

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

New Testament Interpretation – Gospels

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW [LEVI]

A. INTRODUCTION:

1. Who wrote it? – No good reason to discount the traditional belief that the apostle Matthew [Levi the tax collector] wrote it. It has a particularly Jewish focused approach, which supports Matthew/Levi as being one of the twelve Jewish disciples/apostles. Mathew tends to stress the things that would be important to Jews as they come to terms with Jesus as their Messiah... this is the overwhelming theme of the book – “Hear O Israel, your Lord has come!”
2. Who are the readers?
 - a. Probably Jews throughout Palestine & Jerusalem.
 - i. Matthew and Peter were the apostles to the Jews, when these Jews responded to Jesus as Savior and Lord, they were called Messianic Jews.
 - ii. Paul was apostle to Gentiles, who when they responded were known as Pagan converts.
 - iii. Other groups in the Judea-Christian world were Judaizers – who were Jews that taught to be Christian you had to have the Law of Moses and Christ; Gentiles who were interested or openly following Jewish norms.
 - b. People in targeted synagogues included true believers as well as marginalized followers.
 - i. Cannot see into the heart of a person to know if they are truly faithful.
 - ii. Sheep and goats were present together in the church through the ages.
 - c. Readers were expected to be the church leaders.
 - i. Leaders would pass the information along to the flock.
 - ii. Hearers would meditate on the letters throughout the week.
 - iii. Wasn't intended for believers to own their own copy.
 - d. Hearers listened to the whole message read to them.
 - i. We don't have the words of Jesus, only those recorded by Matthew and the other gospel writers relating what Jesus said and did.
 - ii. The message would be passed along from the elders to the young of the church.
3. When was it written? Although there is no clear evidence or agreement, these Gospels are generally dated in ranges and most likely in this order:
 - a. The Gospel of Mark is believed to have been written around 55 AD.
 - b. The Gospel of Mathew is believed to have been written somewhere between 58-62 AD.
 - c. The Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written around 59-62 AD.
 - d. The Gospel of John is believed to have been written somewhere between 75-85 AD.
4. What was Matthew's intended message? How do we get to the message? Genre, theme, and structure
 - a. Theme - The primary theme is about Jesus as King.
 - i. John the Baptist – came preaching ‘repent, because that the Kingdom is at hand’ it is near, proximal.
 - ii. Jesus in the beatitudes – Kingdom of God is revealed – the popular understanding of it was woefully flawed. Proper introduction is given.
 - iii. Fulfillment of the prophecy of a Davidic ancestor to rule Israel – Jesus is the Messiah/King.

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- iv. The announcement that ‘the King has come’ was understood by the Jews, though there was disagreement among them about it.
- v. Mathew was written for Christian Jews – this was not an evangelical work: evangelism was not the purpose.
- b. Purpose that Matthew is writing to proclaim:
 - i. The Messiah has come, but He was rejected and put to death by the Jewish establishment, but then He rose again.
 - ii. The world is now different, even though in outward form it has not changed – and we are now different people [new creations in the inner-man] even though life has not improved and in fact is getting worse [in the outer-man].
 - iii. It is a story of conflict between the kingdom of the world and its ruler [Satan], and the Kingdom of God and its Ruler [Jesus Messiah].
 - iv. It is a book of encouragement that as Jesus triumphed through the least likely of vehicles – death on the Cross, that His resurrection is the hope of all His believers and that eternity awaits the faithful.
 - v. Matthew’s audience had expected a rapid return of Jesus, as time went along they came to realize that it could be a painful long period of waiting. Matthew thus wanted to bolster the faith of his fellow believers.
 - vi. Matthew explained that Messiah’s coming has 2 parts, not the one we expected.
 - 1. 1st coming deal with sin – we are now spiritually joined to the Lord through His Spirit, and joined to each other with a common heritage and hope.
 - 2. 2nd coming is about setting things straight – the re-creation of the creation. Perfection is coming – expect it, wait for it anxiously. The material world is now the outer-man.
 - 3. We are now in an awkward time between comings – which we call the church age. We have Spiritual renewal now and the indwelling Spirit gives us the rights of children of the Kingdom of God as we await the renewal of the world.
- 5. Structure – Outline [macro analysis] – there is an inherent rhythm and structure to all Scripture, which provides shape and substance to what God wanted to communicate through the inspired author. We have previously noted in the study of Hermeneutics – the Art of Interpreting Scripture. In assessing the structure of Mathew, there are three approaches most Bible scholars have taken in gaining insight – 1)Geographic framework; 2)Christological development; 3)5 discourse development. Though the latter is the most obvious and intentional by the author, the other 2 bear mentioning.
 - a. Geographic Framework – this is related to the framework employed in Mark’s Gospel and presumes that Mathew used Mark’s material as a basis for developing his own message. There is strong evidence supporting Mark’s primacy. This approach follows the chronological development of Jesus’ ministry. The outline follows the geographic terrain and looks like this:
 - i. Prologue – Mat 1:1-2:23
 - ii. Preparation for ministry – Mat 3:1-4:11
 - iii. Ministry in Galilee – Mat 4:12-13:58
 - iv. Ministry in the North – Mat 14:1-16:12

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- v. Ministry moving toward Jerusalem – Mat 16:13-20:34
- vi. Ministry and confrontation in Jerusalem – Mat 21:1-25:46
- vii. Passion and Resurrection – Mat 26:1-28:30
- b. Christological Development – there is no question that Mathew makes the strong point that Jesus is the Messiah/King prophesied in the Old Testament. This outline looks like this:
 - i. The Person of Jesus Messiah – 1:1-4:16
 - ii. The Proclamation of Jesus Messiah – 4:17-16:20
 - iii. The Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Messiah – 16:21-28:20
- c. 5 Narrative/Discourse Structure – this is the most obvious literary structure by the author, and must be presumed the most compelling. Each narrative/discourse segment is ended by the statement “When Jesus had finished...” – 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1. This is an obvious clue left by the author. The result of the linking of narrative and discourse is a 5 “Books” outline often presumed to follow the 5 Books of the Pentateuch.
 - i. Book 1 – Introduction to Israel’s King & Gospel of the Kingdom – 1:1-7:29:
 - 1. Narrative 1 – Presentation of Messiah – 1:1-4:25
 - 2. Discourse 1 – Sermon on the Mount... the Law of the Kingdom – 5:1-7:29
 - 3. Transition – “When Jesus had finished...” 7:28
 - ii. Book 2 – Presentation of Messiah to Israel – 8:1-11:1
 - 1. Narrative 2 – Jesus’ authority proved – 8:1-9:38
 - 2. Discourse 2 – Commissioning of New Leadership – 10:1-42
 - 3. Transition – “When Jesus had finished...” Mat 11:1
 - iii. Book 3 – Reciprocal Rejection of Israel and Messiah 11:2-13:53
 - 1. Narrative 3 – Accusation & Rejection 11:2-12:50
 - 2. Discourse 3 – Parables of the Kingdom – 13:1-53
 - 3. Transition – “When Jesus had finished...” 13:53
 - iv. Book 4 – New Community of Faith – 13:54-18:35
 - 1. Narrative 4 – Old Community Ends – New Community Begins – 13:54-17:27
 - 2. Discourse 4 – Behavior Standards of New Community of God – 18:1-35
 - 3. Transition – “When Jesus had finished...” – 19:1
 - v. Book 5 – The Kingdom Of God Dawns – 19:2-28:20
 - 1. Narrative 5 – Kingdom lessons & rewards & conflict – 19:2-23:39
 - 2. Discourse 5 – “Olivet Discourse” – End Times – 24:1-25:46
 - 3. Transition – “When Jesus had finished...” 26:1
 - vi. Epilogue – Messiah’s Triumphant 1st Coming – 26:2- 28:20
 - 1. Preparation – 26:2-46
 - 2. Conviction – 26:47-26
 - 3. Execution – 27:27-66
 - 4. Resurrection – 28:1-15
 - 5. Great Commission & Promise – 28:16-20
- d. 7 Part Literary Plot Development
 - i. Prologue – 1:1-2:23
 - ii. Gospel of the Kingdom – 3:1-7:29
 - iii. Kingdom under Jesus Authority – 8:1-11:1

