
MATTHEW

Think For Yourself Study Guide

INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE

The things of God cannot be “proven” as a mathematical equation might be. Does God exist? Is the Bible really a revelation from God? Is the Koran the revelation of God? These things cannot really be “proven” or “disproven” scientifically. Instead we are presented with the evidence, much as a jury is expected to consider evidence as it works toward reaching its verdict.

There are many evidences that God exists. The creation all around us presents evidence of an intelligent, wise, creative and powerful Creator. The “magic” of life, and the wonder of the human body are also evidence.

We are presented with various writings that scholars and others tell us are holy scripture; a revelation from God. Some tell us the Koran is God’s revelation. Others say it is the Bible. Others make other claims. This is the evidence that is before us.

Do we base our verdict on the culture in which we live? Those raised in Islamic countries generally reach the verdict that the Koran is the Word of God. Those raised in Christian cultures more commonly reach the verdict that the Bible is the Word of God. Both positions cannot be correct, since they contradict at many points.

Many others reach no verdict at all. They believe they cannot possibly know for sure, since there are so many who disagree. Others believe the verdict has no bearing on their life.

But for those willing to examine the evidence, an **informed verdict** can be reached. I believe the Bible is the Word of God, His revelation to mankind, because of this evidence.

Many who come this far will agree as to what the Bible **says**, but they will often disagree as to what the Bible **means**. For example:

- Some believe the Kingdom Jesus talks about is “heaven.” Others believe the Kingdom is different from heaven, and will actually come upon the earth when Jesus returns.
- People have differing views of what “the unpardonable sin” is as found in Matthew 12.
- People have differing views as to what happens when we die. Do we go instantly to “heaven” or “hell?” Do we go into a sleep state awaiting the resurrection?
- People have differing views as to what will happen on the earth, and the order of events, in the end times.
- Some people believe we have “free will” while others believe God has “determined” every event.

Again, most will agree as to what the Bible says. But the opinions of man differ as to what the Bible means, or how it is to be interpreted.

Most Believers will agree that the Bible speaks of salvation only through the work of Jesus Christ. This is our common ground. Errors in translations and interpretations of the Bible have not clouded this major fact concerning Salvation. This is the foundation of our faith! It is this belief that makes us a Believer (and a part of the Body of Christ) or a non-Believer.

But on many other points we differ in our understanding.

Many hold to their beliefs based upon their upbringing, their culture, the teachings of their pastor or professor, or the official doctrines of “The Church” (creeds or statements of faith). But even these differ on many specific points, so we know they cannot all be right.

I challenge you to consider the evidence, and to think for yourself as you study the Bible! Theologies are nothing more than **theories** to be challenged and tested to be sure they are correct. Don’t simply accept the theology that has been handed to you by your church or your pastor. Test it! Study and think for yourself.

This study guide is not intended to teach you the definitive, correct interpretation of Matthew. I have in my library a number of books and commentaries on Matthew, and on many points they disagree. No author, teacher or professor should be considered infallible, and the final word. The fact that they disagree should show us that some, and perhaps all, are wrong in some areas. Many, for example, say that Jesus is referring to “hell” when He uses the word “Gehenna.” Others, including myself, disagree, and believe Jesus is talking about something totally different ... a geographic place outside of Jerusalem.

I am simply asking you to study, and to think for yourself. This study guide presents my own perspectives on Matthew. I don’t claim to be right on all specifics, and everyone holding other views wrong. I study the evidences, and I think, and contained in this guide are my “**theories**” to be considered and tested.

So as we begin I simply make the request that you think! You have been taught what Matthew means, and this has become the “theory” you now hold to be true. Challenge that theory. Examine the facts and evidences, and consider that your theory might be wrong on some points.

Open Matthew, and study anew. Think for yourself!

A WORD ABOUT BIBLE VERSIONS

After having tried a number of different Bible versions in my life, I now use primarily the Concordant Literal New Testament and the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, both published by the Concordant Publishing Concern. This is a literal translation, and it was developed using consistent, scientific principles. If God used two different Greek words, the distinction is preserved, instead of combining several different Greek words into a single English word. Likewise if God used the same Greek word in different instances, the same idea (and even the same word whenever possible) is presented in the English. Meanings of words are derived by using a concordance to examine every instance where a word is used in Scripture.

My favorite thing about this translation is the “Keyword Concordance” which is included. This allows the reader to take any word used in the translation, determine what Greek word it came from, and look at every other instance where that same Greek word was used. This allows the reader to examine every individual word in all of its occurrences to see if the English word used in the translation is correct.

The Concordant Version can be ordered from “The Concordant Publishing Concern” at 661/252-2112 or www.concordant.org

MATTHEW’S ACCOUNT

The Kingdom had been a reality in the days of David and Solomon, but it declined thereafter. Eventually both the northern Kingdom (Israel) and the southern (Judah) were defeated and the people led away into exile. The prophets informed the people that they would be returned to the land, and in fact they were. The temple was re-built, as were the walls of Jerusalem. As Matthew opens, the people were back in their land, but they were not in control. It was not their Kingdom, but that of the ruling Roman government.

In accordance with the Old Testament prophecies, the Jewish people awaited the return of their Kingdom, and their King; the Messiah This is where things stand as we begin reading Matthew.

Throughout Matthew we note the very distinctive Jewish character. Many Old Testament references are provided, since Matthew intends to show that Jesus meets the requirements for being the Messiah.

Jesus had come to announce the coming Kingdom, but the King (and therefore the Kingdom) is rejected by the Jews, and the King (the Messiah) is crucified. Note throughout Matthew that the primary message is “Repent, the Kingdom is near.” Note also that Jesus has come “to the sheep of Israel” and not to the other nations.

THE LINEAGE OF JESUS (1:1)

The lineage shows that Jesus meets the Messianic conditions. He is descended from the line of Judah and David. The lineage shows us the human side of Jesus (born of Mary, v 16) and the fact that He meets the condition for being the Son of God, as Mary is pregnant by the holy spirit (v 18).

THE BIRTH OF JESUS (1:18)

The magi (Gentiles) come to worship. Herod seeks to kill Jesus. Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt.

THE KINGDOM PROCLAIMED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST (3:1)

The message: “Repent, for near is the kingdom of the heavens.”

Many are baptized, confessing their sins. The Pharisees and Sadducees come, but John rebukes them.

- “Progeny of vipers”
- “Produce fruit worthy of repentance”

The proclamation: The kingdom is near.

The desired response: Repentance with fruit, confession, baptism.

“THE KINGDOM”

Many Bible teachers say “The Kingdom” is the same thing as “Heaven.” But when Jesus talks about the Kingdom is He really referring to the heavenly realms?

Must we interpret “The Kingdom” figuratively? David’s kingdom was a physical kingdom upon the earth. A return of the Kingdom, and a successor king from David’ lineage, is promised by the prophets. Daniel says it will be greater than all other kingdoms. But what makes us think the Kingdom being proclaimed here is different from David’s kingdom; an earthly kingdom?

The disciples were expecting a physical kingdom to come upon the earth after the resurrection (Acts 1:6) and Jesus does not tell them they have misunderstood. He simply tells them it is not theirs to know the timing of certain things. In Revelation we see Christ's return to the earth, and the establishment of the kingdom (in the eon which follows this present eon). Even in Revelation 21:1 (in the final eon) when John perceives "a new heaven and a new earth" and sees "the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven..." we note that it descends out of heaven, but he does not say that it is heaven itself!

Throughout Revelation, as the Kingdom becomes a reality, we note the distinct Jewish character. The twelve tribes (Rev 21:12) and twelve apostles (21:14) are prominent. The nations are not found within the city, but are outside (21:24). How different from Paul's description of the heavenlies, with no barrier between Jew and Gentile.

In Revelation 22:2 we learn that the leaves on the tree are for "the cure of the nations," implying physical bodies in need of the leaves to sustain life. Compare this with the incorruptible spiritual body described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

In Revelation 21:8 the lake of fire is burning, and it is further described as the "second death." Compare this with 1 Corinthians 15:27 when "the last enemy is being abolished: death."

In Revelation 21:5 we see Christ reigning upon the throne, as promised by the prophets of old. Compare this with 1 Corinthians 15:25,28 where we read that Christ must reign until He places all enemies under his feet, and then when all is subject to Christ He subjects Himself to God, Who becomes All in all.

In Revelation 22:5 the "slaves of God" are reigning, and in 21:24 there are "kings of the earth." Compare this with 1 Corinthians 15:24 where we see that all sovereignty, authority and power are nullified.

