we cannot fall without His consent and if He gives it it is both for His glory and our best: Heaven!

**32**

Jesus is looking for anyone who confesses Him or acknowledges Him, to those who are giving allegiance to Him. As we let it be known we are for Him, so He lets it be known in heaven that He is for us.

**33**

But similarly, those who deny this openly are denied in heaven.

**34**

He goes on to explain what it means to show this allegiance. It will cause division, not between Christians but between those of Christ and those who not of Him. It will cause death, Christians will be persecuted (He is not here giving a call to arms such as in the crusades, that idea is refuted in Gethsemane when Peter drew his sword).

**35, 36**

He quotes from Micah 7: 6, in context this says 'the day God visits you: now is the time for their confusion. Do you not trust a neighbour, or friend, for a son dishonours his father, etc.'

He was claiming a messianic prophecy for Himself. Reminding them that when God comes it causes confusion, people join God's side or not and such divisions happen even in families.

**37**

So our allegiance to Christ must be beyond all earthly alliances, even our families. We must put Him first, not them.

He is not saying we should not love family members, but don't let that love stop you from following Christ first. These verses are especially important today for those converts from other faiths, and must be a special comfort to them.



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But, due to more subtle pressures, they are also important for those from non-Christian western families.

### **38**

To take up a cross is to walk the walk of death. It is only picked up on the way to crucifixion; so for us it is a resolute walk because, unlike the Roman prisoners, there is choice involved: no-one is beating you with a stick to make you carry it. It is deliberate self-denial; that is the attitude Christ wants in us, to put our own wants and ways to death to obey Him.

### **39**

So our aim is not to 'find ourselves', that is loss, but to lose ourselves and find Him: that is life

### **40**

Given all that, that we are carrying the cross, denying self, acknowledging Him, clearly followers of His team, then anyone welcoming us are welcoming Him and when rejecting us they reject Him. We are so identified with Him that we become the visible manifestation of Him.

### **41**

Those who recognise our calling and His hand on us and receive us knowing this will be rewarded accordingly.

### **42**

Acts of kindness towards even the least in the kingdom will be rewarded.

## Chapter 11

### **1**

Jesus moves on, and begins to talk to the public, not specifically to His followers.

### **2,3**

News spread and John heard; he had met Jesus at His baptism, and now asks for confirmation that He was the Messiah.

### **4**

"You will be known by your fruits". Jesus quotes and OT prophecy of the Messiah (Isaiah 35: 4 – 6). He quotes it by saying:

### **5**

The blind are seeing, the lame walking, etc. In other words this prophecy is being fulfilled. (If only we knew today the prophecies and Scriptures clearly and well, so we could be convinced of His soon coming)

### **6**

Literally *blessed is whoever is not offended by Me*. In other words: yes I'm no blasphemer I AM God.

### **7**

Jesus asks about John, what had the crowd believed of him? Was he "nothing?" Just like grass, blown around by what ever fads come along?





originally written in 1994

**8**

Was he, instead, a Somebody? Important, rich.  
No to both of these.

**9**

Was he a prophet? The crowd had gone in numbers to him, why?  
Yes: he was a prophet, but more so!

**10**

He himself had been prophesied of (no other prophet had); he was the messenger, sent to prepare the way of the Lord. They knew he was to come, his coming was a sign that God, the Messiah, was coming soon. He had been and now had gone from the scene, a sure sign that the Messiah must be here.

**11**

John was the most important person, yet also the least in the kingdom; John was the Best Man, but the Church is the Bride.

**12**

The kingdom of heaven is here and is advancing, taking captives for Christ as people cast off Satan's ways and forcefully turn to Christ, against all opposition. An army on the move, invading and claiming new ground.

**13**

John is in the prophets and the Law, he would come to announce the kingdom was approaching.

**14**

He is "Elijah", the prophet who prepared the way for new things (the start of the prophet era in Israel).  
Since John, the kingdom age is advancing on.

**15**

Such a thing will only be understood by those who *will* (that is an active willing) to hear. Not just hear words, but in hearing act to hear truths.