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- iv. Teaching and Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom amid Rising Opposition – 11:2-13:53
 - v. Progressive Polarization of the Kingdom and the world – 13:54-19:2
 - vi. Opposition and Eschatology... the Triumph of Grace – 19:3-26:5
 - vii. The Passion and Resurrection – 26:6-28:20
 - e. Chiastic Structure of the Third Discourse:
 - A. Jesus to the Crowds – 13:3b-33
 - 1. Parable of the Soils – 13:3b-9
 - 2. Interlude – 13:10-23
 - a. Understanding the Parables – 13:10-17
 - b. Interpreting the Parable of the Soils – 13:18-23
 - 3. Parable of the Weeds – 13:24-30
 - 4. Parable of the Mustard Seed – 13:24-30
 - 5. Parable of the Yeast – 13:33
 - X. Parables as Fulfillment of Prophecy – 13:34-35
 - X' Interpretation of the Parable of the Weeds – 13:36-43
 - B. Jesus to the Disciples – 13:44-52
 - 5' Parable of Hidden Treasure – 13:44
 - 4' Parable of the Pearl of Great Value – 13:45-46
 - 3' Parable of the Net – 13:47-48
 - 2' Interlude – 13:49-51
 - b' Interpreting the Parable of the Net – 13:49-50
 - a' Understanding the Parables – 13:51
 - 1. Parable of the Teacher of the Law – 13:52
6. Micro Structure – once you have completed the Macro evaluation and performed your “pre-interpretation” preparation, it is OK to delve into the details of the passage composition and word usages.
 - a. Interpretation Tips
 - i. Be submissive to the Spirit, and to the author. Search for their meaning... don't read into the text what you believe theologically, instead allow the text to inform your belief.
 - ii. Context is always where the meaning occurs, and this is found in the whole thought or idea (pericope).
 - iii. Significance of 14 generations listed at intro:
 - 1. Subtle reminder of the King theme.
 - 2. DaViD => 4+6+4 = 14 => perfection/Kingship
 - iv. Book is about conquering Satan – it is the follow through of God's curse of serpent.
 - v. Many elements are actually parodies:
 - 1. Jesus is the new and superior Moses – Gospel message is a blessing as grace leads to life while Mosaic Law leads to judgment and death.
 - 2. Similar images of Jesus to Moses:
 - a. On the mountain 40 days and nights
 - b. Blessing [Beatitudes] versus the Law

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- i. Present tense for 1st and last.
- ii. Future tense for middle.
- iii. Earthly/worldly versus spiritually/heavenly.
- iv. We are already a new creation now, Kingdom is occurring as it is being revealed.
- vi. The modern church does well with the part one of Messiah's Coming – we understand and accept our need for Grace; but we do very poorly in terms of part 2 of Messiah's Coming – obedience to the King and carrying out His Mission on earth. We need to long for His coming again, we need to say AMEN to John's conclusion in Revelation 'come Lord Jesus.'
- vii. Matthew is not predicting Rome being destroyed, or even Rome destroying Jerusalem, rather he is presenting the church in a global view – a global vision, not the localized vision prevalent of the Jewish world view.

B. DISCUSSION OF THE MEANING OF MATHEW:

B.1. OVERALL SHAPE OF THE TEXT:

1) Introduction to Israel's King – Chapters 1-7

- a. Chap 1-4 – Narrative #1: Historical Introduction to Israel's King
 - i. Abrahamic Covenant – eternal covenant of blessing focused on seed and land.
 - ii. Davidic Covenant – eternal covenant of Kingship – Messiah/salvation
 - iii. Jesus New Covenant – eternal covenant of the Messiah – based on His own Blood
 - iv. Message of Matthew is the one message we have – there is a King of this planet – “Repent for the Kingdom is at hand” [3:1 & 4:17] – John and Jesus preached the same message.
- b. Chap 5-7 – Discourse #1: Sermon on the Mount – call to Israel “here is your Messiah”
 - i. Jesus is not correcting the Mosaic covenant, and He is not just correcting the Jewish leaders mistaken understanding of Moses, rather Jesus is preaching a vastly superior message based on His own vastly superior righteousness.
 - ii. Jewish leader's righteousness was fatally flawed.
 - iii. Jewish leaders and the OC they followed was a worldly covenant; Jesus' NC is a Spiritual covenant – His call was to enter the spiritual life in Him.

2) Presentation of the King to Israel – 8-10

- a. Chap 8-9 – Narrative #2: Jesus has Power – He is backing up His words in 5-7
- b. Chap 10 – Discourse #2: Instruction and Commission of disciples for Kingdom ministry to Israel

3) Reciprocal rejection of Israel and her King 11-13

- a. Chap 11-12 – Narrative #3:
- b. Chap 13 – Discourse #3: Parables on the mysteries of the Kingdom
 - i. Jesus reveals His 2 fold ministry because of His rejection
 - ii. 1st coming restores spiritual relationship – He provides Kingdom thinking and deals with sin.
 - iii. 2nd coming restores the material world

4) The King creates a new Community of God – 14-18

- a. Chap 14-17 – Narrative #4: withdrawal from and condemnation of Israel's traditions

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- b. Chap 18 – Discourse #4: Greatness in the Kingdom is in childlike faith and humility
 - i. Those who disrupt the purity of the community must be removed – expulsion from the church.
 - ii. Lessons on forgiveness.
- 5) Readiness for the King's Victorious Return 19-25
 - a. Narrative #5: Chap 19-23
 - i. Israel's preparation for 2nd coming
 - ii. Conflict with failed leadership
 - iii. Condemnation of "This generation" – 11:16; 12:39; 16; 17; 23; 24
 - iv. Book of Numbers has 2 numbering of the people:
 - 1. Group 1 was the group that died in the wilderness.
 - 2. Group 2 entered into the promised land
 - v. Israel as a nation was chosen by God, but not all Israelites are approved of; some generations were bad and were rejected.
 - vi. Jesus gave harsh criticism of the failed Jewish leadership is not about the 1st century, rather it is about being part of group 1 – they will die in their sin.
 - vii. Jesus is predicting a redeemed generation when He returns – this is group 2.
 - viii. The "dry bones" in Ezekiel 37:4 refers to the dead nation of Israel. They will live again as a Christian nation.
 - b. Discourse #5: Chap 24-25 – "The Olivet Discourse" – the King's triumphant coming
 - i. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He triumphed over Satan.
 - ii. At the end of Jesus' ministry, He triumphed over death.
- 6) Climax of the King's 1st coming – chap 26-28
 - a. Preparations – 26:2-46
 - b. Conviction – 26:47-27:26
 - c. Execution – 27:27-66
 - d. Resurrection – 28:1-15
 - e. Great Commission – 28:18-20