Revelation describes the Kingdom which comes upon the earth, with Christ reigning. This is the kingdom Jesus is introducing in Matthew, but it is rejected, and the king crucified. During the period in which we now live, while Israel is temporarily set aside, salvation is offered to the Gentiles (Romans 11:25). When God is ready, the Kingdom will come upon the earth, although it is not ours to know the timing. (Acts 1:7)

And when God is ready, when every knee is bowing and all are subjected to Him, the final eon will come to its conclusion (1 Corinthians 15). Death (the lake of fire) will be abolished, **all** will find salvation through the grace of God and the work of Christ upon the Cross, and God will be All in all.

JESUS IS BAPTIZED (3:13)

"For thus it is becoming for us to fulfill all righteousness."

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS (4:1)

Jesus is **led** by the spirit, and **tried** by the Adversary.

Note the parallel to Adam being **led** by God into the Garden of Eden, where he was **tried** by the serpent. The difference is that Adam disobeyed, resulting in death for mankind. Jesus obeyed, resulting in life for mankind.

"As it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation, thus also it is through one just award for all mankind for life's justifying." (Romans 5:18)

THE KINGDOM IS PROCLAIMED BY JESUS (4:17)

The message is the same as that of John the Baptist: "Repent, for near is the kingdom of the heavens."

Jesus is the King; heir to the throne of David. But the kingdom is not yet here ... it is near.

JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES (4:18,21)

Peter, Andrew, James and John.

THE KINGDOM IS PROCLAIMED IN ALL OF GALILEE (4:23)

Here we see the **means** used to proclaim the Kingdom:

- **Teaching** in their synagogues
- **Heralding** the “evangel of the kingdom”
- **Curing every disease and debility**

Vast throngs follow Jesus.

The message being proclaimed (“Near is the kingdom”) is referred to as the “***evangel of the kingdom.***” This is the evangel (gospel) that is being proclaimed by Jesus at this point in history ... “Repent, the Kingdom is near.”

“THE EVANGEL”

The Greek “evangel” is often translated “gospel” in our modern English translations. But when we think of “The Gospel” our ideas have been biased by the system of theology we have been taught.

In fact the word “evangel” simply means “good news,” and it is not always the same. Each time we encounter the word “evangel” we must ask ourselves, “What is the good news being referred to in this passage?”

The Concordant Version simply uses the transliteration “evangel” instead of the word “gospel” so that our thinking will not be biased with any preconceived notions of what “The Gospel” is. In Matthew we see that the “evangel of the kingdom” is being proclaimed. But if we study carefully we will note that this evangel is much different from the evangel Paul later proclaimed to the Gentiles, who have their expectation in “the heavenlies” and not in the kingdom to come upon the earth.

HAPPY ARE THOSE AWAITING THE KINGDOM (5:1)

Happy are _____, their reward is to come in the kingdom

- Poor, mourners, meek, those hungering for righteousness, merciful, clean in heart, peacemakers, persecuted
- Consoled, receive allotment of the land, satisfied, mercy, see God, called sons of God, vast wages

The reference to receiving an “allotment of the land” should show us that this is to be fulfilled in a “physical” way, upon the earth. This allotment of land should not be “spiritualized.” It is real land to be enjoyed by the Jews when the Kingdom is realized upon the earth.

JESUS GIVES THE KINGDOM RULES (5:13)

This section is commonly called “The Sermon on the Mount.” Remember that throughout Matthew Jesus is speaking *to the Jews*. Let us be very careful not to assume that things that are spoken directly to the Jews, and in a particular age, automatically apply directly to non- Jews in the 21st century.

Certainly these words are **principles** for us today, but they are strictly enforced **rules** for those living in the earthly kingdom.

- Salt and Light (5:13)
- Jesus to fulfill the law (5:17)
- **Superabounding righteousness to enter kingdom (5:19)**
- Murder; anger (5:21)
- Reconcile with brother before bringing gift (5:23)
- Settle before going to the judge (5:25)
- Adultery; lust (5:27)
- Divorce (5:31)
- Oaths (5:33)
- Turn the other cheek (5:38)
- Love enemy (5:43)
- **Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (5:48)**
- Do righteousness in private (6:1)
- Pray in private (6:5)
- No useless repetitions when praying (6:7)
- The “Lord’s Prayer” (6:9)
- Forgive others (6:14)
- When fasting, do it secretly (6:16)
- Hoard treasures in heaven, not on earth (6:19)
- Eye is the lamp of the body (6:22)
- Cannot serve two lords; God and mammon (6:24)
- Do not worry; seek first the kingdom (6:25)
- Do not judge (7:1)
- Don’t give what is holy to curs (7:6)
- Ask, seek, knock (7:7)
- Do to others what you would have done to you (7:12)
- Narrow is the gate leading to life (7:13)
- Beware of false prophets (7:15)
- Not all saying “Lord” will enter kingdom; but he who is **doing** the Father’s will (7:21)

Again, these are **rules** for the “kingdom of heaven” to come upon the earth, that Jesus is introducing. Yes, they are **principles** for us today, since they reveal the heart of God. But they are to be strictly enforced rules for those living in the kingdom to come (which we see realized in Revelation when Christ returns).

Note that a condition for entering the kingdom is superabounding righteousness, and perfection is called for. This “evangel of the kingdom” is very works oriented!

Also note as we read Matthew that for certain crimes, death is the punishment, with the body of the guilty party cast into Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem.

GEHENNA

“Gehenna” (translated “hell” in most modern translations) is first mentioned in Matthew 5:22. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew “Gai Hinnom” or “Valley of Hinnom.” This is a physical place; a ravine just below Jerusalem. This place is referred to in 2 Chronicles 28:3 and 33:6. In Jesus’ day it was a refuse dump with fires perpetually burning. When Jesus talked about “Gehenna” His audience understood that He referred to this refuse dump outside of Jerusalem. For certain crimes within the Kingdom, the bodies of the guilty would be cast into this refuse dump; a disgraceful fate. Isaiah 66:22-24 foretells of this place, and the terminology used shows us it is clearly a physical, not a spiritual, place. “All flesh” will see the corpses of the “mortals” burning in the fire as they come to Jerusalem to worship.

Again, this is the first mention of Gehenna in the Greek Scriptures (New Testament). Had Jesus been referring to a spiritual place of endless torment, something different than the “Valley of Hinnom” the Jews were familiar with, this would have been a new thing and many questions would have been asked. From Genesis forward the penalty for sin is **death**, not endless torment. If Jesus is changing the penalty from death to endless torment, many questions would have arisen and further explanation given.

HE TAUGHT AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY (7:29)

The throngs are astonished (7:28)

MIRACLES ACCOMPANY THE KINGDOM EVANGEL (8:1)

- **Leper healed (8:1)**
- **Centurion’s son healed (8:5)**
- **Peter’s mother-in-law healed (8:14)**
- **Many healed; demons cast out (8:16)**

We saw in 4:23 the close relationship between proclaiming the coming kingdom and miracles. It seems that the miracles are one of the “means” used to “proclaim” the Kingdom evangel.

THE COST OF FOLLOWING (8:18)

The Son of man has no place to lay His head.

- The cost to Jesus

Follow Me, and leave the dead to bury the dead.

- The cost to the disciple

The message to the disciples seems to be ... Set aside worldly worries and focus on the things of God.

MIRACLES ACCOMPANY THE KINGDOM EVANGEL (8:23)

- **Jesus calms the sea (8:23)**
- **Two demoniacs healed (8:28)**
- **Paralytic healed (9:1)**

MATTHEW CALLED (9:9)

JESUS CRITICIZED FOR EATING WITH SINNERS (9:11)

Jesus replies: “Came not to call the just, but sinners.”

DISCIPLES WILL FAST WHEN BRIDEGROOM GONE (9:14)

John’s disciples ask Jesus why His disciples don’t fast. Jesus replies, “When the bridegroom is taken away, they will fast.”

In other words, the disciples are not fasting because the bridegroom is with them. This seems to link fasting with a **longing** or a **desire** for the bridegroom to come.

NEW WINE SKINS NEEDED FOR FRESH WINE (9:16)

Jesus was introducing “new wine,” but those around Him had trouble because He seemed to be stretching (or breaking) the old “wine skins.”

MIRACLES ACCOMPANY THE KINGDOM EVANGEL (9:18)

- **Dead girl raised (9:18)**
- **Woman with bleeding healed (9:20)**
- **Two blind men healed (9:27)**
- **Demons cast out of mute demoniac (9:33)**

PHARISEES CRITICIZE JESUS (9:34)

They say healings were done “by the chief of demons.”

THE KINGDOM IS PROCLAIMED (9:35)

The Kingdom is proclaimed in all cities and villages. Again we see the **means** used to proclaim the Kingdom (compare with Matthew 4:23).

