

# **MATTHEW**

You, God, and a KJV Bible

By Eric Neumann

Copyright 2016

### **Copyright Notice**

The author hereby grants permission for any and all material within this commentary to be reproduced free of any fees to the author, provided that said materials are not sold for a profit.

### **Quotations**

The only material quoted in this book is the Word of God in the King James Version. No commentaries or scholars are quoted, because God's Word is important, not man's word. As such, I encourage all readers to be good Bereans by searching the scriptures to see if what I have said is true (Acts 17:11). It is okay if you do not agree with what I say, but it is not okay if your disagreement is not based upon the Word of God in its proper context, which involves "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

### **Goal**

The goal of this commentary is to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5) so that members of the body of Christ may "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

### **Contact the author**

Therefore, the author encourages any disagreements be brought to his attention so that future versions of this commentary can be changed if deemed necessary.

You may e-mail the author at [Bibledivider@gmail.com](mailto:Bibledivider@gmail.com).

## **Books by Eric Neumann**

All books are available in paperback and in Kindle formats by going to: [www.amazon.com/author/bibledivider](http://www.amazon.com/author/bibledivider). You may also access the author's sermons by going to: <http://www.youtube.com/user/bibledivider/videos>.

Eric's Bible study guides on the following books are now available:

**Matthew**

**Mark**

**Luke**

**John**

**Acts**

**Romans**

**Hebrews**

**James & I Peter**

**Revelation**

In addition, the following books are available:

**A Bible Believer's Bible Summary: How to Understand the Bible** – Section 1 is a narrative of the Bible from beginning to end, while section 2 gives a one-sentence summary and a key verse from each book of the Bible. (84 pages)

**Bible Per-VERSIONS: How Satan Changes God's Word to Lead You Astray** – Over 850 Bible verses are listed in the KJV, NIV, NKJV, and NLT with comments to show how modern versions stray from the truth of God found in the KJV. A topical guide and an explanation of why modern versions are perverted are given. (248 pages)

**How to Be Led by the Holy Spirit: Discerning God's Will for Your Life** – This book examines a megachurch pastor's decision-making process, compares this process to scripture, and shows God's way to be led by the Spirit in making decisions in your life. (34 pages)

**A Bible Believer's Critique of Ironside's "Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth": A Defense of Paul's Mystery** – (150 pages)



## **New Testament Introduction**

Amos 8:11 says: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.” This famine is the 400-year period between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. There were no prophets from God during that time.

The book of Matthew puts an end to this time of silence from God, due to the timeline God established for Israel in Daniel 9:24-27. Matthew begins approximately 35 years before “Messiah be cut off” (Daniel 9:25), which leaves only 7 more years of prophecy—the tribulation period—before God establishes His eternal kingdom on earth (Daniel 2:44). Therefore, God sends John the Baptist to “prepare...the way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3) by preaching that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). Thus, the gospel or good news of the kingdom is preached, making John the Baptist the greatest prophet to arise (Matthew 11:11).

This is where the book of Matthew begins. There are 2 things that must take place before God can establish the kingdom. First, He must provide the sacrifice for sin (Isaiah 53:5-6). Second, Israel must be ready to be the priests of the Lord to the Gentiles, so that they may be saved, as well (Isaiah 61:6).

The books of Matthew through John show the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, fulfilling the 4 aspects of the Christ that were prophesied in the Old Testament. Matthew shows Him as Israel’s king (Jeremiah 23:5), who will bind Satan, take him off the throne, and sit on the throne Himself (Matthew 12:28-29). Mark shows Him as Israel’s servant (Isaiah 42:1), Who would provide the sacrifice for Israel’s sins, so that they can enter the kingdom. Luke shows Him as Israel’s man (Zechariah 6:12), Who lives a perfect, sinless life, so that His sacrifice for their sins will meet the justice of God, while appeasing His wrath against sin. John shows Him as Israel’s God (Isaiah 40:9), Who has the power to take them from being in Satan’s grasp (Jeremiah 31:11) and bring them into the kingdom.

These four aspects of the Messiah are summarized by the four “Behold” statements in the Old Testament:

Zechariah 9:9 “Behold thy King” – gospel of Matthew

Isaiah 42:1 “Behold my servant” – gospel of Mark

Zechariah 6:12 “Behold the man” – gospel of Luke

Isaiah 40:9 “Behold your God” – gospel of John

The next step in the process is to prepare Israel to have faith in God to bring them into the kingdom. All 3 members of the Godhead are needed for this. God the Father sends John the Baptist (John 1:6) to prepare the way for the Lord (Matthew 3:3). Unfortunately, Israel beheads him (Matthew 14:10). God

the Son comes to Israel in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, Israel crucifies Him (Matthew 27:25). In spite of the warning that the Holy Ghost is the only member of the Godhead left for them to reject (Matthew 12:31-32), Israel rejects Him in Acts 2-7 with their final rejection of Him being the stoning of Stephen (The one-year ministry of the Holy Ghost during Acts 2-7 is prophesied by Jesus Christ in Luke 13:6-9.). Thus, God accomplishes His purpose in Matthew – John, but Israel fails to believe (John 12:37).

### **Matthew Introduction**

The book of Matthew shows Jesus as Israel's king. He says, in Matthew 15:24, that He is "not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Thus, He is ISRAEL'S king in Matthew. His goal is to save ISRAEL at this time, not the entire world. He gives His life a "ransom for MANY" (Matthew 20:28), which is Israel (Isaiah 53:11). Jesus' giving of His life as a "ransom for all" is not revealed until "due time" (I Timothy 2:6), which is when it was revealed to Paul in Acts 9 (Galatians 1:11-12). If you do not understand this, you will not understand what Matthew is saying, and you will not overcome Christianity's false teaching that Matthew is written to you today.

Matthew 1 connects Jesus' genealogy to King David (1:1). He is treated as a king by wise men from the east (2). The way is prepared for the king by John the Baptist (3). Jesus frees people, bound by Satan's kingdom (4:23-25). He gives His people His law (5-7). When Israel rejects Him as king (12:24-27), He stops giving clear instructions to Israel and speaks to them in parables so that they may not understand the mysteries of the kingdom (13:10-11), since they are outsiders. He prepares the believing remnant to take over for Him, by appointing Peter the leader while Christ is not on the earth, giving the apostles the authority to forgive or not forgive sins (16:18-19). Jesus shows His people His coming glory in the kingdom (17:1-5). In the meantime, He shows His disciples that He has not been accepted as Israel's king yet (21:1-11), but the believing remnant will accept Him as king (21:43). He warns the believing remnant of the false kingdom, which is apostate Israel (23). He tells them how they will know this false kingdom is coming to an end (24). He tells them of the Jews (25:1-30) and the Gentiles (25:31-46), who will be part of His kingdom. We see the false kingdom's plot to overthrow Christ as king (26-27) by crucifying Him. Jesus' resurrection shows that plot is not successful, and Christ sends His disciples out to build up His kingdom (28), since, as the conquering king, "all power is given unto [Jesus] in heaven and in earth" (28:18).

**Summary:** The Christ comes as Israel's king (2:2), binds Satan through His death, burial, and resurrection (12:29), and now has the power to bring Israel into the kingdom (28:18).

**Key passage:** 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

**Important Note:** Most Christians try to apply directly the book of Matthew to themselves more than any other book in the Bible. However, Matthew is not directly applicable to us today because it was written to Israel in their program. Matthew is merely a continuation of Israel's program from the Old Testament with the plan of God Himself coming as a man to deliver Israel from being Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24). This must be kept in mind if we are to understand properly the book. Matthew's goal is to show Jesus as Israel's king, not as your king!

**1** This chapter focuses on Matthew's goal of showing Jesus as Israel's king by showing His royal line, tracing it back to King David, but also going back to Abraham to show He is a Jew and Abraham's promised seed.

**1:1** God promised Abraham that He would bless all families of the earth through him (Genesis 12:3). Thus, Jesus is mentioned as being the son of Abraham. God also promised that David's son would rule forever as king (II Samuel 7:12-16). Thus, Jesus is mentioned as being the son of David. We are also told that His generation is of God, as opposed to the religious leaders of the day being part of the generation of vipers that are of the devil (Matthew 3:7 and John 8:44) and as opposed to everyone born before Him in Adam's line (Genesis 5:1-3). Therefore, in just the first verse, we learn that Jesus is of God, and that He will fulfill God's Abrahamic and Davidic covenants with Israel, meaning that He will reconcile the earth to God through the nation of Israel, and He will sit on the throne, ruling and reigning over the whole earth forever.

**1:2** Christ's genealogy starts with Abraham since he was chosen by God to start the nation of Israel. Thus, Jesus is a Jew. And, He is a Jew of the heart, not just physically, since He came through the line of faith. In other words, He came through Isaac, and not Ishmael. He came through Jacob, and not Esau.

**1:3** Phares was born of an incestual relationship that Judah had with her (Judah was her father-in-law (see Genesis 38:6,18,29)). This shows that Israel was not a holy nation. Rather, it was very polluted with sin and needed a kinsmen redeemer—the Lord Jesus Christ—to save them from their sins.

**1:5** Ruth was a Moabitess, but she proselytized herself as a Jew by agreeing to serve Jehovah God (Ruth 1:16). This shows that God is not necessarily concerned with having physical Jews in Jesus' line, but with having Jews of the heart in the line, because, at this point, it is only the Israel of God that Jesus Christ came to save (Galatians 6:16).

**1:6** When Israel wanted a man king to rule over them, it showed that they had rejected God as their king (I Samuel 8:7). God gave them Saul to be their king, but then He replaced Saul with David, who was God's choice to

be king. Although David physically died, God never replaced David as His king. Thus, he is called “David the king” here, and no one else is called “king” in Matthew 1.

**1:6** Jesus’ royal line continues through David through a child born to him from the woman he committed adultery with and murdered her husband. This shows that God’s choice of David as king was because of his faith in God and not due to any works of righteousness he had done.

**1:11** Israel’s Babylonian captivity is mentioned, showing that Israel did not keep God’s law covenant with them. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ would have to fulfill the law in their place (Matthew 5:17).

**1:16** Note that Joseph was not the father of Jesus. He was Mary’s husband, and Mary was the mother of Jesus. God was/is Jesus’ father. Matthew lists Jesus’ genealogy through Joseph, while Luke gives us Mary’s line. Since Joseph would be God’s line, the genealogy starts at Abraham, which is where God started the nation of Israel. Since Mary would be man’s line, Luke’s genealogy goes all the way back to Adam and then to God (Luke 3:23-38).

**1:17** Matthew does skip a few names in his genealogy. The ones skipped are skipped on purpose, resulting in 3 groups of 14 generations from Abraham to Jesus. People like to use skipped names as proof that the Bible has errors in it. However, if there are mistakes in the Bible, they certainly would not be in something as simple as stating names. In other words, if man wrote the Bible and tried to pass it off as being written by God, man would make sure there were no names missing here. The fact, that a few names are missing, shows that God skipped them on purpose.

Man’s accusation, then, that God’s Word is not infallible, shows man’s negative bias toward God’s Word so that man does not have to be bound by it. Instead of looking for reasons not to believe God’s Word, we should believe that it is true, and then search for why the Bible does not match up with what we think is the truth. When we do that, we allow the Holy Spirit to teach us the hidden wisdom of God (I Corinthians 2:6-13). This is how we come into the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).

**1:18** Now, we are told the real Father of Jesus was God. Jesus’ virgin birth is absolutely critical because it means He was born without a sin nature. This makes Him the second Adam (I Corinthians 15:45). He could not save the lost sheep of Israel, or us today for that matter, if He was born with a sin nature.

**1:21** This is the first time God revealed the name of the Messiah to be Jesus. The scripture quoted here is Isaiah 7:14, which says His name is Immanuel—God with us (1:23). His name of Jesus was a secret until this time. This is why He would not reveal His name to Jacob in Genesis 32:29.



**1:25** Mary was a virgin only until Jesus was born. Later on, she had children with Joseph through natural means, as mentioned in 13:55.

**2** Gentiles worship baby Jesus, while the Jews do not care about Him, even though He is their Messiah.

**2:2,16** The wise men traveled for about 2 years to find the Messiah after seeing His star. Psalm 19:1-4 says that the heavens declare the glory of God to the whole earth. The constellations had the gospel message in them. Having studied this message and knowing that “there shall come a Star out of Jacob” (Numbers 24:17), the wise men knew, by the star’s appearing, that the Messiah had been born. Thus, even Gentiles living far away from Israel could know of the Messiah’s birth. Note that it was Gentiles who first tried to find “the King of the Jews.” The Messiah was born and lived for 2 years, and the Jewish religious leaders did not even bat an eyelash! They did not care about the Messiah. The believing remnant did, though, and they had been talking about it since the Messiah’s birth (Luke 2:38).

The Jewish religion had God’s Word to them and did not believe it. The Gentiles believed the Messiah had been born, based upon a star showing up! Acts 17:27 says that the Gentiles could “seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him.” The Jews had God in their very presence in the temple, and they did not believe! This should tell us that we should not be concerned about sending missionaries to the “unreached nations” of the world today. God has already given them witness of Himself (John 1:9; Romans 1:19-20), and they may believe God more than the Christian religion in the United States does!

**2:3** All of Jerusalem is apostate. If not, they would be thrilled that their Messiah was born, rather than being troubled.

**2:4-6** The Jewish religious leaders knew the prophecy of Micah 5:2 of where the Messiah would be born. Therefore, they knew from the beginning about the Messiah’s birth, but they did not trust in Him. They spent His entire life trying to keep people away from Him, when they should have been pointing Israel to the Messiah.

**2:11** The wise men brought 3 gifts. That is why people say that there were 3 wise men, but we are never told how many wise men there were. The wise men are the first to honor Jesus as the Lord over the whole universe. It shows their great faith that they travel 2 years to find Him and give Him gifts fit for His position, even though He was only 2 years old!

The three gifts represent His three offices of prophet, priest, and king. A prophet spoke for the Lord, Who calls the flesh dead (Colossians 3:2-3). Thus, the wise men brought myrrh, which is an embalming fluid for the dead (John 19:39). Song of Solomon 3:6 says that, when Christ comes to Israel, He is “perfumed with myrrh and frankincense.” Frankincense is used

in offerings brought before the Lord by the priest (Leviticus 2:1,2,15,16). Therefore, frankincense speaks of Jesus being Israel's priest. Finally, the gift of gold symbolizes Jesus being Israel's king. Therefore, the wise men chose the 3 gifts that represent the 3 thrones that Jesus would take over the whole universe as prophet, priest, and king.

**2:13** From His birth, Israel did not want their Messiah. At age 2, He had to flee to another country to avoid being killed!

**2:15** The prophecy fulfilled here is Hosea 11:1. For Israel, Egypt is a type of sin. Therefore, by Jesus Christ coming out of Egypt, this prophecy typifies how God will bring Israel out of sin through Jesus Christ's sacrifice for their sins.

**2:16-18** Herod's killing of all the children 2 years and younger in Bethlehem is another prophecy fulfilled regarding the Messiah that Jesus, if He were not really the Messiah, had no possible way of fulfilling Himself. This prophecy is found in Jeremiah 31:15. Perhaps the reason why God had Jesus born in the smallest area of Judah (2:6) was so that fewer children were killed by Herod.

**2:21-22** Although Jesus technically grew up in Israel, Galilee was considered to be a Gentile area because they were not involved in the Jewish religion (4:15). It was important for Jesus to grow up outside of the Jewish religion as much as possible, since they would be the ones to kill Him. However, even the Jews in Nazareth attempted to kill Jesus at the beginning of His ministry (Luke 4:28-31).

**3** The believing remnant follow the gospel of the kingdom, separating themselves from the apostate nation of Israel and its leaders.

**3:1,3** Israel is so corrupt that the one preparing the way for the Messiah has to preach in the wilderness. Israel has to go "outside the camp" in order to be saved (Hebrews 13:13).

**3:2,6** The gospel of the kingdom in order for Israel to be saved was to change their mind ("repent") and believe in God's law covenant with Israel, rather than in continuing in religion, and be water baptized to be cleansed from their idolatry (Ezekiel 36:25). Both changing their mind AND being water baptized were required for salvation (Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38).

Note that "repent" means to change your mind. It does not mean to turn from your sins, as a lot of Christians think it does. Since "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and "in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18), we have no capacity to turn from our own sins. Therefore, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, **while we were yet sinners**, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). We cannot

turn from our sins. We can only believe in the finished work of Christ to FORGIVE us of our sins.

**3:2** God's kingdom is now at hand, meaning that Daniel's 70-week time schedule was about complete (Daniel 9:24-27). God's kingdom would come after Messiah is killed and the 7-year tribulation period ends.

**3:4** John the Baptist looks like Elijah (II Kings 1:8), and he has come in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Israel should see him, hear his message, and think of Malachi 4:5. Instead, they do not believe his message, and so he is not Elijah (John 1:21).

**3:5-7** So many people in Israel came to John in the wilderness that the Pharisees and the Sadducees came to try to put a stop to it. You know they are not believing the gospel because John calls them the "generation of vipers," which means they are children of the devil (John 8:44).

**3:8-12** Immediately, John identifies the two groups in Israel we have seen throughout the Old Testament—the apostate nation and the believing remnant. The apostate nation thinks they will enter God's kingdom because they are physical Jews. John tells them that is not enough. They must also repent and be baptized. Then, after Jesus' ascension, they will be baptized with the Holy Ghost. If they do not repent, they will be baptized with fire for all eternity. When Jesus comes the second time, He will separate the wheat (believing Israel) from the chaff (apostate Israel). The wheat will enter God's kingdom, while the chaff will dwell in the lake of fire (13:30).

When Christians hear the word "baptized," they immediately think of water. However, there are three, different baptisms mentioned in Matthew 3:11 alone, and only one of them is water. Therefore, when we are told today that we are "baptized into [Christ's] death" (Romans 6:3), we should not automatically assume this is water baptism. Rather, it is a dry baptism into Christ's death so that we can also be identified with Him in His resurrection (Romans 6:5). This is the "one baptism" that God recognizes today (Ephesians 4:5). Satan tricks people into thinking it is water baptism so that they do not live in the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3:10** Here, God first tells the Jewish religious leaders that they will soon be replaced by members of the believing remnant if they do not join the little flock themselves. "The power of the Lord was present to heal them" spiritually at this point (Luke 5:17), but the nation, as a whole, will choose to continue to live in apostasy.

**3:15-16** Jesus is baptized by John in order to be ordained as a priest so that he can reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24). He was washed with water, and the Holy Ghost's coming upon Him was His being anointed with oil, according to the requirements for a priest's ordination,

found in Exodus 29:4,7. Jesus did not need to repent and be baptized for salvation because He was sinless.

**3:17** God the Father gives confirmation to the believing remnant at the beginning of Jesus' ministry that Jesus is also God.

**4** By overcoming Satan's temptations, Jesus does what Adam and Israel did not do. Having persevered, Jesus starts gathering Israel to be part of God's kingdom.

**4:1-2** My guess is that, when God led Israel out of Egypt, if they would have believed, they would have been in the wilderness for 40 days and then entered the Promised Land. Instead, they were there for 40 years. Now that Jesus is God's ordained priest, God has Jesus make the journey of faith that Israel failed to make. Jesus goes to the wilderness and makes the 40-day journey from the Red Sea to the Promised Land. Unlike Israel, Jesus makes the journey by faith. He does not complain about not having food and water like Israel did, e.g., Exodus 15:22-24.

Note that God sustains Jesus so that it was only AFTER the 40-day journey was over that He became hungry. Luke 4:2 tells us He was tempted by the devil for the entire, 40 days. However, because He lived "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (4:4), He hungered and thirsted after righteousness (5:6), which kept Him from yielding to the devil's temptations during those 40 days.

**4:3-10** Jesus has not eaten for 40 days, and He is hungry. Satan tempts Jesus with the lust of the flesh (vs. 3-4), the lust of the eyes (vs. 5-7), and the pride of life (vs. 8-10). This is Satan's threefold attack on everyone (I John 2:16).

We see this with Eve, too in Genesis 3:6. She saw the tree was "good for food" (lust of flesh), "pleasant to the eyes" (lust of the eyes), and "desired to make one wise" (pride of life). In all 3 cases, Satan's temptations were things God had already promised Jesus, but they were future, while Satan offered them to Him now. Thus, it was a faith issue of trusting God's Word by waiting on God. In all three cases, Jesus quotes scripture (Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13) to show He is trusting in God's provision and will not yield to Satan.

**4:6** Satan even quotes scripture (Psalm 91:11-12) with his temptation of Jesus. The context of this scripture is Jesus' first coming, and Jesus actually thwarts Satan's attack by using "His truth" as His "shield and buckler," as mentioned in Psalm 91:4. Satan actually misquotes scripture by adding the phrase "lest at any time." If Jesus did not trust in God's inerrant, preserved word as His final authority, He would have succumbed to the temptation. (It is no coincidence that modern translations take out

the phrase “lest at any time,” making Satan quote Psalm 91:11-12 correctly!)

The reason so many people today try to follow Jesus’ teaching in Matthew – John, although His teachings for today are in Romans – Philemon, is because Satan has blinded most Christians, who trust in scripture, to trust in the wrong scripture so that they do not serve God today and their effectiveness in serving God in heaven for eternity is greatly diminished, just like Satan tried to do with Jesus with the timing being just a little bit off.

**4:5,8** Note that Satan brought the temptations to Jesus. Even a perfect man cannot stay away from temptations.

**4:8-9** All the kingdoms of the world belonged to Satan at this time, including “God’s” nation, Israel. This is why Jesus came to earth—to redeem Israel from being Satan’s lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24) so that they could be a kingdom of priests to the rest of the world (Exodus 19:6).

**4:11** With the 40 days of temptation being over and Jesus being in the Promised Land, the devil leaves Him. Note that Jesus receives from God the Father 2 of the 3 things that Satan had just tempted Him with: 1) Angels come to His aid, and 2) They give Him food. The third thing, the kingdoms of this world, will be given to Jesus at His second coming (Psalm 2:8 “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”)

**4:12-16** Just like Israel when they entered the Promised Land under Joshua, this Joshua (“Jesus” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Joshua”) sees Satan in firm possession of the land. First, in less than 2 months’ time, the religious leaders have gone out into the wilderness and have thrown John into prison. So, while Jesus was journeying from the Red Sea to the Promised Land, the nation was going backward from the Promised Land to the wilderness to keep believing Israel from entering the Promised Land with John.

Second, we see the territories of Zebulon and Naphtali are so far into sin that they are called Gentile territories. The land of Israel had two, big problems—one area was lawless and did great wickedness (Galilee) and one area was full of religion (Jerusalem). Jesus ministered for 3 years in Galilee with multitudes following Him. He did not last one week in Jerusalem before they killed Him. This shows that false religion is far worse than evil, wicked living. However, man looks at it and says that Jerusalem is “the Holy City,” while Galilee is evil.

**4:17** Jesus begins His ministry. He preaches the same gospel-of-the-kingdom message that John the Baptist preached. He calls Jews to go forth to God, away from apostate Israel, “bearing [Jesus’] reproach” (Hebrews

13:13). They do this by trusting in God to bring them into the kingdom by obeying God's law covenant with them.

**4:18-22** Peter, Andrew, James, and John begin following Jesus. This is not their first time seeing Jesus (see John 1:40-41). They had been following John the Baptist, who had pointed them to Jesus. Now, the time is here for Jesus to increase and John to decrease (John 3:30). Therefore, they now follow Jesus.

**4:23-24** Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom, which is to believe in God to bring Israel into the kingdom with the covenant He made with them and to identify themselves with the believing remnant by being water baptized (Mark 16:16). He did not preach the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24), which is to trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for atonement of sins (I Corinthians 15:3-4). That is today's gospel. In fact, Jesus did not even speak to His disciples of His death until Matthew 16:21.

Also, note that Jesus healed all brought to Him—not just ones who had enough faith. When someone is not miraculously healed today, people claim it is due to a lack of faith. However, Jesus healed ALL brought to Him, which shows the faith aspect is in the person doing the healing, not in the person being healed. We see this clearly demonstrated in Matthew 17:15-21, when the disciples could not cast a devil out of a man, but Jesus did cast it out. The two great categories of miracles were healing the sick and casting out devils. Both represent physically what Israel needed spiritually. They needed to forsake their idols and be healed from being Satan's lawful captive.

## **5** How to obey God in the tribulation period

**5:1** There are great multitudes following Jesus, but He only teaches His disciples. Jesus goes up to a mountain to get away from the crowd. The mountain is a picture of the kingdom, and His being set is a picture of the throne. So, we see a foretaste of the Lord in His kingdom, sitting on His throne, telling the little flock the things they need to know and observe to endure unto the end (24:13) of the tribulation in order to enter into the Lord's kingdom on earth. Therefore, this first verse of the famous "Sermon on the Mount" tells us right away that the message is for Israel to make it into God's earthly kingdom. It is not for us today to follow. After all, God tells us today that "our conversation is in HEAVEN" (Philippians 3:20), but He told His disciples: "the meek...shall inherit the EARTH" (Matthew 5:5).

**5:2-12** "The Beatitudes", being in the context of 5:1, are for the little flock to get through the tribulation period. Our instructions today come from Romans – Philemon.

**5:3** The poor in spirit are those who take no thought for how they will be fed (6:31), because they cannot provide for themselves, since they did not

take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). Today, those, not providing for their families, are worse than an infidel and have denied the faith (I Timothy 5:8).

**5:4** The little flock will mourn in the tribulation period because they do not have food, and they see fellow believers being persecuted and even killed (Revelation 6:9-10).

**5:5** In the tribulation period, most in Israel follow the Antichrist because they believe he is the Messiah and have brought them power in the kingdom. However, the little flock will be meek, not seeking power, but will be given power by Jesus at His second coming when they inherit the earth.

**5:6** The little flock will hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ's coming kingdom (II Peter 3:13). Therefore, they will be willing to go physically hungry and thirsty during the tribulation period so that they are not spiritually hungry and thirsty for all eternity. That is exactly what Jesus did in the 40 days in the wilderness. It is no coincidence, then, that Revelation 12:14 says that God nourishes the little flock in the wilderness for the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period.

**5:7** With the little flock being persecuted during the tribulation period, they are to be merciful to each other by providing for their physical needs whenever possible (10:40-42). In turn, God will be merciful to them by rewarding them in His kingdom.

**5:8** This verse is a reminder to the disciples not to worship the image that the beast sets up (Revelation 13:15) or follow the Antichrist. Otherwise, they will not see God in His kingdom. See Psalm 24:3-6.

**5:9** The peacemakers are members of the little flock who go throughout Israel, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, so that Israel might be saved. This is what Jesus commands in 10:5-6 and says in 10:23 that they will not go over all the cities of Israel before Jesus comes back. In Isaiah 52:7, these people are said to be publishing peace. Therefore, they are the peacemakers. They make peace between Israel and God by Israel accepting the gospel they preach to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38).

**5:10-11** If they go throughout Israel and preach the gospel during the tribulation period, they will be persecuted for righteousness' sake. Jesus says in 10:17-18 that they will be delivered to councils and scourged in their synagogues. When this happens, they should keep in mind this verse that they will receive the kingdom of heaven, and, in that kingdom, Jesus says they will "receive an hundredfold" what they gave up in the tribulation period (Matthew 19:29).

**5:12** Israel's promise is to rule and reign with Christ in God's kingdom on earth. 6:9-10 says that God the Father is in heaven, and the prayer is for

His kingdom to come. Therefore, it is the kingdom of heaven come down on earth. Revelation 21:2 shows New Jerusalem coming down to earth out of heaven. Revelation 22:12 says that Jesus has the little flock's reward with Him. Thus, their reward is in heaven until it is brought down to earth with the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming.

**5:13-16** God had set Israel to be a kingdom of priests to reach the rest of the earth for God because all the earth belongs to Him (Exodus 19:5-6). This makes them the salt and the light to bring the gospel to the rest of the world. The problem is that the salt has "lost his savour." This is a call, then, by Jesus for his disciples to let the light shine before Israel that they may be saved and regain their savour to reach the rest of the world with the gospel. Note that this is done by the good works they do. This is what James is talking about in James 2:14-17. Israel will see the little flock taking care of each other. This is men seeing their good works. Then, as a result, those men may glorify God and be part of His kingdom, also.

**5:17-18** The little flock needs to do the good works commanded under the law during the tribulation period as a testimony to unsaved Israel (5:16). Jesus does not destroy the law. The law program of the Old Testament continues throughout Israel's program. The facts that, today, we are under grace, not under the law, (Romans 6:14), and heaven and earth have not passed, show that the book of Matthew is not written to us today. Israel was under the law. We are not under the law today.

Now, people argue that Jesus fulfilled the law through His death on the cross, but that is not true. He was made a curse under the law (Galatians 3:13), but the law continued on. In fact, Jesus told the little flock, in Matthew 28:20, that they were to teach the nations to observe what He had commanded them to observe, which, according to Matthew 23:2-3, is the law. Then, IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM, we still see the law going forth out of Zion (Isaiah 2:2-3). When Jesus says "till all be fulfilled," He is not talking about all the law. Rather, He is talking about all the things in Israel's program that will reconcile Israel to God. Those things are: "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy," as listed in Daniel 9:24. Once those things are fulfilled, the old covenant passes away, and God puts Israel under the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Today, the old covenant "is READY to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13), but will not be "fulfilled" until Jesus' second coming, when everlasting righteousness is brought in with the new covenant.

**5:19** Because they are still under the law, when the little flock goes to Israel with the gospel of the kingdom and they accept it, the disciples need to teach them to obey the law. Matthew 25:20-21 says that the little flock, who preaches the gospel and teaches the law to Israel, will be ruler over many. This equates to what Jesus says here about being great in the kingdom.



After all, why would Jesus tell His disciples to teach the law to Israel if He is going to abolish the law with His death on the cross?!

**5:20** The Pharisees obeyed man's commandments (Mark 7:7). The little flock needs to obey God's commandments. Then, they will have God's imputed righteousness.

**5:21-48** Now, Jesus will show how to obey God's commandments as opposed to man's commandments, which the Pharisees teach. He is separating tradition from God's law. Note the contrast in this passage between what has been said by tradition/religion and what God says (cp. vs. 21-22, vs. 27-28, vs. 31-32, vs. 33-34, vs. 38-39, and vs. 43-44).

**5:21-22** The Pharisees said that "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13) meant they had not broken the law unless they physically killed someone. However, God says that they have broken His law if they are angry with someone, because the law says "thou shalt not...bear any grudge against the children of thy people" (Leviticus 19:18). Breaking the law makes them in danger of hell fire because they have sinned. What Jesus is doing is He is showing that the law is a heart issue, not an outward flesh issue. Therefore, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). So, how does their righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20)? By believing the gospel of the kingdom, thereby, receiving God's imputed righteousness unto them.

**5:23-24** God only accepted offerings brought under the law if they had a pure heart behind them. That is why God said in Amos 5:22 that He would not accept their offerings. Therefore, they should work out things with others before they bring an offering to the Lord.

**5:27-28** Again, the Pharisees said that they had to commit adultery to break the law. However, God's law says not to covet thy neighbour's wife (Exodus 20:17). Therefore, they have broken God's law if they commit adultery in the heart.

**5:29-30** The little flock should not let anything keep them from entering into God's kingdom. Plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand really will not help them enter God's kingdom. Since sin is in the heart, they will still sin without appendages, but the point is that they should not let the flesh keep them from entering God's kingdom. The plucking out of an eye or the cutting off of a hand will literally happen when the Antichrist does these things to those who will not deny Christ. Spiritually speaking, the believing remnant will pluck out an eye or cut off a hand by saying "death to the flesh" by their refusal to obey the Antichrist because they have faith in God's promise to bring them into God's eternal kingdom on earth.

**5:31-32** God allowed divorce under the law, but it was because of their hard hearts (19:8). If they are to have pure hearts, obeying the heart of the

law, they will not get divorced unless the spouse has already “divorced” the other by committing fornication. However, Jesus is saying much more here. He is ultimately referring to the covenant that God had with Israel. They are not to divorce God for a covenant with the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27). Rather, they should keep the law covenant with God throughout the tribulation period.

**5:33-37** If the little flock obeys the law, they will not have to swear by God to make their word truthful. People will know their word is their bond. This is contrast to the Pharisees, who “say, and do not” (23:3).