B.2. 1st Discourse – the Sermon on the Mount

- 1) Beatify means to bless; hence the beatitudes are about blessings. There are not 3 't's in beatitudes, because it's not about attitude, but blessing.
- 2) Body of the message – 5:17-7:12 – an interesting *inclusio* of "Law and Prophets" [5:17 & 7:12] marks the sermon.
- 3) The author draws directly from the Jewish tradition from Deuteronomy where the people were divided into 2 groups, one that shouted blessings and the other group who countered curses for failure to be obedient to God. Blessings and curses was the norm for the Old Testament [Old Covenant].
- 4) At the outset of Jesus' ministry He preached only blessing... that had to have caught the attention of His Jewish hearers!
 - f. Introduction 4:23-25
 - i. Jesus was going throughout Galilee [23]
 - ii. The news about Him spread [24]
 - iii. Large crowds followed Him [25]

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- g. Main points – righteousness, scripture, Pharisees, performance
 - h. Direct comparison to scripture – from the ‘heart’ or ‘inner-man’ 5:21-48
 - i. Direct comparison to Pharisees – true piety & Heaven’s rewards 6:1-18
 - j. Direct attack on Pharisee’s values – spirit & eternal consequences 6:19-34
 - k. Direct attack on Pharisee’s theology & anthropology 7:1-11
 - i. Anthropology – other’s best interest should be the motivation for our faith, not our self-interest 7:1-6. The Jewish leaders were all too concerned for their high position and wealth, which they saw as validating their holiness. Unfortunately, many pastors fall into this trap.
 - ii. Theology – God is Good and Generous 7:7-11. He is also Just and Righteous.
 - iii. New covenant command it is that the best interests of others is what should motivate us, not our own self-interest. The “Golden Rule” of the Kingdom of God is about Spirit vs. material – love God, & others as yourself; don’t worry about what you have or the material things you can receive.
- 5) Conclusion is our personal identifying with the True King – 7:13-27
- a. Remnant mentality – 7:13f. God had always provided a remnant of faithful Jews who would carry forth God’s purpose on earth. These true believers were usually imbedded in the larger culture that failed to properly respond to God.
 - b. “Acid test” for leaders and would be Messiahs – 7:15-23
 - c. Parable – following Jesus is our 1st best goal, He is the True King and is ultimately determinative – 7:24-27.
 - d. While these discourses are shown in many Bibles in Red Letters indicating they are attributed to being Jesus actual words, the red lettering was done by modern scholars and editors and are not so listed in the original texts.
 - i. What we do know, is that these are the words of a churchman – Matthew was preaching Kingdom theology, which is the same theology that Jesus preached, and Paul preached.
 - ii. The fact that the book was written 30 years after the death of Jesus, when many of the eyewitnesses to these events were perishing and while Jesus was delayed in His returning, supports the mission of the text to the church.
 - iii. All of Scripture is written by humans who were divinely inspired to speak and write God’s Word for real people in a particular time and place, and for posterity where the Spirit would prophetically lead preacher/teachers to guide the new generations.
 - e. Sheep & Goats – Christian faith will be outlawed at the end of times, and Jews will especially be persecuted as during Hitler’s day and during the 1st century. This points to an increased polarization of God’s people and the world’s people. There have been times when God’s people have suffered and there are times now when that is happening. But the time that is coming which Jesus speaks of will be horribly worse. The use of sheep & goat imagery is clear to any who have raised either – there is a world of difference between the two animals character and nature, even though they appear closely related. So it will be with Christians and non-Christians – it is not just what we say that matters, but who we are in the inner-man. “New Creation in Christ” is not a hypothetical matter; it is a functional reality that shapes who we are, what we think, and what we do.

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- 6) OT Symbolism – notice how 5:1-2 set the stage for the Sermon on the Mount:
- a. ‘Sitting down’ was a Rabbinic teaching motif. Sitting conveys an unhurried and attentive position of listening to the Master. When the Master would speak, all others would be attentively silent.
 - b. ‘Mountain’ setting was a deliberate literary prophetic motif. Reminiscent of Micah 6:1-2 where the permanence and majesty of the Mountains are called as God’s witness. As well as Deuteronomy 28:1-68 in reciting blessings and curses from the mount to the people in the valley between.
- b) Old Covenant & New Covenant Influences the mountainside Jewish hearers would have noted:
- i. Moses – gave 3 curses for every blessing... this was not accidental, the OT was about condemning not freeing. Plus one generation could be blessed while the next could be cursed. The blessings and curses were temporal – they revolved around health and wealth.
 - ii. Jesus – gave only blessings, no curses. The blessings were eternal, rather than material/temporal. The poor loved this, they welcomed the opportunity to participate in such a kingdom, the power brokers of the day wanted their status quo, and they were more concerned about their own well being than God, His Truth, and His Kingdom. They wanted an immediate induction of the Kingdom and overthrow of the Romans, they wanted to be “The Chosen Race” again and reap the rewards of the Davidic monarchy.
 - iii. Note the dualities in the development of Messianic imagery – the NC is a way better covenant. We need to get our heads and hearts around this dramatic difference between Law and Grace.

<u>OC</u>	<u>NC</u>
Earth	Heaven
Material	Spiritual
Temporal	Eternal
- c) Note the Blessings in 5:3-12
- i. The 1st 8 are qualified by a ‘for’ and the 9th is qualified by 2 ‘fors’ in the NASB [NASB is considered by most scholars to be the most literal and reliable translation]. The 1st ‘for’ relates to the specific blessing, the 2nd ‘for’ relates to the historical heritage of Christians in the line of the Prophets of Jewish antiquity. The Jews in the era of OT prophecy didn’t want to hear God’s Truth that they preached, and refused to submit to God. Mathew is saying the same thing is happening in the New Covenant. Again the distinction is between sheep and goats – of believers and unbelievers.
 - ii. Sinai Covenant was all about material blessings and prosperity “in the land.” New Covenant is about turning the Jew’s view of the “blessings from God” on its head. Death is a part of life, mourning and grief happen. Today is not the day of material blessing, but there is a greater blessing revealed which will be consummated in the future. Note the use of ‘shall’ in each blessing – this is a forward-looking certainty that is different from the norm we live in now.