- **Teaching** in their synagogues
- **Heralding** the evangel of the kingdom
- **Curing every disease and debility**

JESUS HAS COMPASSION FOR THE THRONGS (9:36)

Jesus observes that the throngs are battered and tossed as sheep without a shepherd. He notes to the disciples that the harvest is great, but the workers are few.

JESUS GIVES AUTHORITY TO THE TWELVE (10:1)

It is interesting that the twelve are sent out immediately after Jesus observes that the harvest is great, and the workers few.

- They (The Twelve) are the ones being “commissioned”
- “Apostle” and “commission” both from Greek “apostello”
- “To the lost sheep of Israel” (10:6)
- “Say, ‘Near is the kingdom of the heavens’” (10:7)
- **Authority to heal, raise, cleanse, cast out demons (10:8)**

This authority is given specifically *to the twelve*! They are “commissioned” for a specific time and a specific purpose. They are instructed to go specifically to the lost sheep of Israel. Can we legitimately assume that we are “commissioned” today in the same way?

- When persecuted they are to flee to a different city.
- Don’t fear the one who can kill only the body (Satan, men) but fear the one who can kill both body and soul (God).
- If anyone disowns Me before men, I will disown before the Father.
- I come not to bring peace, but a sword.
- To be worthy one must take his cross and follow. He who is finding his soul will be destroying it...

KILLING THE BODY; KILLING THE SOUL

In 10:28 the distinction is made between one who can kill the body (death) versus one who can kill both the body and the soul.

A study of the Greek words used will reveal that the soul becomes active when the body (from the soil) and spirit (from God) are joined. At death the body returns to the soil, the spirit returns to God, and the soul goes to “hades” (the unseen place). This is true of both the righteous and the wicked.

At the resurrection the soul lives again. This will occur in the next eon, where those in Christ will enjoy “eonian life,” while those not found in Christ remain in the unseen place (1 Thessalonians 4:13ff).

Don’t fear those who can kill the body, but who cannot keep the soul in hades (mankind). Instead, fear Him (God) who is able to destroy the body **AND** keep the soul in hades, forfeiting eonian life in the next eon.

JESUS TEACHES & HERALDS (11:1)

After commissioning the twelve, Jesus Himself goes out to teach and herald in the cities.

JOHN THE BAPTIST SENDS DISCIPLES TO JESUS (11:2)

John’s disciples ask Jesus, “Are You the One?”

Instead of a direct response Jesus answers by pointing to the things taking place (miracles, evangel proclaimed to the poor). This seems to imply that the purpose of these manifestations is to say, “I am the One!”

Since miracles accompany the teaching and preaching concerning the kingdom (4:23 and 9:35) it would seem that the purpose of the miracles was to **proclaim** in a way more powerful than words that the Kingdom (and the King) are near.

JESUS TALKS ABOUT JOHN THE BAPTIST (11:9)

- More than a prophet; the one Malachi spoke of (Mal 4:5-6)
- None greater among those born of women
- But he is still less than the smallest in the kingdom
- He is Elijah who is about to be coming

The Kingdom of the heavens is not yet come upon the earth; it is near. The Kingdom is a reality in the heavens at this point, and the least within the Kingdom is greater even than John the Baptist.

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE KINGDOM (11:12)

- The Kingdom is being violently forced.
- Woe to unrepentant cities; Tyre/Sidon would have repented.
- Things are hidden from the wise; revealed to minors.
- None recognize the Father but those to whom the Son unveils
- Lift My yoke and learn from Me; you will find rest.

If Tyre and Sidon would have repented had they seen such powerful deeds, why were they not given the chance? If the unrepentant are cast into hell forever, this would not be just. If ultimately every knee will bow, what appears to be an injustice may have served a purpose as God works thru history to bring all into subjection to Him, ultimately saving all.

LORD OF THE SABBATH (12:1)

Jesus' disciples pick grain on the Sabbath.

The Pharisees object, saying this is unlawful.

Jesus replies:

- Mercy am I wanting, not sacrifice
- Son of Mankind is Lord of the Sabbath

Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the sabbath.

The Pharisees object.

Jesus teaches:

- It is allowed to be doing ideally on the sabbaths

PHARISEES PLAN TO KILL JESUS (12:14)

Knowing this, Jesus retreats.

Many follow ... and **He cures them all.**

Jesus warns them not to be making Him manifest.

Up until now Jesus has openly proclaimed the kingdom, and He commissioned His twelve to do the same. Now He tells those healed not to make Him manifest. This seems to be a change! He seems to be saying, "Don't proclaim."

HEALING THE BLIND & MUTE DEMONIAK (12:22)

The throngs say: "Is this not the Son of David?"

Pharisees: "He casts out demons by the chief of demons"

Jesus: "If Satan casts out Satan, he works against himself"

"If by spirit of God, then the kingdom outstrips in time to you"

"He who is not with Me is against Me"

Jesus is introducing the long awaited Kingdom, but the Jewish leaders are not recognizing it. They are rejecting the King, and therefore the Kingdom.

THE UNPARDONED SIN (12:31)

Speaking against the holy spirit will not be pardoned "in this eon nor in that which is impending."

Since this immediately follows the altercation with the Pharisees, this seems to be directed at them. They were guilty not because they opposed Jesus, but because they attributed the work of God to Satan. God's holy spirit was operating, but they

claimed it was the power of Satan. Such rejection of God, or failure to recognize God, will not be forgiven in this present eon, nor in the eon to follow. This is not to say, however, that forgiveness will not come after that subsequent eon had concluded.

THE FRUIT REVEALS THE TREE (12:33)

Out of the superabundance of the heart the mouth is speaking.

JUSTIFIED/CONVICTED BY YOUR WORDS (12:36)

For every idle declaration, man shall give an account in the day of judging. By your words you will be justified or convicted.

Justification in this context seems to be the opposite of **conviction** ... being found not guilty as opposed to guilty. One who is justified is found to be not guilty. One who is found guilty must be pardoned. There is a difference.

THE SIGN OF JONAH (12:38)

The Pharisees ask for a sign. Jesus replies: “A sign will not be given except the sign of Jonah. The Ninevites will condemn this generation; they repented at the heralding of Jonah; and more than Jonah is here!”

As the Kingdom is introduced, the desired response Jesus is looking for is “repentance.” Remember the message being proclaimed is, “Repent, for near is the Kingdom.”

UNCLEAN SPIRIT RETURNS TO EMPTY HOUSE (12:43)

A house is swept clean and decorated, but is unoccupied. More wicked spirits will enter to dwell there, making things worse than before.

This seems to be more than a lesson on demons. Note the conclusion: “Thus will it be to this wicked generation also.” This is a lesson concerning the entire generation.

This is a part of Jesus’ lecture to the Pharisees. Perhaps he is referring to their “religion.” Idols have been swept away, but the Jews are now “swept clean, decorated, but unoccupied.” They do not allow the holy spirit to occupy, and will be worse off than before.

JESUS’ MOTHER & BROTHERS (12:46)

“Whoever should be doing the will of My Father ... he is My brother and sister and mother.”

The Jews placed great emphasis on their genealogical relationships. Jesus is minimizing the genealogical, in favor of a different kind of relationship, based on obedience. Note throughout Matthew the emphasis is on “doing.”

PARABLE OF THE SOWER (13:1)

“WHY SPEAK IN PARABLES?” (13:10)

The parables are used to reveal **secrets** concerning the kingdom to Jesus’ disciples, but to conceal these secrets from the other listeners. Parables are not to illustrate or simplify, but to conceal. “To you has it been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, yet to those it has not been given.”

PARABLES

At first the Kingdom was proclaimed very openly, but the Jewish leaders have been rejecting it. Now Jesus proclaims in parables, to conceal, and to reveal only to His closest followers.

This seems to relate to 11:27 – “None recognize the Father except those to whom the Son unveils.” Jesus chooses:

- a. Those to whom the Father is *revealed, and*
- b. Those to whom the Father is *concealed*

His use of parables is one of the ways He accomplishes this.

It seems that those accepting the evangel of the kingdom (the disciples) are those to whom the Father is revealed, and those rejecting the kingdom (Jewish leaders) are those to whom the Father is not being revealed.

THE KINGDOM “LOCKED”

In Matthew 15:14 the Kingdom that was being proclaimed as “near” is “locked” for the remainder of Jesus’ ministry. He uses the words from Isaiah 6:9,10 to lock the Kingdom, and speaks about it only in Parables from this point on. In Matthew 23:13 Jesus points out that it was the Pharisees who were responsible for “locking the kingdom of the heavens in front of men.”

In Matthew 16:19 Peter is given “the keys of the kingdom of the heavens.”