**5:38-42** The little flock needs to be merciful in the tribulation period, as covered in 5:7. Apostate Israel may smite them, but they are not to fight back (v. 39). Their possessions may be taken away from them, but they will not do them any good since they cannot buy and sell since they did not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). Therefore, they should be willing to let go of all their possessions (v. 40). They should help out fellow members of the little flock, too, being good companions and giving to those in need (vs. 41-42).

**5:43-47** God’s law says to love thy neighbour, and it does not say to hate thine enemy. In the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37, Jesus shows, in answer to the question of “who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29), that all of Israel is their neighbour. Therefore, the little flock should love all of Israel, even those persecuting them. By doing so, their light shines before men so that they may glorify God their Father (5:16).

**5:48** Perfection means completeness. For the little flock, completeness comes by trusting in God to cleanse them and bring them into the kingdom. Fundamentally, this is a heart issue, as Jesus has said in Matthew 5. The Pharisees say, “I am righteous because I obey the law.” The little flock says, “I am righteous because God has given me His righteousness, as I recognize that I cannot obey the law perfectly.” Therefore, the way the little flock is perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect, is that they are “complete in” Christ (Colossians 2:10). They recognize their hearts are desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9), and they trust in God to give them new hearts under the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:26) in the kingdom.

**6** The religious leaders of apostate Israel will appear to be righteous (vs. 1-18), but only those who seek the kingdom of God (the little flock) (v. 33) at the expense of basic needs (vs. 25-34) will rule with God in His kingdom.

**6:1-18** The Pharisees do not obey the law, but they want everyone to think they do. Therefore, they do three things to make themselves appear good before men: 1) Give alms (vs. 1-4), 2) Pray (vs. 5-15), and 3) Fast (vs. 16-18).

**6:1-4** The little flock will give alms. They will actually sell all that they have and give it all away (Luke 12:33), as pictured by the widow giving her two

mites (Luke 21:2-4). The little flock gives alms in obedience of God's command, while the Pharisees do it to receive the praise of man.

**6:5** Luke 18:11-14 gives an account of one of these prayers by the Pharisees. Their prayers are to men, telling of how good they are. They pray aloud so that men hear them and think great things of them. Proverbs 30:12 says they are pure in their own eyes, but they are not washed from their filthiness. By contrast, the prayer of the believing remnant is done in humility, asking for God's help to continue to trust in God's Word over the Antichrist's word.

**6:8** The believing remnant will be asking for God's help in the tribulation period as they are persecuted by apostate Israel for trusting in God and denying the Antichrist.

**6:9-13** This is commonly known as the Lord's prayer. However, it is what Jesus taught His disciples to pray during the tribulation period. (The Lord's prayer is found in John 17.) It is NOT for us to pray today, because it relates specifically to Israel's program. Our prayers today should be spiritual in nature, such as what is found in Ephesians 1:17-23.

**6:9** From the first word of the prayer, we see that this prayer is for Israel to pray during the tribulation period. "Our Father" refers to Him being Israel's Father. God calls Israel His son in Exodus 4:22. God is called their Father in Isaiah 63:16. The fact that their Father is in heaven is a rebuke of the nation of Israel. They were supposed to be a kingdom of priests to reconcile the earth back to God because all of the earth belongs to God (Exodus 19:5-6). Yet, God is not on earth, because all the kingdoms of the earth belong to Satan (Luke 4:5-6). God is in heaven because Israel failed to do their job. God's name has been profaned by both Jews and Gentiles (Ezekiel 36:23). However, the believing remnant can hallow God's name by continuing to trust in Him through the tribulation period.

**6:10** The little flock should pray for God's kingdom to come because that means that the tribulation period and their suffering through it will be over. God's will is not being done on earth, but it will be done in His coming kingdom, just like His will is already done in heaven today (Deuteronomy 11:21).

**6:11** We do not need to ask God to give us daily bread today, because we go out and work for it. In the tribulation period, since they cannot buy or sell, they cannot buy bread. God will have to give it to them, just like He did for Israel when they were in the wilderness (Exodus 16:4 and Revelation 12:14). Note how Exodus 16:4 says they received bread from God **every day**, just like the prayer here for "daily bread." By contrast, we are told today that, "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8).

**6:12** Because the little flock will not be able to buy or sell since they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17), they will be borrowing from each other (5:42) as food and other necessities are given to them by those wanting to bless Israel (25:34-36). In this economy, they are to forgive the debts that they owe each other, since they will have all things in common (Acts 2:44).

**6:13** The way God delivers the little flock from evil is by His Word. The little flock needs to keep in mind that the Antichrist's kingdom is temporary, while God's kingdom will be forever (Daniel 2:44).

In Matthew 4:1, Jesus was led into temptation by the Spirit. Temptation is good if you overcome it, but it is not good if you do not. Knowing that the deception program of Satan will be so strong during the tribulation period that, if it were possible, the elect would be deceived (Matthew 24:24), Jesus tells the little flock to pray that they do not have to go through temptation. However, if they do go through temptation, they are to ask God to deliver them from evil. I Corinthians 10:13 says that "with the temptation" God will "make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it." Therefore, when God leads them into temptation, He can also deliver them from evil by them believing His Word to them. But, because Satan's deception program is so strong during that time, it is best that they ask God not to lead them into temptation. The temptation in mind may be having to make the decision to bow down to the image of the beast and lose their salvation (Revelation 14:9-11) or not bow down and be killed (Revelation 13:15).

**6:14-15** Conditional forgiveness is part of Israel's program. They must have faith plus works in order to enter God's kingdom. If they would not forgive men, God would not forgive them. Contrast this with the dispensation of grace that we currently live in, where we are to forgive others BECAUSE we have already been forgiven by God (Ephesians 4:32), not in order to receive forgiveness from God. Matthew 6:15 and Ephesians 4:32 stand in direct contradiction to each other if we try to apply the entire New Testament to us today. We must rightly divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15), or we no longer believe that it is the Word of Truth.

**6:16-18** The Pharisees fasted to appear holy to others. The little flock will fast out of necessity. They will not eat food because they have no food because they refuse to take the mark of the beast. This is meant to get Israel to realize that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Jesus says, in Matthew 17:21, that the only way the little flock learns this lesson is "by prayer and fasting."

**6:19-21** Apostate Israel will be wealthy in the tribulation period because the Antichrist will give them riches for taking his side. By contrast, the little flock will be poor and needy. Jesus' instruction here, then, is for the little

flock not to be envious of the apostate nation, because the little flock will be rich in God's eternal kingdom.

**6:22-23** Light and darkness, here, have to do with doctrine. Apostate Israel will be rich materially, but their souls will be dark and they will end up in the lake of fire.

**6:24-34** Jesus continues to tell His disciples that, in the tribulation period, they will have to choose between: 1) Taking the mark of the beast and having food, clothing, and all the basic necessities, and 2) Having faith in God and His Word by not taking the mark and relying upon God to take care of their basic needs.

**6:24** "Mammon" is a reference to the riches of this world. Note Luke 16:11, where Jesus calls the riches of this world "unrighteous mammon."

**6:25** Again, this is for the tribulation saints. They are not to worry about where their next meal will come from because they do not have food. God will take care of them (6:26). Today, in this dispensation, we have the ability to work in order to buy food, and we have denied the faith if we do not work to support our family (I Timothy 5:8). Again, there is a contradiction between Matthew and Paul's epistles if we do not rightly divide the Word of Truth.

**6:26** The fowls of the air are no accidental mention here. Elijah was fed by a raven during a famine (I Kings 17:4-6). Similarly, God will take care of His tribulation saints, even though they cannot buy food.

**6:30** No one throws grass into an oven. Grass, then, must stand for the nation of Israel. They will go through the fire of the tribulation period (Malachi 3:2-3). Only those, trusting in God and His Word, will survive this oven, while the apostate nation will be burned. Therefore, it does not matter how much wealth people accumulate in the tribulation period, because it will all be burned up if it is not spiritual precious metals, i.e., works to build God's kingdom.

**6:33** This is a famous scripture quoted by Christians. However, in today's dispensation of grace, we are to work for our food. If we do not work, we do not eat (II Thessalonians 3:10). In the tribulation period, the believing remnant are to trust in God and His Word and preach the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, relying upon God to add food, clothing, and their basic necessities to them.

**6:34** "The morrow" is a reference to the day of the Lord when, at the end of the tribulation period, God will destroy the wicked, apostate nation and give the kingdom to the believing remnant. "The morrow" is when the evil of the tribulation period will be destroyed. "The morrow" stands in contrast to the "to day" of 6:30. Note Hebrews 3:7-8,12-19, where the invitation to join the

little flock is valid for “to day” only. When “the morrow” comes, the apostate nation will be judged.

**7** Jesus calls Israel to believe the gospel (vs. 1-5), rely on God’s provision during the tribulation period (vs. 6-12), and do not get caught up in the false religion of apostate Israel (vs. 15-23).

**7:1** This verse is often taken out of context. It does not mean they could not judge, because Jesus told the disciples in John 7:24 to “judge righteous judgment.” Rather, judging, here, refers to condemning to hell. Matthew 19:28 says that, in the kingdom, the apostles will “sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Jesus came to earth to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24). His second coming will be when He judges the world (24:35-43). Similarly, the disciples were to go over Israel, preaching the gospel, so that the lost sheep of the house of Israel might be saved (10:4-6). When they come back with Christ at the end of the tribulation period, they will sit on twelve thrones and judge the world. Until that time, they are not to judge, because they do not know who are believers and who are not believers.

The parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13 illustrates this. Matthew 13:28-30 says not to gather up the tares, “lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” Therefore, the apostles are to wait until the time of this gathering at Jesus’ second coming before they are to judge.

**7:3-5** Rather than judging apostate Israel to hell, Jesus’ disciples were to repent, be baptized, and follow God’s law covenant. Then, they would be fit to preach the gospel to the rest of Israel so that they might enter God’s kingdom, as well. By the time we get to chapter 10, we see that the 12 apostles are sent out by Jesus to do just that (10:5-7).

**7:6** Dogs and swine were unclean animals under the law. Thus, they are representative of apostate Israel here. The point is that the disciples were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:6), not to apostate Israel. That is why Jesus told them in 10:14 that, whoever will not hear their words, they are to depart from them. They are not to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom to a bunch of unbelievers. That is also why Jesus began speaking in parables in Matthew 13 after the nation as a whole had rejected the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus said to the disciples in Matthew 13:11 “It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”

**7:7-11** The disciples will go out to the lost sheep of Israel, but they are mixed in with the apostate nation. That is why Jesus said, “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves” (10:16). Since the disciples will not take the

mark of the beast and they may find a bunch of wolves instead of sheep when they go to a city, they may be in danger of starvation or of being killed by the wolves. Therefore, Jesus gives them an unconditional prayer promise. If they ask God for something, He WILL give it to them.

Because they will be led by the Holy Spirit when they go out after the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, they will ask for things that pertain to the kingdom of God (6:33), instead of things of this world. Thus, God WILL grant their requests. This promise is not for today, nor can the words of Jesus be modified to say that He will give what they ask IF they have enough faith or IF it is God's will. It is an unconditional prayer promise. See also John 14:13-14 and 16:23-24 for more clear statements by Christ of this unconditional prayer promise. Therefore, this is not the health-and-wealth-prosperity gospel. Rather, it is God promising to take care of the basic needs of His disciples as they go through Israel with the gospel during the tribulation period when the apostate nation will be persecuting them and trying to kill them. The seeking and knocking of this passage refer to seeking and finding the kingdom of God. 6:33 says to seek the kingdom of God. 7:7 says that, if they seek the kingdom of God, it will be opened to them.

**7:9-10** Note that the requests the disciples will make will be for basic necessities that they cannot get because they did not take the mark of the beast.

**7:12** The famous Golden Rule. It applies in the context of the communal living situation of the believing remnant in the tribulation period. They would sell all that they have (Luke 12:33), having all things in common (Acts 2:44). You can see this applied in Acts 4:32-37 where they sold their possessions, gave the money to the apostles, and the apostles distributed goods according to need. Jesus had already talked about this in 5:42, when He said to give to those who ask, and in 6:12, where He said to forgive the debts of those who owe them. Selling and distributing according to need was best since their goods would be taken away from them halfway through the tribulation period when the mark of the beast would be implemented (Revelation 13:16-17). By following this, they would be loving God and loving their fellow brothers, because the verse says that following this "is the law and the prophets", and Jesus said that loving God and your neighbor fulfills the law and the prophets (see Matthew 22:37-40).

**7:13-14** People use these verses today to show how you to have to work for your salvation. However, this is for Israel's program during the tribulation period. They will have to endure unto the end to be saved (10:22). If they take the mark of the beast, they will go to the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). Therefore, their salvation is conditional upon stating faithful to God to the end of the tribulation period. Today, we are saved by grace through faith without works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Therefore, God gives us justification NOW,

as a present possession (Romans 5:9). The strait gate is the gate of God's kingdom. The wide gate is Satan's kingdom.

**7:15-20** As there are two, different ways (God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom), there are two, different prophets and resulting fruits. In 24:11, Jesus warns of many false prophets who will deceive many. 24:24 says that these false prophets will "shew great signs and wonders." Instead of looking at what they **do**, false prophets are identified by what they **say**. Their fruit is their doctrine (12:33-34). Is what they say against God's Word rightly divided? If they say to worship the image of the beast in the temple, they must be false prophets, because God said not to worship other gods and not to make any graven images. If they speak blasphemy, as the Pharisees did in Matthew 12:24, they are not of God. If they say the believing remnant should be killed, they are not of God. Doing supernatural things is not, in itself, indicative of a true prophet, as we see the false prophet, doing wonders and miracles, during the Great Tribulation period, to deceive them that dwell on the earth (Revelation 13:13-14).

**7:22-23** Note the claims of those who are false prophets and are cast out by God. They had works that made them look like they were of God (cast out devils, many wonderful works, and prophesied in God's name), but their doctrine was bad. Therefore, they are bad, because evil people can do good things but they cannot speak good things (12:33). What about today? God said that, when the Bible is complete, the gifts, including miracles, cease (I Corinthians 13:8-10). If, in the tribulation period, those of the devil are casting out devils and doing many wonderful works, would not those who cast out devils and do miraculous healings today also be of the devil since God says He is not doing miracles today? Once again, it is doctrine that tells you they are of the devil. God says that these miracle workers are really workers of iniquity!

**7:24-25** What are these sayings of Jesus? They are: 1) Obeying God's commandments during the tribulation period (5:3-12), 2) Preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel (5:13-15), 3) Obeying God's law and teaching the found sheep of Israel to do the same (5:16-19), 4) Obeying God's law, in contrast to the religion of the Pharisees (5:20-48), 5) Obeying God's law as a faith response to God's Word, as opposed to showing off holiness before men (6:1-18), 6) Relying on God's provision to meet their needs as they preach the gospel of the kingdom, rather than joining themselves with the Antichrist (6:19-34), 7) Accepting the gospel themselves before preaching it to Israel (7:1-5), 8) Preaching to the lost sheep of Israel only (7:6), 9) Asking God to provide for their basic needs (7:7-11), 10) Showing love toward God and others (7:12), and 11) Following God and His Word and not false religion and false prophets (7:13-23). This boils down to accepting the gospel, obeying the law covenant, preaching the gospel to the lost sheep of Israel, and not believing the Antichrist and apostate Israel.



**7:28-29** The scribes taught people their religion. They laid aside the commandment of God in order to keep their own tradition (Mark 7:8-9). As such, they had “a form of godliness, but [denied] the power thereof” (II Timothy 3:5). The power of godliness is the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). By contrast, Jesus taught the Word of God. Therefore, His teaching had authority and power behind it, while the scribes’ teaching did not.

**8-9** Jesus preaches the gospel of the kingdom and gives Israel the signs of the kingdom, and they reject Him.

**8** In 4:23-25, Jesus preaches the gospel of the kingdom and performs miracles. Those, accepting the gospel, receive teachings of the kingdom in chapters 5-7. In 8:1-17, Jesus does more miracles. In 8:18-34, those, accepting the gospel, see He is God. Thus, chapter 8 is a continuation of His teaching, but He teaches by doing now. The main thing we see in chapter 8 is that Israel wants physical healing, but they do not want spiritual healing.

**8:1 & 4:25-5:1** Note that the great multitudes were only there for the healings. Jesus taught only His disciples in chapters 6-7. This would be more than the 12, who were not chosen until 10:1-4.

**8:2-4** The first individual healing mentioned in Matthew is Jesus cleansing a leper. Leprosy represents sin (Numbers 12:3,10-11). Thus, this miracle represents Jesus’ ability to cleanse Israel of their sins. Also, note that Jesus tells the cleansed leper to shew himself to the priest and offer the gift commanded by Moses. This would accomplish two things: 1) The priest would see the leper cleansed. By this, the priest should know that the Messiah is here. The priest should ask the cleansed leper to take him to the Messiah. The priest, then, would tell everyone in his synagogue that the Messiah has come and should be followed. There is no record of this happening, which shows the apostasy of the Jewish religion. And 2) Jesus told him to obey the law (Leviticus 14:2). The Old Testament law that God gave Moses is still in effect.

**8:5-13** Jesus heals the centurion’s servant.

**8:6-7** The centurion was a Gentile. In 15:22-24, a Gentile woman asks Jesus to cast a devil out of her daughter, but Jesus will not even speak to her. The reason is because Jesus is sent by the Father to bring salvation to Israel, not to the Gentiles (15:24). The reason Jesus speaks to the Gentile centurion is because he went through the proper channels. He did not talk to Jesus directly (see Luke 7:3-6), but he had the Jews talk to Jesus for him. In Israel’s program, Gentiles must bless Israel in order to be blessed by God (Genesis 12:1-3).

**8:10** The great faith that Jesus marvels at is the centurion’s understanding of God’s reconciliation program. He knows that he does not have direct access to God, because he is on the wrong side of the middle wall of

partition (Ephesians 2:14). (This he knows even though he is in the dark, unlike the Jews, who have light (Acts 17:27).) He can only be blessed by blessing Israel (Genesis 12:3). Thus, he had built a synagogue for Israel (Luke 7:5), and he went through the proper channel of going to the Jewish leaders in order to be blessed. This is what Jesus marvels at, because this man knows more about the Abrahamic covenant than those on the right side of the middle wall of partition—the Jews.

**8:11-12** Jesus uses this as an opportunity to teach the religious leaders present just who will get into God's kingdom. They think all physical Jews will be there. Jesus says that many of the Jews will go to the lake of fire, because they did not accept the gospel of the kingdom, while many Gentiles will make it into the kingdom because they blessed Israel. The issue is not being a Jew. The issue is having faith in what God has told you. Therefore, Gentiles with faith make it into the kingdom, while Jews without faith do not make it in. Similarly today, people think that all those going to church make it into heaven. However, being part of an organized religion does not give you eternal life. Having faith in the blood of Christ as atonement for your sins is what gives you eternal life today.

**8:14-15** Notice the instant recovery of Peter's mother-in-law. The miraculous healing from her fever is shown by how she got up and took care of them. If she just got over the fever by natural means, it would have taken her some time to recover. Thus, this is a physical miracle.

**8:16** Jesus' casting out of devils is a physical sign of how God wanted to cast the devil out of the nation of Israel spiritually, as well. With His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus bound the strong man—Satan—(12:29) so that Israel would no longer be Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24). He also wanted to heal spiritually the sick in Israel, by their repenting, being water baptized, and obeying the law covenant so that they might enter God's kingdom which was at hand (3:2 and 4:17). In other words, through the cross, the strong man has no more power over Israel, unless Israel gives him the power through their unbelief in what God has told them.

**8:17** The context of this quotation of Isaiah 53:4 is that Israel's response to Jesus' healing campaign was to hide from Him, despise Him, and say that God was punishing Him. Therefore, while Jesus came to heal the nation, the nation rejected Him. This is shown by the phrase "when the even was come," found in 8:16. Israel is living in darkness (John 1:5).

**8:18-34** After the many miracles Jesus had performed, His disciples get a quick lesson that He is God by seeing Him change the weather, devils calling Him the Son of God, and His casting the devils out of 2 men. Sadly, few in Israel will even follow Him long enough to see these things, and new people, who do see these things, reject Him.

**8:18** Jesus' healing campaign was so that Israel would be spiritually healed. Since they have rejected Him, Jesus gets away from the multitude.

**8:19-23** Here, we have the lip service of the nation. When Jesus gave the command to depart to the other side, He was also giving the invitation to the nation to follow Him. The nation's response is excuses. The nation needs to understand that nothing should keep them from believing the gospel and following Jesus in reaching the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom. The great multitude, who follow Him for healings, is dwindled down to a number of disciples who enter a ship with Him. Only a little flock is willing to obey Him.

Basically, the context is the apostasy of Israel. In 8:16-17, Jesus is casting out devils, bearing the infirmities of Israel due to their unbelief. In 8:18, great multitudes follow Him, and He goes to the other side, because they are not true believers. They follow Jesus out of the flesh, for the miracles. In 8:19, a scribe responds in his flesh that he will follow Jesus wherever He goes. We know where Jesus is going; He is going to the cross to bear the sins of Israel. Therefore, Jesus' response in 8:20 is basically that Jesus has no rest on this earth, because it is not his home (yet). He cannot lay His head anywhere because He must first go to the cross. In 8:21, a disciple values the world by staying with his father until death. In 8:22, Jesus calls the disciple to follow Him into death, meaning that he needs to reckon his flesh to be dead to this world to the point of being willing to die for God. In 8:23, out of the "great multitudes" (8:18), only "His disciples followed Him" (8:23).

Therefore, Jesus is saying that the things of this world, such as foxes and birds, have their place in this world, but the Son of man has no place in this world (8:20). Instead, He must die for Israel's sins. So, if the scribe (8:19) or the disciple (8:21) truly want to follow Jesus (8:19), they need to know that they will be following Him to the death. At the least, the death is reckoning their flesh to be dead to the world; at the most, it is being a martyr.

**8:23-27** We are not told how many men follow Jesus. It is probably more than 12. At this point, His disciples are still lacking in faith. Rather than trusting in God, they believe they will be killed, and they marvel that Jesus has control over the weather. Note the great calm Jesus experiences by trusting in the Father such that He is able to sleep during a great storm. Proverbs 3:24 "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet."

**8:28,31** God's power is seen here. The fiercest people, possessed by devils, such that no one will come near them, when they see Jesus, they beg Him to cast them out into pigs! In other words, when approached by man, the devils win, but when the Son of God approaches them, they give up before Jesus even says anything to them!

**8:29** Note the devils' response. Jesus' disciples do not even realize that Jesus is God, as they said of Him: "What manner of man is this" (8:27)? However, Satan's minions immediately recognize Him as "Jesus, Thou Son of God" (8:29). These devils also recognize that they chose the wrong master, because they know they will be thrown into everlasting torment in the future.

**8:30** Swine are unclean animals (Leviticus 11:7). The swine are a type of apostate Israel, as they are unclean, because they do not have faith in God.

**8:32** The swine, possessed by the devils, then, represent the spiritual uncleanness of Israel. The swine "perished in the waters," just like Israel will perish in Satan's kingdom because of their unbelief.

**8:33-34** The unbelief of Israel is seen again. Their Messiah has come and cast out devils and wants to heal them of their sins and bring them into God's kingdom, and their response is to cast HIM out. They would rather have devil-possessed men, who no man can come close to, in their midst, than their Messiah and God, the Lord Jesus Christ! Note that they rejected Him based on His looks. "And when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53:2). They were looking on the outward appearance. He did not look like a king, because they beheld Him with their physical eyes.

**9** The Pharisees have rejected Jesus as their Messiah (v. 3), but the common Jews have not made up their minds yet (v. 8). The crowds are willing to associate with Jesus (vs. 10-13), but the disciples of John the Baptist find fault with Him (vs. 14-17). Jesus is willing to bring spiritual life to all classes of people, from rulers to diseased women to blind men (vs. 18-31). The Pharisees proclaim that Jesus is of the devil (vs. 34), which means that it is now up to the foolish nation (21:43) of the believing remnant to reach the lost sheep of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom (vs. 35-38).

**9:2** Note that Jesus sees their faith. Jesus saw their faith by their works (James 2:18).

**9:2** With Jesus' return, we see great opposition by the religious leaders. Luke 5:17-26 is the parallel passage of this miracle. Luke 5:17-19 tells us that the man sick of the palsy had to be brought in through the roof. The multitude around Jesus was NOT there for healing. Now, the multitude is all the Jewish religious leaders. God's power is there to heal them spiritually (Luke 5:17) so that they can be God's kingdom of priests to reach the world with the gospel. But, they are in unbelief (Luke 5:21). They have come as the generation of vipers to try to do away with Jesus. Therefore, the nation of Israel remains in an apostate state. By contrast, the people, bringing the man sick of the palsy, have faith, and their sins are forgiven them. The reason Jesus forgives their sins here, instead of just physically healing the guy, is because eternal life in God's kingdom is the issue. All of the

Pharisees standing around need forgiveness of sins, too, and God's power is there to give it to them. However, they are in unbelief and leave there still dead in their sins.

**9:3** Right away, we see the unbelief of the Pharisees. Their response to the opportunity God has given them to be forgiven and enter God's kingdom is to accuse the Lord of blasphemy!

**9:4** Jesus proves to the Pharisees, yet again, that He has not blasphemed, as shown by the fact that God has revealed to Him the very thoughts of the Jewish religious leaders.

**9:5-6** Christianity usually says that it is easier to say "thy sins be forgiven thee" because the proof of being able to forgive sins is harder to show than the proof of a physical healing. However, 9:6 tells us that it is easier to say "Arise and walk." The devil has power to perform miracles, and he does so through the Jewish religious leaders. We were told this in 7:22-23. If Jesus healed the sick of the palsy physically with the Jewish religious leaders standing by, it would have been no big deal to them. But, He heals the sick AFTER forgiving the man's sins. This is something the Jewish religious leaders could not do. This is why they said that they saw "strange things" (Luke 5:26). The Pharisees may be able to heal the sick, but they cannot forgive the man's sins and then heal him because they were of the devil (John 8:44). Thus, forgiving the man's sins was much harder to do than healing the sick man. The fact that Jesus does both is proof positive to all the religious leaders that He is the Messiah. Unfortunately, their reaction is one of unbelief because they do not believe the gospel.

**9:6,8** The fact, that Jesus calls Himself "man" in 9:6 and 9:8, tells us that God gave power to men to heal. This shows: 1) That His power was of God, not of the devil, 2) Jesus healed others, including forgiving sins, in His capacity as a man, not as God, and 3) The disciples will later get this same power to forgive sins. God gave it to Jesus, the man, and He also will give it to the 12 apostles (John 20:23). Now, this does not mean that Jesus is not God. He never laid aside His deity (Philippians 2:6), but He functioned in His capacity as a man while on earth at His first coming (Philippians 2:7-8).

**9:9-10** The power of God was present to heal the Pharisees spiritually, but they would not be healed. Therefore, Jesus picks the new leaders of the nation from the outcasts and those considered to be the vilest of sinners among Israel. Matthew, a tax collector, is picked as one of these new leaders, even though the Jews considered tax collectors to have given up their "Jewness" because they were collecting money for Rome. Thus, Jews considered publicans and sinners to be the lowest of Jews. This is the meaning of Jesus' parable in Luke 14:16-24 of inviting the outcasts to be part of God's kingdom since the leaders had rejected the kingdom.

Jesus was building up “a nation” to take God’s kingdom from unbelieving Pharisees and put it in the hands of the little flock of Israel (21:43). This is not unlike what God did with Abraham’s seed, Ishmael. Although Ishmael was the firstborn son, he was not the child by faith. Therefore, Isaac is considered heir of the promise, not Ishmael (Galatians 4:23). Similarly, the Pharisees had the physical lineage to Abraham (John 8:37), but they were not of God because of their lack of faith in God’s promises to Israel (John 8:39).

**9:13** When Jesus said, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,” He was quoting Hosea 6:6. He told the Pharisees to go read and find out what that means. Hosea 6:2 says that God will raise up Israel on the third day. Hosea 6:4-11 speaks of how Israel has turned away from God. Therefore, what Jesus is doing is trying to get Israel to return to God’s law covenant with Israel. The problem is that Israel’s religious leaders are just as sinful as the rest of the nation, but they do not acknowledge their sins because they are self righteous. Therefore, they will not receive mercy from God.

**9:14** John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus (3:3). John was cast into prison (4:12), and Jesus started His earthly ministry. This was John decreasing and Jesus increasing (John 3:30). With John in prison, Jesus’ ministry has increased. Jesus has been healing and teaching His disciples. Then, why are these disciples of John not following Jesus, but instead are lumping themselves in with the self-righteous Pharisees? And, they seem to be caught up in religion. This shows the continued unbelief of Israel. Most will not follow Jesus, and those, who followed John, are now following the Pharisees.

The disciples of John represent those, who accepted the gospel, but then went back to religion. They went to John, confessed their sins, repented, and were water baptized. Then, they went to the Pharisees and started following religion. Similarly today, those, who accept the gospel of grace, almost always start following the religion of a church denomination, rather than believing the Bible rightly divided (II Timothy 2:15) as their final authority (Romans 4:3).

In fact, as late as Acts 19:1-7, we see the disciples of John still not following Jesus, when Paul comes to them and they receive the Holy Ghost. They were so far removed from what God did with Jesus and following that they had not even heard of the Holy Ghost!

**9:15** When Jesus ascends, the tribulation period will soon start. The tribulation saints will not be able to buy food. Therefore, they will fast. Thus, the fasting of the believing remnant is out of necessity and of helping their fellow believers, while the Pharisees fasted as part of religion (6:16).

**9:16-17** Jesus is telling the followers of John to stop following religion and start following Him. The old garment and the old bottles are the religious

leaders, and the disciples of John are the new cloth and the new wine. God is doing away with the old and bringing in the new. If the disciples of John try to follow the Pharisees, they will not make it into God's kingdom. They will be preserved only if they follow God's new leadership—the 12 apostles.

**9:20-22** A miracle is added, here, by way of parenthetical reference. This woman's issue of blood is symbolic of the nation of Israel as a whole, and how their lifeblood is of Satan. They need to accept the gospel of the kingdom in order to receive God's blood as atonement for their sins. Many people use a passage like this to demonstrate that faith is required in order to receive physical healing. However, when Jesus says, "thy faith hath me thee whole," He is referring to her spiritual healing. She has been loosed from the bondage of Satan spiritually, just like Jesus forgave the sins of the man with the palsy in 9:2.

**9:24** Jesus says that the dead girl is not really dead, but she is sleeping. This is the same thing that He said about Lazarus in John 11:11. Inherent in the promise of God's kingdom on earth is belief in resurrection. The believing remnant does not die; they only sleep until they are resurrected to enter the kingdom. That is what Jesus is referring to. The fact that He is laughed to scorn shows the unbelief of the nation of Israel as a whole. They are not trusting in God's kingdom too be set up on earth.

**9:25-26** Jesus' raising the girl from the dead, then, is meant to show the nation of Israel that God has resurrection power. They are to believe the gospel of the kingdom so that God can raise them from the dead at His second coming so that they may live forever in His kingdom on earth.

**9:27** Note that the blind men call Jesus "Son of David," recognizing He is the One, Who will sit on David's throne in God's kingdom forever.

**9:27-31** In 4:23 and 9:35, we are told that what Jesus is doing is that He is going to the cities of Israel, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and demonstrating that He is of God by casting out devils (sign of God's power to bind Satan and cast him out of Israel) and healing the sick (sign of God's power to heal Israel of their sins and bring them into God's eternal kingdom on earth.)

In chapter 10, Jesus sends His twelve apostles out to do the same thing, and He tells them in 10:11-14 that the way they do this is, when they enter a city, inquire who is worthy, meaning that they are to find out who believes the gospel. They are the lost sheep of Israel and are saved. If people persecute them, they are to shake the dust off their feet (10:14) and move on to the next city (10:23). That is what Jesus is doing here. When He raised the girl from the dead, the city did not believe because they laughed Him to scorn (9:24). Therefore, He departed that city (9:27) to go to another one. However, two men stop Him before He leaves. Jesus inquires if they are worthy (9:28). In other words, He asks if they believe. Since they do, they are

saved. They will live forever in God's kingdom on earth. Their physically blind eyes being opened is just a sign of what God has done for them spiritually.