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- iii. The NC experience is spiritual now – with the best [life in the indwelling Spirit] was given first. It not only allows us to live with God given peace and grace on sin-cursed earth, but it also affirms that perfection is coming.
 - iv. The ‘are’ in the beatitudes are those believers who live in the world and who are living in and for the Kingdom of God, and awaiting “for” the 2nd coming of Jesus when His Kingdom will redeem all of creation... when things are returned to the ideal state God had originally created. But there is a caveat... life with God in Eden was the best place on earth, life with God in Eternity is the best place.
 - v. The purpose of this teaching helped believers deal with the question “if Jesus is the King, why are we being persecuted?” What is wrong? Because Jesus is the rejected King, and we are going through birth pains of the new reality to come. The conclusion is to be prepared – it will get worse.
- d) Note Salt & Light in 5:13-16
- i. Israel failed as salt & light – salt has a preservative and a flavoring affect on culture as well as on food. The illumination of light versus the blindness of the dark has a literal application both in the natural world as well as in the Spiritual world. Walking in the light is to be children of God... for God IS LIGHT. The Jews had been selected and conscripted to be a blessing to all the nations, but instead turned in upon themselves claiming the blessing God wanted to pour out on all humanity. Their failure and impunity caused them to turn away from God.
 - ii. The saints of the Kingdom are now the means to flavor and preserve the world. Our light will reveal the Father and the Son. As Christians, we should be content to be odd – we are different from the world for a reason. It is a great mistake to so closely relate to the fallen world order that we fail to allow God’s Light of Grace to shine upon humanity. In this shining there comes responsibility – will people accept it, or will they reject it? It will polarize humanity into sheep [the people of God] and goats [the people of Satan].
- e) Note the correction offered on the “law and the prophets” – the *inclusio* of 5:17 & 7:12. As discussed in Hermeneutics the Art of Interpretation, an *inclusio* is a term or phrase that begins and ends a key portion of the text. It calls attention to the text as being significant; this is a clue as to what was important to the author. They didn’t have upper case letters, or quotation marks or exclamation points, but they did have ways of getting our attention if we’re paying notice.
- i. Being ‘great in the Kingdom’ means they will be accepted by God.
 - ii. Being ‘least in the Kingdom’ means they are not accepted by God.
 - iii. In this text, Jesus is demonstrating that the law is not spiritual. The law deals only with your direct actions... what you actually did, and not with what your thought or intentions. Jesus raises the bar saying the inner life is more important that your mere outer life.
 - iv. Moses judgment of law was an ‘eye for an eye’ and did nothing for the evil intent of the heart, or planned evil. Jesus judgment is spiritual death in hell for those outside of the Kingdom. We each have a choice; all who refuse Jesus will die – physically and spiritually.
- f) Note the ‘Personal Relationship Regulations’ listed in 5:21-48:

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- i. These are the Old Covenant laws contrasted with New Covenant – it is a literary feature employing figurative language. Jesus is painting a picture of the differences of those in the Kingdom of God or in the kingdom of the world.
 - ii. This is not a correction of Moses as much as a correction of the misguided shepherds of Israel.
 - iii. The leaders of Israel are in opposition to the King, and you cannot follow both – Israel has to choose. – the temporal or the eternal.
 - iv. Conclusion of 5:48 – ‘Be Perfect’... you cannot perfectly live out the Law, and the Jews knew this. But Jesus is offering to perfect His people through the indwelling Spirit and the Grace of salvation to be purchased in Jesus’ Blood.
- g) The “Lord’s Prayer” asks “Who is your focus? God or man?” Chap 6:
- i. Prayer is all about addressing the King.
 - ii. Worship is all about adoring the King.
 - iii. Offerings are all about voluntary gifts brought before the King, they are gifts of love, not of compulsion. Tithing is OC tribute gifts are given out of compulsion, you have no choice – these are what tithes were all about. They are required payment to the suzerain lord. Jesus’ followers will give, but give differently – because they love their Savior/Lord and what He has accomplished for us personally, and the joy of our relationship with Him.
 - iv. The Kingdom of God/Heaven is infinitely powerful. The kingdom of earth/man is limited, weak, & imperfect. We choose where we want to live, and must live according to the rules of the realm we choose.
 - v. God’s will is always good – even though it may not feel good on earth. His way is perfect, and He can be totally trusted – totally different than man’s kingdoms.
 - vi. At the Fall in Genesis 3, the serpent usurped the throne of earth from its rightful holder – Adam. Genesis proves that humanity in self-rule is a disaster. We are looking forward to the perfect Adam [Jesus] taking the earth back and rendering it what it was made to be – a garden.
 - vii. Only those who have accepted and experienced God’s Grace can receive God’s Goodness.
 - viii. There is a tendency then as now, to get excited about miracles. They point to a power beyond us, but they aren’t everything. You can be healed of cancer one day, and hit by a truck the next. Life on earth is uncertain, only God is Certain. The earth is temporal, look forward to the eternal. The reality of life on our Fallen Creation is that we all die... no one gets off the planet alive. Death is certain; it is only a question of how and when... not if. The question is what realm do we choose to live in and for? The temporal/material world? Or the Eternal/Spiritual Life in Heaven?
- h) Judging is about our setting our self up and acting as ‘little gods’ – chap 7
- i. We want to judge, we want to order our reality. Our problem is that we can’t see clearly and judge rightly – we don’t know the heart of another, we hardly know our own hearts. Only God knows the heart of a person and can judge rightly. We are clouded by sin-curse. This is different from using common sense in evaluating people or their actions – you can see when people mean well or not much of the

time, but not all the time. Judging means to condemn... to cease to treat another with grace and dignity.

- ii. 'I never knew you' – 7:21
 - a. These are not people who were saints but then failed and who didn't make it. They may have been nice people, they may have had reasonably good values – but they didn't love their creator, and they didn't desire to be obedient to Him. By their obstinacy they demonstrated that they hated their creator because they wanted to be little gods and control their own lives. These are people who will not bow to Jesus.
 - b. There were other people who knew they were not prophets or messiahs, but want the power and prestige that afforded them. They deluded themselves, and fooled the people and led many astray. But they cannot fool God – He knows their hearts. When they attempt their tricks to gain acceptance or power, He is not impressed. They are wolves in sheep's clothing out for themselves and personal gain. They can fool others because we can't see their hearts. But God does – He knows them for what they are and calls them on it. These are the Pharisees and the false leaders of Israel or the Church. They are usually after what they can gain for themselves, rather than what pleases God.
 - c. There were also those who deliberately aligned themselves with Satan and his interests for their own gain and benefit. They also were wolves in sheep's clothing and would pay for their deception and hatred of God.
 - d. "Know" – in this context means to know redemptively – God foreknew all the saints, these are those who were rejected.
- i) "He who builds his house on Me (7:24) is balanced with Jesus' statement of "building His church on Peter" (16:18). Redemptive history provides the foundation and background, but a new order has emerged... and it is way better and wondrous.

B.3. Discourse 3: Parables on the Mystery of the Kingdom of God chap 13:1-35

- 1) "Large Crowds" refer to a great multitude including both believers and non-believers, this was a mixed group. Many came just to check Jesus' out, some were trying to understand Him with their own wisdom, yet others heard His Word and it impacted them. There is a necessary reciprocal relationship between wanting to hear, actually hearing, and believing what you've heard... similar with seeing.
 - a) We know that God wants all to be saved: 1 Timothy 2:3-6
This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time.
 - b) We also know that Jesus invites all to relationship with God: Revelation 3:20
'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.
 - c) We also know that many will choose not to be saved – God allows them the choice and they bear the responsibility for the choice.