In Acts 2 we see Peter use the keys to “unlock” the Kingdom, and it is proclaimed openly once again.

But after repeated rejection, and especially after the rejection of the Jewish leaders in the final chapter of Acts, the Kingdom is “locked” once again. Paul uses the same words from Isaiah 6 that Jesus had used to lock the Kingdom.

The Jews, and the Kingdom, are now set aside “until the complement of the nations may be entering” (Romans 11:25). Paul’s “evangel of the uncircumcision” is now the message, until it is time once again for the “kingdom evangel” to be proclaimed during the Tribulation period as written in John’s “Revelation.”

PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED (13:18)

The parable was told to the throngs. Now Jesus explains the parable to the disciples.

When the word of the kingdom is given:

- Some will not understand, and the wicked one will snatch away what has been sown.
- Some receive the word with joy, but when affliction comes he is snared.
- Some hear, but are distracted by the worry of this eon and there is no fruit.
- Some hear and understand, and bear fruit.

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE THROGS ONLY IN PARABLES

Parable of the Weeds: Let the weeds grow together with the ideal seed until the time of the harvest. (13:24)

Parable of the Mustard Seed: Starts small; grows large. (13:31)

Parable of the Yeast: Small amount leavens the entire batch. (13:33)

Jesus spoke to the throngs only thru parables; telling things that had been hid since the disruption. (13:34)

The Parables teach things about the Kingdom, which is what Jesus has come to introduce. These parables are a part of the Kingdom evangel, but told in such a way to **conceal** certain things from some, while **revealing** truths about the Kingdom to others.

Parable of the Weeds Explained: At the conclusion of the eon, the weeds will be culled by messengers dispatched by the Son of Mankind, and burned. (13:36 - See Rev 19:11 thru 20:15)

Note that even the disciples did not understand the parable until Jesus explained it.

Note the emphasis on works. “He shall be culling out of His kingdom all the snares and those **doing** lawlessness.” (13:41)

Parable of the Hidden Treasure: Kingdom like hidden treasure. (13:44)

Parable of the Pearl: Kingdom like merchant seeking a pearl. (13:45)

Parable of the Net: Kingdom is like a net gathering all varieties. At the conclusion of the eon the rotten will be cast out. (13:47)

The Scribe: A scribe who is made a disciple in the kingdom is like a man who takes new and old things from his treasure. (13:52)

PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR IN HIS OWN COUNTRY (13:53)

“And He does not many powerful deeds there because of their unbelief.” This infers that the powerful deeds follow belief, and where unbelief exists there will be no miracles.

MIRACLES

Miracles were a **means** used by Jesus in the time He proclaimed the nearness of the Kingdom. But the Kingdom was rejected. It cannot be **assumed** from this that miracles are still used by God today. We live in a different “administration” and God may choose to **act** in different ways than He did during the “Kingdom administration.” Today we do not proclaim that the Kingdom is near ... we proclaim grace, and reconciliation with God. Miracles were used by God to demonstrate the nearness of the Kingdom. But are miracles still needed by God to offer His grace and reconciliation to the world? Certainly God is the **same** in all ages, but He may choose to **act** in different ways to suit His purposes. We cannot box Him in and assume He will always **act** in the same way in all ages and circumstances.

DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (14:1)

Hearing of his death, Jesus retires into a wilderness place, privately. Jesus has compassion on the throng and **cures those who are ailing**.

FEEDING OF THE 5,000 (14:15)

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER (14:22)

When Peter begins to walk on the water, but then begins to sink, Jesus says to him, “Scant of faith, why do you hesitate?”

Those on the ship proclaim, “Truly God’s Son art Thou.”

This seems to imply that the purpose for this miracle is to display that Jesus is God’s Son.

We have seen before that miracles are closely tied to the proclaiming of the kingdom evangel. The response that is given to this miracle, that Jesus is God’s Son (and the King), is really a part of the kingdom evangel.

HEALINGS AT GENNESARET (14:34)

All who had an illness were brought to Jesus. They asked only to touch the tassel of His cloak. Whoever touched it “were brought safely through.”

CRITICISM; TRADITION OR GOD’S WORD? (15:1)

The Scribes and Pharisees say the disciples are transgressing **the tradition** of the elders by not washing their hands before eating.

Jesus responds that the Scribes and Pharisees transgress **the precept of God**, and invalidate the **word of God**, because of their tradition.

CLEAN & UNCLEAN (15:10)

Jesus teaches that it is not what goes into a man’s mouth that contaminates him, but what comes out. Things going into a man’s mouth eventually come out. But things coming out of a man’s mouth originate from his heart; and they contaminate the man.

In other words, it is a man’s heart (inner being) that makes him clean or unclean. What is within a man is manifested in the things coming out of him.

Jesus cites some examples: wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, prostitutions, thefts, false testimonies, calumnies.

The disciples point out that the Pharisees are snared at Jesus’ words. Jesus replies that every plant which is not planted by God will be uprooted. He describes the Pharisees as blind guides of the blind.

A GENTILE HEALED - CANAANITE WOMAN (15:21)

Jesus is approached by a Canaanite woman asking Jesus to cure her demonized daughter. Jesus points out the He “was not commissioned except for the lost sheep of Israel.” The woman persists, “worshipping” Jesus. She points out that even puppies eat the scraps falling from the master’s table. Jesus replies: “Great is your faith,” and **He heals the daughter.**

Jesus’ mission is still “to the lost sheep of Israel.” Gentiles are blessed indirectly, as in this case.

“WORSHIP”

The Greek word translated “worship” is “proskuneo” (toward – teem).

Our notion of what “worship” is has been shaped by the traditions and ideas of men. To determine the true meaning of “worship” as used in the Word of God, we should search out every occurrence of the word, and examine its use closely.

Using the Keyword Concordance contained within the Concordant Literal New Testament will allow us to examine every occurrence of “proskuneo.”

In Matthew 15:26 we see that the Canaanite woman “coming, worships Him.” We learn from this instance that “worship” does not always occur within a group, as we might have thought. It is not always done through “singing.”

Upon examining every occurrence of the word, it appears that worship is a coming near, a reverence for, and a faith in the object of worship.

Search every occurrence of the word and ask the Lord to reveal to you the true meaning of “worship.”

JESUS HEALS MANY (15:29)

Vast throngs come to Jesus with their lame, blind, mute, maimed, etc.

He cures them. The throngs marvel, and glorify “the God of Israel.”

FEEDING OF THE 4,000 (15:32)**PHARISEES & SADDUCEES ASK FOR A SIGN (16:1)**

Jesus refers to the generation as “wicked and an adulteress.” He tells them no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah.

Signs and wonders have been plentiful, but perhaps not in the presence of the Jewish leaders. Where there is unbelief, there will be no signs.

BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES (16:5)

The disciples think Jesus is talking about bread, and they point out that they have no bread. Jesus says they are scant of faith; not remembering the feeding of the 5,000 and the 4,000.

Jesus then points out that by “the leaven” He was referring to “the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

“WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?” (16:13)

Jesus: "Who are men saying the Son of Mankind is?"

Response: "Some say John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, a prophet."

Jesus: "Now you, who are **you** saying that I am?"

Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus: "Happy are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood does not reveal it to you, but My Father Who is in the heavens."

ON THIS ROCK WILL I BUILD MY ECCLESIA (16:18)

Jesus tells Peter:

- You are Peter (Greek for Peter is “petros”)
- On this rock will I be building My ecclesia (Greek for rock is “petra”)
- The gates of the unseen shall not prevail against it
- I will be giving you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens
- What you bind on earth will be those things bound in heaven
- What you loose on earth will be things loosed in the heavens

He tells the disciples not to say to anyone that He is the Christ.

“On this rock”: Could refer to Peter, or could refer to Peter’s faith in proclaiming that Jesus is the Son of God.

“Keys to the Kingdom” implies that the Kingdom in Jesus’ day is “locked.” This concept is confirmed by the fact that Jesus has been talking about the Kingdom only thru Parables to conceal the Kingdom secrets from the masses. When the holy spirit comes at Pentecost (Acts 2) we see the keys to the Kingdom coming to Peter. He becomes the focal point, and is given signs and wonders to accompany His Kingdom proclamation. But as the Kingdom continues to be rejected by the Jews in Acts, Peter fades and Paul takes the forefront. The keys given to Peter are no longer used as Acts comes to a conclusion. A new age has begun, with Paul taking not the “kingdom evangel” to the Jews, but the “evangel of grace and reconciliation” to the Gentiles.

“Binding on earth” and “loosing on earth” is authority given here to Peter, and only to Peter (at least in this instance). Let us be careful not to “steal” authority or commission given to a person or a group, within a certain age, that does not pertain to us!