Jesus had already shaken the dust off His feet, and the city was judged by God (10:14-15). Therefore, Jesus tells them not to tell others in the city about this. The only reason Jesus heals them physically is because they have demonstrated that they are the lost sheep of Israel. (He would have healed their blind eyes without a faith response before the city rejected the gospel of the kingdom.)

**9:31** By spreading Jesus' fame abroad in that country that had rejected Him, they were giving that which is holy unto the dogs and casting their pearls before swine (7:6). They were wasting their time with hardened unbelievers.

**9:32-34** We see the danger, here, of performing miracles for unbelievers. The Jewish religious leaders attribute God's power to Satan. This is the blasphemy of the Son of Man.

**9:35** Jesus continues to go through the cities of Israel. He heals people there physically and preaches the gospel of the kingdom so that they might be healed spiritually. Jesus heals them physically, even if they do not have faith, for we are told that He healed EVERY sickness and EVERY disease. Therefore, people today, who say that someone was not healed physically because he did not have enough faith, does not understand what Jesus was doing with the physical miracles in Matthew – John.

**9:36-38** As Jesus goes through the cities of Israel, He finds the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and they are saved (John 17:6-9). However, the religious leaders of the land are leading the lost sheep astray so that they will not endure unto the end, like they had done with the disciples of John. Therefore, Jesus shares with His disciples the need for others to go out to Israel to give the lost sheep the gospel of the kingdom so that they might be saved and they, in turn, can reach others with the gospel so that Israel will be ready to enter God's eternal kingdom on earth at Jesus' second coming.

**10** Jesus sends the 12 apostles out to the cities of Israel to do what He has been doing.

**10:1** Jesus chose 12 men to be His apostles. He sends them out to preach the gospel of the kingdom and perform the two signs of the kingdom: 1) Cast out devils, and 2) Heal the sick. The reason God chose 12 men is because there were 12 tribes of Israel, and so 12 men will sit on thrones in God's eternal kingdom on earth and judge the 12 tribes (19:28).

**10:1-2** Note that they are called "disciples" in verse 1, but they are called "apostles" in verse 2. The word "apostle" means "sent one." They had been



following Jesus up to this point. Now, Jesus sends them out to preach the gospel of the kingdom (10:7) to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:6).

**10:5-8** Jesus sends His 12 apostles to do exactly what He is doing. They are to go from city to city within Israel. They are not to go to the world with the gospel or to any Gentiles. Rather, they are to go to each city within Israel to preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand so that Israel might repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. The 12 will not finish going over all of the cities of Israel before Jesus' second coming (10:23). The people, who believe this gospel, will be lost sheep that are found.

In Exodus 19:5-6, God says that the earth belongs to Him, and that Israel is to be a kingdom of priests to reclaim the earth for God. A priest is consecrated for service by being water baptized (Exodus 29:4) and by receiving the anointing oil (Exodus 29:7). Anointing oil is a type of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Thus, in Matthew 3:16, Jesus is water baptized and receives the Holy Spirit as His ordination as a priest. For the nation of Israel, they were to be baptized as part of the gospel to be saved. Then, in Acts 2, they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). Both Jesus' goal and the 12 apostles' goal, then, was to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the cities of Israel so that they may be saved, become a kingdom of priests, and then preach the gospel to the world (the Gentiles) in the millennial kingdom on earth (Matthew 28:19-20).

**10:7** Note that the apostles preached the gospel of repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. They did NOT preach to trust in Jesus' death for salvation. It was not until about 2 years later in 16:21 that Jesus "BEGAN" to tell them of His death, and their reaction was "be it far from thee, Lord" (16:22). This would not have been their reaction if they had been preaching for the past two years Jesus' death as atonement for sins.

**10:9-10** The 12 apostles were not to bring possessions with them, but to rely upon God to sustain them (6:30-34). This is not what we should be doing today (I Timothy 5:8).

**10:11** A person's "worthiness" was determined by his reaction to the gospel message that the disciples preached. Verse 14 tells you this because they were to depart from those who would not receive their words. Their worthiness is in reference to being worthy of eternal life. A faith response was required to be worthy. We see this in the gospel of grace that Paul preached in Acts 13:46 when he said, "seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

**10:13-15** According to Daniel 9:24-27, once Messiah was cut off, there would be more than 7 years before the Messiah's second coming. Since "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (3:2), they were not to linger in cities to try to convince people to accept the gospel. They would preach the gospel and heal the sick and cast out devils to show what they were saying is true. If people

accepted it, they were saved. If not, they must not be the lost sheep of Israel, and they would move on to the next city. Even at that rate, they would not be able to go through all the cities of Israel before Jesus' second coming (10:23). Therefore, they had to keep moving.

**10:16** The 12 apostles were to go through the cities of Israel (10:5) with the gospel of the kingdom (10:7) so that the lost sheep of the house of Israel might be found (10:6). The problem was that the nation as a whole, as we have seen, rejected Jesus as their Messiah. Thus, they were continuing in an apostate state. Spiritually speaking, the Jewish religious leaders were as wolves, devouring the sheep (see Ezekiel 22:26-29 and Zephaniah 3:3-4). In fact, some of the wolves were false prophets appearing to speak for God (7:15).

In order to determine who is a sheep and who is a wolf, the 12 apostles would have to be wise as serpents. That is how Satan was when he appeared to Eve (Genesis 3:1). However, he was also harmful like a serpent, while the 12 apostles were to be harmLESS. They were to proclaim the gospel and perform the hallmark signs of the kingdom: casting out devils and healing the sick.

**10:17** The religion of Israel, and how far it was from God's law covenant with them, is clearly seen here. If a person served the Lord their God, they would come to the synagogue to be instructed in God's Word, to have fellowship with God, to obey the law, and to offer sacrifices to God. Instead, in Israel's religion, men would scourge them in the synagogues. Note that it was "their" synagogues. Israel was so steeped in THEIR religion, that it was no longer God's place. (God left the temple in Ezekiel 10:18-19.)

**10:17-20** Being brought before councils and rulers would give the apostles a large audience to speak to. God Himself promised to speak through them. This is seen when we look at some of the speeches in early Acts, e.g., Acts 4:8.

**10:21-22** In the tribulation period, many in Israel will join to the Antichrist. The Antichrist will require all to worship the image of the beast and take the mark of the beast or be killed (Revelation 13:15-17), and some in Israel, who join to the Antichrist, will "deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." The believing remnant will have to endure unto the end of the tribulation period, not taking the mark of the beast, worshipping the image, or joining with the Antichrist. Otherwise, they will not be saved and will not enter God's kingdom on earth.

**10:23** This verse shows that the disciples were not even to start fulfilling "The Great Commission" of Matthew 28:19-20 of going into all the world to preach the gospel, until after Jesus' second coming. Therefore, even those,

who do not rightly divide the word of truth, should recognize that the commission of Matthew 28:19-20 is not for today.

**10:24-25** The 12 apostles are just continuing what Jesus did: preach the gospel of the kingdom, heal the sick, and cast out devils so that the lost sheep of Israel might be saved. Therefore, the 12 apostles should expect the same persecution that Jesus received. They said Jesus cast out devils by the devil (9:34), and they would say the same about the apostles.

**10:30** In Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (By the way, their Hebrews names were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, respectively (see Daniel 1:6-7).) were thrown into the fiery furnace, and there was not “a hair of their head singed” (Daniel 3:27). As such, they were a type of the believing remnant going through the tribulation, showing that God would protect them spiritually so that they would not be harmed whatsoever. Therefore, Jesus makes reference to this, saying that the very hairs of their head are numbered, showing how God will completely protect the little flock SPIRITUALLY through the tribulation period (Spiritual protection is what is meant here because Revelation 6:9 says that believers will be physically killed during the tribulation period.). The Antichrist and his forces cannot kill the soul (10:28).

**10:32-33** These verses show that, if someone appears before apostate Israel and is told to worship the image of the beast or be killed (Revelation 13:15), they must not deny God by worshipping that image or else they will be thrown into the lake of fire. This is confirmed in Revelation 14:9-11.

**10:34-39** You often hear the term “peace on earth” during Christmas time, in reference to Christ’s birth, but Christ clearly says He did not “come to send peace on earth.” How could He bring peace on earth when the earth is controlled by Satan? Instead, He brought a way of salvation for those with faith in God. So then, during the tribulation period, there would be spiritual warfare between the believing remnant and the apostate nation of Israel, such that apostate Israel would seek to destroy the believing remnant, even to the point of family members trying to kill other family members!

**10:37** The fifth commandment is to “honour thy father and thy mother”(Exodus 20:12). However, the greatest commandment is to love the Lord thy God (22:37-38). So, when father and mother tell their son to take the mark of the beast, they would be rejecting the gospel of the kingdom and not loving God and would end up in the lake of fire for all eternity by obeying their parents. Therefore, they need to trust in God instead.

**10:39** Finding your life, in the tribulation period, is the idea of sparing your life by following the Antichrist, but God says that is denying God and will result in ending up in the lake of fire. Those, who are willing to give up their lives because they trust in the Lord rather than in the Antichrist, will find everlasting life in God’s kingdom.

**10:40-42** Verse 41 stands in contrast to verses 40 and 42. A prophet and a righteous man, in verse 41, are religious people in the Antichrist's kingdom. Therefore, they receive material rewards from them that will perish at the end of the tribulation period. But, those, who accept one of the 12 apostles, accept God because they trust the message—the gospel of the kingdom—that the 12 apostles preach. The little ones, of verse 42, would be the little flock of the tribulation period, who do not have food or drink, because they would not take the mark of the beast. If a Gentile blesses Israel by helping the little flock, which is the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16), in the tribulation period, God will bless that Gentile in God's kingdom, according to the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:3).

**11** Israel has rejected their Messiah, and the Pharisees have taken the kingdom of heaven away from them. However, there is still time for Israel to repent, be baptized, and obey God's law covenant with them in order to be saved.

**11:1** Jesus continues preaching in the cities of Israel so that the lost sheep of Israel might be saved.

**11:2-3** John the Baptist knew that Jesus is the Messiah because he recognized Him as such in John 1:29-34. Therefore, John's question is not to look for another Messiah but to look for another COMING of the Messiah. In other words, based upon Israel's unbelief, John does not see the kingdom of heaven being ushered in at this time, which necessitates a second coming by the Messiah.

**11:5** The answer to John's question is in the works that Jesus does. Since He preached the gospel of the kingdom and gave the signs of the kingdom, there would have to be another coming of Messiah when He brings God's wrath upon the unbelievers.

**11:7-14** Now, Jesus tells the multitudes who John the Baptist was.

**11:9-10** John the Baptist was a prophet, but he was also the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 in that he prepared the way for the Messiah. The way he did this was to get people to separate themselves from the apostate nation of Israel and come out to the wilderness so that they could be water baptized as new priests so that they could be part of God's kingdom on earth and part of the kingdom of priests to go out to the world to reconcile the earth back to God (Exodus 19:5-6).

**11:11** "Greater" in this verse does not refer to a greater prophet, just like 11:3 does not refer to another Messiah. Rather, John the Baptist had a greater message than any other prophet had had before him in that he was bringing people into God's kingdom and baptizing them to be a kingdom of priests to reach the whole earth with the gospel. Being least in the kingdom

is better, though, because a person in the kingdom has a new body and will live eternally, while John the Baptist was still in mortal, sinful flesh.

**11:12** John the Baptist began his ministry by saying that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (3:2). In other words, the kingdom is within the nation's grasp; it is at their hand. Here, Jesus is saying that the nation of Israel, and especially the Jewish religious leaders, has grabbed the kingdom away by force so that it will not start about 8 years after Jesus' death (The 8-year timeline comes from Daniel 9:24-27, which gives a few events that happen after Jesus' death and then there is a seven-year tribulation period.). The kingdom can still be received (11:14) by Israel, but it has to be taken away from the Pharisees now.

**11:13** The prophets and the law culminate in the kingdom of heaven on earth.

**11:14** Malachi 4:5 says that God will send Elijah before Jesus' second coming. The only way John the Baptist would fulfill Malachi 4:5 is if Israel would receive the kingdom by accepting the gospel of the kingdom. Then, Jesus could come back about 8 years after Jesus' ascension, executing judgment upon the earth. Thus, the "it" of this verse is the kingdom. Since Israel did not accept the kingdom, John the Baptist only fulfilled Isaiah 40:3, and not Malachi 4:5. Israel's unbelief has put the kingdom of heaven in abeyance until the dispensation of grace is completed with the rapture of the church.

**11:15** Because the religious leaders have already accused Jesus of being of the devil (9:34) and the multitudes are not following Jesus in the sense of listening to and following His teaching after repenting and being baptized (4:25-5:1 and 8:1,20-23), Israel has rejected their Messiah. Their eyes do not see, and their ears do not hear (John 12:40). Therefore, Jesus is already concealing matters (Proverbs 25:2) so that only the little flock understands what He says, because only believing hearts have ears to hear the mysteries of the kingdom (13:9,11). This is why these verses do not come right out and state that there will be another coming of the Messiah and that Israel needs to receive the kingdom for John the Baptist to fulfill Malachi 4:5.

**11:16-19** The generation in Israel is not of Jesus Christ (1:1). Rather, it is of the devil, a generation of vipers (3:7). They have accused both the Messiah, and the one preparing the way for the Messiah, of being of the devil (9:34; 11:18). However, there is a little flock of believers, who accept Jesus as the Messiah. These are the ones who have wisdom by trusting in the Word of God. Wisdom, then, is what brings about true belief.

**11:20-24** Jesus pronounces judgment upon the cities that He had gone to, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and performing miracles. Jesus is shaking the dust off of His feet, not giving the cities peace (10:13-14). Since only 3 cities are mentioned here, we can conclude that many of Jesus'

miracles have only been done in 3 cities of Israel. Therefore, there are many more cities in Israel still to be reached with the gospel.

**11:25-27** However, there were still some who trusted in Jesus as their Messiah. It was not the real religious Jews who did so, because the wise of this world think God's wisdom to be foolish (I Corinthians 1:19-20). Rather, it was the babes, those who simply trusted in the gospel of the kingdom who became part of the little flock.

**11:28-30** Those, who "labour and are heavy laden," are those who are trying to keep the traditions of the Pharisees in order to enter God's kingdom. Instead, they are to take on Christ's yoke. His yoke is to have the works of faith to go along with their faith (James 2:20-26). These works are necessary in order to enter God's kingdom. Otherwise, there would be no yoke. Thus, they need to lay down the heavy burden of man's commandments (Mark 7:7) and take up the easy burden of faith in God's provision for them, as found in the law.

**12** Jesus shows the common Jews that the Pharisees are of the devil and will not make it into God's kingdom, yet the common Jews will not believe in Jesus and the gospel He proclaims. Therefore, only His little flock will make it into God's kingdom.

**12:1-2** Jesus concluded chapter 11 by saying that the Pharisees' teachings are a heavy burden to bear, while Christ's yoke is a light burden. Now, He will demonstrate this is so. According to the Pharisees' teachings, Jesus' disciples cannot even pluck corn and eat it to satisfy a hungry stomach on the Sabbath Day! God's law allows them to do this.

**12:3-5** The Pharisees quote their traditions, and Jesus points them to scripture ("Have ye not read" (vs. 3 and 5)) to show them that they are not following God's law. Note that both examples Jesus uses are exceptions for priests (see I Samuel 21:5-6 and Numbers 28:9-10). Jesus is telling these religious leaders that those, who accept the gospel of the kingdom, are now priests. They are part of the kingdom of priests that is supposed to reach the Gentiles with the gospel (Exodus 19:5-6).

**12:7** In 9:13, Jesus told the Pharisees to go learn what Hosea 6:6 means when it says, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice." Hosea 6:7 says that Israel had broken God's covenant because they did not have mercy. The lesson for the Pharisees is that, as the religious leaders, they were supposed to lead Israel in the obedience of God's law, while showing mercy to help people follow the law. In 9:9-13, Jesus has mercy on sinners to show them God's love so that they will want to obey God's law covenant. Now, in chapter 12, Jesus has mercy on His disciples by letting them have some food so that they will not rebel against God's law covenant. If the Pharisees had read Hosea 6 when Jesus told them to, they would have figured this out and not chided Jesus' disciples for supposedly breaking the law, which they

did not break. Thus, Jesus demonstrates in 12:1-7 that His burden is light, while the Pharisees' burden is heavy. The time period of Hosea 6 is relating to Jesus' first coming, in addition to His second coming, since it is when He will raise up the nation of Israel by His Own resurrection from the dead.

**12:8** Jesus, the man, is lord of the Sabbath day. This means that all men are lord of the Sabbath. In fact, Jesus says this here, but it is recorded in Mark, not Matthew. Mark 2:27 says "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The point, then, is that "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days" (12:12) for all law abiding Jews. Yet, the Pharisees would use the Sabbath as an excuse not to do good!

**12:9-13** Jesus gave the Pharisees an opportunity in 9:13 to learn mercy. They did not do it. He told them the same thing again in 12:7. They received examples, in both cases, of how to apply mercy, instead of their unnecessary burdens. Since the Pharisees will not change and they are the ones instructing the common people, Jesus goes to the synagogue to give a demonstration to the common people in Israel of how the Pharisees oppose God and His law. Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath to show Israel that they need to put themselves under God's law covenant with them, which includes mercy, and not the Pharisees' law, which excludes mercy.

**12:14** The Pharisees are only concerned with the power and money they receive from Israel, not with the Messiah and following Him. We saw this from the beginning of Matthew when the Pharisees would not go with the wise men to find the Messiah (Matthew 2:4-9). Since Jesus has shown to the common folks that the Pharisees' law is NOT God's law, the Pharisees are afraid of losing the people. Therefore, they seek to kill Jesus.

**12:15** Again, Jesus heals all those needing physical healing. It is not just those who have the faith that God will heal them. Faith is only required for spiritual healing, not physical healing. People today pray for more faith to be healed physically, and the healing never comes, because God is only concerned with the spiritual, of which people are usually not concerned.

**12:16-21** According to 12:16-17, the reason Jesus does not want those healed telling others about the Messiah is so that Isaiah 42:1-4 can be fulfilled. "Shew[ing] judgment to the Gentiles" means that the Gentiles will see that God has judged the Jewish religious leaders, replacing them with the believing remnant of Israel (21:43). This means that, we are not even halfway through the book of Matthew, and God has already given up on trying to save the religious people in Israel. The reason is because they have already declared Him to be of the devil (9:34).

By bringing judgment upon the apostate nation, it clears the way for the little flock to lead Israel in God's law, not in the Pharisees' law (see Matthew 23:2-3 and 28:19-20), so that God's judgment leads to victory so that God can bring in the kingdom on earth so that the Gentiles can trust in God for

their salvation. Isaiah 42:4 says that the Gentiles "shall wait for His law." So, they are waiting for God to judge the religion of the Jews to be replaced by God's law so that the Gentiles might obey God's law and be saved in the millennial kingdom. Verses 19-20 tell you that Jesus brings judgment upon the Jewish religious system and their leaders without so much as speaking out against it to a multitude of people, much less physically fighting against them! If the healed people told the Pharisees about the miracles, the Pharisees would claim He is of the devil (12:24) and would lead even the little flock astray. If the little flock is led astray, there is no believing remnant to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in the millennial kingdom for the Gentiles to be saved. Therefore, for the sake of the little flock, healed people are not to tell others in Israel about Jesus' healings. The sad state of affairs is that, even with Jesus preaching the gospel of the kingdom and performing the signs of the kingdom--healing the sick and casting out devils--the flesh is so strong that the whole nation would go right back to following the Pharisees' religion if Jesus' work spreads too far to apostate Israel.

**12:22** The person, here, is an exact, physical representation of the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel. As this man is possessed with a devil, Israel is Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24). As the man is blind and dumb, Israel is spiritually blind, such that they do not see their Messiah right there in their midst, and Israel is spiritually dumb in that they do not preach the gospel of the kingdom, because they have not accepted this gospel for themselves. As this man both spoke and saw through God's miracle, the power of God is present to bring spiritual healing to the common people in Israel, as it was in Luke 5:17 for the spiritual leaders to be healed spiritually. All they have to do is believe.

**12:23-24** The people see Jesus as the son of David, which is Matthew's emphasis, showing Jesus as Israel's king, fulfilling the Davidic covenant (II Samuel 7:12-13), which means that the Jewish common people are ready to accept the gospel of the kingdom since they have accepted their Messiah. But, the Pharisees speak up and say that Jesus is of the devil, not of God. As a result, the people do not repent and be water baptized for the remission of sins, and, with the whole nation now having rejected their Messiah, Jesus begins speaking to them in parables (13:2-3) because it is only for those who accept the gospel of the kingdom to learn the mysteries of the kingdom of God (13:10-11). It is now evident why the religious leaders must be judged and replaced by believers. Otherwise, there will be no believers at the end of the tribulation period, because the Pharisees will lead them astray.

This shows the danger that religion poses. It adds credibility to those propagating it such that men trust the religious leaders over God's Word. There is no better example of this than what we find in "Christianity" in the United States today. Sharing the truth of God's Word rightly divided is usually met with one of the following responses: 1) "That sounds like a cult, because I have never heard that before." 2) "I don't know about that. Let me



talk to my Sunday school teacher about that.” 3) “My pastor does not agree with what you said.” 4) “The early church fathers disagree.” 5) “No one in mainstream Christianity believes that.” Note that, in these responses, the final authority is man, not the Word of God. No doubt Jesus and His disciples were met with similar excuses, which is why the nation, as a whole, rejected the message and the messengers.

**12:25-27** Since the Pharisees' father is the devil (John 8:44), the children of the Pharisees would also be of the devil. Therefore, the statement in verse 27 shows that the Pharisees cast out devils by the power of the devil. We see Jesus warning the little flock in 7:22-23 of these very people. Jesus' response in verses 25-27, then, is really an indictment of their kingdom, rather than a defense of Jesus' miracles. Satan's and the Pharisees' kingdom will fall. Verse 27 also tells us a little of the governmental structure in the lake of fire. I think what is being said here is that the Pharisees' students will build on their corruption such that they will be in a higher position in the lake of fire, judging the Pharisees.

**12:28** Jesus' defense of His casting out of devils is that "the kingdom of God is come unto you." The way the people of Israel would know the difference, since both the Pharisees and Jesus are casting out devils, is by the doctrine that Jesus teaches being consistent with God's law covenant with Israel (12:33-34).

**12:29** Satan climbed into the sheepfold of Israel and caught them by religion (John 10:1). Thus, Israel became Satan's lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24). Satan is stronger than Israel (Jeremiah 31:11). Israel cannot contend with Satan (Ecclesiastes 6:10). Thus, the strong man, in this verse, is Satan, and the house is the house of Israel. The Lord Jesus Christ came to bind Satan so that the believing remnant of Israel may overcome him and enter God's kingdom, when Jesus comes back for them at His second coming (Isaiah 40:11; John 10:3-4).

**12:30** Gathering with Jesus would be the idea of preaching the gospel of the kingdom to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:6). Scattering abroad goes back to the fifth cycle of chastisement, where God said that, if Israel continued in unbelief, He would scatter them among the heathen (Leviticus 26:33). Note that the Jewish religious leaders were interested in sending missionaries to far away countries to “save” Jews, because it made them look good (23:15). They were not so much concerned with the people in Jerusalem, because they had already been duped into believing religion. Does this not sound like Christianity in America today, scattering abroad their apostasy?

**12:31-32** "Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" is the infamous “unpardonable sin.” The context of the passage is being able to enter into God's eternal kingdom on earth, which is Israel's program. Therefore, it does not apply today in the dispensation of grace. Within Israel's program, they

had rejected God the Father by beheading John the Baptist (John 1:6 and Matthew 14:10-11). They have rejected God the Son (the Son of man) by not believing the gospel of the kingdom, ultimately crucifying Him “by wicked hands” (Acts 2:23). The only member of the Trinity left is the Holy Ghost. His ministry will begin on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. If they reject Him, there is no other member of the Godhead to reject. Therefore, Israel will be judged to hell. Israel committed the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost in Acts 7 when they stoned Stephen. As such, God's kingdom on earth could not start, but God still has promises to fulfill to Israel by their ruling in God's eternal kingdom on earth. Therefore, God started the dispensation of grace with Paul in Acts 9, and Israel's kingdom program will resume after the rapture of the Body of Christ with a new generation of Israelites.

**12:33-35** Since Israel has not committed the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost yet, God's kingdom will still be offered to Israel as a whole with the coming of the Holy Ghost. Regardless, in the tribulation period, both God's people (10:8) and Satan's people will cast out devils (7:22). So how do you tell which is which? You tell by who is teaching God's law according to SCRIPTURE and not according to MEN. That is what these two verses are saying. Fruit is doctrine; it is NOT signs and wonders, because we are told that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (12:34). In other words, Satan can fool people by doing things, such as miracles, that God does. However, he cannot keep God from preserving His Word for man (Psalm 12:6-7; Matthew 24:35). Therefore, Jesus is telling Israel to compare the doctrine being taught with God's Word. If the doctrine is the truth, the men have good fruit; their miracles are of God. If the doctrine is a lie, they are of Satan and should not be followed.

**12:36** Idle words are unprofitable words, not bringing edification to the hearer. As the religious leaders of the Jews, it was the Pharisees' responsibility to tell people God's words. They will be judged for not doing so.

**12:37** Doctrine is the key. Apostate Israel will say that they prophesied in God's name, cast out devils, and did "many wonderful works" during the tribulation period (7:22). However, because they are of the devil, their doctrine is not of God. Therefore, it is evil, and they will be condemned to hell.

**12:38** The Pharisees completely ignore what Jesus just said, because He told them that doctrine determines if a person is on God's side or on Satan's side, and they respond by wanting a sign. Furthermore, they have already received many signs, including Jesus' casting out of a devil and healing blind eyes and deaf ears that He just did! This shows that the Pharisees' request for a sign is just an excuse not to believe.

**12:39-40** The Pharisees have already blasphemed God the Father and God the Son. The only one left is God the Holy Ghost. Therefore, the only sign

Jesus will give them is His death, burial, and resurrection, which are necessary in order for the Holy Ghost to come and give Israel one more chance to accept the kingdom.

It took three days and three nights in the whale's belly before Jonah would preach to Nineveh, and they were saved from judgment. Similarly, it takes three days and three nights for Jesus to be in the heart of the earth before God conquers death, hell, and Satan, such that the little flock understands what God did, preaches the gospel of the kingdom, and Israel is saved by believing and going through the tribulation period.

**12:41-42** The Pharisees believed that all proselytized Gentiles and religious Jews would make it into God's kingdom. Jesus attacks this belief by pointing out two examples of Gentiles that will make it into the kingdom, while stating that the Pharisees, and all other physical Jews who side with the devil, will not make it into the kingdom because they have not accepted the gospel of the kingdom. Not only that, but Jesus is also saying that the Gentiles He mentions will make it into God's kingdom because of Jews who led them to God. These Pharisees are not even saved. They certainly will not lead the Gentiles into God's kingdom. In fact, Jesus says that, when the Pharisees do get a Gentile convert, they make him "twofold more the child of hell than [themselves]" (23:15)! Therefore, no Jewish religious people will make it into the kingdom.

Note also that Jesus says that He is greater than Jonah and greater than Solomon. Reading the book of Hebrews provides further detail. Hebrews says that Jesus: 1) Is greater than Moses (Hebrews 3), 2) Is a greater priest than the Levites (Hebrews 7), 3) Brought a better covenant than the old covenant (Hebrews 8), 4) Is in a better temple (Hebrews 9), and 5) Brought a better sacrifice for sins than the Levites brought (Hebrews 10).

Jesus says in Matthew 12:6 that he is greater than the temple, which speaks of His priestly office. He says in verse 41 that He is greater than Jonah, which speaks of His prophetic office. He says in verse 42 that He is greater than Solomon, which speaks of His kingly office. Therefore, by making these three statements, Jesus says that He possesses all three offices over the entire universe—prophet, priest, and king.

**12:43-45** The religion, that the Pharisees perpetrated, kept its followers from committing human evil. Now that Jesus is in Israel and has cast out many devils, Israel is swept clean. The problem is that apostate Israel does not have sound doctrine in their souls. Without this, their souls are empty, leaving them susceptible to even greater evils coming their way and following them. Those greater evils will be the Antichrist's kingdom. Apostate Israel will indulge in them, taking his mark and worshipping his image, leaving them in a worse situation than they were in under the Pharisees in Jesus' day. These prophetic words of Jesus will be fulfilled in the tribulation period. Thus, when Jesus refers to "this wicked generation," He is referring

to those of the devil, not necessarily those physically alive during Jesus' day. Obviously, the tribulation period never came for those alive during Jesus' day. The same interpretation of generation also holds true in 23:36 and 24:34. The danger, then, that Jesus is warning Israel about is that, if they do not believe the gospel of the kingdom now, they will believe the gospel of the Antichrist later, which is no gospel at all.

**12:46-50** In 12:41-42, Jesus points out that Gentiles will make it into God's kingdom, while those of the generation of vipers will not make it. Now, He identifies what JEWS will make it into God's kingdom. Those, who believe the gospel of the kingdom and preach the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, are the ones who do God's will and will be great in God's kingdom.

What Jesus is telling Israel is that physical lineage by itself is not enough to make it into the kingdom. Here are His mother and His half brothers standing outside, and they are seeking to stop Jesus' ministry. This shows that even the precious, virgin Mary is, at this time, outside of God's will. If she does not believe the gospel of the kingdom, she will not make it into God's kingdom, in spite of being chosen by God for the virgin birth. Similarly, the Pharisees cannot just say, "Abraham is our father" (John 8:39), and expect to make it into the kingdom. God's concern is with the spiritual, not just with the physical. Therefore, the ones, who are Jesus' true family, are those who do the Father's will.

These verses all show the Catholics that Mary did not remain a virgin all her life, as she had other sons. They also show the Catholics that she did sin, because she was trying to remove Jesus from doing His Father's will.

**13** Having been rejected by both the religious leaders and the masses, Jesus shifts His focus to bringing sound doctrine and edification to His little flock of believers only. The parable of the sower (13:1-8,18-23) shows that only a little flock of Israel will be saved. The parable of the wheat and the tares (13:24-30,36-43) shows why the kingdom of God could not begin right away, and why they must suffer through the trials of the tribulation period before the kingdom of God begins.

**13:1** Jesus told His 12 apostles in 10:14-15 that, if a house or city did not accept them, they were to move on and that city would suffer in hell. Knowing this, the statement, here, that Jesus went out of the house tells you that the Jewish people gathered in chapter 12 did not accept the gospel of the kingdom. They chose, instead, to believe the Pharisees that Jesus is of the devil. The remainder of Jesus' ministry will be concentrated on the believing remnant of Israel, which are outside the religious house of Israel.

**13:2-3** Great multitudes are still gathering around Jesus, but they have rejected Him as their Messiah. They just want the physical healings He gives. The physical healings point to the spiritual healing He offers, and

since they will not be spiritually healed, at least until the Holy Ghost comes in Acts 2, Jesus does not heal them. Instead, He teaches of the kingdom, but the apostate nation is not to know about these mysteries. Therefore, He speaks to them in parables (13:10-11). Only those with spiritual ears to hear will know what Jesus is saying (13:9).

**Parables:** When it comes to parables, people get so confused about what they say. Funny that. That was the same thing that happened to the multitudes listening to Jesus. Apparently, neither they nor people today have the ears to hear (13:9) the parables. Even those, who are saved, do not generally know what the parables mean because they do not rightly divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).

Nearly every commentator, pastor, and scholar will tell you that Jesus spoke in parables so that people could understand the deep truths of God. However, Jesus says in 13:11 that the reason He spoke in parables was to hide the mysteries of the kingdom from unbelievers. Therefore, Jesus spoke in parables to confuse people, not to help them understand. Commentators, pastors, scholars, and all Christians need to stop believing what people tell them and start believing what God's Word says!

**13:3-8** The parable of the sower. Jesus has recognized that the whole nation of Israel has rejected Him as their Messiah now, and He will concentrate on instructing the little flock from here on out. Jesus gives them this, His first parable, to tell them exactly that.

The sower sows the gospel of the kingdom. Fowls are a type of sin in the Bible (Leviticus 11:20). The fowls represent the Pharisees with their religion. Before people have a chance to accept the gospel of the kingdom, the Pharisees lead them astray (v. 19). That is what happened in 12:22-50. The stony place seed are people who accept the gospel of the kingdom at first, but they deny it once the Antichrist and his kingdom start persecuting them, as represented by the sun scorching them (vs. 20-21). The ones among thorns are the ones who accept the gospel of the kingdom at first but reject it later when the Antichrist offers them material riches and possessions in his kingdom (v. 22). The thorns springing up represent the rise of the Antichrist's kingdom.