- 2) 13:10 – Parables – were used for the multitudes – these were public teachings. Private teachings for the believers/disciples 13:36-46
- 3) Kingdom Parables - “The Kingdom of heaven is like...” these are descriptive parabolic teachings. This is a structured Chiastic construct – 2-7 are alike, but 1 & 8 are different.
- a) 1st is the soils – the seed is the word, the difference is not about the seed but the soil it grows in. Preach the word; don’t worry about a favorable response or rejection. The Word preached may lie dormant in the person’s heart for years, or it may spring up immediately. Believers are called as ministers of the Gospel, to bear witness of the Truth we know and live for.
 - a. 2nd is the wheat/tares – the field is the world, not the church. The world is destined to become the exclusive home of Christians. In the meantime, we must share the planet, and wait upon God; He’ll deal with the weeds in our midst.
 - b. Mustard seed – the church is small and seemingly insignificant, that’s ok. It will grow. In Daniel, the tree vision was of Nebuchadnezzar who grew into a huge tree that filled the earth. The mustard seed may be small, but don’t underestimate it.
 - c. Leaven – the early church was just flat bread, no size. Leaven cannot be seen, but it invisibly affects the whole bunch of dough and causes it to rise and grow, so is the church in the world.
 - d. Treasure – this is about a man who stumbled upon something wonderful and recognized its worth, and secured it. It was a happy accident.
 - e. Pearl – this is about a professional gem dealer who discovered this wonderful specimen and sold everything to obtain it. It was a purposeful acquisition.
 - f. Dragnet – all will stand before the King, and will be sorted out by their faith... some to judgment and some to blessing. In the end, no one will be able to claim God was unfair.
 - g. Householder – the Scribe was an Old Covenant copier of the Word of God. When they come to faith, they will have knowledge of the old with the new... the new being way better.

B. 4. Discourse #5 – Olivet Discourse – chap 24-25

- 1) Context setting up the discourse:
- a) 4:24-25 – Jesus is preaching & teaching
 - b) 9:35-38 – Jesus is preaching & teaching
 - c) 12:46-50 – whoever does the will of My Father
 - d) 17:24-27 – Jesus was halted at the temple, discussion of who was greatest in the Kingdom
 - e) 23:37-39 – Jesus lament over Jerusalem – ‘Israel will be desolate until My 2nd coming.’
 - f) “Do you not see all these things” – 24:1-2 – actually means “you do see all these things” – it is a confirmation, they see it. They ask “when will these things happen?”
 - g) Chap 19-23 is rejection – first the Jews of Jesus, and then Jesus of the Jews. This is what was preceding the 5th discourse.
 - h) The 1st century persecution of the Jews by Rome was just a foretaste of what would come. The Jewish rebellion brought about the swift reaction of Rome, but the Jews had already rebelled against God.

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- i) Christians – both Pagan and Messianic Jews of the 1st century witnessed this Jewish persecution, but did not directly partake of it, though they certainly knew many of the Jews who suffered. This was a foretaste of what Christians would soon suffer.
 - j) This apostolic teaching – it has been 3 decades since Jesus left us, and the apostles and eyewitnesses of Jesus ministry were dying away. John would be the last one left – then he wrote Revelation in response of Jesus delayed return.
 - k) NT teaching is consistent – be prepared always for His return. We don't know when, but His coming is certain.
 - l) The tribulation of 1st century Jews was bad – 1.5 million died, and it could be likened to Hitler's treatment of the Jews. These were bad times. The Jews remembered their history of having gone through the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC when they believed it couldn't get worse – it did.
 - m) The message is clear – “the Son of Man”, “Master”, and Bridegroom” – will come, so be ready.
- 2) Three Questions: 1)“Tell us when these things will Happen” – 2)“What will be the sign of Your coming” – 3)“and of the end of the age.” – 24:3
- a) Jesus doesn't give them the answer they asked; instead He goes into a dialog that focuses upon knowing Him, and basically telling them not worrying about the timing. The emphasis is upon Him and now, not when or where. Note the text by play on knowing:
 - i. 24:32-33 – ‘you do know’
 - ii. 24:36 – ‘you don't know’ – I'm not going to tell you
 - iii. 24:42 – ‘you don't know’
 - iv. 25:13 – ‘you don't know’
 - v. 7:22-23 & 25:11 – “Lord, Lord” – ‘I don't know you’
 - b) Conclusion – it's not about knowing when, it's all about knowing Whom – look out, don't follow false messiahs & false prophets. It boils down to ‘true Israel’ who are the ‘wise ones’ who recognize their Messiah and who will enter the Kingdom; and ‘false Israel’ who are the ‘foolish ones’ who failed to recognize the Messiah and won't enter the Kingdom.
 - c) These parables are about contrasting true and false Israel.
- 4) Warnings – 24:4-28 – this is a particularly Jewish approach intended for Christian Jews who would understand it.
- a) 24:12 – ‘lawlessness increased’... this is also translated wickedness, and evilness, but its meaning is in context to the law. This has to do with the Law being able to convict condemn, but not transform the individual. It was the Spirit liberated by Messiah in conformance with Joel's prophecy that allowed transformational living. The power of the Spirit enabled this transformation. The law would break down in time, and because of the lack of power in the law was helpless to prevent it.
 - b) 24:15 – ‘abomination of desolation’ – this is from Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 – and refers to the pagan alter a Jewish leader brokered with his Roman patron in 168 BC when a statue of Zeus was erected in the Temple. The nation would break down and conform to the world norm, and its leaders were in league with the powers of its demise. Recently a Jewish Rabbi went to Syria and refuted the holocaust, this is the type of thing the anti-Christ will do.

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- c) 24:27 – ‘lighting will flash across the sky’ – everyone will see it, it won’t be hidden. There we some who said that Jesus had returned in 70 AD. People were confused as to why things hadn’t gotten better – they missed the point of Jesus’ teaching!
 - d) 24:28 – ‘where the corpse is the vultures will gather’ – the vultures are the false prophets, the corpse is spiritually dead Israel. A rather graphic description of apostasy, especially since anything dead was unclean in Jewish Law.
- 5) Kingdom Parables – chap 24 & 25
- a) Fig tree – 24:32-41 – leaves appear immediately before summer, so when they appear you know summer has come. Message is to be on the alert, there won’t be much warning, be prepared.
 - b) Head of the house – 24:42-51 – the faithful and sensible slave is rewarded; the evil slave is destroyed and sent to hell.
 - c) Virgins – 25:1-13 – there are only 2 categories – wise & foolish. The wise are ready and go to heaven, the foolish are not ready and go to hell.
 - d) Talents – 25:14-30 – the master came back after a long time, and again there are 2 categories – the Faithful and the faithless. The faithful were busy about their master’s business even when He wasn’t looking and they were rewarded, the faithless wicked slave was sent to hell. His faithlessness had to do with his laziness, and his wickedness had to do with the mischaracterization of his master as a “hard man” he was afraid of. His words were excuses and his actions betrayed him.
 - e) Judgment – 25:31 – “WHEN the Son of Man comes” – Jesus IS the King of Israel AND the King of earth. The Son of Man from Daniel’s vision is now clearly identified as the King. All the nations will bow to Him willingly as the King of Israel and earth.
 - i. In eternity, there will be no gradient of blessings or of citizenship. All will share from God’s graciousness.
 - ii. Sheep and goats can be easily identified – sheep’s tails are down, goat’s tails are raised. And of course, their temperament gives them away.
 - iii. Sheep on the right hand [place of power] are blessed; the goats on the left hand are cursed. The literary/rhetorical development of the story – ‘when did I...’ is done to heighten the action and focus the reader’s interest.
 - iv. In vs. 40 the sheep are called ‘Brother’ – the term Jews commonly call each other, a practice continued by Christian Jews and later by Christians in general. In vs. 41 the goats are impersonally addressed because they are unworthy.
 - v. In Revelations, beast 1 is gentile and will be supported by a Jewish leader/priest who will persecute Christian Jews.
 - vi. In Daniel, the great apostasy is Israel selling out the nation. In Revelation, apostasy is false Israel identified as Babylon who turned against God. Calling Israel Babylon is a highly inflammatory rhetoric! What is being discussed here is not the Christian church, it is Israel in Apostasy.