“ECCLESIA”

“Ecclesia”: Usually translated “Church,” this word simply means “called-out-ones.” When the word ecclesia is used throughout the New Testament, it clearly does not mean the same thing in all cases.

Acts 7:38 – Refers to an assembly in Moses’ day

Acts 19:32 – “Ecclesia” is an unruly mob

Acts 19:39 – A “legal ecclesia,” like a jury

Ecclesia is from the Greek “ek” (out) “klesia” (called). It is simply a group of people “called out” from the general masses for a particular purpose. Since “ecclesia” is obviously not always “called out” for the same purpose, we cannot assume that whenever the word “ecclesia” is used that it always means “Church” as we understand “Church” to be.

Those called out in Jesus’ day, and in the book of Acts, were the Jews, whose expectation was the Kingdom from heaven, to come upon the earth. Those called out in Paul’s day were Jews and Gentiles, called into “one body,” whose expectation is in the heavenly realm (1 Thessalonians 4:13). There is a difference.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH (16:21)

Jesus begins to show His disciples:

- He must be coming to Jerusalem
- To be suffering much from the elders, chief priests, scribes
- He must be killed
- On the third day to be roused

Peter objects, “This shall not be.” Jesus replies to Peter, “Go away behind Me, satan! ... you are not disposed to that which is of God, but that which is of men.”

Jesus has told His disciples of the plan of God. Peter challenges God’s plan, substituting his own plan that seems right to him.

THE COST OF FOLLOWING (16:24)

If anyone wants to come after Me:

- Let him renounce himself
- Pick up his cross
- Follow Me

SAVING/DESTROYING ONE’S SOUL (16:25)

Whoever is wanting to save his soul, shall be destroying it.

Whoever destroys his soul on My account shall be finding it.

What will it benefit a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?

SAVING/DESTROYING ONE’S SOUL

See the note following Chapter 10.

To save one’s soul in this eon, by denying Christ, is to give up life in the eon to come.

To destroy one’s soul in this eon, by standing with Christ even unto death, is to gain life in the eon to come.

At the end of this eon, those who are in Christ will be raised and will enjoy life in the eon to come (1 Thessalonians 4:13ff). Those not in Christ will not be raised until the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11) and will then experience the second death.

SON OF MAN WILL COME IN GLORY (16:27)

For the Son of Mankind is:

- About to be coming in the glory of His Father,
- With His messengers,
- And then He will be paying each in accord with his practice.

Some of those standing here under no circumstances should be tasting death till they should be perceiving the Son of Mankind coming in His kingdom.

THE “TRANSFIGURATION” (17:1)

This fulfills the words of Jesus in 16:28 – Some have now seen Him coming in His kingdom in this vision.

Jesus instructs them to tell no one of “the vision” until the Son of Mankind is roused from the dead.

The disciples ask why the scribes say that Elijah must come first?

Jesus replies:

- Elijah is coming and will be restoring all.
- Elijah came already, and they did not recognize him, and they do to him whatever they will.
- Thus the Son of Man also is about to suffer by them.

The disciples understood that Jesus was referring to John the Baptist.

HEALING OF EPILEPTIC BOY (17:14)

The disciples could not cure the boy “because of their scant faith.” If they had faith as a kernel of mustard, they would tell a mountain to move, and it would. “Nothing will be impossible for you.”

This authority had been given to the disciples as the Kingdom was being proclaimed. The Kingdom is now delayed. The “ecclesia” was being called out and into the Kingdom. Today the “ecclesia” is being called out to be a part of the Body of Christ. We cannot assume the ability to move mountains is given to us in the present age.

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH (17:22)

JESUS PAYS THE TAX (17:24)

“The sons are free from the tax, but lest we should be snaring them...” Jesus is not technically required to pay the tax, but to avoid creating obstacles for others He pays nonetheless.

WHO IS GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM? (18:1)

Cannot **ENTER** kingdom unless one becomes as a little child.
He who **humbles** self as a little child; he is greatest in kingdom.
Whoever receives one such little child in My name, receives Me.

By using children as the example, Jesus is stressing the need for **humility** to enter the Kingdom.

SNARES/CAUSING OTHERS TO SIN (18:6)

Whoever snares one believing in Me; better to be drowned.
Woe to the world because of snares. It is necessary that snares come.
Woe to that man thru whom the snare is coming. To remove a snaring member is better than being cast into fire eonian (Gehenna).

The Kingdom rules are very strictly enforced. Better to take extreme measures to remove sin, than to forfeit one’s life and be cast into Gehenna.

PARABLE OF LOST SHEEP (18:10)

If a man has 100 sheep but one is led astray, he will leave the 99 to seek the one. If he finds it he will rejoice over it, rather than over the 99. Not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish.

This expresses the heart of the Father ... to seek the one who is straying. Will God’s heart change? Will He be satisfied to give up on the many who are led astray and who are tormented “endlessly” in a fiery hell?

WHEN A BROTHER SINS AGAINST YOU (18:15)

If a brother is sinning:

- Expose him between you and him alone
- If he does not hear, take 1-2 others with you
- If he disobeys them, tell it to the ecclesia
- If he disobeys the ecclesia, consider him as one of the nations

As is the case with much we have read in Matthew, this would seem to be a good principle for handling problems within the ecclesia. But as for a “rule” for “church conduct” this comes from a different age, and the ecclesia is a different group than in the present age. Here the ecclesia is Jewish, and they are being gathered to the Kingdom upon the earth. Today the ecclesia is Gentile and Jew alike, being gathered into the Body of Christ, whose expectation is in “the heavenlies.”

These instructions are spoken specifically to the ecclesia of Jesus’ day. We cannot automatically carry over this “rule for church conduct” into the ecclesia of the present day.

AUTHORITY GRANTED TO DISCIPLES (18:18)

Those things bound in heaven you should be binding on the earth.
Those things loose in the heavens you shall be loosing on the earth.

“If ever two of you should be agreeing on the earth concerning any matter, whatsoever it is they should be requesting shall be coming to them from My Father Who is in the heavens. For where two or three are, gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”

We hear this passage quoted often today, but it pertains to the Kingdom age. Experience should show us that there are times where two or three agree and the matter does not come to pass.

In the Kingdom age, where two or three are gathered Christ is in their midst. In the present age, where one is gathered he has the holy spirit of God “in his midst.” As wonderful as the words sound ... “where two or three are gathered” ... we have something even better in this present age!

PARDON YOUR BROTHER 70x7 (18:21)

Again, would a God who stresses the need for repeated forgiveness come to the point where He, Himself, will not forgive those being tormented “endlessly” in hell?

PARABLE OF UNMERCIFUL SERVANT (18:23)

The kingdom is like a king wanting to settle accounts with his slaves.

The king has compassion and remits his loan. The slave goes to a fellow slave and demands payment. The king finds out and has the slave he had forgiven tormented until he pays everything owed. “Was it not binding on you to be merciful to your fellow slave as I am merciful to you?”

"Thus shall My heavenly Father also be doing to you, if each one should not be pardoning his brother, from your hearts."

OBSERVING THINGS THAT ARE DIFFERENT

Here we see that pardon can be retracted. Pardon is contingent upon the recipient granting pardon to others.

Pardon is something a King (executive) has the authority to grant. Justification, which Paul talks about, is something a Judge (judicial) has the authority to grant.

Pardon is taking someone who is found guilty, and suspending the sentence. Justification is finding someone innocent of the charges.

There is a big difference.

In the Kingdom age, here in Matthew, we see pardon being offered. We do not hear Paul offering pardon, but justification.

Let us pay close attention to these details, and not assume things like “pardon” and “justification” are the same thing.

Let us pay similar attention to things like:

- Born again vs. New creation
- Kingdom of God vs. The Heavens
- Evangel of the kingdom vs. Evangel of grace

MANY FOLLOW & ARE HEALED (19:1)**DIVORCE NOT PERMITTED (19:3)**

Jesus: What God yokes together let not man be separating.

Pharisees: Why did Moses direct to give a scroll of divorce?

Jesus: Moses permits due to hardheartedness. Not so from beginning.

“Whoever should be dismissing his wife (not for prostitution) and should be marrying another, is committing adultery, and he who marries her who has been dismissed, is committing adultery.”

God hates divorce. He prohibits divorce in the Law. But the Law cannot save, it can only show man his inabilities and imperfection. We should not, in the current age, use this section to “enforce” the Law pertaining to divorce, but we should still see the heart of God that hates divorce.

THEN ISN'T CELIBACY BETTER? (19:10)

Disciples: "Then it is not expedient to marry."