**16**

Jesus goes on to look at the generation, which sadly was on the whole not hearing. Just sitting, playing, 'gabbling' like children. Not going anywhere.

**17**

Unable to connect with what God is doing, making up rhymes to ridicule what they don't understand.

**18**

John was wrong because he fasted

**19**

Jesus was wrong because he didn't.



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They were closed to the Truth because it didn't fit their preconceptions, which were confused anyway.

Yet God's wisdom is greater and shown to be right by the outcome

### **20**

People were looking for God on their own terms, and missing Him completely as a result. He was there, doing great things; yet even his holy Presence should have been enough.

They did not repent though.

### **21, 22**

So He denounces the cities he had not been received well in. Tyre and Sidon had been destroyed for refusing God in the OT but God had not actually walked in them. If He had, Jesus said, they would have repented.

Korazim and Bethsaida did not and they were destroyed by the Romans in 60 to 70 A.D., because they did not heed Jesus. They were without excuse.

### **23**

Capernaum to, Jesus's base for much of his ministry, would be razed by the Romans; it had rejected God so He could not protect it.

### **24**

Even Sodom which had Lot, a righteous man in it after all, will fare better at Judgment.

### **25**

So Jesus turns to praise and worship; gospel truths are there for those who can receive as 'little children'. All great wisdom of earth does not enable us to receive (this, by the way, is illustrated in Gulliver's Travels which contains a parody of man's wisdom versus common sense).

### **26**

It was God's goodwill and pleasure to do it this way, so that no-one was unable to receive because of a lack of knowledge/wisdom

### **27**

God has placed all things in Jesus' hands, at His disposal, in His rule. Jesus is Lord over all because He is under God. The knowledge they have of each other is complete, even knowledge of God could only come to us through knowledge of Jesus; know Him, know God!

### **28**

It is Jesus that gives us rest from all of life's trials and burdens, it is He who restores us.

### **29**

As we walk with Him we learn to walk straight, He carries the burden, but only whilst we stick close to Him under the same yolk (two oxen); with Him we have all we need.

### **30**

For with Him we get no new burdens; He is, like an anti-gravity device(!), making life easier! That is not to say that we have no trials and tribulations, but that He walks in them with us and, if we let Him, exchanges stress and anxiety for peace and trust.



originally written in 1994

# Chapter 12

## **1,2**

A quiet restful walk, yet even here 'they are watching you, marking all you do'. We are never off duty; it is natural, and was lawful, to pick and eat from the field but it was a sabbath and doing so infringed the rabbinical / pharisaical codes. So the accusations came.

## **3,4**

Yet Jesus knows their hearts and he refers to other incidents when the spirit of the law is maintained, despite breaking the letter of it.

## **5**

Even the priests themselves work on the sabbath, the duty of making the sacrifices. Yet they are innocent of breaking the law, hence the Pharisees had interpreted it all wrongly.

## **6**

Jesus declared himself to be bigger / greater than the temple, greater than the old law code. This transcended it.

## **7**

The law was written by the God of mercy, He looks to the needs of individuals.

## **8**

Jesus should know, He and not the Pharisees is in charge of the sabbath.

## **9, 10**

So they came to the synagogue and there is a man with a bad hand. They still want to trap and test: "can we heal on the sabbath?" they ask. "No!" is their answer, is Jesus going to break this rule too?

## **11**

Yet He answers by talking about what they do; they make exceptions to rescue their property.

## **12**

Yet human life is more precious than animal life and more precious than property. Doing good is fine on the sabbath!

## **13**

So He does! He simply speaks healing, gives a command. The one who obeys Jesus reaps the reward and his hand is healed.

## **14**

Marvel at the miracle? No, the ones who will not obey are blinded to the truth, and want to kill Jesus in order to be able to regain control and power. Christians who live by God's way not man's can always expect opposition from those whose power they threaten.

*That completes the notes as written in 1994, unfortunately I did not continue to work through Matthew at the time. Whether I return to write more here remains to be seen!*