B. 5. Concluding Thoughts:

- 1) Setting up the Ending from the Beginning: Now that we’ve walked through the book, it bears to review the primacy of the Sermon on the Mount in chaps 5-7
 - a) Beatitudes are a fundament inauguration of the Kingdom of God under Messiah:

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- i. The beginning of Jesus' ministry talks about persecution – this is due to the gap between 1st and 2nd coming. The hearers of the time didn't understand this, but we with the benefit of hindsight understand what was said.
- ii. Salt and light should have been Israel. They were given a great gift in God's favorable and preferential treatment as the vehicle to redeem humanity. Though they failed their calling, God prevailed anyway.
- iii. Law and prophets is mercy, love, ethical & moral living.
 - Your righteousness must be greater than the Jewish leaders, or you won't make it into the Kingdom.
 - Righteousness is "right standing" with the Overlord or Suzerain – being God the Father and Jesus.
- iv. Jesus is bringing forth a superior law than what was brought through Moses.
 - The inner heart matters most, not just the outward behavior.
 - "You have heard it said, but I say to you..." is a testimony to Jesus' authority demonstrated by the miracles. The Jews demand for another sign to prove Jesus' authority is another indication of just how fallen they had become. Jesus Word proved true – not even the rising from the dead would convince them, because they had ceased to be God's people. But God's true people would believe, and to them the Kingdom of God is their inheritance.
 - Sentence for murder was death in the Old Covenant; New Covenant equivalent crime is hating another. The Law of the Kingdom is Love.
 - Righteousness of the OC was outward behavior, righteousness of the NC is internal transformation... that humanity cannot see, but God does see it and that is what He desires. The emphasis is to impresses God not man.
 - Giving, prayer, fasting, treasure – these all are inner-man conditions.
 - Worry & judging are inner-man conditions.
 - The outer-man is still sin cursed; the inner-man is redeemed and perfected by Jesus' work.
 - Outer-man can't get any worse being the equivalent of a corpse; inner-man can't get any better... being alive throughout eternity – this is the key to understanding Grace!

b) Chapter 7

- i. Christ followers are not to hold absolute ruling on judgment over another. This doesn't mean we ignore our God given observation and intuition so as not to unnecessarily expose ourselves or our family and faith community to the wolves in sheep's clothing we know are out there. Be wise... but be gentle. We need to allow the inner-man to rule our actions knowing that God can be trusted.
- ii. The narrow gate – don't need to follow the crowd led by the false and self-serving Jewish leaders... this applies today as well within the church... there are still wolves in sheep's clothing in our midst.
- iii. 7:21-23 – God does not see a gradient of faith for entry to the Kingdom. He sees two groups – faithless [goats] and faithful [sheep].

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- The heart of unbelief is not just on the wrong side of zero meter; instead it is being on deficit mode.
- The heart of unbelief includes the teacher's of the law and those who followed them. This is a difficult matter and holds application for the church today – we are responsible to evaluate those we follow. Following blindly does not honor God who gave us minds and expects us to use them.
- You cannot fool God – He knows who loves Him and who doesn't love Him. Man can and will continue to be deceived, but God cannot be deceived because He knows our hearts.
- So, be careful about following men, even when they seem reasonable, it is our calling instead to follow Jesus.
- Irony... those misrepresented themselves as "lawful" are actually "lawless"... they are the sons of the anti-Christ.
- Follow me – turn your back on the Pharisaical religion. Legalism is a poor substitute for Grace, yet it is almost always what the institution of faith will fall into. The value is not in the institution... this is just another fallen aspect of humanity that awaits the remaking of the world. The value is in the organism of faith... the Spirit indwelt body of Christ, redeemed and transformed by the Blood of the Lamb.

2) ESCHATOLOGY: Signs of 2nd Coming in narrative and discourse #5:

a) Chapters 19-23

- i. This encompasses various elements of the Jews moral/spiritual bankruptcy and their false teachings, false doctrines and expectations.
- ii. Author's point is the faithlessness of Israel's leadership – they are corrupt and unworthy of God, and are being replaced.
- iii. God will reward His faithful equally. Pharisees were all too anxious to appear concerned about justice and law, but they rejected grace. They wanted God's blessing for Israel alone, and for the rest of the world to go to hell.
- iv. You really don't want justice from God, grace is infinitely better!
- v. Israel will be left out.
- vi. Son of David = faithful.
- vii. Cursing the fig tree is reflective God's curse of Israel.

b) Chapter 23

- i. Seven woes issued to Pharisees and teachers of the law.
- ii. 23:37-39 – Israel will convert, and there will be a pre-millennial Kingdom.

c) Chapter 24

- i. V1 – Seam in book – it is a transition in the text.
- ii. V2 – "Do you not see all these things?" Expects an affirmative answer. Believers will see it; unbelievers won't see it until the 2nd coming.
- iii. V3 – Disciples want to know "when", Jesus clarifies "who" to follow. Genuine faith follows the King regardless of tough times.
- iv. V11- False prophets will have some success due to the spiritual powers they represent, but their power is only to deceive and destroy.

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- v. V13 – those who follow Messiah to the end... who don't follow the non-Christian synagogue.
- vi. V15 – Daniel defines the ultimate [greatest] and the pen-ultimate [next-greatest] – it is setting up expectations leading to the ultimate.
 - OT Hope is about “He’s coming”
 - NT Hope is about “He came and He’s coming back”
 - Daniel 2, 7:13
- vii. V28 – vultures collect where there is a corpse; they testify to the presence of a corpse. Attracted by death, false messiahs are the vultures, Israel is the corpse. Bible is speaking about the nation as a whole.
- viii. V32 – ultimate – fruit on fig tree. Pen-ultimate – tender leaves on fig tree.
- ix. V34 – This generation is who He is speaking about... the evil and adulterous generation refers to the morally and spiritually bankrupt Jews who won't believe in Jesus until the 2nd coming. Compare this with Israel in Exodus and Joshua... there is continuity. The ultimate conclusion of God's redemptive Grace in history is the new generation with Jesus.
- x. V37 – The coming of the King and the destruction of the world will occur, and it will be much worse than the flood.
- xi. V44 – all you need to do to be ready is to follow Me.
- xii. V48-50 – unbelief will have a horrible end when Jesus comes again. The devastating flood, the consumption of Sodom & Gomorrah will be nothing in comparison. All people will have heard the Gospel and have had the chance to respond... those who refuse are the wicked and rebellious like the fallen angels who became demons. Deception will play a part, but the overwhelming truth is that the wicked prefer the darkness... and God will allow them to have their own way.

d) Chapter 25

- i. V1 – 5 wise and 5 foolish bridesmaids – be ready... be prepared, Jesus is coming back and the wise and foolish will be separated.
- ii. V14-30 – the talents – message is also to be ready, Jesus is coming back and the good & faithful will be separated from the evil & faithless. It also adds the component that we are responsible for what God has Graciously given us. Use it wisely... we are accountable for the gifts we receive and how we invest them in the Kingdom.
- iii. V31 – Messiah is coming to and for Israel, which these teachings have been about. Here the nations [gentiles] will be judged as either sheep or goats.
- iv. V40 – “Brothers of Mine” could be all the saints, or it could be the Christian Jews. I believe it to be the former.
 - Gentiles will be like the Jews – some will get in and some don't.
 - Non-Christian Jews will mistreat Christian Israel.
- v. V31-46 – the King will come, Israel will believe and there will be a pre-millennial Kingdom. It will be a 100% Christian nation – the new Israel, the Church.