Jesus: "Not all are containing this saying, but those to whom it has been given. The one able to contain it, let him contain it."

Not all have the ability to remain celibate. Experience shows this to be the case, even as we observe the many problems within the “priesthood” of the Roman Catholic Church.

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME (19:13)

“For of such is the kingdom of the heavens.”

RICH YOUNG MAN (19:16)

"Teacher, what good shall I be doing that I should be having life eonian?"

- Keep the precepts
- No murder
- No adultery
- No stealing
- No false testimony
- Honor father and mother
- Love associate as self

"These all I maintain. In what am I still deficient?"

Jesus: If you are wanting to be perfect:

- Sell your possessions, and give to the poor
- You will be having treasure in the heavens
- Follow Me

Hearing this, the youth came away sorrowing, for he had many acquisitions.

To have “life eonian” (v 16), or life in the age to come, is here paralleled with “being perfect” (v 21). Throughout Matthew, entering the Kingdom (or gaining life in the eon to come) is dependent upon works (obedience).

HARD FOR RICH TO ENTER KINGDOM (19:23)

Easier for a camel to be entering through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be entering into the kingdom of God.

"Who, consequently, can be saved?" (In other words, if it is up to man to meet the requirements of the Law, who can be saved?)

Jesus: "With men this is impossible, yet with God all is possible."

This takes the focus away from the efforts of men, which are insufficient. It places the focus upon the works of God, with Whom all things are possible.

BEING SAVED

"Salvation" as used throughout God's Word does not always mean the same thing.

Here in the Kingdom age it appears that being "saved" meant entering the kingdom. For us today being saved means having an expectation in the heavenlies. In the Old Testament being saved often meant being rescued from one's enemies.

Let us pay close attention when "salvation" or "being saved" is referenced, to see what the subject is being saved from, and how he is being saved (works, obedience, faith, etc).

REWARDS FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOW (19:27)

You who follow Me, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne:

- You shall sit on twelve thrones
- Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Everyone who leaves houses, family, fields on account of My name:

- A hundred-fold shall be getting,
- And shall be enjoying the allotment of life eonian.

Yet many of the first shall be last, and the last first.

This is fulfilled in Revelation. Note that in Revelation we see a very "Jewish" character. Paul's "joint heirs" is not referred to, but the Kingdom with preference given to the Jews. This makes sense. The Kingdom that was being introduced by Jesus, and then by Peter, is postponed when the Jews continually reject the Kingdom message. During the time the Kingdom agenda is set aside, Paul introduces a new thing ... the Body of Christ comprised of Gentile and Jew alike, with neither having superiority (Ephesians 2:11). But in the end times, which we see in Revelation, the Kingdom agenda returns as God completes His work within the ages. In the final eon we see the righteous Jews upon the earth, with Christ reigning upon the throne. The Body of Christ is in the heavenly realms, not upon the earth. (Ephesians 2:6, 2 Timothy 2:12, 2 Timothy 4:18, 1 Corinthians 6:3)

PARABLE OF WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD (20:1)

Those coming in eleventh hour received same pay as those who came first.

- Is it not allowed me to do what I want with that which is mine?
- Thus shall the last be first, and the first last.

JESUS AGAIN PREDICTS HIS DEATH (20:17)**REQUEST FROM MOTHER OF ZEBEDEE'S SONS (20:20)**

“To be seated at My right and My left is not Mine to give.”

He who wants to become great; let him be your servant. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve; to give His soul a ransom for many.

TWO BLIND MEN HEALED (20:29)

Leaving Jericho, a vast throng follows Jesus. Jesus, having compassion, **restores sight to two blind men.** They follow Jesus.

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY (21:1)

To fulfill that which is declared through the prophet: “Your King is coming to you, meek and mounted on an ass.”

The throngs preceding and following Him cried, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be He Who is coming in the name of the Lord!”

The throngs: "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

MONEY CHANGERS IN THE TEMPLE (21:12)

"It is written, `My house a house of prayer shall be called,' yet you are making it a burglars' cave."

The blind and lame came to Him in the sanctuary, and **He cures them.**

Chief priests and scribes see the marvels, hear the throng, and resent it.

FIG TREE WITHERS (21:18)

"No longer, by any means, may fruit be coming of you for the eon." And withered instantly is the fig tree. The disciples marvel at how instantly the tree withered.

- If you should be having faith and not be doubting...
- Whatever you should be requesting in prayer, believing, you shall be getting.

This is a word spoken to the disciples. Can we legitimately claim that this promise pertains to us today?

JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED (21:23)

Chief priests and elders ask Jesus by what authority He acts. Jesus refuses to tell them.

PARABLE OF TWO SONS & THE VINEYARD (21:28)

A man asks his two children to work in his vineyard.

- One says no; but later regrets and goes to work
- One says yes; but he does not go

The tax collectors and prostitutes precede you into the kingdom.

- You did not believe John
- The tax collectors and prostitutes believe him
- You do not even regret subsequently, to believe him

Jesus does not say the leaders will **never** get into the Kingdom, but that others will **precede** them.

PARABLE OF WICKED VINEDRESSERS (21:33)

A man plants a vineyard and travels, leasing it to farmers.

- He sends his slaves to get his fruit; the farmers kill one
- More slaves sent; they drive them away
- He sends his son; they kill him to get his allotment

“Did you never read in the scriptures:

- The stone rejected by the builders
- This came to be the head of the corner”

“The kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation producing its fruits.”

This prophesies the setting aside of Israel, with the evangel going to the Gentile nations thru Paul. But the Kingdom is not **permanently** taken from Israel, as we see from Paul’s words in Romans 11:25, and in the Kingdom that eventually comes in Revelation which is most clearly Jewish in character.

JEWISH LEADERS FEAR THE THROGS (21:45)

Chief priests and Pharisees know He is talking about them. They seek to hold Him, but they fear the throngs (who hold Jesus as a prophet).

PARABLE OF WEDDING BANQUET (22:1)

The kingdom of the heavens is like a king preparing for his son’s wedding.

- He sends his slaves to the invited guests; they won’t come
- He sends other slaves; they don’t care
- Some slaves are killed
- King is angry; sends troops
- Murderers destroyed, city burned
- Those invited not worthy. Call whoever you find.
- Slaves gathered all they found, wicked and good
- King notices a man without wedding apparel
- Bind his feet and hands; cast him into outer darkness

Many are the called, yet few are the chosen. Note that all are called into the Kingdom, whereupon the King judges.

PAYING TAXES TO CAESAR (22:15)

Pharisees consult, planning to trap Jesus by a word.

Is it allowed to pay poll tax to Caesar?

- Pay what belongs to Caesar, to Caesar
- Pay what belongs to God, to God

MARRIAGE AT THE RESURRECTION (22:23)

Sadducees ask Jesus about husbands/wives in the resurrection

- You are deceived, not being acquainted with the scriptures, nor yet with the power of God.
- In the resurrection they are not marrying; as messengers of God in heaven.

THE RESURRECTION

Some have their destiny in the coming age (eon) in the earthly Kingdom. This includes the many righteous Jews in the OT times, the twelve apostles, and those hearing the “circumcision evangel” (evangel of the kingdom) when it was proclaimed. They look to the resurrection when they will take their place within the Kingdom of Heaven when it comes upon the earth.

Also included within the earthly Kingdom will be those found righteous upon the earth, and still living when the Lord returns to reign.

But some have their destiny in the age to come, not upon the earth but in the heavenlies (1 Thessalonians 4). Paul tells of a secret that had been hid in ages past. He tells of the formation of the Body of Christ, with Jews and Gentiles as joint heirs and of equal status. This is the evangel to be proclaimed today; not the Circumcision (Kingdom) evangel which has been temporarily set aside, but the Uncircumcision evangel which proclaims the grace of God, and where those believing have a destiny not upon the earth but in the heavenlies.

Let us take great care to see differences as they are found within the Word of God, so we do not mix together things that are different!

GREATEST COMMANDMENT (22:34)

A Pharisee asks Jesus, “What is the great precept in the law?”

- You shall be loving the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole comprehension. This is the great and foremost precept.
- The second is like it: You shall be loving your associate as yourself.

On these two precepts is hanging the whole law and the prophets.

In other words, the purpose of the Law is **LOVE** for God and for others.

WHOSE SON IS THE CHRIST? (22:41)

Jesus to Pharisees: “Whose Son is the Christ?”

Pharisees: “David’s.”

Jesus: How then is David calling Him Lord?

None could answer Jesus.

None dared from that day to inquire of Him any longer.