I John 2:16 says that there are three categories of temptation: 1) Lust of the flesh, 2) Lust of the eyes, and 3) The pride of life. The wayside seeds are people who never follow the lust of the flesh, because they believe what religion tells them, rather than what the Word of God tells them. The stony seeds follow the pride of life, because they are not willing to endure persecution for the gospel's sake. The thorny-ground people follow the lust of the eyes, because they want material possessions. Therefore, the three types of bad ground represent the three types of temptations.

The good ground seed represents the little flock who will make it into God's

eternal kingdom. Note that some bring forth 100 fold, some 60 fold, and some 30 fold. This represents the little flock preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The amount of fruit is not as important as the fact that they present the gospel. When they do that, it is then up to the lost sheep to become found.

**13:9** Only the saved in Israel can understand Jesus' parables, because Israel, as a whole, does not have ears to hear since they have rejected the gospel of the kingdom (13:15).

**13:9-13** People tend to think that Jesus spoke to Israel in parables so that they could understand what He was telling them. However, these verses tell us that the opposite is true. Israel has had their chance. Most have rejected the gospel of the kingdom. Therefore, they are not given the mysteries of the kingdom. Those, who have accepted the gospel of the kingdom, are given the mysteries. Therefore, the purpose of the parables is to speak God's Word to all of Israel and have only the saved in Israel actually understand God's Word. It is like I Corinthians 2:14 tells us for today that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

**13:12** Spiritually speaking, during the tribulation period, the little flock will be given more truth and have more spiritual abundance, even though, materially speaking, the Antichrist will take away their possessions. The more of God's Word that a Jew believes, the greater will be His reward in the kingdom. This is explained in 25:14-30 by the parable of the talents.

**13:14-15** This prophecy is from Isaiah 6:9-10. The context in which God turns the truth away from the people is always when they have already rejected the gospel, whatever that gospel may be, for the people listening. In Isaiah's day, they could not understand spiritual truth because they had rejected God's law covenant and their favored nation status. Here, in Matthew, Israel has rejected the gospel of the kingdom. In Acts 28:25-27, where it is also quoted, it is the Jews rejecting the gospel of grace. The idea, here, is that they have heard the gospel, and they have seen the miracles showing them the kingdom of God is there. Yet, they have rejected it. Therefore, they will not understand the things Jesus teaches pertaining to the kingdom.

God's law gives man a punishment that fits his crime (Exodus 21:22-25). Since Israel has hardened their own hearts against the truth, God keeps them from understanding the truth when it is presented to them. Note that 13:15 says, "their eyes they have closed." Because Israel closed their own eyes to the truth, God kept them from seeing the truth, by speaking to them in parables.

**13:16** By contrast, the believing remnant will learn the mysteries of God's kingdom.

**13:17** The mysteries of God's kingdom had "been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (13:35), until Jesus revealed them in parables. That is why prophets and righteous men had not heard these things before.

It is important for us to note that the mysteries of God's kingdom have NOTHING to do with the current, mystery dispensation. God's kingdom on earth, which is Israel's program, had been "spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). However, there still remained some details that had not been spoken until Jesus started revealing them here. Those details primarily have to do with how the little flock is gathered during the tribulation period. By contrast, ALL of the details of the current, mystery dispensation was "kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest" (Romans 16:25-26).

**13:18-23** The details of the parable of the sower were dealt with earlier in this chapter's commentary.

**13:24-30** The parable of the wheat and the tares. The man is Jesus (v. 37). The seed are "the children of the kingdom" (v. 38). But, Jesus is also God, because He sows seed in "His" field, meaning He sowed it in the world, which He created (v. 38). The men, who slept, were the religious leaders of Israel. Because they did not have faith in God's Word and were following their own traditions, rather than God's commands as found in the law covenant, the enemy—the devil—came in and sowed his own seed (v. 39). The result were two generations—the generation of Jesus Christ (1:1), and the generation of vipers (of the devil) (3:7). The generation of Jesus Christ is the little flock—the children of the kingdom (v. 38). The generation of vipers is the children of the wicked one (v. 38). The servants are the angels, while the householder is Jesus (vs. 27 and 41).

The problem was that the Jewish religious leaders were of the wicked one, not of the kingdom. As a result, most of Israel followed the religious leaders, either out of ignorance or out of desire. Jesus placed the 12 apostles in the position of leadership, and they were now to go to the cities of Israel to find those in Israel, who followed the religious leaders out of ignorance, a.k.a., the lost sheep of Israel, and give them the gospel of the kingdom and the signs of the kingdom, i.e., casting out devils and healing the sick, so that they may take their rightful positions in the kingdom of God as children of the kingdom. The problem is that, in their infant stages, both wheat and tares look a lot alike (v. 29). The fire of the tribulation period (the trials of those 7 years) will reveal who is wheat and who is tares. Then, at the end of the tribulation period, the wheat can be gathered into the kingdom, while the tares can be burned (v. 30).

Thus, what this parable is teaching Jesus' disciples is why the kingdom cannot begin now (the gospel has to be sown so that the rest of the wheat can grow), and why the fiery trials of the tribulation period will take place

(so that the wheat can be identified apart from the tares).

What this demonstrates is that, if Israel had been obeying the law covenant, they would have believed the gospel that John the Baptist and Jesus preached that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (3:2 and 4:17). All of Israel would have trusted in it, and the kingdom could have begun right then. They would have bound Jesus Christ on the altar in the temple as the complete Passover Lamb (as commanded by Psalm 118:23-29), the kingdom would have begun, and Israel would have went to the Gentiles with the gospel so that they might be saved.

But, instead of making Him the sacrifice, Israel tried to make Him king (John 6:15). Since He did not fit their religious belief of the Messiah, rather than a belief based on God's Word, they ultimately rejected Him and killed Him. Thus, their unbelief meant that the kingdom of heaven was taken away from Israel by the Pharisees for the time being (11:12), and Israel would have to go through the time of "Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7), the tribulation period, in order to enter the kingdom.

**13:20,37** Note from 13:20 that the seed in the parable of the sower is the gospel of the kingdom that a sower sowed in Israel. The result was that most rejected the gospel, and so the seed was destroyed or taken away. However, some seed sprouted. This represents the little flock. But, in the parable of the wheat and the tares, we are told in 13:37 that the seed are the children of the kingdom. So, the second parable builds on the first parable. At first, the sower sows the gospel of the kingdom. It grows, blossoms, and produces the little flock. The little flock, then, become the seed sown to find more lost sheep of Israel. This seed, then, is of a higher quality, because it is the gospel lived out in believers. Thus, it has greater effectiveness in reaching the lost sheep. This is why the tribulation period will be the greatest time of Jewish conversion ever.

**13:31-32** The parable of the mustard seed. Following the progression of the last two parables, the mustard seed is the good seed of the little flock giving the gospel to the rest of Israel. Just like the mustard seed is "the least of all seeds," Israel was "the fewest of all people" (Deuteronomy 7:7). But, because the gospel is given, it becomes "the greatest among herbs" (13:32). Once that takes place, though, we are told that a change takes place. We are told that it "becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof" (13:32). Genesis 1:12 says that the herb yields seed "after his kind," which means that an herb is always an herb, and a tree is always a tree, but this parable shows the "greatest among herbs" becoming a tree. This shows that something went wrong.

Ezekiel 31:3-8 says that the Assyrian is like a great tree, in which "the fowls of heaven made their nests" (Ezekiel 31:6). Matthew 13:4,19 has already told us that the fowls represent the wicked one taking the gospel away from the people. Isaiah 10:5-6 calls the Antichrist the "Assyrian," going "against an



hypocritical nation,” which would be apostate Israel.

Therefore, what the parable of the mustard seed is saying is that the little flock will sow the gospel, the lost sheep of Israel will believe, such that the mustard grows into the greatest among herbs. But, then, because it is great, the Antichrist comes and makes it into a tree, and it is filled with devils. (Remember the warning of 12:45 that more evil spirits will occupy apostate Israel?)

Therefore, the little flock should not be discouraged when they find false prophets and bad doctrine have come into their midst. Instead, they should expect this to happen. Similarly, when a right-division church grows, the Christian religion will see the opportunity for power and money and try to get false doctrine into the church.

**13:33** The parable of leaven. In Matthew 16:6,12, we are told that the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees refers to their doctrine. Leaven is a type of sin in the Bible, which is why God instituted the feast of unleavened bread and declared that people, not observing that feast, were to be cut off from Israel (Exodus 12:15). Therefore, this parable of leaven refers to sin and false doctrine.

The woman of this parable would be the Babylonian religious system, called “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” in Revelation 17:5. This Babylonian religious system “hid” (That’s the “mystery” part of her name.) leaven “in three measures of meal.” The three measures of meal would be the three members of the Godhead. The first measure was God the Father, as represented by the ministry of John the Baptist. The second measure was God the Son, as represented by the ministry of Jesus Christ. The third measure is God the Holy Ghost, as represented by the ministry of the little flock between Jesus’ first and second comings. The end result is that the whole of Israel is leavened, meaning that apostate Israel has to be judged and replaced by God with the little flock of Israel.

**13:34** We are clearly told that, since Israel, as a whole, has rejected the gospel of the kingdom, Jesus hides the mysteries of the kingdom in parables so that only the little flock understands them.

**13:35** The quote is of Psalm 78:2, which shows that David was a prophet, in addition to being a priest (I Samuel 23:9-13) and a king (II Samuel 5:4). The near fulfillment of that verse was God giving the law to the nation of Israel. Now, we see the full fulfillment of this prophecy in Jesus giving the mysteries of the kingdom to the little flock through parables.

**13:36** With the multitude gone, Jesus explains the parable of the wheat and the tares to the little flock. First, they learned of the different reactions to the gospel of the kingdom during the tribulation period (parable of the

sower). Now, they are learning of the growth of the believing remnant among apostate Israel (parable of the wheat and tares).

**13:38** Now, since this verse says that “the field is the world,” most Christians, because they do not rightly divide, think that this is referring to people from all nations being saved. However, this is only referring to Israel being saved. The reason the whole world is sown is because the lost sheep of Israel are scattered all over the world, due to the fifth cycle of chastisement being upon them (see Leviticus 26:33 and John 7:35). Therefore, “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world” (Matthew 24:13), but the little flock is only to go “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6).

**13:39-40** “The end of THIS world” is a reference to the end of Satan’s rule over the earth rather than being a reference to the actual end of this earth. Therefore, Jesus is referring to His second coming, when He ends the times of the Gentiles (Daniel 2:44), as opposed to referring to the time when the new heaven and the new earth are put in place at the end of Jesus’ millennial reign (Revelation 21:1).

**13:41-43** These verses show that the first thing Jesus does at His second coming is that He takes up all of the wicked people and throws them into hell. The believing remnant stays on the earth, because they will be going into God’s eternal kingdom on earth. Therefore, when 24:39-41 says that one will be taken and the other left, the one left is the believer, and the one taken is taken away and thrown into hell. By contrast, at the end of the dispensation of grace, it is the believers, who are taken off the earth, not the unbelievers (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). The reason is because we live forever with the Lord in heaven. Therefore, we are taken off the earth and brought into God’s kingdom in heaven, while the believing remnant of Israel stays on the earth in order to enter God’s kingdom on earth (6:9-10). Yet, over 99% of Christianity does not understand this. Why? Because they do not have the spiritual ears to hear (13:43).

Once the things of darkness are removed from the earth, then the righteous shine forth as the sun. This light is Israel radiating out the glory of God (Revelation 21:11).

**13:44** I believe this treasure is the little flock, and the field is the world, as in verse 38. The treasure is hid because the world does not recognize the little flock as a treasure. Jesus, though, does recognize them as a treasure. Therefore, He comes to earth and gives His life (“goeth and selleth all that he hath”) in order to “buy...that field,” or get the world back from Satan. Then, He has the treasure, i.e., those trusting in Him, which He saves forever. (See Malachi 3:17, where God calls the believing remnant of Israel “My jewels.”)

**13:45-46** This parable of the pearl of great price is the same as the parable of the treasure. Jesus is the merchant man. He obeys the law perfectly and

gives His life in order to buy the pearl of great price, which is the believing remnant. Note that a pearl is the only precious stone that is a living stone, because it is made by an oyster. I Peter 2:5 calls the believing remnant “lively stones.” Also, a pearl is made through great suffering, as is the believing remnant, since they have to go through the tribulation period in order to be saved.

**13:47-50** In the parable of the net, the net seems to be God’s judgment of the world at the end of the tribulation period, since the sea is often seen in scripture as Satan’s realm and God made His disciples “fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). All are brought to the judgment. The wicked are thrown into the lake of fire, while the just, those who accept the gospel of the kingdom and endure unto the end, are saved, entering into God’s kingdom on earth. As such, this parable is similar to the parable of the wheat and the tares (13:24-30,36-43), except that the wheat and the tares dealt exclusively with Israel, while the parable of the net probably deals with the world as a whole.

**13:51** Jesus does not need to explain the other five parables’ meanings to them, because, with the two explanations already given (parable of the sower and the parable of the wheat and the tares), they already know how to understand the parables themselves.

**13:52** The different truths that Jesus teaches the little flock about the kingdom of heaven will be used by them, depending on the situation, so that they can be “wise as serpents” (10:16). They now have all the information they need to endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved.

Note that they had “old” information from the prophets and “new” information that Jesus shared with them. This required them to figure out what information belongs with Jesus’ first coming, what information belongs with the tribulation period, what information belongs with Jesus’ second coming, and what information belongs with the kingdom. This meant that they needed to rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), much like we need to do in order to understand scripture today.

**13:53-58** Man believes that you have to have a seminary degree or some other credential in order to teach people the things of God. Therefore, when they see Jesus’ wisdom and mighty works, they reject them because Jesus was not educated by doctors of the law. He did not have the right background to make His wisdom great in the eyes of man. The same holds true today. Paul told the Corinthians that “a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me” (I Corinthians 9:17) as “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:17), yet they wanted a “letter of commendation” from someone (II Corinthians 3:1), verifying that what Paul said is true. In other words, they believed man over God. Today, people will not believe the truth of God’s Word, because mainstream Christianity does not believe it. Who cares! Your question should be “what saith the scripture” (Romans 4:3; Galatians 4:30), not “what saith Christianity.”

**13:53-54** Jesus goes to Nazareth with the gospel of the kingdom and miracles.

**13:55-56** Note that Mary did not remain a virgin after Jesus' birth as Catholics claim, but she had at least 4 other sons and 2 daughters.

**13:54,57** Jesus went to "THEIR synagogue," and His message offended them. Thus, they chose to continue to follow their religious leaders over following God Himself. Thus, they are not blessed (11:6).

**13:58** Jesus shakes the dust off His feet (10:14) and moves on from Nazareth, because they will not accept Him or the gospel.

**14** Jesus teaches the little flock to rely on God's provision to get through the tribulation period, even though the Antichrist and his kingdom are all that surround them.

**14:1-2** Herod did not understand that John the Baptist prepared the way for the Messiah. However, he does seem to recognize that John the Baptist was from God, and that God has the power to raise him from the dead. He is at least one step ahead of the Sadducees (Acts 23:8), but that is not saying much.

**14:3-4** Now, we go back in time to the death of John the Baptist. The reason is to show that the rejection by the nation of Israel of Jesus as their Messiah should not come as a shock to the disciples, who have already seen that Israel rejected God the Father by killing John the Baptist.

Apostate Israel killed John the Baptist because he spoke out against an adulterous relationship. Similarly, in the tribulation period, the Antichrist's forces will kill the little flock because they speak out against the spiritually adulterous relationship that apostate Israel has with Babylon, the mother of all harlots.

**14:5** Israel also does not understand John the Baptist's ministry. True, he was a prophet, but he was much more than that, preparing the way for the Messiah (Luke 7:26-28).

**14:6** The dancing of Herodias to please Herod in order to kill John the Baptist is not unlike how the Antichrist will entice apostate Israel with the Babylonian religious system to join his side in trying to kill the believing remnant. We see this system likened to a strange, flattering woman in Proverbs 7:5-23. In that passage, Israel is said to go "after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks...and knoweth not that it is for his life" (Proverbs 7:22-23).

**14:9** We know from verse 5 that Herod wanted to kill John the Baptist, but

he feared the people. Therefore, his being sorry here is because he feared an insurrection by the Jews, not because he did not want to put John the Baptist to death.

**14:13** When Jesus hears that John the Baptist is dead, He goes to a desert place. This is a type of how the nation needs to go outside of the Jewish religious system and unto Jesus, bearing His reproach, so that they might enter the kingdom of heaven (3:5-6; Hebrews 13:12-14).

**14:14** 9:36 says that the reason Jesus was moved with compassion was because the multitude “were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.” In other words, the Jewish, religious leaders were supposed to be pointing the nation to the Messiah, but they failed to do so. Therefore, Jesus “shepherds” them here. By healing them physically, He shows the multitude that God wants to heal them spiritually and bring them into the kingdom.

**14:15** The disciples are saying that there is no food in the desert. Physically speaking, that is true, but, spiritually speaking, the true food is in the desert, because it is outside of the Jewish religious system. That is why God fed Israel with physical manna in the wilderness under Moses, and He will feed the multitude physically here, too.

**14:16-17** Jesus tells His disciples to give the multitude food to eat. He is giving them a chance to put into practice what He taught them in 7:7-10. There, He gave the specific example of a son asking his father to give him bread and a fish. If the disciples have faith in the Father, they will ask Him for food to feed the multitude. This miracle would then be a sign to the multitude that the disciples are of God and are able to feed them spiritually, as well. However, the disciples do not have this faith, but they will after Jesus’ ascension (John 21:15-17).

**14:19-21** Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 men is to demonstrate to them how, if they have faith in God, believe the gospel of the kingdom, and do not take the mark of the beast, God will sustain them through the tribulation period. The 12 baskets remaining represent the 12 tribes of Israel enduring unto the end of the tribulation period. This miracle also demonstrates God's governmental structure in His kingdom on earth. The 12 apostles will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel (19:28), much like Israel went to the 12 apostles to receive food here.

Also, note that Jesus “commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass” (14:19). This should have reminded the multitudes of Psalm 23:1-2: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.”

**14:22** The multitudes are close to the water here. So, those, accepting Jesus as their Messiah would repent and be water baptized for the remission of sins. Sadly, instead of having faith in God, they try to make

Jesus king by force (John 6:15). Jesus will now test His disciples to see if they learned the lesson that God will sustain them through the tribulation period. Jesus constrains them to get into the ship and go to the other side as a type of how, in the tribulation period, God will not physically be with them. They will have to trust in His Word in order to endure unto the end. Jesus is on the mountain alone, praying to His Father during this time, as a type of how Jesus will be in heaven, interceding for the little flock, during the tribulation period (Revelation 1:13,20). Therefore, although Jesus is not with the disciples physically through the tribulation period, He is with them spiritually (Matthew 28:20).

**14:23-25** Jesus was on the mountain by Himself by the time evening had come, but He waits until the fourth watch of the night, which is the last watch of the night—3:00 to 6:00 AM—before He saves His disciples. This is signifying how the little flock will have to go through the tribulation period with God having turned away from them. They will only find God in His Word. His coming at the end of the tribulation period signals the end of the night and the start of the morning when He ushers in His kingdom on earth (Psalm 30:5). Thus, Jesus is giving His disciples a very memorable illustration, regarding the coming tribulation period. Note that Jesus only does this at night in the midst of a storm when no one else is around. This shows that the lesson, that Jesus is God and He will bring them safely through the tribulation period, is only for the believing remnant—not for the nation as a whole.

**14:25** The sea, the abyss, etc. are all types in the Bible of Satan's realm. The turbulent sea signifies the extent to which Satan will have control of the earth during the tribulation period. By walking on the sea, Jesus is teaching His disciples that He will easily overthrow Satan's kingdom when He comes at the end of the tribulation period. In fact, Job 9:8 tells us that God “treadeth upon the waves of the sea.” Also, Psalm 93:3-4 says, “The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.” Therefore, this event is proof to the disciples that Jesus is God.

**14:26-27** Note that the disciples do not recognize Jesus. This shows the deception of Satan during the tribulation period. Jesus said that false Christs and false prophets will arise such that, “if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (24:14). Therefore, when Jesus does finally show up, even the little flock is not sure that it is really Jesus.

**14:28-31** Peter's walking on the water shows that the little flock will get through the tribulation period untouched by the Antichrist's kingdom which is all around them (as symbolized by the sea), even though the sea is wild with waves and wind around them. However, if the little flock takes their eyes off of God's Word and begins to look at what Satan is doing, they will end up falling—not enduring unto the end (10:22). Faith in God's Word is

the key, which is why Jesus chides Peter for his lack of faith. This also shows that, even though the little flock sins during the tribulation period, they will still enter the kingdom because God is there to keep them from drowning.

**14:32** The wind ceasing when Jesus is in the ship symbolizes Israel being safe in God's kingdom after Jesus overthrows the Antichrist's kingdom.

**14:33** In 8:27 after Jesus had rebuked the wind and the waves, the disciples' reaction was "what manner of man is this?" Now, when He does it this second time, they say, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Thus, we see the disciples' progression of faith, even if they are still of "little faith." This shows the progression of faith during the tribulation period. It takes 7 years of trials for the little flock to go from thinking that Jesus is a man to believing that He is the Son of God.

**14:34-36** Jesus heals in this other city of Israel. While it is true that Jesus was concentrating on feeding the little flock only by the time we get to chapter 13, we have to remember 14:10-13 that this story goes back in time to John the Baptist's beheading. Thus, these events take place BEFORE Matthew 13. Look at how even religion has interfered with Jesus' physical healings. They need not touch His garment to be healed, but people feel like they have to do their part in order for the miracle to take place. It is not just God doing it, but it is the person doing their share of the miracle, even if it is just touching the hem of Jesus' garment. This shows the pride of man and tells us that they undoubtedly did not accept the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preached. People do this today by thinking they have to confess their sins, be water baptized, or some other thing in order to be saved. The truth is that belief in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection is all that is required in the current dispensation of grace to be saved. You do not even have to pray to receive eternal life. Just believe!

**15** Three groups are seen: 1) Unbelieving Pharisees (15:1-20), 2) A believing Gentile (15:22-28), and 3) Believing Jews, who will fall away for the most part (15:30-38). These stories illustrate how faith is what saves a person, not being on the right side of the middle wall of partition.

**15:1** Time wise, we must be close to the events of Matthew 12, since the scribes and Pharisees follow Jesus from Jerusalem to the land of Gennesaret just so they can accuse Him to get people to continue to follow them instead of following God. How great is Satan's jealousy of God that he will not even let God minister to people without fighting Him every step of the way.

**15:2-6** The Pharisees of Jerusalem are the worst of the Pharisees, such that they accuse the disciples of transgressing "the tradition of the elders," while the Pharisees in 12:2 accuse the disciples of breaking the law. These Jerusalem Pharisees hold their traditions above God's law, which shows

they are the most religious Pharisees. Jesus shows that they should not be followed because their traditions are contrary to God's law. For example, they allow people to break the commandment of honoring father and mother. As such, they have "made the commandment of God of none effect by [their] tradition" when they were supposed to lead Israel in the obedience of God's law. This is why Jesus condemns them so strongly in chapter 23. (The commandment to honor father and mother is found in Exodus 20:12. The punishment of death for cursing father or mother is found in Exodus 21:17.)

**15:7** What makes the Pharisees hypocrites is that they say that they follow God's law, when they actually teach disobedience of God's law.

**15:8-9** Jesus quotes the Pharisees Isaiah 29:13, which is talking specifically of the religion of the Pharisees. They appeared to be close to God, but they were really far from God because they taught the fear of the Lord with the commandments of men, while shunning God's commandments. So many people do the same thing today, supposedly fearing God by following scripture, but they are really following men. If they were following God's Word, they would know that salvation is by grace through faith and not of works (Ephesians 2:8-9). If the Pharisees know Isaiah 29:13, they should also know Isaiah 29:14 which says that, because of the religion of the Jews, God promises to get rid of the wisdom and understanding of the Pharisees. In other words by quoting Isaiah 29:13, Jesus is telling the Pharisees of their eventual demise.

**15:10** Note that Jesus does not respond to the Pharisees. They have already rejected their Messiah. His response is to the multitudes so that they might understand that the Pharisees' doctrine is of the Devil; therefore, they should not be followed. Therefore, Jesus' disciples are to leave them alone (15:14).

**15:11** Physically speaking, Jesus is talking about eating with unwashed hands (15:20). Spiritually speaking, Jesus is talking about doctrine, not food. If he was talking about food, he would be teaching the disciples to disobey God's law because there were some foods that were unclean and would defile a Jew who eats them (Leviticus 11:4-8). All modern translators, with the exception of the New King James Version, do not get this point, because they add the comment in Mark 7:19 that Jesus declared all foods clean by teaching this. However, Jesus said that not one letter of the law would pass away (5:18). These modern translations say that Jesus taught men to disobey the law. Therefore, these modern translations are not the Word of God and should not be followed.

**15:12** Jesus had said that people are blessed who do not take offense by what Jesus says (11:6). The Pharisees, then, are not blessed.

Today, the truth of God's Word is not preached or believed with the excuse



given that we should love and not judge others. We do not want to hurt anyone's feelings. Here, Jesus offends the Pharisees, and He does not apologize or back down. In fact, He says to "let them alone" (15:14). If they are offended and do not believe the truth, the disciples should not worry about it. The truth is more important than feelings.

**15:13-14** God has rejected the Pharisees. They have been replaced by His 12 apostles. Jesus is warning the multitudes about the Satanic doctrine of the Pharisees so that Israel follows their Messiah instead of the Pharisees.

**15:17-20** "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). If a person is trusting in God's Word ALONE, his heart is pure, and he remains undefiled by the things of this world. If he is not trusting in God's Word, his heart is full of evil and already defiled, and the things he does will be indicative of his evil heart. The same holds true with unclean animals. If a Jew knowingly eats an unclean animal, it shows that he is defiled on the inside, because he does not mind breaking God's command. What Jesus is saying, then, is that obedience is a heart issue. That is the lesson He gave them in 5:21-48. Since Jesus had already given them this lesson, He asks them here: "Are ye also yet without understanding" (15:16)? In other words, "Didn't I already tell you this?"

**15:21** Jesus is only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24), yet He is in Gentile territory (Tyre and Sidon). The reason is because Israel had been scattered among the Gentiles according to the fifth cycle of chastisement in Leviticus 26:33.

**15:22-24** Israel was supposed to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:5-6) to reach the Gentiles with the gospel of the kingdom (Isaiah 60:1-3). This Gentile woman comes to Jesus directly, thereby skipping the proper order of going through the Jews first. That is why Jesus does not talk to her at first. It is not because she is a woman, because Jesus actually initiates His conversation with the woman of Samaria in John 4:7. The proper way for a Gentile to address Jesus is seen by the centurion in Luke 7:1-10. However, you cannot really blame the woman, here, for approaching Jesus directly, since the Jewish religious leaders and the disciples probably would have ignored her.

**15:24** This is the clearest statement by Jesus that He was sent by the Father to save Israel only. He was not even to save all of Israel, but He was sent only to save "the lost sheep" of the house of Israel, which means only the believing remnant are to be saved. Romans 15:8 confirms this ministry by saying that "Jesus Christ was a minister OF the circumcision."

**15:25-26** Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35). His "bread" is eternal life for Israel if they believe the gospel of the kingdom (John 6:35). The fact that Jesus says here that it is Israel's bread, or "the children's bread," means that His invitation in John 6 is to Israel ONLY. Jesus cast out devils in

Israel to show them He would cast Satan out of them as well, if they believe the gospel. In Israel's program, Gentiles are considered to be dogs. Therefore, Jesus says it is not right to offer eternal life to this woman directly without Israel being the mediator.

**15:27-28** Now, Jesus sees that the woman knows of the proper order. She knows that Gentiles are only blessed through Israel. She probably did not go through the Jewish leaders to get to Jesus like the Roman centurion did in 8:5-13 because they would not do it for her. You can see in the story before that the Pharisees have rejected Jesus as their Messiah. Trusting in the proper channel of blessing is "great faith." Jesus calls it such here and also in 8:10 with the Roman centurion. As such, both Gentiles stand as shining examples of faith among the Gentiles when Israel is so entrenched in unbelief that this woman cannot even go through Israel to get to Jesus. She must go directly. Incidentally, the Roman centurion was probably able to go through the proper channels only because of his money (Luke 7:3-5).

Also, note how the Gentile woman recognizes that eternal life is offered to Israel, and they have rejected it by allowing it to fall down to the ground. This shows that she believes her Bible and recognizes the Jewish religious leaders for the unsaved, unbelieving hypocrites they are.

Note also who is offended by the truth. Jesus calls the Gentile woman a dog, which is a very derogatory remark, and she says, "Truth, Lord." By contrast, Jesus speaks out against one of the Pharisees' traditions, and they are offended by Him (15:1-12). Similarly, God says that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Believers today say, "truth, Lord," acknowledging their sin and trusting in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for the payment of their sin. The Christian religion today is offended by Romans 3:23 and builds traditions to justify how they are self-righteous before God, not ever being saved.

**15:1-20;22-28** The contrast is seen here between apostate Jews and a believing Gentile. It also shows that the devout Jews will not make it into God's kingdom, while lowly Gentiles, with faith in God, will make it into God's kingdom.

**15:29** Since the Gentile woman could not go through the proper channels, we can conclude that the Jews in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon have rejected Jesus as their Messiah. Therefore, Jesus leaves these cities.

**15:29-33** These healings by Jesus were before Matthew 12 when the nation as a whole had rejected Jesus as their Messiah. Therefore, Jesus is doing miracles here. These great multitudes INITIALLY believe in the gospel of the kingdom, because they follow Jesus and listen to His teachings for 3 days rather than being healed physically and then leaving. Most will fall away later, since there were only 120 believers left on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:15). In the parable of the sower, these people would be in the stony-

ground category (13:20-21).

Also notice that no mention is given of casting out devils, which probably means that these people were probably good, moral people, who followed the Pharisees' teachings, needing their sins forgiven. This is shown by their casting these people down at Jesus' feet. You would not literally throw a blind or maimed guy at Jesus' feet, but you would throw your sins at Jesus' feet. That is what is in view here. Jesus forgave their sins, but most did not follow Jesus afterward.

**15:32-33** In 14:15-16, Jesus gave the disciples a chance to ask God the Father to provide food for the multitude (7:7-10). They failed that test. Now, they are given another chance, and they fail this one, too. In both cases, they fail to apply "The Golden Rule" (7:12).

**15:34-38** The seven loaves and the seven baskets left over stand for the seven years of tribulation. God will feed His little flock in this manner during the tribulation period. The little flock's leaders will distribute food to the little flock, and there will be enough because God will miraculously increase the food. We see a foretaste of this in Acts 4:34-35, where people bring to the apostles what they have and it is distributed among the little flock based on need. This passage in Matthew also shows why possessions were brought to the apostles, because it was through them that God would work the miracle of multiplying possessions to meet the needs of the little flock.

**15:36** The Christian tradition of praying before a meal probably comes from Jesus' two feedings of the multitudes recorded in Matthew 14-15. And, we are to pray without ceasing and give thanks in everything in this current dispensation (I Thessalonians 5:17-18). However, the context of the prayer is to thank God in advance for blessing the limited food so that it will be enough to feed everyone.

**15:39** Although great multitudes had followed Jesus for 3 days, they depart here. They are probably like the crowd of Matthew 14, who followed Jesus only to be physically fed by Him, rather than because they believe on Him for eternal life.

**16** Jesus' ministry is solely to the little flock now. He teaches them that: 1) Their food is the doctrines of God (16:5-12), 2) He is the Messiah (16:13-20), 3) He will die for their sins (16:21), and 4) They need to be willing to die for preaching the gospel to the lost sheep of Israel during the tribulation period (16:24-25).

**16:1** This is the first time the Sadducees are mentioned as ganging up with the Pharisees to try to bring Jesus down. The two groups did not get along well, because the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection or angels (Acts 23:8). However, both groups hate Jesus by this point, and so they unite, in their common bond of hatred, to do away with Jesus.