3) Further Discussion of Discourse # 3: PARABLES IN MATTHEW

- a. Chapt 10 – commission of the apostles – who were sent to Israel, and their message was rejected.
- b. Chapt 11-12 – teachings & miracles demonstrate Jesus' rightful claim as Messiah.
- c. Chapt 13:
 - i. "Parables" used 11 times in this chapter alone, and 16 times in Matthew. Used 4 times in narrative by Matthew in 34-36.
 - ii. Revelation was for the disciples; mystery was not dispensed with for the crowd. Mystery & revelation are the theme of these teachings. To those who "hear" but don't "see" – they don't understand and are not illuminated by the revelation. Those who hear and see are saved.
 - iii. What was the Kingdom program that had been revealed in OT scripture? Monarchy was predicted prior to the era of the judge's in the Pentateuch. Judges were an expanded version and introduced the moral/ethical rulings of the judges. The judges are the God appointed and Spirit empowered to advance the Kingdom of God. Following the judges the prophets and kings added central administrative functions not previously employed. Monarchy was at its zenith with David, and decayed quickly after Solomon.
 - iv. Kingdom is nothing without a King – who was the "ultimate savior"? He was prophet, servant, ruler, etc., and He ruled from the capital of Israel that was Jerusalem. This is the ideal form of Theocratic Rule... a rule of Grace not merely of Law.
 - v. Failure of the earthy kings gave way to the prophecy of a restored kingdom under the Davidic line as the Messiah [God/Man – King of earth]. Matthew's writing identifies and concludes Jesus was and is the Messianic King prophesized.
 - vi. Climatic rejection by Israel was crucifixion of the King. The resurrection validated His identity as Messiah. In this the Word of God is demonstrated as real and valid.
 - vii. Parables 3 & 4 and 5 & 6 are clones in their presentation.
 - viii. Parables 2 & 7 also have similar characteristics.
 - ix. Parables 2 & 7 show the end of the age as the point of separating the sons of the Kingdom from the sons of the devil. This was an unexpected delay of the implementation of the ideal.
 - x. Weeds parable explained by Jesus – field of harvest is the world; not Israel or the church. In the ideal world – only good seed exists.
 - xi. Our ideal today should reflect the desire for God to complete the prophecy and send back the Savior to institute the ideal.
- d. Parable # 1
 - i. The Messiah cast out His seed – all of it was good seed – but not all of Israel was good soil. This holds true yet today... not all who hear will understand, those who understand won't necessarily submit in obedience. Only the obedient-Spirit filled will bear fruit.
 - ii. The redeemed were the fruit bearing seeds; only the unredeemed were weeds that bore no fruit and were unproductive. Fruit of the Spirit bears witness to the life of the Spirit... no fruit, no life.

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

- iii. It is impossible to tell the fruit bearing from the unproductive plants until they mature and produce their fruit. As the life of the plant is in its seed, the life in a believer is in the Spiritual fruit produced in themselves.
- iv. Israel was the target of the blind and deaf teachings & miracles. They refused to “see” even when the truth was apparent... bearing testimony of their wickedness.
- e. Parable # 2 & 3 - Mustard seed & leaven
 - i. Both speak of little to big [now & later] conditions.
 - ii. Seed has to die before it can grow – and as a consequence it becomes large – this is a transformation that is very visible.
 - iii. The leaven works from a small lump of dough and when added to the unleavened dough works through it completely making it grow. This is an invisible process that produces visible results. This is the spiritual stuff that can’t necessarily be seen. Don’t focus on the size, trust God and persevere.
- f. Parable 4 & 5
 - i. Hidden treasure & the pearl of great value – Israel is the land and the sea is the chaotic nations of the gentiles. It is the person of faith that is looking/searching and astute enough to identify the treasure.
 - ii. This begs the question... what are you looking for? Why are you seeking it? It is the what and why that determine the result.
 - iii. Once identified, the wise will spend all they have to acquire the treasure that is beyond compare.
- g. Chapter 10
 - i. Israel is a nation of sheep without a shepherd. The leaders who were supposed to be the shepherds have abandoned the sheep for their own benefit. They are the wolves in sheep’s clothing.
 - ii. The workers were inadequate – so the 12 and the 72 were commissioned.
 - iii. Initially the message was broadcast only to Israel, and it was rejected.
 - iv. The shocking thing was the rejection of the message and of the messengers... who were beat up or killed on this mission. Matthew wrote about the ongoing rejection and persecution that the faithful suffered through, and paints a dismal picture of the fallen nature of humanity.
 - v. Until the “Son of Man comes” refers to the 2nd coming at the end of the age. It is only then that Israel will finally understand and accept the truth of Jesus as their Messiah.
- h. Chapter 14
 - i. Perception of the Word was to hear & see = understand and accept.
 - ii. Perception was to penetrate, permeate, and dominate... it is to transform the individual completely from the inside out as the leaven works through the dough.
- i. Summary thoughts of Parables:
 - i. The problem Matthew is addressing has to do with the evil in the world – things had not gotten substantially better after Jesus left – the early Christians were forced to cope with a delayed 2nd coming. It would not be until the 2nd coming, that perfection on earth would be inaugurated; there would no longer be any evil.

- ii. The focus for today is to live praisefully of our Father in heaven – we live for His Glory, not for the respect or acknowledgement of men.
- iii. Israel had just climatically rejected the King. Thus, God’s redemption of creation would be delayed. But the good news is that the door that had been blocked by the Jews preventing the Gentiles to enter has been thrown wide open. All who hear and respond to Jesus as Savior AND Lord will be saved.
- iv. The parables of the pearl of great price and the leaven deal with the new community of God – growth would be slow and pervasive. The unseen Kingdom would permeate everything as the community persisted, and God’s ultimate triumph was assured.

4) Discourse # 4 – Behavior in the Kingdom – Chapter 18

- j. “Faith” was a big deal to Matthew:
 - i. “No Faith” were the Jewish leaders, false Israel
 - ii. “Little Faith” were the disciples, true Israel but weak.
 - iii. “Great Faith” were the Gentile believers; they recognized and accepted God’s Truth as offered.
 - iv. These are not to be taken literally; they are literary hyperbole – to demonstrate the value of the Gentile Christians. Ironically, at the time of writing, the disciples were the superstars of the faith. This is rhetorical 1st century “affirmative action.”
- k. “Humility” is another major theme in Matthew. Offense in the Greek is *scandalon* – Matthew writes of many instances where people are blessed by not taking offense at Jesus, or where Jesus offended the Jewish leadership, or sought not to offend them.
 - i. 17:24-27 has to do with the Temple Tax – Jesus asks Peter a question, who pays the taxes to a kingdom – the sons of the king or the subjects?
 - 1. The answer is obvious, the sons are exempt, the subjects pay.
 - 2. But so as not to offend the Jewish leaders, Jesus contrives a minor miracle to pay for the tax. Peter goes fishing for it!
 - ii. 18:1-4 The previous discussion leads to a question of who is greatest in the Kingdom – Jesus maintains it is the humble child-like ones who are greatest.
 - 1. 18:4 – humility of a child is the 1st quality
 - 2. 18:6 – faith in Jesus is the 2nd quality
 - 3. What then is the relationship of faith and humility? They are the same!
 - 4. The critical quality of a Kingdom citizen is faithful humility. This leads to the next issue:
 - iii. 18:6 children are more likely to stumble and fall.
 - 1. Children are more likely to be unsteady on their feet.
 - 2. While Christian maturity is manifest in humility, trust and innocence; these qualities make us more vulnerable to those who innocently or deliberately lead children astray.
 - 3. We are to welcome professing believers; however, we do not find out if they are true until they prove out their faithfulness. Believe, but also watch and observe. Do one’s words and deeds line up? Is there consistency in what they say and do?