WOE TO THE JEWISH LEADERS (23:1)

Jesus: On Moses’ seat are seated the scribes and Pharisees

- Do as they say to you
- Do not do according to their acts

The Scribes and Pharisees:

- Are placing heavy loads on men’s shoulders
- Work to be noticed by men
- Take the first reclining place at dinners
- Take the front seats in the synagogues
- Are called “Rabbi” by men

You may not be called Rabbi, Father, Preceptor

- One teacher, and you are all brethren
- One Father, the heavenly
- One Preceptor, the Christ

The greatest among you shall be your servant

- Anyone exalting himself will be humbled
- Anyone humbling himself will be exalted

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees; hypocrites!

- **Locking the kingdom** of the heavens in front of men
- Not entering; nor letting those entering to enter
- Making proselytes who become a son of Gehenna
- Blind guides
- Taking tithes; leaving the weightier matters of the law (Judging, mercy, faith)
- Cleansing outside of cup and plate; not inside
- Like whitewashed sepulchers (Beautiful outside, unclean inside)
- Sons of those who murder the prophets
- Serpents; progeny of vipers. How can you flee from the judging of Gehenna?
- You kill, crucify, scourge, persecute prophets and wise men
- On you shall come all the just blood shed on the earth
- All these things will be arriving on this generation

JESUS LAMENTS OVER JERUSALEM (23:37)

How many times do I want to assemble your children—and you will not. You will not be seeing Me till you should be saying, “Blessed is He Who is coming in the name of the Lord!”

JESUS PREDICTS DESTRUCTION OF TEMPLE (24:1)

“OLIVET DISCOURSE” (24:3)

Disciples: What is the sign of Thy presence and the conclusion of the eon?

- Don't be deceived; many will come saying 'I am the Christ'
- You shall be about to be hearing battles, and tidings of battles
- Roused shall be nation against nation, kingdom against kingdom
- Famines and quakes
- All these are the beginning of pangs

- Then shall they be giving you up to affliction
- Many shall be snared; giving one another up
- Many false prophets shall be roused, shall be deceiving many
- Growing lawlessness; the love of many will be cooling

Yet he who endures to the consummation, he shall be saved.

- This evangel of the kingdom shall be heralded in the whole earth; as a testimony to all the nations

Then the consummation shall be arriving.

GREAT COMMISSION FULFILLED?

Here, in the end times, we see the evangel of the Kingdom proclaimed in the whole earth. This seems to be the fulfillment of “The Great Commission” (Matthew 28:18).

But today is not the time to proclaim the “evangel of the Kingdom.” This was the evangel proclaimed by Jesus, and even by Peter in Acts, but today the “evangel of the Kingdom” has been temporarily set aside, and we are to proclaim the evangel God has given us for this age ... the evangel of the uncircumcision ... the evangel of grace. We have absolutely no authority or commission to proclaim the “evangel of the kingdom” today!

GREAT TRIBULATION (24:15)

When you see the abomination of desolation, declared through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (Daniel 11:31; 12:11)

- Flee!

- A great affliction, unlike any occurring before
- Unless the days were discounted, no flesh at all would be saved
- Because of the chosen, those days will be discounted
- If any says: “Here is the Christ,” do not believe him
- His presence will be as lightning from east to west
- False christs/false prophets; great signs and miracles to deceive

COMING OF THE SON OF MAN (24:29)

After sun and moon darkened; stars falling,

- The powers of the heavens will be shaken
- Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven
- All the tribes shall grieve (“tribes” = the Jews)
- They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds
- He will be dispatching His messengers with loud trumpet
- They will assemble from the extremities of the heavens

PARABLE OF FIG TREE (24:32)

When the bough becomes tender and the leaves sprout, summer is near. When you see all these things; He is near.

“By no means may this generation be passing by till all these things should be occurring.”

NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR (24:36)

Concerning that day and hour no one is aware

- Not the messengers, nor the Son; only the Father

As the days of Noah, thus shall be the presence of the Son of Mankind.

- Eating, drinking, marrying; until Noah entered the ark.
- They did not know until the deluge came
- Two in the field; one taken and one left

Be watching, then, for you are not aware on what day your Lord is coming. In an hour you are not supposing, the Son of Man is coming.

PARABLE OF FAITHFUL/EVIL SERVANTS (24:45)

Happy is the slave found faithful when his lord returns.

- Over all his possessions will he be placing him.

If evil slave thinks the lord will delay, mistreats slaves...

- Lord will return when he knows not
- He will be appointed with the hypocrites
- Lamentation and gnashing of teeth

Here the message seems to be: “Be watchful.”

PARABLE OF WISE/FOOLISH VIRGINS (25:1)

Kingdom of the heavens like ten virgins coming to meet bridegroom.

- 5 stupid get torches, but no oil with them
- 5 prudent get oil with the torches

When clamor occurs, those without oil go out to buy oil.

- Those ready enter with the bridegroom; door is locked
- Others come: “I am not acquainted with you”

Watch, for you are not aware of the day, neither the hour. Here the message seems to be: “Be watchful.”

This is not “the rapture” from 1 Thessalonians 4, where Christ “takes up” the Body of Christ. Here in Matthew we read of Christ’s physical return to the earth, gathering and judging and establishing His Kingdom upon the earth.

PARABLE OF TALENTS (25:14)

“It was binding on you to be depositing my silver with the bankers, and on coming, I should recover what is mine together with interest.”

“To everyone who has shall be given, and he shall have a superfluity,
Yet from the one who has not, that also which he has shall be taken away.”

- The useless slave cast out into outer darkness
- Lamentation and gnashing of teeth

Here the message seems to be: “Be good and faithful stewards until He returns.”

SHEEP & GOATS (25:31)

When the Son of Mankind may be coming in His glory:

- He will be seated on the throne of His glory
- All nations will be gathered in front of Him
- He will sever the sheep from the kids

Sheep: Enjoy the allotment of the kingdom

- As you do it to one of the least of My brethren, you do it to Me
- These (the just) come away into **life eonian**

Kids: Go from Me, you cursed, into the fire eonian, made ready for the Adversary and his messengers.

- As you do it not to one of the least, you do it not to Me
- These shall come away into **chastening eonian**

SHEEP & GOATS

Note that this is a judgment based on works, not faith. No indication is given that this refers to the resurrection in any way. The nations which are upon the earth are gathered by the Son of Man for judgment, and they are judged based on how they treated God’s chosen people (the Jews).

Also note that the reward (life) and the penalty (chastening) are not “endless,” but “eonian.” The word here translated chastening is “kolasis” and it means in all instances a “chastening” for the good of the subject, as a tree is pruned for example. How can it be for the good of the subject if the chastening goes on endlessly? Further, by examining all instances where the word “aion” is used it is clear to see that it cannot possibly, in many cases, carry a meaning of “endless.”

PLOT AGAINST JESUS (26:1)

Jesus tells disciples Passover is coming after two days, and the Son of Mankind is being given up to be crucified.

Chief priests and elders gather with chief priest (Caiaphas)

- They plan to lay hold of Jesus and kill Him
- Not in the festival, lest a tumult occur among the people

JESUS ANOINTED (26:6)

Disciples: “Why this destruction? Could be given to the poor.”

- She works an ideal work for Me
- You always have the poor, yet Me you have not always
- She does it for My burial

JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS (26:14)

Chief priests give him thirty pieces of silver.

Thenceforth he sought an opportunity that he may be giving Him up.

PASSOVER/LORD’S SUPPER (26:17)

The Son of Mankind is going away, as it is written concerning Him.

- Yet woe to that man thru whom the Son of Man is given up!
- Ideal were it for Him if that man were not born!

Jesus, takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, gives it to the disciples:

- Take, eat. This is My body"

And taking the cup and giving thanks, He gives it to them:

- Drink of it all, for this is My blood of the new covenant that is shed for many for the pardon of sins.
- I will not drink again till I drink it with you in the kingdom

JESUS PREDICTS PETER’S DENIAL (26:31)

Jesus: "All of you shall be snared in Me in this night

- It is written, I shall be smiting the shepherd, and scattered shall be the sheep of the flock.

After My rousing I shall be preceding you into Galilee.

Peter: I will never be snared!

- Before a cock crows, thrice will you renounce Me
- Peter: I will under no circumstances renounce Thee
- Likewise said all the disciples also.

GETHSAMANE (26:36)

He begins to be sorrowful and depressed.

- Sorrow-stricken is My soul to death.
- Remain here and watch with Me.

He falls on His face, praying:

- My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass by from Me.
- However, not as I will, but as Thou!

He finds the disciples drowsing.

- You are not strong enough to watch one hour with Me?
- Watch and pray, lest you may be entering into trial.
- The spirit, indeed, is eager; yet the flesh is infirm.