**16:4** Jesus has already given the Jewish religious leaders countless signs that He is the Messiah. Since they have rejected Him, they are "a wicked and adulterous generation." They are wicked because they do not obey the law, even though they say that they do. They are adulterous because they serve Satan. Because they have already blasphemed Jesus, claiming He does miracles by the Devil's power (12:24), the only sign they will get is His resurrection, which is their last opportunity to accept Him as Messiah before they are judged into hell. They get the same answer as the Pharisees in 12:38-42 received from Jesus.

**15:39-16:4** Jesus does not do any miracles or preach the gospel in the city of Magdala because they are part of the generation of vipers. While Jesus was coming to people and healing them before, now He is avoiding people, leaving the multitudes at the end of chapter 15 because they were not believers and leaving Magdala because the Pharisees and Sadducees are in firm control of that city.

**16:5** This verse proves that Jesus did miracles to show people that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He did not do miracles for everyday use, as evidenced by the fact that the disciples needed to pack food when they travelled.

**16:6** Leaven takes bread and causes it to ferment and rise. This means that the bread is broken down and transformed into something that is bigger than the original. 16:12 tells us that the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is their false doctrine. Like we saw in the parable of the mustard seed (13:31-32), false doctrine changes the truth and makes it bigger than what it really is. Therefore, the disciples need to recognize false doctrine for what it really is so that they will continue to build the kingdom of heaven on the foundation of the truth.

**16:7-12** Jesus tried to teach His disciples about going through the tribulation period by feeding 5,000 and then by feeding 4,000. Now, He tests them and finds out they still have not learned that the true bread and drink is God's Word. Sound doctrine is what will sustain them through the tribulation period. If they do not get this and want physical food instead, they will end up taking the mark of the beast and being thrown into the lake of fire. Note also how Jesus emphasizes the number of baskets of leftover food they took up so that they will understand that the 12 baskets represent the 12 tribes of Israel and the 7 baskets represent Israel going through the 7 years of the tribulation period, trusting in God's provision.

**16:13-16** These verses show the difference between Jesus' disciples and the rest of Israel. Although the disciples may not have faith (16:8) to ask their heavenly Father to give them food to feed the multitudes thereby obeying The Golden Rule (7:9-12), they do believe that Jesus is the Messiah, while the rest of Israel thinks He is just a prophet.

**16:17** “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17). All of Israel had the Old Testament. If they would have believed the words on the pages of scripture, the Father would have revealed to them that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. However, the Jewish religion was caught up in their goals of money, power, and satisfying the flesh. Therefore, although they read scripture every Saturday in the synagogue, they did not believe it. Since they did not believe it, the Father did not give them the understanding, which led them to use their flesh to rationalize that Jesus is just a man. The flesh never will acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because that would mean that the flesh would have to submit to God, and the flesh wants to be God.

Similarly, the Christian religion reads scripture every Sunday in church, but allows their flesh to rob them of learning the truth of God’s Word, because they decide to believe what man says about God (religion), rather than believing the Bible.

**16:18** “This rock” of 16:18 refers to the Christ. In 16:16, Peter says that Jesus is the Christ, and Jesus’ response to that is that on “this rock”—the Christ (I Corinthians 10:4)—“I”, meaning God, will build My church. The church is not the Body of Christ, which is present today in the dispensation of grace. Rather, the church is the found sheep of the house of Israel. (A church is merely a group of believers. It did not start in Acts 2, as most people claim, as evidenced by Acts 7:38, which says that the church existed in the wilderness during Moses’ day.) They are found because they, like Peter, have trusted in Jesus as the Christ. “The gates of hell” refers to the Antichrist’s kingdom in the tribulation period. “The church” is the believing remnant during the tribulation period. Try as they might, the Antichrist and apostate Israel cannot destroy God’s church. The reason that the church cannot be destroyed is because of the work that the Messiah did to save Israel from Satan—the one stronger than he (Jeremiah 31:11).

**16:19** God will give Peter the authority to act on behalf of heaven. If he forgives someone’s sins, God forgives their sins. If he does not forgive their sins, they are not forgiven. Note the future tense. God “will give” this power to Peter. He gives it to him when he receives the Holy Ghost. We are told this in John 20:22-23. We see a demonstration of this in Acts 5:1-10 when Peter pronounces death upon Ananias and Sapphira for lying, and they are immediately struck dead by God. It was the Holy Ghost, Who told Peter that they had lied. The Holy Ghost does not operate in this manner in the dispensation of grace. Therefore, the Pope, or anyone else, does not have the authority to forgive or retain sins, nor should we fear church leaders, as the little flock did then (Acts 5:11).

**16:20** The gospel, that the disciples preached to Israel, was to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (3:2, 4:17, 10:7). The detail that Jesus is the Messiah was not to be revealed until after others believed the gospel and

became part of the little flock, because God had to reveal to man Who Jesus is (16:17), and God would not reveal that to unsaved man.

**16:21** An absolute key verse to understanding that the gospel of the kingdom could NOT have included the message to trust in Jesus' death as atonement for sins. About two years before in Matthew 10, Jesus sent His apostles out to Israel. Luke 9:6 tells us that they preached the gospel every where they went. Yet, it is not until Matthew 16:21 that Jesus BEGAN "to shew unto His disciples" that he must be killed and raised the third day. The gospel of the kingdom could not have included Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, because the disciples preached the gospel for two years before Jesus even BEGAN to tell them these things. Even after Jesus' resurrection, they still did not understand that He must rise from the dead (John 20:9). This shows that the idea that there is only one gospel throughout the history of man and that gospel is to trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection is COMPLETELY FALSE. The gospel the disciples preached was to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, which meant to change their mind which meant to stop trusting in the Jewish religion and start trusting in God's law covenant with Israel and God's imputed righteousness to them through that covenant (Mark 1:14-15).

**16:22** Peter's reaction also shows that the disciples had not been preaching trust in Jesus' death and resurrection as atonement for sins. Instead of supporting this gospel, Peter rebukes Jesus for suggesting it, because it is NOT the gospel he had been preaching. If it had been the gospel he had been preaching, Peter's reaction to 16:21 would have been, "DUH!!! We've been preaching your death, burial, and resurrection for over two years. Tell me something I don't know!"

**16:23** Peter goes from being blessed by God in 16:17 to being called Satan here! Jesus is not really calling Peter "Satan" here. He is saying that what Peter said is of Satan. Jesus MUST die and rise from the dead in order to raise the nation of Israel to life (Hosea 6:2). Therefore, Peter's rebuke involves asking God to stop His plan of reconciling the earth back to Himself through the nation of Israel (Exodus 19:5-6). That is why Jesus refers to what Peter says as being from Satan.

Also, note that Peter received a blessing for believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, but he did not receive a cursing for his unbelief that Jesus would die, be buried, and rise from the dead. What this shows is that, even in Israel's program, works, attributed to Satan, do not exclude a person from having eternal life. Therefore, the works needed with faith in order for Israel to be justified must be positive works of faith, rather than negative works of unbelief (James 2:21-25).

**16:24** The "cross," that Jesus' disciples were to take up, was the willingness to be rejected by man like Jesus was. If Jesus was called the Devil (12:24), apostate Israel would also call His disciples the Devil (10:25).

As Jesus' disciples preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:5-8), they need to be willing to be rejected by men.

**16:25** In the tribulation period, a person would be killed if they did not take the mark of the beast and worship the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15-17). However, if they did those things, God would throw them into the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). Therefore, whoever saves his life in the tribulation period by worshipping the image of the beast will lose his life by being thrown into the lake of fire.

**16:26** The Antichrist will give the offer to Israel to join him in his kingdom and receive great riches. The little flock will trust in God's Word and realize that joining the Antichrist means gaining riches in exchange for their souls.

**16:27** If they trust in God and endure unto the end (10:22) of the tribulation period, they will receive riches in God's kingdom on earth that will last forever, instead of perishing with riches before the tribulation period ends. This verse, then, is not talking about salvation, but it is talking about an eternal reward in the kingdom (19:27-29).

**16:28** It has been about 2,000 years since Jesus made this statement. Jesus has not come back to the earth, and there are no people on earth today, who have lived for at least 2,000 years. Therefore, this statement must refer to Peter, James, and John seeing Jesus in His kingdom six days later in 17:1-8. This conclusion is confirmed by II Peter 1:16-18, where Peter says that they "were eyewitnesses of His majesty."

**17** Jesus continues to teach His disciples how they need to trust in God alone during the tribulation period in order to endure unto the end.

**17:1** Six days before, Jesus promised that some of the disciples would see the Son of man coming in His kingdom (16:28). Now, that promise is fulfilled.

**17:2** Mortal man cannot see God's face and live (Exodus 33:20,23). Yet, Peter, James, and John see Jesus' face in the kingdom and live. The reason is because Jesus came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3). If God came in all His glory, sinful man would have been killed.

**17:2-3** The Son of man coming in His kingdom is still a future event. Therefore, Peter, James, and John were transported into the future here to the end of the tribulation period. Revelation 1:10 tells us that, while on the isle of Patmos, John also was transported into the future to see the events of the tribulation period. So, we should not be surprised to see the time warp here, as well. The fact, that Moses and Elias are here, is the strongest evidence that they are the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3-12, although Zechariah 4 may give even stronger evidence that the two witnesses are Joshua and Zerubbabel.

I see three reasons why Jesus shows Peter, James, and John of His coming in His kingdom. The first is so that the disciples will see that His death and resurrection are necessary in order to bring in His eternal kingdom on earth. The second is so the disciples will trust what Jesus says over what the Jewish religious leaders say, because there will be nothing but persecution and false teaching from the Pharisees from here on out. The third is to give the believing remnant the courage to endure the Antichrist's kingdom during the tribulation period and also to show them that the way the Messiah sets up His kingdom on earth is by coming on a mountain with Moses and Elijah. It is not through military conquests, which is the way the Antichrist will rise to power. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

**17:4** This verse shows how man, in his flesh, seeks to worship other men, perceived as better than themselves. This verse also shows that people are recognizable in their glorified bodies.

**17:5** Six days prior, Peter had said that Jesus is the Son of God (16:16). Now, he gets evidence from God the Father that this is so. The reason for the voice is because the disciples need to believe that Jesus will die, be buried, and rise again. In 16:21, Jesus told them this for the first time, and Peter's response was: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee." Therefore, God the Father speaks directly to Peter to listen to what Jesus is telling them about His impending death.

**17:6-7** These two verses testify to the miracle of God coming in the flesh. When God the Father speaks in all of His glory, people fall down and are "sore afraid." When God came on Mount Sinai and spoke the law covenant, all of Israel trembled in fear (Exodus 19:16). How can you listen to what God says when His very voice causes you to fall down and your whole body to shake? Therefore, God had to come in the unintimidating body of Jesus Christ and say, "Arise, and be not afraid."

**17:9** Seeing Jesus in His kingdom will help Peter, James, and John lead the church after Jesus' ascension and will help the believing remnant trust in God's kingdom over the Antichrist's kingdom. Since this vision is for that future time, they are to keep it secret until Jesus' resurrection.

**17:9-10** Again, Jesus tells them that He will rise from the dead, but they do not see this. John 20:9 says that they did not understand the resurrection until He actually rose from the dead. From that and these two verses in Matthew, it is apparent that the disciples ignored the death part and focused on the coming kingdom part. They expected Jesus to usher in the kingdom of God on earth without dying, which is why they ask Him why Elias must first come.

**17:11** The next-to-the-last verse of the Old Testament is God's promise to



Israel that He will send them “Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (Malachi 4:5). Now, in Matthew 17:11, we find out the purpose of Elijah’s coming is to “restore all things.” This means that he will do the things mentioned in Revelation 11:3-6 so that Israel will believe the gospel of the kingdom during the tribulation period.

**17:11-13** These verses tell of two comings of Elijah. The first was John the Baptist, as the disciples understood. The disciples did not understand the future coming of Elijah, which we know to be future because Jesus says, "Elias truly SHALL first come." The second coming of Elijah is necessary only because the nation of Israel rejected him at his first coming in the person of John the Baptist. Since Elias would have been John the Baptist if Israel believed the gospel, we can conclude that the second coming of Elias may not necessarily be Elijah himself, but may be another Jew, like John the Baptist, who comes “in the spirit and power of Elias” (Luke 1:17).

**17:12** Jesus tells them again that He must suffer, but the disciples do not see it. They see Him as the coming king, not as the suffering servant.

**17:14-18** The lunatik is a picture of the religion of Israel. They follow the commandments of men as given by the Pharisees, which has made them spiritually crazy. So bad is the situation that not even the 12 apostles can cast the devil out of the lunatik because of their lack of faith. The disciples have trusted in the gospel of the kingdom, but they lack the trust in the doctrines Jesus has taught them in order to cast out the devil. They are still trusting in the commandments of men that they have been taught by the Pharisees from birth. Signs and wonders only follow believers (Mark 16:17); therefore, the disciples cannot cast out the lunatik devil.

**17:19-21** In Luke 10:17-19, we find that the 70 disciples, that Jesus sent out, were able to cast out devils in God's name. But, here, they cannot cast out this kind. The reason they were able to cast out devils in Luke 10:17-19 was that the disciples had trusted in the gospel of the kingdom, which was necessary to release the stronghold that Satan had on Israel as his lawful captive (Isaiah 49:24). The lunatik here, though, represents the crazy religious system that Israel is under.

In Matthew 16:21, Jesus first BEGAN to tell His disciples of His death, and they did not believe it. Because of their unbelief, they cannot cast a devil out over which they have no power. The only way that the believing remnant of Israel, as a whole, will overcome their trust in the religious system of the Pharisees will be by going through the tribulation period and seeing Satan's religious system at its peak nastiness under the Antichrist. That time of the tribulation period will involve much prayer for God's provision (7:7-11) and much fasting as they do not receive food right away, and they cannot buy it since they have not taken the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). Thus, only by going through the tribulation period will the little flock establish the trust in God's doctrine necessary to overcome religion and cast out "this

kind" of devil. In other words, even the believing remnant will be powerless to cast out religion until they have cast it out of their minds first, which will only be accomplished through the fiery trials of the tribulation period which will cause them to pray and fast, finally learning that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

**17:20** The faith as a grain of mustard seed should bring the disciples back to the parable of the mustard seed in 13:31-32. There, they learned that the grain of mustard seed represents the little flock giving the gospel to the rest of Israel. In spreading the gospel, they will encounter the false religious system of Babylon, standing in their way. A mountain represents a kingdom. Therefore, in order for all of Israel to be saved, Israel will have to have the faith to say to the mountain of religious Babylon, "Remove hence to yonder place." In other words, faith destroys the mountain of religion. We see this in physical type in Revelation 8:8 in the second-trumpet judgment, where a great mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea.

**17:22-23** Again, Jesus reveals that He will be killed and raised from the dead the third day. However, the disciples do not understand this. They probably do not connect the title "The Son of man" with Jesus. So, they think He is referring to someone they do not know. This makes them "exceeding sorry," when they should have been saying, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

**17:24-27** It appears that the Jews required tribute money be paid by Jews travelling to a territory they do not live in that would go to the priests of the temple in that territory. Jesus tells Simon they do not need to pay tribute because they are children, not strangers. Nevertheless, Jesus has Peter pay tribute by getting money from the mouth of a fish. This is another lesson to the apostles of how God will provide for the needs of the little flock during the tribulation period.

**18** Jesus explains to His disciples that they have faith in what He has told them, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (v. 3). Then, to be great in the kingdom of heaven, they must preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (vs. 11-14) and be willing to forgive fellow members of the little flock who have wronged them (vs. 21-35).

**18:1** "At the same time" tells us that, while Jesus was trying to teach His disciples to trust in God to have their needs supplied by Him in the tribulation period, the disciples were not even paying attention. They were talking about God's coming kingdom that they saw in 17:1-9 and arguing over who would have the greatest position in the kingdom, when they should have been concerned with actually entering the kingdom, since they needed to be converted first, due to their unbelief (v. 3).

**18:2-4** The disciples want to know which of them will be the greatest in the

kingdom of heaven, and Jesus tells them that they will not even make it into the kingdom of heaven unless they put aside their pride and learn the doctrine Jesus is trying to teach them. Jesus is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. He got that position by humbling Himself to become like a little child (by His taking on the likeness of sinful flesh and living under the Mosaic law) in order to usher in the kingdom of heaven. Those, who believe in Jesus' gospel, do the same thing. They humble themselves as children, choosing to obey God's Word, rather than the rules of those in power over them in the tribulation period. Thus, they will go throughout Israel to seek and to save the lost sheep of Israel (18:11-14).

**18:5-6** In Israel's program, the Gentiles will be judged by God as to how they have either accepted or rejected the little flock (Genesis 12:1-3; Matthew 25:31-46).

A physical demonstration of the analogy of the millstone being cast into the sea is given in Revelation 18:21, saying that that is how the economic system of Babylon will be destroyed. This ties in to what Jesus is about to say in Matthew 18:7-14, which is that it is better to die physically in order to make it into God's kingdom, than it is to live physically and die spiritually as a result of what you do in your physical life.

**18:7-9** Jesus said in 11:6 that the one, who is not offended by Christ, is blessed. The little flock stand for Christ in the tribulation period as they go through the cities of Israel proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. If someone is offended by the gospel they preach, that person will end up in the lake of fire.

A hand or foot offending a person is not a reference to keeping themselves from sinning by cutting off an appendage, because that will not cut off the sin nature. Rather, Jesus is saying that those hearing the gospel from the little flock should believe it at all costs, even if it means the Antichrist will cut off their hand or foot or their very life if they choose to trust in God and His Word and reject the Antichrist and his kingdom. If they take offence to the gospel, they will probably follow the Antichrist and end up in everlasting fire. Those, who trust the gospel, will enter into everlasting life in God's kingdom on earth, even if they do suffer loss of life or limb. "That man by whom the offence cometh" then refers to whoever leads a member of the little flock astray (18:6), with the primary person being the "man of sin" (II Thessalonians 2:3), the Antichrist.

**18:10** The idea of people having a guardian angel comes from this verse. However, that is not what this verse is talking about. Even if we do not consider the context, if the angels "always behold the face of My Father" then guess who they are not watching—YOU! The context is the tribulation period and people persecuting the believing little flock to the point of having them killed or having an arm or leg cut off. The book of Revelation talks many times of angels being sent by God to send plagues upon the earth,

killing and injuring many people. Revelation 8:3 talks about an angel offering the prayers of the saints upon the altar before God's throne. Rev. 8:4 says those prayers ascend to God. Then, in 8:5-9:21 you see the first six trumpets sound and six angels bring great punishment upon the earth. These punishments, then, are God's answered prayers of saints who were killed/injured for standing for God and His Word. Someone, who mistreats the little flock during the tribulation period, should take heed, because there are angels standing around God's throne, looking at His face, just waiting for God to send them to punish people on earth. Since it is better to be drowned in the sea than to offend a member of the little flock (18:6), you can bet that the ones receiving the worst punishment from God via His angels will be those who offend members of the little flock. This is what the angels beholding God the Father's face is all about. We do not have a guardian angel today. Grace and peace come from God's throne today in this dispensation of grace, not punishment of the wicked (Romans 1:7, I Corinthians 1:3, II Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, I Thessalonians 1:1, II Thessalonians 1:2, I Timothy 1:2, II Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4, and Philemon 1:3).

**18:11** This is another reference to Jesus coming to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24). The point to the disciples is that the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (the Lord Jesus Christ) came to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So, too, the little flock should humble themselves by going through the cities of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom, so that the lost sheep may be saved. They may be killed in the process because 10:16 says, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." However, that is also what will soon happen to Jesus, which is what He is trying to tell the disciples right now. In other words, Jesus is saying, "I did not come to bring you the kingdom of heaven right now. I came to save Israel so that they may enter the kingdom of heaven when I come back."

**18:12** Many of those of Israel, who will make it into God's kingdom on earth, will be "lost sheep," following the established religion of the Antichrist, thinking that they are really following God. As such, God calls them "lost sheep." God will send out the little flock, i.e., the sheep already found, to go to Israel with the gospel of the kingdom. The lost sheep will accept the gospel and abandon the Antichrist's religious system and become found sheep, until all of the sheep are saved (Romans 11:26). This is how God fulfills this verse.

**18:13-14** This is not to say that God loves the one with wavering faith better than He loves the 99 with steadfast faith. Rather, God recognizes that the one with wavering faith will go to hell if he does not endure unto the end. Therefore, God rejoices when He sees faith restored.

**18:15-17** Churches like to use this as a model today in order to kick people out of their fellowship. This model was partially followed by Calvary Chapel in order to expel me from their Bible college, and I saw it used to

disfellowship an assistant pastor of an Acts-9 dispensational, right dividing church I was attending. However, using it today is taking it completely out of context. The standard for kicking someone out of your church over a doctrinal issue is found in Titus 3:10-11 where we are told to reject "an heretick after the first and second admonition." Also, I Timothy 1:19-20 says that someone in a teaching position in a church is to be kicked out of the church for the false doctrine they teach.

What this passage in Matthew is really talking about is a sin that one member of the little flock commits against another member. Because God wants all lost sheep to enter His kingdom and He uses the little flock to find the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the little flock should not let anything stand in the way of having a lost sheep accept the gospel of the kingdom they present to him. Therefore, unity is key. (It is also key for people to be saved in this current dispensation (see Romans 16:17-20).) If the person will not listen after the whole church has heard about it, then that person is not a part of the little flock. They are to be ignored like a Gentile would be.

**18:18** After the little flock receives the Holy Ghost in Acts 2, they will have the power to forgive or retain sins of others (John 20:21-23). Since the Holy Ghost is working through them, they have the power not to forgive the man of his sin against a member of the little flock. Thus, a member of the little flock, not willing to make a sin right, is not a member of the little flock any more! Therefore, following this passage does not just simply kick someone out of their church to go to another church; it kicks the person out of God's eternal kingdom on earth! Churches, today, who follow Matthew 18:15-17 in disfellowshipping someone, will fail to continue to read into verse 18, because the congregation may then see the dispensational difference. An example of retaining sins is seen in Acts 5:1-10, where Peter retains the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, and they are both struck dead on the spot! Obviously, this does not happen today, which is good, because, as corrupt as Christianity is today, it would be believers, who would be killed, not unbelievers!

**18:19-20** This passage is often quoted by those believing in divine, physical healings for today, saying that someone will be healed if at least two people agree in prayer for their healing. Again, it is taken completely out of context. Today, the Holy Spirit is with EACH and EVERY believer because they have been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30), regardless of if they are praying over something or not. And, since God is not physically healing people through a healer, you can believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that God will heal someone, and it will not happen!

Rather, the passage is saying that, if at least two members of the little flock agree to forgive or not to forgive someone, God will stand behind their decision on judgment day. We see this context from both the preceding (vs. 15-17) and the following (vs. 21-22) verses, but most Christians do not want to believe the truth, which is why they do not understand what these verses

are talking about.

**18:21-22** Peter wants to know if there is a limit to the number of times a person can sin against him and ask forgiveness and receive forgiveness for that sin. Jesus' answer of "seventy times seven" does not mean to forgive a person 490 times, but do not forgive them for offense #491 and following. Rather, it is a reference to the 70 weeks of Daniel, which is 70 times 7 or 490 years (see Daniel 9:24-27). The end of the 70 times 7 is the end of the tribulation period. Therefore, Jesus' answer is that God will continue to forgive the sins of His little flock through the end of the tribulation period, provided they are willing to reconcile with a brother when confronted with their sin. In other words, by saying, "until seventy times seven," Jesus is telling the believing remnant to forgive until Jesus' second coming.

**18:23-35** The "therefore" to begin this illustration (v. 23) and the conclusion of the story (v. 35) tell us that the illustration helps explain that members of the little flock should always forgive other members of the little flock, who have sinned against them and seek to make things right. In the illustration, the king is God the Father. The servants are members of the little flock (v. 35). The "ten thousand talents" is an exorbitant amount of money that no man could pay. Thus, it represents "the wages of sin" which is death (Romans 6:23). Those members of the little flock, willing to make sins right, will receive forgiveness from God (v. 27). However, if they do not forgive other members of the little flock, who want to make a sin right with them, as represented by the relatively small debt owed to the servant in verse 28, God will not forgive that unforgiving servant (v. 35). Thus, this illustration gives detail to Jesus' summary statement in 6:14-15 that says, "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Verse 34 says that God will deliver the unforgiving servant to the tormentors until his debt is paid. However, since the debt that man owes to God is his life, the punishment is eternal death, being tormented in the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). In other words, the only way out of sin is to receive forgiveness, which the unforgiving servant does not receive from God. Therefore, the lesson to Peter and to the rest of Jesus' disciples is to forgive those willing to make sins right, because, like the man unwilling to make a sin right, the man, unwilling to forgive a sin, will be thrown into the lake of fire.

This shows that salvation is conditional upon works during the tribulation period for Israel. Because Christians do not want their salvation to be conditional, this story is largely ignored by mainstream Christianity, except for the legalists among Christianity.

**19** God has divorced apostate Israel, due to their transgressions (Isaiah 50:1), but they can still enter the kingdom if they believe the gospel of the kingdom and work for God during the tribulation period.

**19:1-3** Jesus goes to another area of Israel, and He heals people. However,

the gospel of the kingdom does not have much time to reach the people, because the Pharisees are following Him, trying to keep the lost sheep of the house of Israel from hearing and believing the gospel.

In the parable of the sower, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls devoured them up (13:4). 13:19 says these fowls work for “the wicked one” to catch away the word of the kingdom before a man has a chance to understand it. That is what the Pharisees are doing here. A great example of this is found in Luke 5:17, where “the power of the Lord was present to heal” Israel, but they were not healed, because the “Pharisees and doctors of the law [were] sitting by.” Therefore, from now through the end of Matthew, we will continue to see the power of the Lord present to heal Israel spiritually, but the Pharisees will vehemently oppose this power to keep Israel in their apostate grasp.

**19:3-9** The Pharisees have changed the law of God with their own traditions. They say that they can divorce their wives for any reason, but God's law says in Deuteronomy 24:1 that it must be for uncleanness found in her. Jesus clarified this for His disciples in 5:31-32. Yet, Jesus does not reiterate this here, because He knows that the Pharisees are not truly seeking an answer to the question. They are just tempting Him, trying to get Him to speak against the law, so that they will have cause to kill Him.

Also, the greater issue at hand is the condition of the nation of Israel. In Jeremiah 3:8, God said that He had given Israel a bill of divorce due to her uncleanness. She was unclean in that she served other gods. Therefore, she had committed spiritual adultery against Him. Under the law, God had every right to divorce Israel. However, His intention is to follow the establishment of marriage with Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:23-24. Therefore, God sent His Son to reconcile Israel back to Himself as His wife. But, Israel has rejected Him again. Israel has one more shot through the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the first seven chapters of Acts. Israel will reject God then, too, but God STILL will not give up on Israel, because He will let no man put asunder His marriage to Israel (19:6), not even these religious leaders of the generation of vipers. Therefore, by bringing up this question, the Pharisees think they are trapping Jesus, but the question really gives Jesus the opportunity to show Israel that their religious leaders have hardened hearts that will not believe the gospel and enter the kingdom (19:8).

**19:3,9** Note how the Pharisees were saying that a man could put away his wife for any cause, but God's Word says the only correct reason is adultery. Even then, I Corinthians 7:10-14 shows that a married couple should never look for excuses to get out of a marriage, but they should stay together. Yet, Christians today, because of the hardness of their hearts, give no regard to scripture when it comes to marriage and divorce, just like with the Pharisees in Jesus' day.

**19:10-12** The disciples' reaction shows that the Pharisees allowed a man to divorce his wife for any reason. Now that they know that divorce is only allowed in the case of adultery, they conclude that it is best to remain single, which shows the hardness of the disciples' hearts, as well.

Jesus mentions that some people will be able to remain single and not fall into sin. Remaining single, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, has two aspects to it: 1) Remaining single is advantageous in order to go through all the cities of Israel and preach the gospel of the kingdom to reach more of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Having a wife around would delay this process or cause the man to leave his wife at home, and 2) The 144,000 sealed of the tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4), who will be fed by God in the wilderness for the last 3 1/2 years of the tribulation period (Revelation 12:6), are virgins, both in the spiritual (not having joined themselves to idols) and the physical sense (Revelation 14:1-5). Therefore, there are distinct advantages for the little flock to remain unmarried during the tribulation period, if they can.

**19:12** This verse also shows that, even today, men and women can live their whole lives without getting married and without falling into sexual sin, because, if you are not born that way, you can use the mind of Christ to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh. In other words, if men can make a man live unmarried, how much more can God do so.

This verse also goes against the idea that people, who are homosexuals, should practice that lifestyle because they are "born that way." If we used that argument, then we should all live sinful lives, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, because all of us are born with a great propensity to sin. No man gets away with the excuse that he can sleep with multiple women because he was "born that way." Rather, he is to control the lusts of the flesh. Similarly, even if a person is born with homosexual tendencies, that person should not satisfy those tendencies. Since a heterosexual man can be made into a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, we can also conclude that a homosexual man can be made into a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

**19:13-15** This story shows that, although the nation of Israel, as a whole, has rejected their Messiah, individual Jews still have the opportunity to believe the gospel of the kingdom and be saved. They need to come to Jesus with the faith of a little child so that they abandon the religious system of the Pharisees for the truth of God's Word. They are to be childlike, in that they are to believe God's Word to them, just like a child would believe his father's word to him.

Jesus departs because the city He was in had rejected Him.

**19:16-17** Jesus is called "Master" in 8:19, 9:11, 12:38, 17:24, 22:16, 22:24, 22:36, 26:25, and 26:49. In every case, it is an unbeliever who calls Him



"Master," including Judas Iscariot in 26:25 and 26:49. His disciples usually call Him "Lord" (8:2,6,8,21,25, etc.). That is not to say that the title of "Master" is bad. However, the fact that this guy sees Jesus as his Master, rather than Lord, shows that he is not one of Jesus' disciples. That is why Jesus keys in on the word "good," saying that only God is good. This leads to the question: "Is the man saying that Jesus is God, or is he just saying that Jesus is a master of the law?"

**19:16-22** The man does not come to Jesus, seeing his need for a Saviour. Rather, he comes to Jesus on the basis of works he can do to inherit eternal life. If someone will not have faith in God and rely upon God's imputed righteousness for salvation, they must obey the law perfectly. Romans 2:6-7 says, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." The problem is that perfection is required. This perfect standard goes back to 5:48. They must be perfect. Their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees (5:20). The problem is that no one meets this standard (Romans 3:10), which is why this man needs God's imputed righteousness. However, he is trying to make it on his own. Therefore, he must keep the commandments to enter into life. He must keep ALL the commandments, but Jesus only mentions 6 of them. Jesus does not randomly pick some commandments. Rather, He mentions the ones that this man specifically has NOT kept. Yet, the man claims that he HAS kept all of them. Jesus' response is that he must be perfect, and He asks him to fulfill the "love thy neighbour as thyself" command by selling his possessions and giving to those in need. That is what Jesus commands the little flock in Luke 12:33. They will sell their possessions, and the apostles will distribute "unto every man according as he had need" (Acts 4:34-35). They will do this because, halfway through the tribulation period, their goods will do them no good since they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17).

We should also mention that most Christians think of the 10 commandments in Exodus 20, as being what we should follow today. However, Jesus only mentions 5 of these, and He mentions an additional commandment that is not even part of the 10. This shows that Christianity bases its beliefs on tradition, rather than on the Word of God, because, although they say we should follow the red letters in Matthew – John today, they break from this when it comes to the 10 commandments.

**19:18-19** The six commandments, that Jesus mention here, match almost identically with the six He mentioned in 5:21-47: 1) No murder vs. thou shalt not kill of 5:21-26, 2) No adultery vs. No adultery, which includes idol worship, in 5:27-30, 3) No stealing vs. Divorcing a woman without cause or stealing her ability not to commit adultery in 5:31-32, 4) No bearing false witness vs. Not swearing by God because you do not lie in 5:33-37, 5) Honour father and mother vs. Do not fight back against apostate Israel in the tribulation period of 5:38-42, and 6) Love your neighbour vs. love your

neighbour of 5:43-47. These are the six commandments the Jewish religious leaders were most guilty of breaking and will answer for at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-14).

**19:22** This man represents the apostate nation of Israel during the tribulation period. They will have riches by aligning themselves with the Antichrist, and they will claim to be obeying the law perfectly, even though they have broken its commandments. When confronted with God's standard of righteousness, they will abandon God and go back to the Antichrist because they will not be willing to give up their riches in exchange for eternal life.