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

4. False teachers/followers can do great harm in the fellowship before they are recognized as false. When proven false, they need to be removed.
 5. It is to our credit that we accept others at face value, but we must be aware of this potential.
 6. 18:7 confirms that stumbling blocks will come, and when they do – they need to be dealt with. Some will need to be cut off.
- iv. 18:12-14 all of humanity are valuable to God... He takes no delight in anyone perishing. However, those professing faith that continue to sin cannot be allowed to remain in the fellowship, and must be removed.
- v. 18:15-17 is all about church discipline.
1. Our hope is always for restoration, but some won't be restored because they were never true.
 2. Refusal to repent and be restored results in expulsion. If we allow them to remain, we confuse the standard expected.
 3. Leaders in the church must be held to a higher standard of conduct, what is permissible for the flock is not acceptable for the shepherd. Shepherds are human and fallible, but they must acknowledge and hold to a high standard.
 4. 2 or 3 confronting the sinner brings Jesus into the midst, and ultimately He is in charge and will sort out the matter.
 5. In the Kingdom, every individual is of inestimable value – there are no 2nd class citizens in the Kingdom. No disparity of value, and this presumes no disparity of rewards.
 6. Purity of the group must be maintained. What sins cause excommunication of the congregant? Unrepentance is the final sin. All believers will repent, thus the unrepentant are nonbelievers.
- vi. 18:21-35 is all about forgiveness - Repentance and forgiveness are congruent aspects of the believer and are to be extended to all our faithful brothers and sisters.
1. Forgiving sons and daughters of the Kingdom is expected.
 2. As long as they repent, we are to forgive – 18:21-22
 3. Unforgiveness is indicative of unbelief – and is grounds for removal from the Kingdom community.
 4. The parable of the king and the worthless slave [18:23-35] has to do with false members of the community. They will be punished by God.
- vii. Childlike faith is simple – we accept and trust readily, we have mercy and want to comfort others, we find it easy to forgive and forget.
- viii. All humanity has a fatal disease – we are “Sin Cursed.”
1. The “Outer-man” [or “Flesh” or physical nature] will remain sin-cursed until Jesus returns and restores the physical universe. His 1st visit restored the “Inner-man” or our “Spiritual nature.” We await the 2nd coming redemption of creation.
 2. Everyone is sin-cursed, even those who are born again. The payment of sin is made, but the presence of sin remains.

NT 1.2 – Gospel of Matthew

3. Everyone manifests their own distinct manner of sin-curse – some are prone to addictive substances, sexual impurity, etc. One is not less guilty than another; all are subject to the penalty of death.
 - ix. Fellowship within the community of the Kingdom demands forgiveness and acceptance. However, we must evaluate others deeds and conduct, and when such contradicts their words and expected Kingdom behavior, they need to be challenged to repent. If they refuse to repent, there is a course of action prescribed; with expulsion in their continued refusal.
 - x. The question of the eternal security of the “Wicked Slave” may or may not be resolvable. Whether you are Calvinist or Arminianist you can make a legitimate argument for each – ultimately only God really knows... in the meantime we are left with:
 1. Were you ever really saved?
 2. Can you lose what you had?
 3. Is it a temporary problem to be worked out over time?
 4. Don’t know for sure... but God does.
- 5) Narrative between discourse 4 & 5: When the King comes back – will you be ready?
- I. Divorce is a minor problem – “Unbelief” and “Unforgiveness” is a major problem. [19:1-12]
 - i. False Israel has “hard hearts” – this is the major problem.
 - ii. Remember Pharaoh – playing foil to Moses – his problem was a hard heart. Interesting that the Pharisees would be condemned for the same sin of Pharaoh when they are banking on the Mosaic Law to save them. Similar thing occurred when the monarchy and temple were destroyed in 586 BC.
 - m. The blessing of the children by Jesus is symbolic of Messianic grace [19:13-15]
 - n. The rich young ruler [19:16-26] – “What must I do to inherit life?”
 - i. Keeping the norm of the OC is no longer adequate. He knows there is more and it is better, and seeks to acquire it. What’s the cost?
 - ii. The new requirement is to follow Jesus.
 - iii. The “Eye of the needle” is like squeezing through the narrow gate – you either have faith and act on it, or you don’t.
 - iv. We are encouraged that what is impossible for us IS possible for God.
 - o. The workers equal wages [20:1-16] – the grumblers are those who cannot accept grace. They are locked in a works/merit salvation mindset. The good news about grace is we don’t get the death we deserve, we get life. The blest don’t want more than Jesus offers. Being with Him is all we want.
 - p. The blind men calling out for help [20:29-34] – “Son of David” = “King” save us! And He does. Being blind and knowing your need opens the possibility for healing, in contrast to the Pharisees who thought they could see but were blind. The grumblers are false Israel.
 - q. The cursed fig tree [21:18-22] – is false Israel. They should have born fruit, but were incapable. They are faithless, and cursed.
 - r. Parable of the 2 sons – [21:28-32] – False Israel said yes, but did nothing. The son who said no, but came around and did it right are the gentiles who believed. False Israel

complains that they are being mistreated – they always had the love of the Father, but didn't appreciate it. In the end... do you love the Savior? Will you come to Him in obedience and need? To want our way is wicked... but even then the Gracious Lord beckons. You can hear the love of God as the Father speaks with His 1st son.

- s. Parable of the vineyard owner [21:33-46] – false Israel is faithless and selfish, motivated by greed and self-righteousness; not by love, compassion, fair play, and honesty. The inheritance they counted on is removed from them and given to more worthy ones.
- t. Parable of the wedding feast [22:1-14] – another view of false and true Israel.
- u. False Israel “test” Jesus 3 times 22:15-46– recall that Satan tested Jesus 3 times at the onset of His ministry.
 - i. Testing:
 - 1. 1st test – Pharisees and tribute [22:15-22]
 - 2. 2nd test – Sadducees and resurrection [22:23-34]
 - 3. 3rd test – Scribes [lawyer] and the great commandment of the law [22:35-40]
 - 4. The King tests them back and silences them [22:41-46]
 - ii. True faith is acceptance, not needing proofs and signs. Their insistence for this demonstrates their faithlessness. They wanted spectacle not transformation. In the end, they don't want to change.
- v. The King exposes false Israel 23:1-12]
- w. The King pronounces Woes on false Israel [23:13-36] – these are curses in keeping with OT thinking of blessings and curses – justly deserved for their lack of faith.
- x. The King laments over Jerusalem [23:37-39] – this closes with the end of an *Inclusio* [21:9 and 23:39] – “blessed is He”
 - i. Israel will remain blind until the 2nd coming.
 - ii. Then many will bless the Lord and receive Him, and many will not.
- y. The feeding of the 5,000 were the Jews, the feeding of the 4,000 were the Gentiles. The significance of picking up more than what was started with, calls attention to the exponential expansion of grace – it is overflowing Grace of God that satisfies completely.