A second time, He prays:

- My Father, if this cannot pass by from Me if I should not drink it, let Thy will be done!

Again He found them drowsing

He prays a third time, saying the same word.

Again He is coming to the disciples:

- Are you drowsing furthermore and resting?
- Lo! near is the hour, and the Son of Mankind is being given up into the hands of sinners

JESUS ARRESTED (26:47)

Judas came, with a vast throng with swords and cudgels

- They laid hands on Jesus and hold Him.
- One with Jesus cuts off the ear of the chief priest's slave.
- Jesus: All those taking the sword, by the sword will perish.
- Do you suppose I cannot entreat My Father and have Him send twelve legions of messengers?
- How, then, may the scriptures be fulfilled; thus it must occur

Then all His disciples, leaving Him, fled.

The miracles have ceased. Jesus points out that He could summon legions of messengers, but He will call for no miracle here. It is the will of the Father that these things take place.

BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN (26:57)

They lead Jesus away to Caiaphas, the chief priest

- The scribes and the elders were gathered.
- Peter followed from afar, entering the chief priest's courtyard

They sought false testimony, to put Jesus to death; couldn't find any.

- One reported that Jesus said He was able to demolish the temple and rebuild it in three days.
- Jesus was silent

Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.

- Jesus: "You say it."
- "You shall be seeing the Son of Mankind sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven."
- Chief priest: "He blasphemes!"
- "Liable to death is he."

- They spit in His face and buffet Him.

PETER DISOWNS JESUS (26:69)

Peter is reminded of the declaration of Jesus. He laments bitterly.

JESUS LED TO PILATE (27:1)

Chief priests and elders of the people consult to put Him to death. They take Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

JUDAS HANGS HIMSELF (27:3)

Judas, perceiving He was condemned, regretting,

- Turns back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests
- "I sinned in giving up innocent blood."

Judas strangles himself.

JESUS BEFORE PILATE (27:11)

Governor: "You are the king of the Jews?"

Jesus: "You are saying it."

At being accused by chief priests and elders, He answers nothing.

BAR-ABBAS RELEASED (27:15)

Chief priests and elders persuade the throngs to request release of Bar-Abbas, yet to be destroying Jesus.

Pilate: "What, then, shall I be doing with Jesus, who is termed Christ?" They are all saying: "Let him be crucified!"

Pilate: "Innocent am I of the blood of this just man.:"

Entire people said: "His blood be on us and on our children!"

Whipping Jesus, he gives Him over that He may be crucified.

JESUS MOCKED BY SOLDIERS (27:27)

Soldiers of the governor mock Him; led Him away to crucify.

CRUCIFIXION (27:32)

They crucify Him at "Golgotha," which is termed "Skull's Place."

They write above His head: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Crucified together with Him two robbers.

Those going by blasphemed Him

- You who are demolishing the temple and building it in three days, save yourself!
- If you are the Son of God, descend from the cross!
- If he is king of Israel, let him descend now from the cross, and we will believe on him!

- The robbers also reproached Him.

DEATH OF JESUS (27:45)

"Eloi! Eloi! Lema sabachthani?" (My God! My God! Why didst Thou forsake Me?)

One pierced His side with a lance head; out came water and blood.

Jesus, crying with a loud voice, lets out the spirit.

- The curtain of the temple is rent in two
- The earth quaked, and the rocks are rent
- The tombs were opened.
- Many bodies of the reposing saints were roused
- Centurion and those with him: "Truly this was God's Son."

Many women were there also, beholding from afar (Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, the mother of the sons of Zebedee).

BURIAL OF JESUS (27:57)

Joseph from Arimathea (a rich man; a disciple of Jesus) asks Pilate for the body of Jesus. He places the body in his new tomb with a large stone at the door. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sat in front of the tomb.

GUARD AT THE TOMB (27:62)

Chief priests and Pharisees go to Pilate. Remembering that Jesus said he would be roused after three days, they asked that the sepulcher be secured until the third day, lest the body be stolen, with the disciples telling the people He was roused. Pilate assigns a detail to secure the tomb.

RESURRECTION (28:1)

At the lighting up into one of the sabbaths

- Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the sepulcher
- A great quake occurred
- A messenger of the Lord from heaven rolls away the stone
- From fear the keepers quaked and became as the dead
- Messenger to the women: He is not here; He was roused
- Go, tell His disciples that He was roused from the dead
- He is preceding you into Galilee; there you will see Him
- As they went, Jesus meets them
- They hold His feet and worship Him
- Jesus: Fear not! Go, tell My brethren to come into Galilee, and there they shall see Me

JEWISH LEADERS BRIBE SOLDIERS (28:11)

Some of the detail report to the chief priests all that is occurring. They give a considerable sum of silver to the soldiers, telling them to say that His disciples stole the body as they slept.

And this word is blazed abroad by the Jews unto today.

“THE GREAT COMMISSION” (28:16)

The eleven disciples went into Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus arranges with them.

Jesus: Given to Me was all authority in heaven and on the earth.

- Going, then, disciple all the nations,
- Baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, holy spirit
- Teaching them to be keeping all, whatever I direct you.
- I am with you all the days till the conclusion of the eon!

THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Hebrew verb distinguishes between completeness and incompleteness, rather than time. “Given to Me was all authority” in verse 18 appears to be in past tense, but this statement is not yet realized. In Revelation 11:15 when the seventh trumpet sounds we read, “The kingdom of this world became our Lord’s and His Christ’s, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons.”

If the disciples thought “The Great Commission” was to be carried out right away, they certainly did not take action accordingly. They did not go to the nations at any time during their ministries.

Could it be that they understood it was not yet time to “disciple all the nations,” but that this would occur once the kingdom had come upon the earth (which we see happen in Revelation)? This would be consistent with Jesus’ description of the end times (Matthew 24:14) when He says, “And heralded shall be this evangel of the kingdom in the whole inhabited earth for a testimony to all the nations, and then the consummation shall be arriving.”

AS MATTHEW ENDS

The Kingdom was introduced by the Son of God, but it was rejected by the sheep of Israel.

Still, the evangel remained the same in the book of Acts, when Peter (who was given the keys to the kingdom) proclaims the same evangel. Christ has been crucified, and resurrected, but in the book of Acts it is still the Kingdom to come upon the earth that is being proclaimed, and it is proclaimed exclusively to the Jews, as was the case through Matthew. Salvation, or life in the eon to come, is presented as life in the kingdom of the heavens, when it comes upon the earth with Christ upon the throne.

But again throughout Acts we see the evangel of the Kingdom rejected.

When the Kingdom is **finally** rejected at the end of Acts, the Jews (and the kingdom evangel) are set aside for a season.

The Uncircumcision evangel is now declared to Jew and Gentile alike.

But have the Jews lost their chance? Has “The Church” taken the place of the Jews? Paul tells us that Israel has been calloused “**until** the complement of the nations may be entering,” after which time “all Israel shall be saved.” (Romans 11:25)

Matthew tells us of a time when the Kingdom to come upon the earth was proclaimed to the Jews. Acts continues that message, even after the death and resurrection of Christ. As Acts ends Paul tells us that a new evangel is going out to Jew and Gentile alike. But when this age has ended, the kingdom evangel will once again be proclaimed upon the earth, and we see this happening in Revelation.

A SUMMARY OF MATTHEW

- Jesus is born and meets the prophetic requirements to be Messiah (1)
- Kingdom evangel (“Repent, for the kingdom is near”) is proclaimed to the Jews by John the Baptist (3)
- Jesus is tried by the Adversary and overcomes temptation (4)
- Kingdom evangel is proclaimed to the Jews by Jesus ... teaching, heralding, healing (4)
- Jesus teaches rules relating to the Kingdom (5)
- Miracles accompany the Kingdom evangel (8)
- Jesus is criticized for the first time--eating with sinners (9)
- Jesus gives authority to the Twelve to proclaim the Kingdom evangel to the Jews (10)
- Pharisees plot to kill Jesus (12)
- Jesus “locks” the Kingdom using words from Isaiah, and begins to speak to the masses only using parables (13)
- Jesus tells Peter He will be giving him “the keys of the kingdom” (16)
- Jesus predicts His death and resurrection (16)
- Jesus continues to teach concerning the Kingdom, the cost of following, and life in the “ecclesia” (16)
- In response to the disciples’ question, “Who can be saved?” Jesus responds, “With God all is possible” (19)
- Woe to the Jewish leaders (23)
- Jesus talks about the end (consummation) of the eon (24)
- Jesus is betrayed, arrested, crucified (26,27)
- Resurrection of Jesus (28)
- “The Great Commission” given by Jesus (28) – When Jews disciple the nations during Tribulation period (see Revelation)