**19:23-24** Two reasons why it is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven: 1) He would be disobeying God's command if he does not sell what he has (Luke 12:33), and 2) The only way a man can end up being rich at the end of the tribulation period is if he has taken the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17), which means he will spend eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11). If a man was rich midway through the tribulation period, he would lose his riches by not taking the mark. People, who try to apply these verses to today, make salvation a works-based system, when it is by faith alone today (Ephesians 2:8-9). A camel cannot go through the eye of a needle, and a rich man, who lives through the tribulation period, cannot enter the kingdom of God.

**19:25-26** Jesus tells the point of the story of the rich man to His disciples. It is impossible for men to follow the law completely and attain life in the kingdom on their own. They must rely upon God's imputed righteousness by repenting and being baptized, i.e., believing the gospel of the kingdom.

"With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (19:26) is popularly quoted by Christians today to say that God can bring physical healing to someone. However, even in its context, this verse is talking about life in the kingdom, not physical healing. Chances are that these same Christians, who quote this verse today, do not actually believe it, when it comes to eternal life, because they probably rely upon their own works, at least to some extent, to get them into heaven. In other words, they quote the verse but do not believe it.

**19:27-30** In Jesus' millennial kingdom, the 12 apostles will sit on thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. Jesus is careful to limit this promise to "ye which have followed Me," meaning that Judas Iscariot will not be one of the twelve. He is replaced by Matthias in Acts 1:26. Jesus also promises to restore 100 times what someone gives up for God in order to get through the tribulation period. This includes family members, who will try to get them to take the mark of the beast. Job is an example of these tribulation saints, except that Job only received twice as much as he had before (Job 42:10-14).

The parable of 20:1-16 tells what Jesus means by "many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Since the parable talks about some people working the entire day, the parable must refer to working in the tribulation period, rather than referring to Israel's history. The little flock is to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep in the cities of Israel during the tribulation period. "Many that are first" will end up getting discouraged and stop preaching, while many saved at the last will continue to preach to the end of the tribulation period. Also, those preaching toward the end will have a tougher time due to greater persecution, i.e., they have to forsake houses, family, and lands to be saved and work for God. Therefore, those, at the last, will be first in the positional reward they receive in God's eternal kingdom on earth. Some of those, at the first, will still go to the cities of Israel for the entire tribulation period. That is why it is not ALL of those, who are first, who will be last. The 12 apostles are an example of this, as they will get a great position in God's kingdom, even though they began following Jesus before the tribulation period even started.

**20** Jesus tries to prepare the little flock to work for God's kingdom during the tribulation period. Instead, they are arguing over who will be the greatest in the kingdom, and the nation rebukes those coming to Jesus for help.

**20:1** The man, who is a householder, is the Lord Jesus Christ. The day represents the tribulation period.

**20:2** The wage of "a penny a day" represents the salvation they receive, i.e., being in God's eternal kingdom.

**20:2-7** Going out and finding laborers at various times of the day represents the little flock going to the cities of Israel and finding the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The found sheep would then go out as new laborers with the gospel of the kingdom and the signs of healing the sick and casting out devils so that more lost sheep may be found.

**20:9-10** Each laborer for God, during the tribulation period, receives eternal life. The penny represents the governmental position each person receives in God's kingdom. Some receive a greater position if they worked for God longer during the tribulation period, but everyone still receives just one position.

**20:12** Bearing "the burden and heat of the day" represents working through the whole tribulation period.

**20:15** "Is thine eye evil because I am good?" Although not related to the passage, this is a great question to ask people when it comes to their view of God. Many people think of God as being evil, because of natural disasters and bad things that happen on earth. How can a loving God allow sickness, death, and disasters, they ask? However, the Bible teaches that all have

sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). If God gave everyone what they deserve, they would all spend eternity in hell. But, “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). God allows sickness, death, and disasters, because He “is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). He lets the evil world keep going, as long as there are people who will be saved. Therefore, by taking an evil view of God, man’s eye is evil, because God is good.

**20:16** The “called” are really all of Israel in the tribulation period, but the “chosen” are those who choose to work for the Lord through the tribulation period. Many of those called at first will choose to stop working. Therefore, they will not attain to a high position in God’s kingdom, while many of the high positions go to those who preach the gospel of the kingdom only at the end of the tribulation period when persecution will be at its peak. The lesson of 20:1-16 is for the little flock at the beginning of the tribulation period to go to the cities of Israel, preaching the gospel of the kingdom throughout the entire tribulation period, so they might get a high position in the kingdom. For the 12 tribes of Israel, this means sitting on a throne, judging a tribe of Israel (19:28). For the rest of the little flock, it means receiving back 100 times what they give up for God in the tribulation period (19:29).

**20:17-19** In 16:21, Jesus began to tell His disciples He would suffer, be killed, and rise three days later. Peter rebuked Him for saying so. He mentions His death and resurrection again in 17:9, 17:22-23, and now in 20:17-19. In all 3 cases, the disciples completely ignore Jesus’ death and resurrection and concentrate on their seeing Him in His kingdom in 17:2-8. Thus, they continue the pattern of the Old Testament, where Israel looked for their Messiah to deliver them from their oppressors, but they did not recognize that their Messiah would come to suffer first. Similarly, most Christians think we are to live great lives in the flesh now, when the Word of God tells us that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12). Suffering is now; glory is later.

**20:20-21** Jesus charged Peter, James, and John not to tell anyone of seeing Him in His kingdom until His resurrection (17:9). Evidentially, James and John disobeyed this command because their mother asked Jesus to give James and John the highest positions of authority in God’s kingdom. This shows that they missed the lesson. The lesson was suffering now, glory later. James and John ignored the suffering, concentrating on the glory. In fact, John 20:9 says that it is not until after Jesus rose from the dead that the disciples even believed in the resurrection.

**20:22-23** Jesus’ cup is His crucifixion, and Jesus’ baptism is His death. Because Jesus is mankind’s substitute for suffering the wrath of God, James and John would be counted as crucified and dead with Jesus so that

they might have life through His name. This is how James and John will drink of Jesus' cup and be baptized with His baptism.

Jesus basically says, here, that the only way a man can sit in the position of power by God is to die for man's sin. The funny thing is that James and John say, "we are able," when they have no idea what Jesus is referring to, because they have not been paying attention. No, they are not able to drink of Jesus' cup and partake of Jesus' baptism, because they have not lived perfect lives like Jesus has. Yes, they will partake of both, once the Holy Ghost is upon them and they suffer for being part of the believing remnant.

So, who will sit on Jesus' right and left hands? The left hand is easy. Jesus is at His Father's right hand (Acts 2:32-35), which means the Father is at Jesus' left hand. Since David will be co-regent with Jesus in the kingdom, he may be the one at Jesus' right hand (Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25).

**20:24** The 10 disciples versus the 2 disciples signifies the split in Israel between the 10 northern tribes of Israel and the 2 southern tribes of Judah.

**20:25-28** To be great in God's kingdom, the 12, and the rest of the little flock for that matter, must preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:5-7). Thus, they become great in God's kingdom by being God's servant. Note that Jesus gave "His life a ransom for MANY" (20:28), which means that He died for Israel. It is not until the mystery given to Paul that we find out that He "gave Himself a ransom for ALL," including the Gentiles (I Timothy 2:6). But, in Israel's program, He died just for the many (20:16) that believe in the gospel of the kingdom in Israel. See Isaiah 53:12, where it says "He bare the sin of many."

**20:29-31** A great multitude is still following Jesus. Given that the multitude rebukes the blind men, the multitude is probably comprised of Jewish religious leaders. Therefore, instead of spiritual Israel following Jesus for His healings, the religious leaders follow Him to keep their eye on Him. This keeps the common folk of Israel from being able to get to Jesus and listen to what He has to say. In other words, the religious leaders are keeping Jews from being able to hear the Word of God, just like they did in the Jewish synagogues, and just like pastors do in churches today.

**20:30** The blind men represent the spiritual blindness of Israel in not believing the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus is the Messiah and following the law covenant. Yet, these blind men recognize Jesus as the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. They see Him as the eternally reigning king. Therefore, although the religious leaders tell them to shut up, religion cannot keep people from having faith in God and His Word.

**20:32-34** The nation of Israel, as a whole, should have been asking for Jesus to open their eyes spiritually so that they may enter the kingdom. Instead, they rebuked those who asked Jesus for help.

**21** Israel does not have the faith to accept their Messiah. Instead of sacrificing Jesus as their Passover Lamb (Psalm 118:26-28; John 1:29), He is interrogated by the religious leaders.

**21:3** This verse is possibly the only time in Matthew that Jesus refers to Himself as “Lord,” although I do not think that is what He is doing here. All other times in Matthew, He calls Himself “the Son of Man,” because He came, as man, to live a perfect life and give the perfect sacrifice on a cross.

**21:4-5** Jesus rides into Jerusalem on “an ass, and a colt,” which is a baby ass. This is in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 and is symbolic of the condition of Israel. Israel is not ready to accept their king, much like a baby ass cannot accept a grown man riding on it. Jesus’ coming in this manner also shows apostate Israel’s condition through the lack of fanfare. Instead of rejoicing and being glad over this day of salvation that the Lord has brought (Psalm 118:24), Jesus rides into town on an animal that can barely support His weight. This certainly is not how man would honor a King. Here is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Who is about to save the world from their sins, and the religious leaders want to stop Him!

**21:8-9** In fulfillment of Psalm 118:26, “a very great multitude” comes out of the house of the Lord and blesses Jesus as He brings salvation to the many of Israel.

**21:10-11** Although there is a very great multitude there, they do not acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, Who has come to die and bring salvation. They say, “this is Jesus the prophet.” Therefore, they are not ready to fulfill the rest of the Psalm 118 passage, which is to “bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar” (Psalm 118:27). They were supposed to bring Jesus to the temple and have Him sacrificed as the ultimate Passover Lamb to save them from their sins. Instead, they rejoice over His coming to them as a prophet, not as a sacrifice.

**21:12-13** Although the multitude is not ready to sacrifice Jesus on the altar in the temple, that does not stop Jesus. He heads straight for the temple. However, the temple is not ready for Him. It is filled with thieves, trying to make money off of those following the Jews’ religion. Jesus clears out the temple, just like He did at the beginning of His ministry (John 2:13-16). And now, He waits. He waits for the religious leaders to bind Him on the altar as the sacrifice for the Jews’ sins.

**21:14** Jesus is still healing the physically sick, when the nation should have been at the point of receiving God’s spiritual healing for them. How heartbreaking it must have been for Jesus, Who is here to save Israel from their sins, and they will not accept Him as their sacrifice for sins! Instead of this being a celebration, Jesus will conclude later on: “O Jerusalem,

Jerusalem ... Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matthew 23:37-38).

**21:15-17** Rather than rejoicing in their Messiah’s coming to save them, the religious leaders are angry with Him. Since there will be no sacrifice for sins in the temple of Jerusalem, Jesus leaves the temple. The apostate condition of Israel is seen in that, when people cry “Hosanna to the Son of David,” the religious leaders are “sore displeased” (21:15).

**21:19** The fig tree is representative of the religious life of Israel. Religion was flourishing in Israel, but, because it was man’s religion, not God’s religion, it bore no fruit, meaning that people would not enter God’s kingdom through the Jewish religious leaders. As such, Jesus cursed the fig tree, as a sign of how God had rejected the Jewish religious leaders and is replacing them with “a nation [the believing remnant] bringing forth the fruits thereof” (21:43).

**21:20-22** Jesus reiterates to His disciples what He told them in 17:20 that the nation must join the little flock in order to remove the “mountain” of religion that is standing in Jerusalem between the Jews and the kingdom message reaching the Gentiles. Thus, the withering of the fig tree is not only a sign of God replacing the Jewish religious leaders with the little flock, but it is also a call to action for the disciples to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom so that the Jewish religious system can be overcome.

We also see the unconditional prayer promise in 21:22. It is so important that all Israel be saved in the tribulation period (Romans 11:26) that God will do any and all physical miracles through the believing remnant during that time, in order to get this accomplished, since “the Jews require a sign” (I Corinthians 1:22).

**21:23** Since the Jewish religious leaders will not sacrifice Him on the altar, Jesus begins teaching in their temples to show the people the error of the religious leaders’ teachings so that they might believe the gospel of the kingdom and join the little flock. The religious leaders question Jesus’ authority to teach, since He does not have credentials from their schools. Paul faced the same questioning in the Corinthian church, e.g., II Corinthians 3:1-6. All believers face the same questioning when they teach the truth of God’s Word rightly divided. It does not matter what credentials you have from a school, if any. What matters is that you are standing on God’s Word as your final authority.

**21:24-27** Jesus would not reveal to the Jewish religious leaders His authority to teach, since they are not to know the mysteries of God’s kingdom, since they are apostate (13:11).

Note that Jesus gets the religious leaders to think about John the Baptist. God used John to prepare the way for the Messiah. The first step for the religious leaders to believe was to think about the message that John taught. Therefore, what Jesus does is He shifts the focus off of Himself and onto the gospel of the kingdom so that these religious leaders may be saved.

**21:28-32** Jesus now clearly tells the Jewish religious leaders that God will replace them with believers (the little flock), even though those believers are the most despised, despicable sinners among Jews. God will turn Israel's governmental structure upside down due to the unbelief present in the religious system and the faith of the lowest of sinners among Jews.

**21:33-39** Jesus speaks a second parable to the Pharisees to let them know that God will replace the apostate nation with faithful, believing Jews. This, and the parable of 21:28-32, although directed at the Pharisees, had the common Jews in the temple as its audience, as well. The ordinary Jew needed to know that they should follow the 12 apostles as their new leaders, rather than the Pharisees.

In the parable of the vineyard, the householder is God and His vineyard is the nation of Israel, as Isaiah 5:1-7 says. Hedging the vineyard round about refers to the middle wall of partition that God established between the Jews and the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14). The tower refers to the religious system that GOD established, not the one currently perpetrated by the Jewish religious leaders, who are the husbandmen of this parable. The servants God sent were the prophets. "His Son" is the Messiah, the Son of God, Who God the Father sent. Slaying the Son is a reference to the cross. This is the death of a criminal, as opposed to being killed as the sacrificial lamb on the altar in the temple (Psalm 118:26-28). Therefore, Jesus is saying that God established the nation of Israel as His chosen people. He looked for those worthy in Israel to enter the kingdom, but He found none when He sent the prophets. Israel killed the prophets. Then, they were threatened by the Son of God and would soon kill Him, as a common murderer is killed, in hopes of Satan taking the kingdom of God for himself (see 11:12).

**21:40,43** Note that God does not replace the Jewish religious leaders with the little flock until His second coming. Although Jesus gives the 12 apostles authority to forgive sins and gives them power like He has, the Jewish religious system continues throughout the tribulation period. Thus, during the tribulation period, the apostate nation and its leaders will join with the Antichrist and thrive, while the little flock will be persecuted.

"A nation" in verse 43 is singular. Thus, it cannot refer to the Gentiles, as most Christians think. Otherwise, it would be plural. Luke 12:32 says that God the Father will give the kingdom to the little flock. God says in Deuteronomy 32:21 that He will provoke to jealousy and anger the religious leaders "with a foolish nation." This "foolish nation" is the little flock. This cannot refer to the Gentiles, since Israel "shall not be reckoned among the



nations” (Numbers 23:9). Rather, this is Israel’s program continuing with new religious leaders in God’s kingdom on earth.

**21:41** The Pharisees pronounce their own judgment against themselves without even realizing it.

**21:42** The builders are the Jewish religious leaders, while the stone is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the Rock in the wilderness with Moses and the rest of Israel (Deuteronomy 32:4; I Corinthians 10:4). His death and resurrection make Him the chief cornerstone, meaning that salvation comes by Jesus’ death and resurrection, yet the Jewish religious leaders have rejected Him. This cornerstone is seen in Isaiah 28:16, but the scripture Jesus is quoting is Psalm 118:22-23, the same passage that shows Israel saying “Hosanna” to their Messiah, and God commanding Israel to sacrifice Jesus on the altar in the temple as the complete Passover Lamb.

**21:44** The phrase “fall on this stone” refers to believers. They are broken in their hearts (Acts 2:37). Therefore, they repent and are baptized and become part of the believing remnant. This happened at Jesus’ first coming. The phrase “on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder” refers to Jesus’ second coming when He destroys the apostate nation.

**21:45-46** Although the Pharisees want to get rid of Jesus because they want to keep their power, it is really the people, who have power over the Pharisees. They will not arrest Jesus because they fear the people. We also saw this in 21:26, where the Pharisees would not answer Jesus’ question. This is why Jesus told the little flock that, if they had faith, they could remove this mountain of religion standing between them and the kingdom (21:21 and 17:20).

**22** Jesus teaches that God’s kingdom is entered by believing the gospel, while the religious leaders try to get Him to break one of THEIR laws so they can lawfully justify killing Him.

**22:1-14** The lesson of this parable is that the Pharisees will not make it into God’s kingdom. Only those, believing the gospel of the kingdom, will make it, which is “a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (21:43).

**22:1** Jesus is just hanging out in the temple, waiting to be killed, as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

**22:2-14** This parable of the marriage supper is like the parable of the vineyard in 20:1-16. Both have the same conclusion that many are called but few are chosen (cp. 20:16 and 22:14). The difference is that the parable in 20:1-16 concentrates on the workers preaching the gospel, while the parable of the marriage supper concentrates more on the fruit produced by those workers, i.e., the lost sheep being found.

The king is God the Father, and the son is God the Son. The first group of His servants are the disciples of John the Baptist. Those bidden to the wedding were the Jewish religious leaders. They would not listen. So, God sent another group of servants, the disciples of Jesus, to tell the Jewish religious leaders to enter into the kingdom of God, and they again refused. The remnant, killing the servants, is apostate Israel through the power of the Antichrist during the tribulation period, killing the believing remnant. Since the religious leaders will not believe the gospel of the kingdom, the little flock will consist of the religious outcasts—publicans, prostitutes, and sinners. Those, who the religious leaders try to keep out of their synagogues, will be the ones in God’s kingdom as part of the bride of Christ, rather than the Jewish religious leaders, who were supposed to lead the Jews into the kingdom. The man without a wedding garment, who is cast out of the kingdom, represents one of those religious wolves in sheep’s clothing (7:15). He acted like a member of the little flock, but Jesus’ response is that He never knew him (7:21-23). Therefore, he is cast out into outer darkness.

**22:5** Going to a farm or to merchandise represents the Jewish religious leaders tending to the things of this world, rather than to God’s kingdom over which they were stewards.

**22:6** Those religious leaders, who did pay attention to the little flock, destroyed them in order to keep man’s religious system going.

**22:7** The king, sending forth His armies and destroying the murderers, represents Jesus at His second coming, destroying the religious system of apostate Israel as they have aligned themselves with the Antichrist during the tribulation period (Daniel 9:27).

**22:8-9** Most of the saved Jews, making it into the kingdom from the tribulation period, will not believe the gospel until after the Antichrist is destroyed at the end of the tribulation period. They are the ones, who are undecided for most of the tribulation period. They did not take the mark, but they did not join the little flock either (Revelation 14:9-11). The Jewish religious leaders will not come to God’s marriage supper because they have aligned themselves with the Antichrist. Those, in the highways, were cast out by apostate Israel, but they are welcomed by God into His kingdom.

**22:10-11** “Both bad and good” shows that living a good life is not what is required to have eternal life; it is faith. Because those, in the highway, had not placed their faith in the Antichrist and are placing their faith in the gospel preached by the little flock at the end, they will have eternal life in the kingdom, even if they had done bad things. (Being in the highway, as opposed to being in the king’s house or in some other house that is part of the Antichrist’s system, shows that these people did not participate in the Antichrist’s program.) The qualification for entering the kingdom is having a wedding garment. The wedding garment is given only to those with faith in

the gospel (Revelation 6:9-11; 19:7-9). Those, showing up for the wedding feast without believing the gospel of the kingdom, will be cast out.

**22:13** Note that the “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is in “outer darkness.” They are not even in the lake of fire yet, and they are already in immense pain. This tells us that the pain comes from not being in God’s kingdom and God’s love for all eternity. A better description of this is found in Luke 13:28, where Jesus tells apostate Israel that “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.”

**22:14** As in 20:16, those “chosen” for the kingdom are those who believe the gospel at the end of the tribulation period and receive a position in God’s kingdom. The “many” represents all of Israel, who had a chance to believe the gospel of the kingdom and endure unto the end, but failed to do so.

**22:15-22** Since the multitudes thought Jesus to be a prophet, the Pharisees needed to find a way to condemn Him to death under THEIR law. Therefore, they team up with the Herodians (political leaders), here, to try to get Him to commit treason against Rome. My guess is that the Pharisees’ law said to give tribute to the Jews (17:24-25), while the Roman law said to give tribute to Caesar. Thus, they are trying to get Jesus to choose sides. If He chooses one, He will be worthy of death under the other’s law. They marvel that Jesus is able to give an answer that obeys both the Jewish and the Roman law, while not declaring allegiance to one over the other.

**22:23-33** The Sadducees (the religious liberals of the day) now try to get Jesus to abandon His belief in resurrection. This will be a great temptation for the little flock during the tribulation period, since they will not endure unto the end of the tribulation period, if they do not believe that God will resurrect them from the dead and bring them into the kingdom. Otherwise, they will follow the Antichrist, not being will to die for their faith, and will end up being thrown into the lake of fire. Similarly, this attack by Satan, through the Sadducees, is aimed at getting Jesus to abandon His trust in God the Father and bow down to Satan as lord of all.

**22:24** This law is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-6.

**22:29-30** The Sadducees show that they do not know the scripture because Deuteronomy 25:6 says that the purpose for a man’s brother taking his wife is to raise seed to him. The Sadducees do not know the power of God because they do not believe in resurrection. If God raises a man from the dead to live with Him forever in His kingdom, he does not need a child to maintain his name since his name will live forever through himself. Thus, there is no purpose in having marriage in God’s kingdom. This shows that, although God established the institute of marriage before the fall of man, He only did so, realizing that the fall would occur and marriage would be needed, while the curse of sin is on the earth.

**22:34-40** You have got to laugh at the Pharisees here, because they think that they know the Old Testament better than anyone, such that they think they can trip up Jesus, when the Sadducees failed. Jesus reveals to the Pharisees that the greatest commandment is to love God. The second greatest commandment is to love their fellow Jews. Apostate Israel will break the first commandment by aligning themselves with the Antichrist, and they will break the second commandment by trying to get the little flock and others in Israel to quit trusting in God and His Word and begin trusting in the Antichrist.

**22:41-45** Since the Pharisees had tried to trip up Jesus, Jesus returns the favor here. However, Jesus is not trying to trip them up. He just wants to teach them that He is both their Messiah and their God so that they may repent, believe the gospel of the kingdom, and be saved.

Jesus teaches the Pharisees that the Messiah would also be God, according to Psalm 110:1. Thus, His proofs to them of being God, e.g., John 8:58, also show He is the Messiah and vice versa. Note that the Pharisees do not agree here that Jesus is the Messiah. They only say that the Messiah, whoever he may be, is the son of David. The answer to Jesus' question is that the Messiah would be the son of David in the seed line, making him fully man. He would also be God, since David calls Him "Lord," making Him fully God and fully man. His deity makes Him the Lord, and His humanity makes him the son of David.

**22:46** Jesus came to the Jewish temple to be offered on the altar as the complete Passover Lamb (Psalm 118:26-28). Ironically, the religious leaders wanted to kill Him, but they wanted to do so by finding Him to be a violator of their law. Since He could not be condemned lawfully, they will have to invent charges to kill Him. Thus, they stop questioning Him now and begin to try to kill Him by subtility (26:4), which is the same method that Satan used against Eve (Genesis 3:1).

**23** Jesus warns the multitude of what religion has done to the Jews. It: 1) Keeps Jews from entering the kingdom (v. 13), 2) Converts Gentiles to keep them from entering the kingdom (v. 15), 3) Replaces God's law with the commandments of men, thereby justifying unlawful behavior (vs. 16-28), and 4) Is guilty of killing all righteous people (vs. 35-36). Jesus does instruct the multitudes to obey the law but not to do the unlawful actions of the Pharisees (vs. 2-5). He then judges the Pharisees for not accepting Him as their Passover Lamb.

**23:2-3** Jesus taught His disciples to obey the law of Moses. They are to obey the Pharisees, as far as their laws do not conflict with God's law because they are to obey those in authority over them. However, if their laws conflict God's law, they are "to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:39).

Matthew 28:19-20 is what Christians call “The Great Commission.” Jesus’ disciples are to “teach all nations..., teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Therefore, they are to teach the law of Moses. Today, in the dispensation of grace, “we are ambassadors for Christ” to reconcile people to God (II Corinthians 5:19-20). It is much better to reconcile people to God than it is to teach people the law of Moses. Why, then, do Christians think we should fulfill “The Great Commission” today? It is for the same reason that the Pharisees were doing that very thing (23:15), even though “The Great Commission” had not been spoken yet. That reason is to make a “fair shew in the flesh” (Galatians 6:12).

**23:3-4** The heavy burdens of the Pharisees upon men is why Jesus said in 11:28,30 to “come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest....For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Compared to the self-righteousness of the Pharisees (5:20), God’s imputed righteousness through the law was easy.

**23:5-7** The Pharisees only obeyed their own law if it made them look good in the sight of men. This is seen in that they would not defile themselves on the Passover (John 18:28), but they did not mind killing their Messiah, the Son of God, on trumped up charges (26:59).

**23:8** Although the little flock will teach the Gentiles the law (28:20) in Jesus’ millennial kingdom, they are not to call each other “Rabbi” with a capital “R”, because that is a title that means “Master,” and only Christ is their master.

**23:9** The little flock also should not call the religious leaders “father,” because God alone is their Father. (This is similar to when Jesus told the rich man that he should not call Him “Good,” because only God is good (Matthew 19:16-17).) The fact that Jesus warns of this shows that the Pharisees WERE called “Rabbi” and “father.” Jesus is saying that their “father” is not our “Father,” just like “their rock is not as our Rock” (Deuteronomy 32:31). (Unfortunately today, this practice of calling men “father” continues in the Catholic church.) These are also warnings for the little flock to put their confidence in God and His Word, rather than in the commandments of men during the tribulation period.

**23:10** The little flock also should not be called masters by others in the tribulation period. Their time of ruling over the people will not begin until God’s kingdom on earth begins. Even then, their master is the Lord Jesus Christ.

**23:11-12** The little flock is to serve others by preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel, going city to city (10:5-15). Those, who exalt themselves, will do so by aligning themselves with the Antichrist. Thus, they will be judged into the lake of fire, rather than being exalted by God in His kingdom.

**23:13-39** Jesus pronounces judgment upon the religious leaders of Israel. They will continue ruling through the tribulation period. Then, the little flock will rule in God's kingdom. Jesus judges them now as a warning to those going through the tribulation period not to follow them, since Jesus is speaking to His disciples and to the Jewish multitude (v. 1). There are great parallels between these religious leaders, and the "Christian" leaders of today. There are 8 pronouncements of woe and 4 pronouncements against them being blind. The sum of 12 signifies the governmental leadership of Israel being in their hands now and in the hands of the 12 apostles in the kingdom.

**23:13** The kingdom of heaven was at hand when John the Baptist (3:2) and Jesus (4:17) came. Then, the Pharisees took it by force, and it was in their grasp (11:12). They then kept the people from getting into the kingdom of heaven. The way they did this was to get people to follow them rather than God and His Word. We saw this in 12:23 where the multitude saw Jesus as their king, but the Pharisees got them to believe that He is of the devil (12:24; 13:1). This is how they "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men" (23:13).

**23:14** The law said to have compassion on the poor and the widows (Exodus 22:22,25-26, Deuteronomy 24:10-17, and Deuteronomy 27:19). Instead, the Pharisees used corrupt judges to take possessions AWAY from widows. The Pharisees' long prayers then covered up their unlawful actions, making them look righteous in the sight of men.

**23:15** The scribes and Pharisees were big-time missionaries, converting Gentiles in other nations. Yet, because the Gentiles were trusting in the Pharisees' laws, rather than in God's laws, they would not enter God's kingdom. These proselytes may have made it into God's kingdom by either blessing Israel (Genesis 12:3) or by worshipping God as the Creator (Romans 1:20-21). Now, they are believing in religion to save them, which is why they will go to hell. They become twofold the child of hell than the Pharisees, because they take the religion of the Pharisees and build more lies on top of it. They think they will be part of God's kingdom, when they will not be. Thus, they are headed for the lake of fire and do not know it.

Similarly today, "Christian" churches go to other countries as missionaries, getting people to trust in something other than Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sins (I Corinthians 15:3-4). As a result, they are headed for the lake of fire and do not know it. Christian missionaries lead people in third-world countries to hell every day by the false gospels they preach, such as requiring someone to turn from their sins and trust in Jesus' blood to be saved, rather than trusting in Jesus' blood alone. In 23:16-28, Jesus gives examples of how the Pharisees use religion to make proselytes into children of hell.

23:14-15 also teaches that there are varying levels of punishment in hell. Between a widow and a Pharisee, who are both going to the lake of fire, the Pharisee will receive the greater punishment. Most everyone judges people after the flesh, which means that they think of good, religious people as going to heaven, while the murderers and rapists go to hell. However, based on these verses, not only is it likely that people like Billy Graham and Mother Teresa will go to hell because they have not trusted in today's gospel for salvation, but they will also be in the hottest part of hell for leading others astray.

**23:16-22** Jesus warns of how the Pharisees have nullified the law of God by teaching their own traditions (Mark 7:9). In the Pharisees' traditions, the things of God—His temple and His altar—are less important than what man added to the temple (gold) and to the altar (the gift). The Pharisees have elevated what man can do above what God has done. Is it any surprise, then, that they crucified the Messiah? Christianity has done the same thing today by saying that water baptism is required or strongly encouraged for salvation, nullifying the blood of Christ alone as atonement for sin.

**23:23-24** The Pharisees were nit picky on certain laws, such as tithing, to show to man that they followed the law, distracting man from realizing that they did not follow God's law in much more important matters such as judgment, mercy, and faith. In other words, they paid tithes on everything, including their spices, but they robbed the fatherless and widows by unlawfully taking their possessions away from them. In this way, they "strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel." The camel reference should remind us of 19:21-24, where Jesus said, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The "camel" that the Pharisees "swallow" is money. They place money above all so that they will align themselves with the Antichrist and not make it into God's kingdom.

The best example, of the Pharisees' religious rules to make themselves look good in the eyes of man while breaking God's rules, is in the crucifixion. They looked holy to the people because they were not defiled from eating the Passover by not going into the hall of judgment (John 18:28), yet they, by wicked hands, crucified and slew Jesus (Acts 2:23)!

**23:25-28** The Pharisees seem to obey God by doing things that look good on the outside, such as giving alms (6:1-4), saying long, repetitive prayers (6:5-8), and fasting (6:16). These things cover up the bad things they do, like giving bribes to judges to receive inheritances from widows. As such, they appear to be holy, but they are really wicked.

**23:29-33** The Pharisees claimed to love the prophets and the righteous of past generations, yet they will kill the only righteous man to ever live—their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Similarly, today in Catholicism, every church is dedicated to some saint, and they have statues of apostles, saints, Jesus, and Mary in their church. Yet, they follow their religion, refusing to believe what God's Word teaches.

**23:34** This verse is speaking of the future, specifically of the tribulation period. The Jewish religious leaders will join themselves with the Antichrist and kill the prophets, wise men, and scribes that God will send to Israel to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel during the tribulation period. These religious leaders will treat the little flock like they treated Jesus. Jesus proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom from city to city in Israel, and the religious leaders followed Him to persecute Him and lessen His effectiveness. Similarly, Jesus called the little flock to preach from city to city (10:23), and we are told that the Jewish religious leaders will follow them around, persecuting them.

**23:35-36** The first person murdered was Abel, and it was a religious murder, as God did not accept Cain because Cain approached God on his own terms. In other words, Cain practiced religion with God. In a Jewish Old Testament, the book of II Chronicles is the last book, and the death of Zacharias is found in II Chronicles 24:20-21. Therefore, by defining the righteous blood as being from Abel to Zacharias, Jesus is saying that this "generation of vipers" (23:33) is guilty of the blood of all righteous people killed for religious reasons from beginning to end. At the Great White Throne Judgment, God will hold "this generation" guilty. "This generation" is not just the Pharisees living during Jesus' day, but it also includes all the religious people down through history.

**23:37-39** These verses contain Jesus' final judgment of the Pharisees. After the multitude welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem by saying, "blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (21:9), Jesus went to the temple to be sacrificed as the complete Passover Lamb. However, the religious leaders only questioned Him. They did not accept Him as their sacrifice. Therefore, in Matthew 23, Jesus pronounces judgment upon the religious leaders, and He leaves their house desolate. Note that it is "their" house, not God's house, because of the unbelief of Israel. He will not be sacrificed by this generation of vipers. They will say "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" alright, but they will say it to Him at His second coming when He comes as a conquering King and throws them into the lake of fire. By contrast, those, who said this to Him at His first coming, will be in God's kingdom.

We should also note the spiritual condition of Israel in 23:37. Because they have not believed the gospel, they are not full-grown sons of God, as we are today (Galatians 4:5-6). They are not making grown-up decisions of how to serve God, based upon the truth of God's Word, as taught to them by the Holy Spirit. Rather, they are like little chicks that cannot do anything, except have their mothers gather them together to keep them safe. Yet, because of their unbelief, they will not even let Jesus do that for them!



**24** Jesus instructs the little flock about the tribulation period and what is required of them so that they will "endure unto the end" of the tribulation period and "be saved" (24:13).

**24:1** Since the Jewish religious leaders will not sacrifice their Messiah on the altar in the temple as the Passover Lamb, Jesus pronounces judgment upon them in chapter 23, says that they will not see Him in the temple again until His second coming (23:39), and now departs from the temple. "Ladies and gentlemen, God has left religion's house!" God the Father left His house in Ezekiel 10:18, because it was no longer His house. It is Jewish temple of religion.

Meanwhile, we can see that the disciples are still clueless as to why Jesus was there, because He has left the temple, and the disciples want to show Him the beautiful temple buildings! The fact, that the disciples want to do this, shows that the disciples are very familiar with the Jewish religion, while Jesus is not familiar with the temple buildings. This is a picture of how true believers need only know scripture and not religion. In other words, you do not have to be familiar with false doctrine in order to know it is false. If you know the truth, you will clearly see false doctrine when it rears its ugly head.

**24:2** Now, we see why Jesus is not familiar with the temple buildings. While any "good" Jew would revere these structures, Jesus does not care about them at all, because He knows that, since they are not of God, they will all be destroyed. There is no need to put your trust in the things of this world, because the world will pass away.

**24:3** Note that the temple was on the mount of Olives. At Jesus' second coming, He will place His feet on the mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:3-4) and fight against the Gentiles. Therefore, the next time the Jewish religious leaders will see Jesus on the mount of Olives again will be when He returns to destroy the wicked at the end of the tribulation period.

**24:4-8** "The beginning of sorrows" refers to the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. The things mentioned here correspond with the first four seals found in Revelation 6:1-8. The first seal is Satan himself coming on a white horse, mimicking Jesus' second coming on a white horse (Revelation 19:11-16). Since Satan is the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33), he will have many false christs come, culminating in the Antichrist. This first seal corresponds with 24:4-5. The second, third, and fourth seals bring war, famine, and death, corresponding with 24:6-7.

**24:9** With the first four seals completed, the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period begins with the Antichrist setting up the image of the beast in the temple (Daniel 12:11). The image of the beast will then kill those who do not worship the image (Revelation 13:15-16). The little flock

will not worship the beast or take his mark, because they would be thrown into the lake of fire if they did so (Revelation 14:9-11). Therefore, Jesus tells the little flock to flee into the mountains when they see the image of the beast set up in the temple (24:15-16). Otherwise, they will be delivered up to be killed, as 24:9 mentions, which corresponds with the fifth seal where the souls of men slain for trusting in God's Word are seen (Revelation 6:9-11). The ones, delivering the little flock up to be killed, are the apostate members of Israel, although the Gentiles will hate the little flock, as well.

**24:10-13** With capital punishment instituted in the middle of the tribulation period for those trusting in God's Word and not worshipping the image of the beast, there will be three, large falling aways of believers in Israel. They will join the apostate nation, which is aligned with the Antichrist, in order to spare their physical lives, but they will lose their souls in the process. First, 24:10 mentions those offended by the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, they stop following God's Word and lose their blessing (11:6), i.e., they lose their souls. Second, Satan will get more people to join his side by raising up false prophets to speak in the name of the Lord, saying that the Antichrist is the Christ. They will verify their doctrine by casting out devils and performing miracles (7:22-23). Many believers will be deceived and abandon God and His kingdom program then. However, many will still not be deceived because the doctrine of these false prophets will not match God's Word (12:33-38). However, they are the third group (24:12) that will eventually abandon God's program, too, because they will be worn out by the sin that abounds on the earth at that time, such that they will give up their love for God and begin fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. The final, fourth group will be those who endure until the end of the tribulation period. They have believed the gospel of the kingdom, and they did not take the mark of the beast or worship his image. This is the only group of the four that will enter God's eternal kingdom on earth. These four groups correspond with the four groups in the parable of the sower in 13:3-9,18-23. Thus, many people in Israel will believe the gospel of the kingdom but will fall away during the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period.

**24:14** Many people use this verse today to say that the rapture of the Body of Christ cannot take place until all nations hear the gospel. Therefore, they use it as justification for sending missionaries out to countries that kill people for preaching the gospel, since we need to publish the gospel in all of the "unreached nations." However, when we rightly divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15), we understand that is not what this verse is talking about. It says that the "gospel of the KINGDOM" shall be preached, not the "gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). These are two, different programs. The gospel of the kingdom is to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). There is no similar requirement for the gospel of the grace of God to be preached to all nations in order for the rapture of the Body of Christ to take place.

Now, 24:14 may seem like it contradicts chapter 10, because Jesus told the

12 apostles to preach the gospel of the kingdom to Israel only, not to the Gentiles (10:5-7) and that the end would come before they reach all the cities of Israel with the gospel (10:23). This is explained in Mark 13:9-11, which says that they will “be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be published among all nations.” Therefore, the little flock will only go to the cities of Israel, but they will be arrested and brought to all nations, when the gospel will be spoken by the Holy Ghost through them while they are on trial (This is the real purpose for speaking in other tongues.). The reason for this is because the Jews will be scattered among the nations (Leviticus 26:33). Therefore, the little flock must be arrested and brought to other nations so that all of the lost sheep of the house of Israel are reached. Ain’t it nice for these unbelievers to spread the gospel with free trips to court rooms all across the world for the little flock?! The gospel of the kingdom will also probably spread to all nations through the ministry of the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3-12.

**24:15-21** Jesus identifies the setting up of "the abomination of desolation" (24:15) as the key event that begins "great tribulation" (24:21). According to Daniel 12:11, this takes place in the middle of the tribulation period. The reason this is the key event is that, once the Antichrist sets up the image of the beast (the abomination of desolation), he institutes capital punishment for those not worshipping the image (Revelation 13:15), and God institutes eternal damnation in the lake of fire for those who do worship his image (Revelation 14:9-11). The stakes just got a lot higher, transforming the tribulation period from being "the beginning of sorrows" (24:8) to being "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."!

Satan knows that, if he takes over the world, he will be God. He also knows that, if he fails, those following the Antichrist will burn forever with him. Therefore, Satan will do everything conceivable to get all people to worship the image of the beast and kill those who do not. Therefore, Jesus now tells everyone who will listen to flee. The safest place on earth will be the highest ground they can find—the mountains (24:16). Capital punishment will be instituted immediately. Therefore, they are to start running right away, not even running from the field to the house to get a change of clothes (24:17-18). They also need to be fast in getting to the mountains. Therefore, it is easier if they do not have to breastfeed babies along the way (24:19), run through winter snow in the mountains (24:20), or travel on the sabbath.

Why does traveling on the sabbath make it more difficult to get away? Because God’s law says that they were to be put to death for working on the sabbath (Exodus 31:14-16). They could not kindle a fire on the sabbath (Exodus 35:3). The shewbread was to be set before the Lord every sabbath (Leviticus 24:5-8). They had extra sacrifices to be made on the Sabbath (Numbers 28:9-10). They had a special psalm for the sabbath (Psalm 92). Most importantly, the distance they were allowed to travel on the sabbath

was limited (Acts 1:12). With all of these extra rules, it would be a lot easier for apostate Israel to recognize them running away, if they did so on the sabbath. (Remember how the Pharisees had accused Jesus of profaning the sabbath (12:2; Luke 13:14, 14:3; John 5:9-10).)

**24:22-27** Satan's deception will be so great during the great tribulation that God does not allow it to go on for longer than 3 ½ years. Otherwise, all of the believing remnant would end up worshipping the image of the beast. During that time, many fake Christs and fake prophets will appear to be true because they will "shew great signs and wonders." In the end, Jesus will say to them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (7:23). The believing remnant needs to keep in mind that, when Christ does come back, it will be clear to all that He is on earth, because He immediately pours out God's wrath upon the wicked. Therefore, any secret or hidden Christ in the great tribulation is a false Christ.

**24:28** What a vivid picture of Christ's second coming! He brings God's wrath upon the earth, leaving behind a trail of dead bodies that have reaped death as the payment for their sins. Therefore, the people on earth will know that Christ has come back by seeing the trail of dead bodies He creates (Revelation 19:17-18)!

**24:29-30** Between the end of the tribulation period and Jesus' second coming, there is a 45-day period of complete darkness on the earth. (The 45 days is calculated by taking the 1,290 days of Daniel 12:11 as days until the end of the tribulation period and the 1,335 days of Daniel 12:12 as days until Jesus' second coming and getting the difference between the two.) That is why all will see Jesus come back as a thief in the night (II Peter 3:10) as a flash of lightning across the sky (24:27). The tribes of the earth mourning are the 12 tribes of Israel. They mourn because they finally see Jesus as their Messiah, come to save them (Zechariah 12:9-14).

**24:31** Since Israel is scattered among the nations, as a result of the fifth cycle of chastisement (Leviticus 26:33), and "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26), the elect are scattered all over the earth.

**24:34** "This generation" does not refer to a 40-year generation of people living on the earth, because 2,000 years have passed since Jesus made this statement. Rather, "this generation" refers to the generation of vipers that are the Jewish religious leaders (23:33). Therefore, this verse is saying that unbelieving Israel will remain on the earth until Jesus' second coming. This verse is NOT saying that Jesus will come within the lifetime of the 12 disciples.

**24:35** This is a great verse about the preservation of scripture. Heaven and earth will pass away after the Great White Throne Judgment, which is after the still-future millennial reign (Revelation 21:1). God says that He will preserve His Word forever (Psalm 12:6-7), even beyond this current heaven

and earth. Therefore, you can be confident that, as long as this heaven and earth are still here, God's Word has been preserved for you without error. This is especially important for the tribulation saints, because it means they can completely trust God's Word, so that they will not be deceived by the Antichrist.

**24:36** Jesus is speaking as the son of man here. As such, He did not know when His second coming would be. He did not learn about that until after His ascension to the Father (Revelation 1:1). As God, however, He planned it all and knew it all from the beginning.

**24:37-39** For the 100 years that Noah was building the ark, He was a "preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5). Before the flood, Enoch preached God's coming judgment to the world and urged them to be saved (Jude 1:14-15). Therefore, they knew of God's impending judgment in the sense that they were warned of it, but they did not know of it in the sense that they did not believe it. Therefore, they ignored what God told them. Similarly, in the great tribulation, men will continue living life, having no idea that God's wrath is about to come upon them.

Note the three things mentioned that the Antichrist and his kingdom will be doing. These three things indicate that they will be practicing religion. Eating and drinking refer to the physical feasts that they celebrate as part of their religion, not as part of God's law. Drinking also refers to the state of spiritual drunkenness they will be in as a result of following the Antichrist's religion. The marrying refers to how they will spiritually join themselves with Babylon, the Antichrist's religious system.

**24:40-42** These verses are often confused with the current dispensation, saying that those taken are raptured up to be with the Lord forever in heaven. But, Jesus is speaking of the tribulation period and His second coming; therefore, these verses do NOT refer to the rapture. Rather, they refer to the taking away of people on the earth in judgment. You do NOT want to be part of this resurrection. Those taken away in Noah's day were the unsaved (24:39). Since the coming of the son of man is the same (24:39), these are taken away in a similar manner. This means that they are killed, just like those caught up in the flood of Noah's day were killed. Revelation 20:1-6 says that the first resurrection is of the saints. Revelation 20:11-15 says that the second resurrection is of the unsaved and occurs after Jesus' millennial reign. Thus, the people taken away by Jesus at His second coming are killed by Him and their bodies go back to the dust to be resurrected and judged after the millennial reign.

A good way to think of this is that Israel is promised eternal life in God's kingdom on earth, while the body of Christ is promised eternal life in God's kingdom in heaven. Since we go to heaven, Jesus comes down and takes us up to heaven. Since Israel is going to be on the earth, Jesus first cleanses the earth of wicked people before He brings God's eternal and sinless

kingdom to the earth for saved Israel to be in.

**24:43-44** The goodman is the head of the household. I Thessalonians 5:2 and II Peter 3:10 describe the Lord's coming as "a thief in the night." In Matthew 12:29, Jesus describes His first coming as the time when He binds the strong man in the strong man's house. This is a reference to Him binding Satan. Therefore, the goodman of the house in 24:43 is the Antichrist, and the thief is the Lord Jesus Christ at His second coming.

Basically, what these verses are saying is that God cannot tell man precisely when Jesus' second coming will be, because Satan would keep Israel from being ready at that time. Therefore, it is up to the believing remnant to watch for His coming and be ready. This is not unlike the doctrine that is found in Paul's epistles for the body of Christ today. If Pauline doctrine had been revealed before Jesus' crucifixion, Satan and his forces would not have had Him crucified (I Corinthians 2:7-8).

God would not reveal the key elements of His battle plan to the enemy. In this context, one of those key elements is the precise moment of Jesus' second coming.

**24:45-47** God's promise to reward those who work for Him during the tribulation period.

**24:48-51** Note the conditional nature of salvation during the tribulation period. Since the person is a servant, he must have believed the gospel of the kingdom. However, he does not "endure unto the end" (24:13). Therefore, he will spend eternity in the lake of fire, as seen by the "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in verse 51. Smiting his fellow servants refers to trying to get the little flock to abandon their trust in God and His Word and to worship the image of the beast and follow the Antichrist instead. Eating and drinking with the drunken goes back to 24:38, referring to participating in the Babylonian religious program of the Antichrist, such that this person becomes spiritually drunk, along with the rest of apostate Israel, all joined to the Antichrist for destruction.

**25** Jesus instructs the little flock to work for God during the tribulation period (25:1-30) and look for God's help from the Gentiles, not from the apostate nation of Israel (25:31-46).

**25:1** The word "then" links this analogy to chapter 24. Therefore, the story of the ten virgins refers to Israel going through the tribulation period. The number, 10, is significant because there were 10 tribes in the northern kingdom of Israel, and they are the ones who went apostate first. Therefore, when speaking of Israel, it is not uncommon to see a division between 10 and 2, representing the 10 northern tribes of Israel and the 2 southern tribes of Judah.

**25:2-13** Psalm 119:105 says "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. Virgins are those who believe the gospel of the kingdom. Those people with lamps and no oil represent people in Israel, who have God's Word, but they do not have the gift of the Holy Spirit at the end of the tribulation period, because they were offended by the gospel of the kingdom when trials came their way. These would be the stony-ground believers of 13:20-21. The wise represent those who continued to believe the gospel of the kingdom during the tribulation period, even though they did not work for the Lord. As such, they have the Holy Spirit with them at the end of the tribulation period. We know that they did not work for the Lord because 25:5 says, "while the bridegroom tarried, they ALL slumbered and slept."

There is a third group, here, which most people miss. This third group are those preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and casting out devils during the tribulation period. The fact that there is a third group, here, is shown in that a cry goes out at midnight for the virgins to go out and meet the bridegroom, which is the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 6). Therefore, there must be a third group, that is watching, in order to give this cry. Because they are trusting in God's Word, they see the signs of the son of man's coming and warn all of Israel that He is coming. This third group is the group that will receive a reward of a position in the kingdom, because they have been watching and working for the Lord during the tribulation period, rather than sleeping.

Both the wise and the foolish virgins trim their lamps, which means that, during the time between the end of the tribulation period and Jesus' second coming, they all decide to have faith in God to bring them into the kingdom. However, Hebrews 6:4-6 says that "it is impossible for those who were once ENLIGHTENED..., if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." (By the way, Luke 8:13 specifically identifies the stony-ground believers as those who "fall away.") Therefore, when the foolish make the decision to come back to God at the end of the tribulation period, God will not give them eternal life, and they are shut out of God's kingdom forever, while the wise do enter in, because they never stopped believing.

This parable shows that almost all of Israel does not work for God during the tribulation period by preaching the gospel of the kingdom, even though they all have God's Word. Half just barely make it into the kingdom thanks to the little flock's warning. Without that warning, none of them would make it in, because the wise virgins were not wise enough to watch for the signs of Jesus' second coming. Therefore, most of the people, who make it into the kingdom, do so because of the faithful, believing remnant, preaching the gospel of the kingdom during the tribulation period and watching for Jesus' second coming. That is why Jesus emphasizes the importance of watching for the son of man's coming (25:13). If they do not, no one else will. How sad that all of Israel comes to the Lord with Bible in hand, only half make it into the kingdom, and a smaller, third group only actually serve the Lord

throughout the tribulation period.

**25:14-30** Watching for the son of man's coming means that they are preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the cities of Israel and performing the signs of healing the sick and casting out devils so that the lost sheep of the house of Israel may be saved (10:5-8). Therefore, this parable of the talents is about doing this. The talents have nothing to do with using your talents for the Lord today or with gaining money. Rather, they are measures of faith in Israel's program during the tribulation period. The "several ability" of 25:15 does not refer to God giving some people more talents than others. Rather, they represent the amount of faith that Israel has in God's Word. Thus, the number of talents is also important.

Romans 12:3 says that every man is to "think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." That is not to say that God gives great faith to one man and little faith to another man. Rather, the measure of a man's faith is based upon how much sound doctrine he has allowed God to build up in his inner man. Thus, the man with five talents represents someone who has studied and believed God's Word more than the man with two talents. For example, in Matthew 17:15-16, the disciples were not believing what Jesus had told them about His death, burial, and resurrection. Therefore, they could not cast out the lunatick devil. Therefore, their number of talents was small, compared with someone who believed everything Jesus had told him.

Thus, in this parable, the man with five talents has great faith such that he can remove the mountain of religion that is in his way of reaching the hearts of the lost sheep of Israel (17:20). Both the man with the five talents and the man with the two talents do good, because they both have faith in God, but the one with greater faith receives a greater reward, which is why he gets the leftover talent from the "wicked and slothful servant" (v. 26). The parable of Luke 19:12-27 makes this more clear, as we are told that the man with ten talents becomes a ruler over ten CITIES (Luke 19:17).

The man with one talent represents the goats in Israel who hear God's Word but place their faith in the Antichrist, rather than in God. Therefore, they will not make it into the kingdom. Believing the gospel and not preaching it would have at least gained them entrance into the kingdom, as represented here by taking the one talent and gaining interest on it, but this man did not even do that. The three points of the parable for Israel as they go through the tribulation period are: 1) Believe the gospel of the kingdom in order to enter the kingdom (one talent with interest), 2) Preach the gospel of the kingdom to the cities of Israel (two talents doubled), and 3) Abandon all ties to religion, having faith in God's Word, to lead more of the lost sheep of Israel into the kingdom and to gain a greater position in that kingdom (five talents doubled).

**25:28** If you do not understand that the talents represent faith, rather than



a gift from God, this verse's statement that the one talent should go to the man with 10 seems unfair to the man with 4 talents. After all, both the man with four and the man with ten doubled their initial talents. When we understand that the man with 10 talents had greater faith in God's Word than the man with 4 talents, it then makes sense that the man with 10 talents would receive the 1 talent from the one not believing the gospel of the kingdom.

**25:29** Jesus' disciples now have a parable to explain what this verse means, which Jesus initially told them in 13:12.

**25:30** Outer darkness is a place outside of the light of God. The people there are not part of God's kingdom. Therefore, there is great agony there, being placed in a place apart from God. These people will be resurrected to the Great White Throne Judgment and thrown into the lake of fire AFTER Jesus' millennial reign is over (Revelation 20:5,11-15). Thus, "outer darkness" is a holding place for unbelievers until they are judged by God and thrown into the lake of fire. They will still have great agony during the 1,000 years of God's kingdom on earth, because torment is, fundamentally, separation from the love of God. The greatest pain, then, comes from eternal separation from God's love, not from burning in fire.

**25:31-46** After seeing Israel judged, we now see Jesus judge the Gentiles. Jesus tells the little flock about the Gentiles here to let them know that their help during the great tribulation will come from Gentiles blessing them, not from the apostate nation of Israel, who will persecute them. (Joel 3:9-17 is a parallel passage of this judgment.) God promised to Abraham that He would bless those who bless Israel and curse those who curse Israel (Genesis 12:3). This is the standard by which the Gentiles are judged. The Gentiles are gathered before Jesus in 25:32, and He separates the sheep from the goats. The sheep enter God's kingdom because they blessed "My brethren" (25:40), which is the little flock of Israel. The way God feeds, clothes, gives shelter, and encourages the little flock in prison during the great tribulation when they cannot buy or sell and are persecuted because they have not taken the mark of the beast is through Gentiles who bless Israel, since apostate Israel will be of no help, as they try to lead the little flock astray by getting them to align themselves with the Antichrist. In fact, it is apostate Israel that gets them thrown into prison and killed. Those Gentiles, who bless the little flock, are the sheep who enter God's kingdom (25:34-40). The Gentiles, who curse the little flock, are the goats. They receive everlasting punishment in the lake of fire (25:41-46).

We should note that these verses are given from a Jewish perspective, meaning that they concentrate on how the Gentiles treat the Jews during the at-hand phase of the kingdom. From a Gentile perspective, however, this judgment probably does not take place until after the millennial reign. The reason I say this is that, during the millennial reign, the Lord Jesus Christ rules the Gentiles with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:7-9). God has saved Israel go

to the Gentiles with the Mosaic law (Exodus 19:5-6), teaching them to observe it (28:19-20). Once the millennial reign is over, the Gentiles choose to side with Satan or with God (Revelation 20:7-10). All the nations are gathered before the Lord at this time for this final battle. This is how He separates the sheep from the goats. They are then judged based upon how they either blessed or cursed Israel and enter God's eternal kingdom or everlasting fire, respectively. How could this judgment occur at the end of the tribulation period, when the Gentiles, in the millennial kingdom, have yet to make their decision of siding with Satan or with God at the end? In other words, we do not truly know who blessed or cursed Israel until after the millennial reign is over. Therefore, this judgment occurs at that time.

**25:32** Note that the shepherd separates "HIS sheep from the goats." This shows that the goats belong to Satan, not to God.

**25:34** God's kingdom was prepared "from the foundation of the world." That is because, as far as God is concerned, "the Lamb [was] slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8), and it was that slain Lamb on which God fastened the cornerstone of the world. (This idea is understood by piecing together the following verses: Job 38:4-7; Psalm 104:5; Proverbs 8:29-30; Isaiah 28:16; Revelation 13:8; Hebrews 9:26; Matthew 7:24-27; and I Corinthians 10:4). Granted, the Lamb was not actually slain until 2,000 years ago, but "God ... calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). Therefore, as far as God is concerned, God's eternal kingdom on earth was prepared from the foundation of the world, although we do not see it as such until Revelation 21:1-3.

**25:34,41** Incidentally, these verses used to be used by Catholic elementary schools to force left-handed children to learn to write right-handed. It is amazing how often the Bible is taken out of context to justify man-made rules.

**25:41** For those who question how a loving God could throw people into the lake of fire, this verse tells us that is not God's intention. He wants all people to have eternal life with Him (I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:9). The lake of fire was "prepared for the devil and his angels," not for man. Unfortunately, most of mankind will also be thrown into the lake of fire because of their lack of faith to receive God's imputed righteousness so that they can have eternal life with a holy God.

The question man should ask is not: "How can a loving God throw people into hell?" The question man should ask is: "How can a loving God give eternal life to unrighteous man?" The answer is through the blood of Christ, and the recognition of this is how man is saved. When man's attitude is negative toward God, as in the first question, he is lost forever. When man's attitude is positive toward God, as in the second question, he believes the gospel and receives the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

**26** Jesus continues preparing His disciples to stay true to Him during His crucifixion, but all 12 disciples fall away, including the weakest one (Judas Iscariot) betraying Jesus and the strongest one (Peter) denying Him, showing that faith in God's Word is absolutely essential for the little flock to endure unto the end of the tribulation period and enter God's eternal kingdom on earth.

**26:2** Jesus' crucifixion is two days away, and He informs His disciples again of His impending crucifixion. He did this in 16:21, 17:9, 17:22-23, and 20:17-19. They have now been told by Jesus at least 5 times, and they still do not believe Him! They will not believe in His resurrection until after they see the physical evidence that He has actually risen from the dead (John 20:8-9).

**26:3-5** Since the Jewish religious leaders could not get Jesus to transgress the law in a manner worthy of death, they will have to use subtility to kill Him, much like Satan used subtility against Eve to kill Adam spiritually by getting him to sin (Genesis 3:1). We also see that the religious leaders do not care about following God's law. They only care about APPEARING to follow God's law so that the common Jews will continue to follow them and give them tithes. The reason they want to kill Jesus is because many Jews believed on Jesus as a result of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (John 12:10-11). So, they stand to lose money and power to Jesus.

**26:6-13** Jesus had told His disciples 5 times about His crucifixion and had said that it is just two days away (26:2), but they still did not believe Him. Now, Matthew goes back four days to show that the disciples have already been given a very costly demonstration of Jesus' impending death. Four days prior (John 12:1), a woman (Mary, Lazarus' brother, according to John 11:2), believed Jesus when He said that He would be buried, such that she took "very precious" (26:7), "very costly" ointment (John 12:3) and poured it on Jesus to anoint Him for His burial (26:12). The disciples' reaction was one of "indignation," claiming that the ointment was wasted (26:8).

Therefore, not only has Jesus told His disciples at least 5 times of His coming crucifixion, but they have also seen a believer spend a great cost to anoint Him for His burial and they STILL do not believe Him when He says He will be crucified! This also shows that believing in Jesus' death was NOT part of the gospel of the kingdom. If it was, Jesus' disciples would not really be disciples, because they would not be part of the little flock, as Jesus says in Luke 12:32 that they are.

**26:13** The gospel of the kingdom will be preached to the whole world during the tribulation period by the Holy Ghost giving the little flock the words to say as they stand on trial (Mark 13:9-11). Therefore, we must conclude that part of what the Holy Ghost will speak through the little flock is the story of how this woman prepared Jesus' body for His burial.

**26:14-16** Now, we are told of the Jewish religious leaders' secret weapon. We are told that, four days prior to their getting together in the palace of the high priest to figure out how they could take Jesus by subtility and kill Him (26:3-5), Judas Iscariot had agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. The reason Iscariot does so is because he was the treasurer and had been embezzling money for himself (John 12:4-6). Thus, he was only hanging around Jesus for the money, and, when he saw he could get more money from betraying Jesus than by staying loyal to Him, as seen by the "waste" of the woman with the ointment, he betrayed Jesus. This is a great example of how "the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Timothy 6:10). Judas' betrayal fulfills Zechariah 11:12-13.

**26:17** Mark 14:12 says that it is the first day of unleavened bread when they kill the Passover. Therefore, we now fast forward six days to the day of Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus had told them two days ago that He would be crucified that day (26:2), yet the disciples are not concerned about that, because they do not believe it to be so. Rather, they are thinking about where to eat the Passover. The closest men to the Messiah were more concerned with following religion than they were with the most significant event in the history of the world—Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection!

**26:18** The disciples, who were with Jesus the most, do not understand that He will be crucified today, yet this unnamed man will let them have Passover at his home, knowing that Jesus' "time is at hand." In other words, this man understands that Jesus is about to be crucified.

**26:20** "Even was come" means it is time to eat the Passover. However, it is also a sign that His crucifixion is about to take place, because the night is upon them. "Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). If Israel had faith in Jesus as their Messiah, He would have been sacrificed in the temple in the day (Psalm 118:24), rather than being arrested in the night.

**26:21-22** Jesus' betrayal comes as a complete shock to the disciples, except for Judas Iscariot, of course.

**26:23** This answer was to John only, not to all 12 apostles (John 13:23-26), but Iscariot gives away the answer to the 12 anyway in 26:25.

**26:24** Jesus said in 18:6 that it would be better to be drown in the sea than to lead a member of the little flock astray. How much worse, then, is the judgment of Judas Iscariot for betraying Jesus!

**26:25** Not only is Judas Iscariot going to betray Jesus, but he is also not ashamed of it. He proudly proclaims that he will betray Jesus, which shows that he never believed.

**26:26-28** Jesus was supposed to be sacrificed in the temple as the

Passover Lamb for the sins of Israel. The Passover Lamb had to be eaten by those offering it in order for it to atone for their sins (Deuteronomy 16:6-7). That is why Jesus said in John 6:53-58 that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have eternal life. Since Jesus will be crucified on the cross, Israel will not have this opportunity. Therefore, Jesus gives His disciples His flesh and His blood to eat and drink here, just before His crucifixion. Thus, they are eating the Passover Lamb and will receive forgiveness of sins. This is not communion as it is to be observed in the dispensation of grace today. In fact, in Luke 22:15, Jesus says that “with desire I have desired to eat this PASSOVER with you before I suffer,” because Jesus knows that this is the true Passover for the disciples that will bring them into God’s eternal kingdom, as they participate in the Lamb of God being slain to take away their sins (John 1:29). Again, we see here that His blood was “shed for many”—meaning for Israel. We do not find out that it was shed for all until Paul tells us in I Timothy 2:6.

**26:29** Jesus says He will not drink the blood of the New Testament until the marriage supper of the Lamb, meaning that, while the disciples drink to be part of the new covenant, God’s new covenant with Israel will not begin until Jesus begins His kingdom reign on earth. It is not until then that Israel will receive atonement for sins (Acts 3:19-20). The “cup” that Jesus will drink now is His death (26:39).

**26:30** Perhaps they sung Psalm 92, because it is a special psalm for the Sabbath and they sung it looking forward to that Sabbath rest they would have with Jesus in His millennial kingdom on earth.

**26:31-32** Again, Jesus tells His disciples He will rise from the dead. However, because the disciples do not have faith in God to believe that Jesus will be crucified, they will abandon Jesus, fulfilling Zechariah 13:7.

**26:33-35** The disciples show their lack of faith in what Jesus has told them, because they say they will not deny Him, but they will. The disciples’ abandoning Jesus when He is taken to be killed is a foreshadowing of how many in Israel will abandon God and His Word and align themselves with the Antichrist in the great tribulation period when capital punishment is instituted for not doing so.

**26:36** Jesus shows His southern roots (“pray yonder”). Actually, the reason we find southern terms like “yonder” and “reckon” in scripture is because these are really old, English words that are still used today in the United States in the south.

**26:37-39** Jesus, the man, is sorrowful to the point of death, because the man, in his flesh, does not want to suffer and die (Ephesians 5:29). God has to send an angel to strengthen Him so that He does not die before going to the cross (Luke 22:43; Hebrews 5:7). But, He yields His flesh over to God the Father and is an overcomer. Note how His first prayer is: “If it be possible,

let this cup pass from me” (v. 39), while His second prayer is: “If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done” (v. 42). In the first prayer, He asks the Father to take the cup away from Him. In the second prayer, He is willing to die. As such, Jesus is an example to the little flock who also need to be willing to die for God in the great tribulation period, yielding the flesh’s survival instinct over to God.

**26:37-46** In 24:42, Jesus warned His disciples to watch so that they would not fall into sin and miss the signs of Jesus’ second coming. In 25:1-12, he gave them the parable of the 10 virgins with the same conclusion to watch (25:13). Now, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus gives Peter, James, and John three opportunities to watch (vs. 38, 41, and 44) so that they do not sin (v. 41). All three times, they fell asleep (vs. 40, 43, and 45), showing that they did not learn the lessons of 24:42 and 25:1-12.

As such, they are a type of saved Israel going through the tribulation period. They will sleep and just barely make it into God’s kingdom thanks to the warning at the end by the little flock (25:5-7). They will not even work for God for one hour (26:40). This refers to saved Israel as a whole, and not the little flock who does watch and warn saved Israel at the end of the tribulation period.

Verses 45-46 make it clear that the sleep in these verses is spiritual sleep, because He tells them to “sleep on now” and immediately says “Rise, let us be going.” So which is it? Well, the “sleep on now” refers to their spiritual state, where they will spiritually sleep and physically scatter when Jesus is smitten, and they will not follow Him. Physically, though, they are rising for Jesus’ betrayal and arrest.

**26:41** “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” is a great summary of the believer’s life. Most believers, regardless of dispensation, never serve God, because they do not yield the flesh over to God “as instruments of righteousness” (Romans 6:13). They “delight in the law of God after the inward man” (Romans 7:22), but they allow their flesh to bring them “into captivity to the law of sin” (Romans 7:23).

**26:44** Although Jesus has already yielded His will over to the Father, He goes back and prays a third time to reiterate to His flesh that it is not in control, God is.

**26:47-49** The fact, that Judas Iscariot had to kiss Jesus to show the multitude Who He is, shows that the Jewish religious leaders did not come themselves to arrest Jesus. They sent their goons. Note the contrast that “a great multitude” do the bidding of the religious leaders, but Jesus has only eleven disciples here, and they will soon forsake Him (26:56).

**26:48** Judas tells the people to “hold Him fast.” This indicates that Judas fully expects Jesus to try to escape. Yet, Jesus has already told him at least

6 times that He will be killed.

**26:50** For betraying Jesus, Judas will receive the worst punishment in hell possible, and yet, at the time of his betrayal, Jesus calls him “friend.” And, He asks Judas the question, “Wherefore art thou come?” When Adam had sinned, the first thing the Lord said to him was, “Where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9). The question, in both cases, is meant to give each person the opportunity to confess their sin so that they may be forgiven. This shows the great love of God for all men!

**26:51-52** John 18:10 tells us that Peter was the one who cut off the servant’s ear. When you read Luke’s account, Peter’s reaction is understandable, since Jesus had them bring two swords with them to Gethsemane (Luke 22:38). Nevertheless, they were not supposed to defend physically the Messiah. They were supposed to show that, even though they had weapons, they would not use them, because “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds” (II Corinthians 10:4). Who knows? If Peter had not fought back, maybe some of the spiritual strong holds, with those arresting Jesus, may have been pulled down.

**26:55** Since Jesus is being arrested at night, it shows that they are ashamed of what they are doing. Jesus tries to use this shame to bring them to a place of repentance. Therefore, regardless of the situation, the Lord Jesus Christ tried to reach sinners so that they might be saved.

**26:56** My guess as to what scriptures of the prophets were fulfilled were those talking about the Messiah dying for the sins of Israel, giving His life a ransom for many (e.g., Isaiah 53:11-12).

As Jesus said would happen, the disciples forsook Him and fled, even though, just 21 verses earlier, they all said they would never do this. This is similar to what Israel did after being led out of Egypt. They told Moses, “All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do” (Exodus 19:8). Yet, before Moses even returned from meeting with the Lord, they were worshipping golden calves (Exodus 32:4-6). The pride of the flesh says “I will never do that,” and then the lust of the flesh does that very thing almost before the promise is made!

**26:57** The religious leaders did not want to dirty their hands by arresting Jesus themselves. Therefore, they waited for Him to be brought to the high priest’s palace.

**26:59-61** The Jewish religious leaders could not find legal grounds for killing Jesus, so, now they are trying to find a false witness and they are still having difficulty. The charge by the false witness in 26:61 that would make Jesus worthy of death under their law is for Him to have said that HE would destroy the temple. Jesus did not say that. He said that THEY would destroy the temple, and He would raise it up in three days (John 2:19-21). Jesus

was referring to them destroying His body. Even if He was referring to the physical temple, He did not say anything against the law. They have twisted His words to find Him worthy of death under their law. According to the law, they are worthy of death themselves for their false accusations (Deuteronomy 19:16-19).

**26:62-64** Jesus would not answer the high priest at first because “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth (Isaiah 53:7). Yet, He does answer the high priest in 26:64 because the high priest adjured Him by God. Thus, Jesus would have broken God’s law if He did not speak here.

The high priest asks Him if He is “the Christ,” or the Messiah. Jesus’ answer basically is, “Yes, but not to you. To believers, I am the Christ, but to unbelievers, I am your judge to condemn you to hell.” Again, Jesus is trying to save an unbeliever by showing him that he is worthy of God’s judgment. The funny thing is that this unbeliever is the high priest. Shouldn’t faith in the gospel be a prerequisite for a person to become the high priest?

**26:64-66** The Jewish religious leaders find Jesus guilty of blasphemy, because He said that He is God. Again, this is a false accusation. The high priest asked Him if He is “the Christ, the Son of God” (v. 63), and Jesus said that He is “the Son of man” (v. 64). Jesus even pointed this out to them by saying, “THOU hast said” (v. 64). In other words, those are your words, not Mine. Jesus did not say that He is God, and yet they will kill Him over something that THEY falsely accused Him of saying.

**26:68** Again, we see Jesus’ accusers calling Him “Christ.”

**26:69-75** Peter denies Jesus three times. Each denial is worse than the previous one. The first one was a simple denial; the second one involved an oath; and the third one involved cursing and swearing. Although Peter later repents and is forgiven by Jesus (see John 21:15-19), his denials are a type of those in the great tribulation who believe the gospel of the kingdom but deny it later when trials come. The problem is that, if their denial involves taking the mark of the beast or worshipping the image of the beast, they will seal their eternal fate in the lake of fire. This shows how easy it is for someone to deny the Lord, if Peter, who knows He is the Christ (16:16), does so under pressure. This shows why, if the great tribulation period lasted longer than 3 ½ years, there would be no one entering God’s kingdom that lived through the tribulation period (24:21-22).

**27** Jesus is tried, crucified, and buried in a tomb.

**27:1-2** The Jewish religious leaders have already found Jesus worthy of death under their law. They could have stoned Him to death, but they decided that did not involve enough pain. They decided to have Him crucified, which only the Romans could do (John 18:31-32). Therefore, they



brought Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

**27:3-8** This is a great example of the religion of the Jewish religious leaders. They sit in Moses' seat (23:2). As such, they are responsible for teaching the people God's law and giving God's judgment and mercy under the law as appropriate. When Judas came to them, confessing his sin, they were in the position of authority to prescribe what he should do. They are not doing their job when they will not do anything for Judas. Judas' coming to them also gives the Jewish religious leaders another opportunity to repent about crucifying the Messiah, as they see their guilt in taking part in the betrayal of Jesus and His execution under false pretenses. They have the greater sin than Judas Iscariot, yet their consciences are so seared that they do not even break stride when confronted with Judas. They get rid of him as quickly as possible and continue in killing their Messiah, the Son of God. Yet, they do break stride to contemplate what their religion tells them to do with the situation, not caring what God would have them do. They have no trouble trying to trip up Jesus falsely so they can "lawfully" kill Him; they have no trouble giving Judas blood money to betray the Messiah; they have no trouble bringing in false witnesses to trump up charges worthy of death; and they have no problem not showing mercy, as given under the law, to a man who comes to them in repentance; but they do have a problem with putting the blood money in their treasury. Thus, with Jesus' crucifixion, they are guilty under God's law of breaking at least 5 of the 10 commandments, along with other violations of the law, but their consciences tell them they are absolutely blameless because they did not put blood money in the treasury!

**27:4** Note that Judas refers to Jesus' blood as "THE innocent blood." Even Judas, the son of perdition himself (John 17:12), recognizes that Jesus never sinned.

**27:5** Judas hung himself, and then Satan took control of his body, such that his body burst asunder and all his bowels gushed out (Acts 1:18). This shows that Satan does not even take care of his own. Satan got Judas to betray Christ, and then he completely destroyed his body. In fact, Ezekiel 32:31 says that Satan (called "Pharaoh" there) will be "comforted over all his multitude" that he got to go to hell with him!

**27:9-10** This prophecy is not found in Jeremiah, but it does not have to be found there, because the verse says it was SPOKEN by Jeremiah. It does not say he wrote it down. Zechariah is the prophet who wrote this passage down (Zechariah 11:12-13).

Note that 27:9 says that the children of Israel were the ones who decided that Jesus' blood was worth 30 pieces of silver. To believers, His blood is priceless.

**27:12-14** Luke 23:2,6 tell us that the accusations the chief priests and

elders brought to Pilate were that he perverted the nation, forbade people from giving tribute to Caesar, claimed to be a king, and stirred up the people with His teachings. Pilate did not believe the Jewish religious leaders because he saw no evidence of wrongdoing. Pilate saw no reason to kill Him (Luke 23:4), sent Him to Herod who also found no reason to kill Him (Luke 23:15), and then told the Jews there was no reason to kill Him (Luke 23:14). Pilate "marvelled greatly" because he could tell Jesus was falsely accused, but Jesus would not defend Himself. He was willing to be killed even though He did nothing wrong.

**27:15-18** The main argument behind the religious leaders' accusations of Jesus was to say that He was causing the Jews to rebel against the Roman government, because He would have had to commit a crime against Rome for Rome to order His crucifixion. Now, Barabbas was already in Roman prison for causing rebellion against the Roman government and for murder (Luke 23:18-19). Pilate knew Jesus was innocent. He offers to let Barabbas go to see if the religious leaders really care about rebellion against the government, or if they have a personal vendetta against Jesus. He finds out the latter is true when they ask for the release of Barabbas (27:21).

By the way, doesn't it seem strange that a way for the Roman government to create good relations with the Jews was to let a Jewish prisoner go? Wouldn't the Jews want all of the prisoners locked up?

**27:19** Pilate's wife "suffered many things this day in a dream" because of Jesus. God must have brought these dreams to her, but why would God do that if God's plan was to have Jesus crucified? The answer is that it shows that God wants Pilate and his household to have faith in God, even though Pilate is the one, who will sentence Jesus to death. Note how Pilate's wife knows that Jesus is a "just man." Not an innocent man, but a just man. Pilate's wife learned more in a dream than the nation of Israel learned in Jesus' entire ministry!

**27:20** Again, the Jewish religious leaders pervert judgment by having a guilty man released in their midst while an innocent man is crucified. Note that it is not the multitude that wants Barabbas released, but it is the religious leaders, who persuade the multitude to have Barabbas released.

**27:23** Jesus had done no evil. That is why the multitude did not answer Pilate's question.

**27:24** Despite finding no fault in Jesus and washing his hands, Pilate is not innocent in having Jesus crucified. He could have released Him, in spite of what the Jews wanted.

**27:25** It is as Jesus said in 23:35 that those of the Jewish religion are responsible for all righteous blood shed on the earth. All of Israel takes responsibility for killing Jesus. However, after the day of Pentecost, when

Peter accuses them of killing their Messiah, they accuse Peter of trying "to bring this man's blood upon us" (Acts 5:28). No! They have done that themselves right here. Yet, that is what religion does. It claims innocence and then starts accusing others when they are found not to be innocent.

**27:27-31** Jesus' being compassed about by Gentiles and the wicked here fulfills Psalm 22:16. Jesus is publicly humiliated by a bunch of Roman soldiers. Isaiah 1:18 says, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Therefore, the scarlet robe put on Jesus symbolizes Israel's sins being placed upon Him, as Isaiah 53:6 says, "and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." They did not know it, but the crown of thorns symbolizes Jesus' taking all the sins of the world upon Him, since thorns is a symbol of sin, due to the curse of sin involving thorns (Genesis 3:18). Thus, both Israel's sins and all the world's sins were placed upon Him. Therefore, while the Roman soldiers were having a barrel of laughs at Jesus' expense, they were actually demonstrating how Jesus would take the sins of the world upon Him and lift the curse of sin from those who would receive eternal life through His death on the cross. Their bowing of the knee in mocking also symbolizes how "every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11).

**27:32** I think the typical Christian view is that Simon of Cyrene was a believer who volunteered to carry Jesus' cross for Him, but that is not the case. This verse says that the Roman soldiers FORCED him to carry the cross. Why did not one of Jesus' followers carry the cross? Because they all abandoned Him out of fear that they would be killed also for being one of His disciples (26:56). The fact that Jesus did not have the strength to carry His Own cross fulfills Psalm 22:15. The fact that He did not have a follower to carry His cross fulfills Psalm 69:20.

**27:34-35** Jesus fulfilled many Old-Testament prophecies on crucifixion day. Some of them, such as these two, He had no control over. In other words, if someone read the Old Testament very well and decided he wanted to be the Messiah, he could do some things to make it happen, but it would be impossible for him to fulfill all prophecies. The fact that Jesus did fulfill all prophecies concerning the Messiah shows that He is the Messiah. The prophecy of being given vinegar and gall to drink is found in Psalm 69:21. The prophecy of casting lots to part His garments is found in Psalm 22:18.

27:35 also tells you that David was a prophet, something that most Christians do not realize.

**27:37** There are slight variations in the gospel writers' accounts of what was written on the sign above Jesus' head. All must be true. Otherwise, the Bible contains an error. Luke mentions that the sign was written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (Luke 23:38). Perhaps the variations are explained by the different languages, while Mark may not record the whole sign. Alternatively, there could have been multiple signs. Matthew records the writing "This is

Jesus the king of the Jews." Mark records the saying "the king of the Jews" (Mark 15:26). Luke records "This is the king of the Jews" (Luke 23:38). John records "Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews" (John 19:19). John shows that Pilate wrote the sign to get a jab in against the Jewish religious leaders (John 19:19-22), who were crucifying an innocent man. However, it is significant that the sign is stating how Jesus fulfills another prophecy. Jesus is the king of the Jews, fulfilling the Davidic covenant as the eternal king to sit on David's throne (II Samuel 7:12-13).

**27:38,44** Matthew says that the two thieves, crucified with Christ, mocked Him. Luke 23:39-43 records that one railed on Him, while the other had the faith to enter God's kingdom. This shows that there had to have been two sets of criminals crucified with Christ. The fact that Jesus died quicker than at least two of the others (see John 19:31-33) makes me think that there were actually five crosses on Golgotha with Jesus being the One crucified in the middle.

**27:39-43** The Romans mocked Jesus earlier. Now, the Jewish religious leaders and other Jews take their turn making fun of Jesus. The Jewish religious leaders feared taking Him in the temple. Now, with Jesus nailed on the cross, they do not mind hurling accusations at Him. The first accusation, mentioned in 27:40, is a contradiction, although the Jews do not realize it. If Jesus is going to fulfill His Word to build up the temple of His body after three days, He cannot save Himself right then.

The accusation in 27:42-43 is telling. First, it shows that the chief priests and scribes admitted that Jesus genuinely saved others from physical death. Second, they did not believe in Him though He saved others from death. Since they did not believe He is their Messiah when He saved others from death, they certainly would not believe Him if He saved Himself from death, even though they claim that they would. In fact, Luke 16:31 says that, if a Jew will not trust in God based on what the Old Testament says, he will not trust in Him if someone rises from the dead. Most people today are not saved because they do not believe in Jesus' resurrection, so, too, these Pharisees.

**27:43** "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now" is the worst accusation of them all. Psalm 18:30 says, "As for God..., He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him." Psalm 115:11 says, "Trust in the Lord: He is their help." Proverbs 29:25 says, "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Therefore, the Jews' accusation, here, shows that they do not believe God and His Word, because they say that Jesus trusts in God, but God will not deliver Him.

**27:44** "Cast the same in His teeth" refers to making Jesus eat His Own words. Thus, all of the world has rejected Him, both Jews and Gentiles, just like all people will hate the little flock in the tribulation period, both Jews and Gentiles (24:9-10).

**27:45** The sky was dark from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM, the brightest time of the day. The darkness was a sign to all that the Son of God was being crucified. It is NOT a sign of sin being placed upon Him, because that does not happen until the three hours of darkness are over (27:46).

Psalms 19:1-4 says that the heavens speak to the entire earth. I think this is a reference to the stars being in patterns of people and animals, such that it tells of the Messiah's death to atone for the sins of the world. It was a particular star that so positively spoke of Jesus' birth that the wise men traveled two years to find Him. Given this background, I believe that the great significance of the sky being dark during the brightest part of the day was so that everyone would look skyward, see the gospel in the stars, and be reminded that the Messiah, the Son of God, was being crucified. The wise men said, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east" (2:2). So, the star told them the king of the Jews was born. Now, with the sky being dark, all people would look up and be reminded of the king of the Jews, then they would look at the sign on the cross above Jesus: "This is Jesus the king of the Jews" (27:37), put the two together, and should come to the conclusion that the heathen Roman centurion does: "Truly, this was the Son of God" (27:54).

**27:46** This is when the sins of all mankind were placed upon Jesus because only then would God the Father forsake Him. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

**27:47,49** The religiosity of the Jewish religious leaders is overwhelming such that they have no clue what the Old Testament says. These have to be the Jewish religious leaders, or at least common Jews, making these statements about Elijah, since the Romans would not know who Elijah is. They either do not know the language Jesus speaks in order to translate "Eli, Eli" into "God, God," or they have deified Elijah to the point of being God. Since the religious leaders have not had trouble understanding Jesus' language before, the latter must be the case. This is utter blasphemy on the part of the Jewish religious leaders to make a mere man, Elijah, out to be God! They do not even know the God they are supposedly leading the Jews in serving! Yet, they were wanting to stone Jesus to death because, "Thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10:33). Talk about a murderous double standard!

**27:48-49** John 19:28-30 tells us that, at this point, Jesus has one prophecy left to fulfill before He dies. That prophecy is Psalm 69:21. "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Therefore, He said "I thirst." The lack of compassion of the Jewish religious leaders is shown here, because only one will even give Him something to drink, and that something is some nasty vinegar. There is no way that a mere man could have controlled the drink given to Him, in order to fulfill this prophecy. Therefore, this is yet another proof that Jesus truly is the Messiah.

**27:50** Note that Jesus "yielded" up the ghost. Even in the most awful conditions possible, Jesus' life was not taken from Him; He gave up His life. He said in John 10:15 "I lay down My life for the sheep," and in John 10:18, He said, "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

**27:51** The veil of the temple being torn in two is NOT the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile of Ephesians 2:14. It is NOT the ability of the Gentile to approach God boldly. The tearing of the veil of the temple deals EXCLUSIVELY with Israel's program and the Jews. The Jews could not enter into the holy of holies, which was on the other side of the veil, except the high priest could do so once per year. Now, with Jesus' death, God sees the saved Jews as holy through the blood of Jesus such that their sins have been atoned for, such that they can now have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Hebrews 10:19b-20). This new way was consecrated "for us", the Hebrews, not the Gentiles. Thus, the tearing down of the veil means that the separation between a holy God and an unholy Jew is done away with the flesh of Jesus Christ, making the Jew holy in the eyes of God through imputed righteousness. That is what the tearing of the veil is all about. Also note that the veil was torn from top to bottom, showing that GOD was the One Who got rid of the veil.

**27:52-53** The resurrection of many saints is a foretaste of the resurrection of those saved in Israel's program. They were resurrected and went right into the holy city. At the first resurrection after the tribulation period (Revelation 20:4-6), those saved in Israel's program will rise from the dead by the power of God and go into the holy city to reign with Christ for 1,000 years. Here, their resurrection was a sign to the Jews in Jerusalem that they also could have life through the power of Jesus Christ to resurrect them from the dead and enter God's eternal kingdom if they believe the gospel of the kingdom. This was not just some neat, magic trick. The purpose of this miracle was salvation of the Jews.

**27:54** The result, though, is the salvation of GENTILES. Religion is the hardest nut to crack. The Jewish religious leaders are not saved at this point. However, Gentiles, engulfed in the Roman system, become believers. Jewish religion said, "Let us see whether Elias will come to save Him" (27:49); Pagan Gentiles said, "Truly, this was the Son of God" (27:54).

**27:55-56** Now, we see the women of the little flock who followed Jesus, even to the cross. They still do not believe that He is to rise from the dead, because they asked who would roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre so that they could anoint His body (Mark 16:3). The women follow so that they can see where His body is laid so they can prepare spices and ointments to anoint the dead body as was the Jewish custom (Luke

23:55-24:1).

**27:57** Joseph of Arimathaea (This is not Joseph, the husband of Mary.) comes in the evening, since it looks like he was scared to be seen with Jesus on crucifixion day, lest he also be killed. Isaiah 53:9 says that the Messiah would make "His grave with the wicked, and with the rich." Making His grave with the wicked is seen in that He was crucified among thieves and malefactors. Making His grave with the rich is seen in that He was buried in a rich man's tomb. Again, these are things that man could not control, showing that Jesus had to be the Messiah. While Joseph thought he was sacrificing his own brand, new tomb and would have to get another one for his own body later, Joseph really gave nothing except for a place for Jesus to stay for two days. He did not even have to sweep the tomb out after Jesus rose from the dead, as Jesus neatly wrapped the linen and napkin He was laid in and left them in the tomb (John 20:5-7) to be used again.

**27:60** Joseph also did not believe that Jesus would rise from the dead, because he rolled a stone over the door of the tomb to keep people from coming in and stealing the body. If he believed in Jesus' resurrection, it stands to reason that he would have left it open.

**27:62,66** The next day was the sabbath. The women did not go to the tomb with spices on the sabbath because they were commanded to rest (Luke 23:54-56). The fact that the Jewish religious leaders came to Pilate on the sabbath shows that they have no regard for the sabbath. They objected when Jesus "worked" on the sabbath by healing (Matthew 12:10), but they do not mind doing real work by setting a watch on the Sabbath. The reason they worked on the Sabbath was that they knew they would be safe because Jesus' disciples would not be around to observe them setting a watch.

**27:63-64** The Jewish religious leaders probably had the same reaction as the Romans in thinking that Jesus is the Son of God (27:54), which is why they want guards to watch Jesus' tomb. They are afraid that Jesus will rise on the third day, just as He had promised. The disciples coming by night to steal the body is just an excuse, because they could have done that the day before, if they wanted to. After all, Joseph, Jesus' disciple, came by night and took Jesus' body from Pilate (27:57-58). He could have ran off to China with Jesus' body, and the rest of the disciples would have claimed that He rose from the dead. Or, Joseph could have put Jesus' body in the tomb, and then the disciples could have stolen it later. The point is that the Jewish religious leaders knew that Jesus is the Son of God, and they were afraid that He would really rise from the dead. They were not concerned about those scared disciples, who fled, coming back to try to steal the body.

**27:66** Religion could not hold Jesus in the grave.

**28** Jesus rises from the dead (vs. 5-6), the Jewish religious leaders are still disobeying God's law (vs. 11-15), and some of Jesus' disciples still do not

believe Jesus is alive, even though they see Him (v. 17). However, Jesus' power can overcome all of that to reconcile the world back to Himself (vs. 18-20).

**28:1, 27:46-50** Matthew 12:40 says, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." 28:1 fixes Jesus' resurrection as being on a Sunday morning. Therefore, in order to fulfill the prophecy of Matthew 12:40, He had to be dead on Sunday morning, all day Saturday, all day Friday, and Thursday night. 27:46-50 says that Jesus died a little after 3 PM, which means that He had to have died on Thursday—not on Friday, as most Christians believe.

The confusion lies in the fact that Luke 23:54 – 24:1 says that the day Jesus was crucified was the day of preparation, the women rested on the sabbath day, and then they came to Jesus' grave on Sunday. So, people conclude that Jesus was crucified on a Friday. However, that would be only 2 days and 2 nights in the grave, leaving Him one day short of fulfilling Matthew 12:40.

The key lies in the parenthetical reference in John 19:31 that the day after Jesus' death was a sabbath day that was "an high day," and the day He was crucified was the preparation day for the sabbath. John 19:14 says that "it was the preparation of the passover." Exodus 12:11-17 says that the passover is the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, and that no work is to be done on that day. Therefore, the passover is a sabbath. This would be a high-day sabbath, since it is not the normal one that happens every week.

Therefore, Jesus was crucified on a Thursday, which was the preparation day for the passover, which was on a Friday. Because it was a high day (passover), Friday was a sabbath day. Then, Saturday was the normal, weekly sabbath. Then, Jesus rose from the dead "in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week" (28:1). As such, Jesus was dead 3 days and 3 nights, due to both of the next two days after His death being sabbaths. No doubt God planned it that way so that no one would even visit His grave until after His resurrection. Jesus' resurrection before dawn on the first day of the week represents the new dawning for Israel—a new covenant that Jesus will bring after the tribulation period, thanks to His death, burial, and resurrection.

**28:2** Here, Mark 16:1-4, Luke 24:1-2, and John 20:1, we are told that the stone was rolled away. We are never told of Jesus leaving the tomb at this time. Therefore, Jesus left the tomb WITH THE STONE STILL IN PLACE on Sunday morning before dawn. The reason the stone was rolled away was so the little flock could look in (Verse 6: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay"), not so Jesus could escape, for the stone was not rolled away until dawn. The angel even had to sit on the stone to make sure no one tried to



move it back in place.

**28:4-6** Jesus had already risen from the dead. With His new, glorified body, He was able to disappear and reappear in a different place, e.g., John 20:19. Thus, He just disappeared from the tomb and reappeared somewhere else, while the keepers were still outside the tomb, guarding it. They were guarding an empty tomb and did not know it!

Note how the angel says that “Jesus” was crucified, but “the Lord” had laid in the tomb. He was crucified as Jesus, but He rose from the dead as “the Lord.”

**28:7** The disciples are still running scared, meeting in locked rooms (John 20:19). Therefore, they do not even go to the tomb with the women. This shows their spinelessness, that they would let women go by themselves to a tomb that is guarded by soldiers. The women probably would not have been able to convince the soldiers to roll away the stone so that they could go in and put spices on it.

**28:10** Jesus' glorified body shines, such that He has to tell Mary Magdalene and the other Mary not to be afraid, just like the angel had to tell them when the angel appeared unto them (28:5).

**28:11-15** What happened to the law abiding chief priests and elders? They bribe the soldiers with large sums of money so that they will lie and say that Jesus' disciples stole Jesus' body. The common Jews must have found out about this, because the story is commonly reported among them at the time of the writing of Matthew. What a great testimony for the Jews to be saved! They are shown that their Messiah rose from the grave, and that their religious leaders are a bunch of phonies. Yet, less than 50 days later, on the day of Pentecost, there are only 120 believers gathered together (Acts 1:15). This shows the great unbelief of Israel. They will not believe in their Messiah, even though they have overwhelming evidence to do so. Abraham rightly said (from paradise) that "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

**28:16-17** The disciples did not believe that Jesus would die and rise from the dead, even though He told them at least 6 times beforehand. John did not believe until he went inside the empty tomb (John 20:8). Thomas gets a bad rap, being called "doubting Thomas," because he did not believe until he saw Jesus' nail prints (John 20:27-28). However, some of the other disciples STILL did not believe in Jesus' resurrection. He appeared to 10 of them in John 20:19,24-25. He appeared to all 11 of them in John 20:26. Now, He is appearing to all 11 again, and "some doubted." They said in John 20:25 that "we have seen the Lord." Now, some are in unbelief. Their religion must have gotten to them. They were not able to cast out the lunatick devil because of religion (17:15-16). Now, because of religion, they do not believe Jesus was

standing before Him, even though He has already appeared to them on more than one occasion. The poor faith of the disciples shows how miserably lost Israel was, such that this was the best group of disciples Jesus could come up with. Second, it shows the theory that the disciples made up the whole resurrection is obviously not true. Third, it shows what a difference the Holy Ghost makes in their lives. They go from being unbelievers to being bold proclaimers of the gospel in early Acts.

**28:18** If you want to know what the cross and Jesus' resurrection accomplished, just compare this verse with Luke 4:5-7. Just 3 ½ years earlier or so, Satan tempted Jesus by saying he would give him the power over all the kingdoms of the world if He would worship him. Jesus did not yield to that temptation. Now, Jesus has all power in earth AND in heaven, and Satan is not the Lord like he wanted to be. In fact, he is now bound (Matthew 12:29), and the saints in Abraham's bosom have been led away from being Satan's captive to waiting in heaven for God to establish His kingdom on earth (Ephesians 4:8-10).

Jesus' death and resurrection accomplished the greatest power shift ever. Jesus triumphed over principalities and powers through the cross (Colossians 2:14-15), such that God raised Him from the dead and made Him "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (Ephesians 1:19-21). If Satan knew that killing Jesus would be his defeat, rather than his victory, he "would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Corinthians 2:8).

**28:19-20** Because Jesus has all power in heaven and earth, saved Israel can teach the Gentiles God's law so that they may be part of God's kingdom, as well. Jesus' commission to His disciples is shown in five places in scripture (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:47; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8), and each reference gives different information than the others do. This one in Matthew 28:19-20 is the most popular one, because it is the easiest to use as justification for sending out missionaries today.

People do not like the Mark commission because it involves taking up serpents and drinking poison, so they claim it is not even part of scripture. (I did not know men have the authority to delete scripture that they do not like!) The Luke and Acts commissions are out because the preaching begins at Jerusalem, although some like to use the Acts commission so they can build Acts 2 on it. Those people say that "Jerusalem" just means your hometown, which does not make any sense, since the disciples all came from Galilee, not Jerusalem, but you are not supposed to figure that out. John is only used by the Catholics because Jesus gave His disciples the power to forgive sins in John, which the Catholics love to lord over people, while most Christians would say that claiming such power makes one a heretic. The Matthew one is used by mainstream Christianity to support their missionary efforts, when, in fact, most of what they do relates more to Matthew 23:15, i.e., making converts twofold the children of hell than

themselves.

What this “great commission” is about is a call for saved Israel to preach the gospel of the kingdom (repent and be baptized for the remission of sins) to the Gentiles in Jesus’ millennial kingdom, and then teach them to observe the law. However, Israel has to be saved first before they can reach the Gentiles with the gospel. Therefore, the apostles never even got started on the Matthew commission. The first commission they were to follow is found in Acts 1:8. They were to start in Jerusalem, go to Judea, then to Samaria, which would cover all of Israel. THEN, they would go to the Gentiles. They do not go to the Gentiles until Jesus’ millennial kingdom, because Matthew 10:23 says that, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.”

When they do finally get to the Gentiles in the millennial kingdom, they are still to baptize them, and they are still to teach them “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” which is obeying the law of Moses (23:2-3). Although most Christian churches claim to follow this commission today, most do not baptize FOR salvation, and they certainly do not teach animal sacrifices as prescribed by the law of Moses. So, they do not follow it as Jesus commanded, but they should not be following it anyway, because it is not for this current dispensation of grace which began with the apostle Paul in Acts 9.

Paul clearly states in Galatians 2:7-9 that the apostles commissioned in Matthew 28:19-20 abandoned that commission, saying they would go unto the circumcision and leave it up to Paul and Barnabas to go to the Gentiles. James, Cephas, and John did not disobey Jesus’ command. Rather, they recognized the change in dispensation that occurred with Paul. They recognized that Israel had rejected Jesus as their Messiah and would not go to the Gentiles with the gospel. The dispensation of grace started with the new commission that is for today, which is called “the ministry of reconciliation.” That commission is to preach Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sins (I Corinthians 15:3-4) in order to reconcile people back to God (II Corinthians 5:18-20). This is a greater commission than the one in Matthew 28:19-20, because our commission today is to reconcile people back to God, while the commission in Matthew is to teach them to observe the law so that they will fear the law so that they will be reconciled to God at a later time (For Israel, reconciliation occurs at Jesus’ second coming. For Gentiles, reconciliation occurs after the millennial reign.)

**28:19** Baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is significant. The Father and the Son are important because they have both been blasphemed by Israel. The Father was blasphemed in Israel’s rejection of John the Baptist’s ministry, because he was “sent from God” (John 1:6). The Son was blasphemed in His earthly ministry, when the Jewish religious leaders attributed His miracles to the devil (12:24). Therefore, they had to be

baptized in the Father's and the Son's names in order to be cleansed. Baptism in the Holy Ghost is important since they would receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38) and need Him in order to obey the Lord during the tribulation period.

**28:20** Note that the Lord Jesus Christ promises to be with His disciples "unto the end of the world." This is an important promise, because it will appear to the disciples that God has forsaken them during the tribulation period when the Antichrist is ruling. Therefore, it is important that they believe God and His Word, in order to endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved.