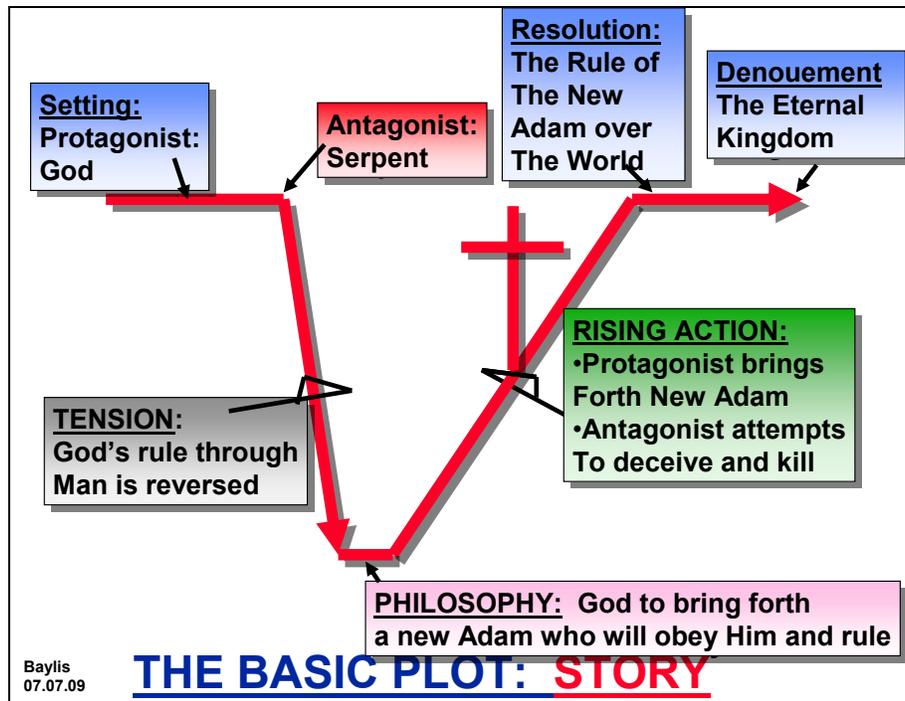
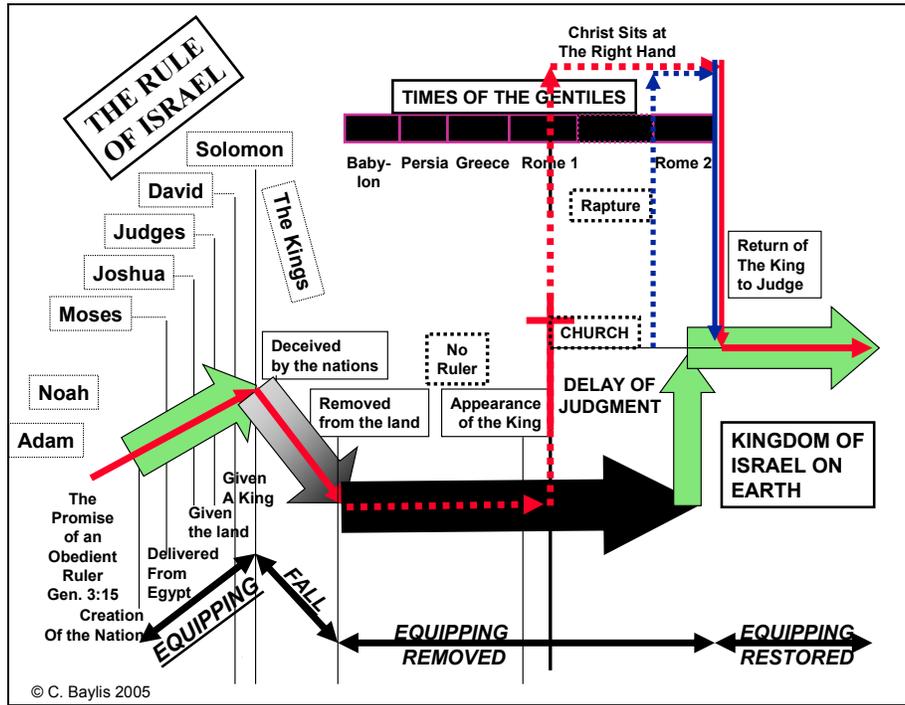
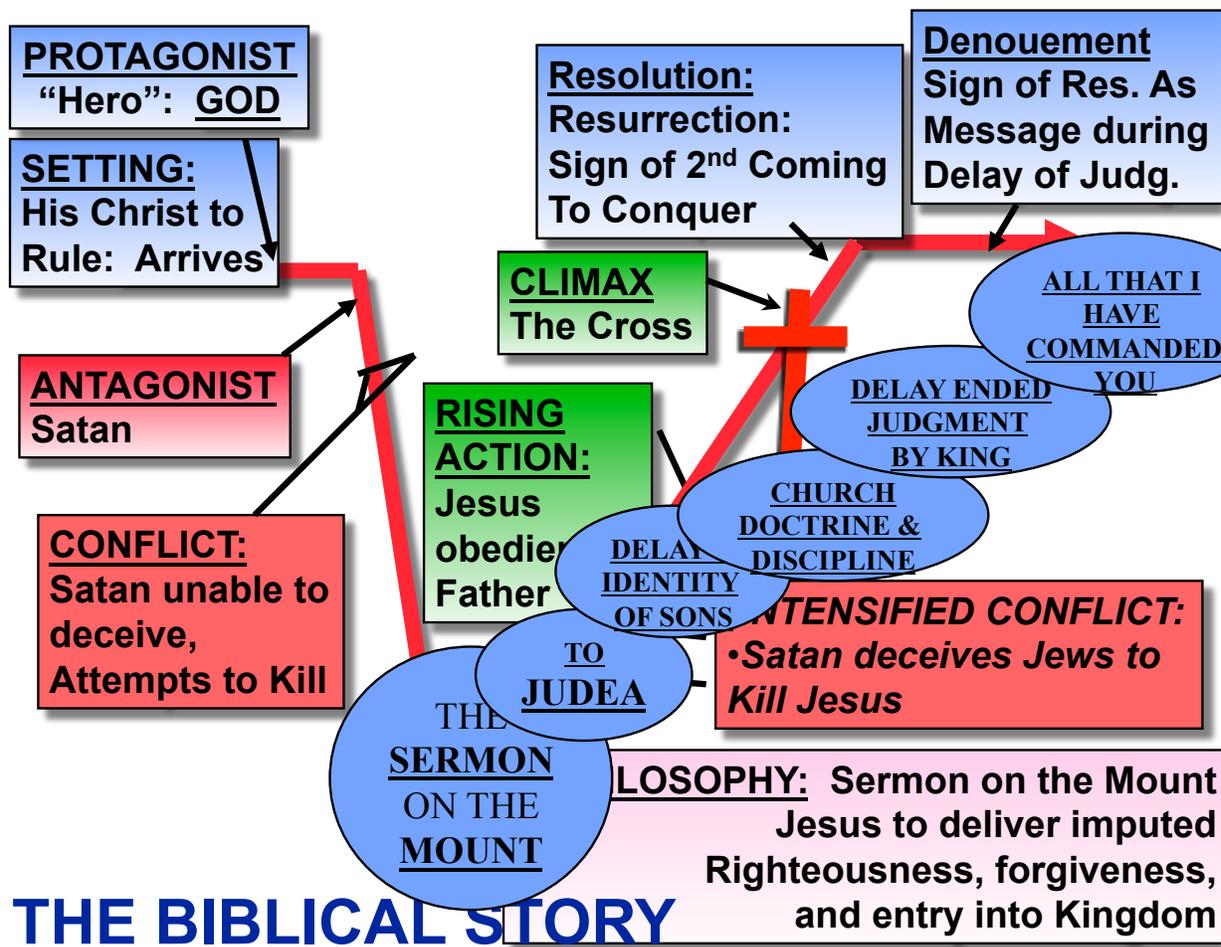


The Biblical Narrative



**The Book of Matthew
Within
The Biblical Narrative**

The Gospels present the ultimate New Adam, The Christ of Psalm 2, the Davidic King of Isaiah 40—66, The New Moses of Deuteronomy 18:15, as being Jesus of Nazareth. This is based on the eyewitness testimony of the Apostles as they identified His life and words as conforming to the Old Testament.



The Plot of Matthew

Setting (1—3):

Protagonist: God through His Christ, Jesus of Nazareth (2:17)
 Antagonist: Satan through the Scribes and Pharisees (3:7)
 Situation: Under the rule of Satan (“The Times of the Gentiles”), God’s anticipated Christ is born and is established by prophecy as the Protagonist’s (God’s) Representative.

Tension or inciting event (4:1-11):

Satan attempts to dissuade God’s Christ (Psalm 2:2) from establishing God’s Kingdom by offering Him rule through rebellion against God and conformance to Satan’s offer of the nations.

Response (Philosophy) (5—7):

The Christ repeats the Old Testament (God’s) philosophy; that of establishing God’s Kingdom in His character (righteousness) through imputation through the King, Himself, as the fulfillment of God’s expectation.

DISCOURSE #1: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: The Philosophy of God (OT) delivered by His Christ (Matthew 5—7)

The Sermon is the revelation of the appearance of the Christ to fulfill the requirements of the Old Testament Law and impute His righteousness to those who ask (the Gospel). He will be opposed by those who promote their own self-righteousness under the Law as the requirement for entry into the kingdom (false prophets).

Response (Rising Action, Rising Tension) (8—26):

Jesus begins to implement the Kingdom in Himself through the Nation Israel, yet Israel opposes Him and attempts to kill Him to eliminate the Kingdom. But Jesus takes His 12 selected disciples apart to carry the message of the ultimate Messiah’s arrival to the Gentiles.

DISCOURSE #2: THE SERMON PRESENTED TO ISRAEL (Chapter 10):

The long awaited appearance of Messiah is revealed by the 12 disciples to Israel to prepare them for their function of blessing the Gentiles through that message (28:19), yet they reject (12).

**DISCOURSE #3: THE SERMON AND THE DELAY OF THE KINGDOM
(Chapter 13):**

In light of the rejection of Israel to receive the message of Messiah, Jesus takes the disciples aside and prepares them to take the message to the Gentiles. He explains in the Parables of the Kingdom that 1) the kingdom will be delayed and 2) the sons of the kingdom will be identified by their testimony (identification) with Messiah's gospel in the Sermon.

**DISCOURSE #4: THE SERMON AS FOUNDATIONAL TO THE CHURCH
DURING THE DELAY (Chapter 18):**

Again, Jesus continues to speak to the disciples establishing that the Sermon on the Mount (the gospel of Messiah) as imputed righteousness must be foundational to the church during the period of delay. Self-righteousness cannot be tolerated as it is opposed to the gospel of Messiah and must undergo God's discipline through the church.

**DISCOURSE #5: THE SERMON AND THE END OF THE DELAY (Chapter 24—
25):**

Jesus speaks to the disciples from the place of His return (the Mount of Olives) to explain about His return and the end of the delay. His judgments are based on the Sermon on the Mount's gospel of Messiah.

Climax (Chapter 27):

Satan through Israel, (the Scribes and Pharisees) is successful at removing Him as they coordinate with the Gentiles to crucify Him.

Validation (Resolution) (Chapter 28):

Jesus is bodily resurrected to conquer the Gentiles attempts to hold Him in the tomb and His body is restored so as to return and rule the earth.

Denouement (Chapter 28):

Based on the sign of resurrection (His ability to rule over the Gentiles), the apostles are ordered to take the good news of Christ's imminent rule to the Gentiles prior to the judgment and the offer of the forgiveness of sins.

The Book of Matthew

Purpose of the Book:

The purpose of Matthew is to explain to the reader the establishment of the church during the delay of the kingdom and its foundation in the apostolic doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Content of the Apostolic Doctrine:

Belief in the gospel of imputed righteousness and forgiveness of sins through Messiah establishes the sons of the kingdom (5—7), in light of Israel's temporary rejection (10), during the delay of the kingdom (13), in which the apostles are to establish the church (18) awaiting the final return of the Christ for judgment and entry to the kingdom (24—25) accomplished through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Validation by Apostolic Witness:

The Book of Matthew is in essence an apostolic defense of their doctrine, which is the eyewitness account. Thus the imperative at the end of the book (28:19-20)¹ is establishing this as the basis of the church's foundation through the apostles' doctrine, that of the five discourses in the book.

The gospel of the apostles (arrival of Messiah, death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins) went to Israel (and they rejected), but it will continue to go to Israel until they accept in the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:32; fig tree illustration) and then through the 12 apostles will also go to the Gentiles.

To the Jews:

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in *the* way of *the* Gentiles, and do not enter *any* city of the Samaritans; ⁶ but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matthew 10:5-6)

²³ "But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you will not finish *going through* the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.

¹ There are three participles ("going", "baptizing", "teaching") and one imperative ("make disciples"). Thus it might be paraphrased that the apostles are to go to the gentiles and make disciples of Jesus Christ. The means by which they are to make them disciples is to baptize them and teach them. The "teaching" consists of the discourses of Jesus (particularly the Sermon on the Mount), in essence the message of the Book of Matthew. Thus it becomes necessary for the reader to understand (correctly) the book so that they might understand the importance of the apostolic doctrine for all, both Jews (Matthew 10) and Gentiles, as foundational for the age.

(Matthew 10:23)

To the Gentiles:

¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

If the reader proceeds on to the Book of Acts, they will find that the apostolic doctrine is noted there as the basis of the church.

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (Act 2:42)

Definitions

Signs:

The signs in the book are used as a reference to validate the unseen. The Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign to show some visible indication that He is acting for God (invisible). The judgment that Jesus is proclaiming (in exile under national judgment) is not apparent to them, so they ask for a sign (visible). Jesus says that there shall be no sign given them because He is the physical reality that fulfills the Old Testament so no sign is needed. Yet He offers the sign of Jonah since the resurrection was needed to indicate something unseen until later, that is the visible conquering of the earth by the King at His Second Coming.

Jonah (a Jew who was to represent the message of Messiah to the Gentiles) was resurrected from the dominion of the fish (death) in order to preach repentance to Ninevah (Gentiles). Jonah's resurrection demonstrated God's mercy to an undeserving man, and nation (Jonah and Israel). Thus, Christ's resurrection demonstrates to Israel God's mercy (and thus their deserved judgment). Like Jonah He will go to the Gentiles (in the 12 apostles). Therefore resurrection is a sign to Israel of their judgment for rejecting the message of the Christ, and the next sign (the sign of the Son of Man) is the fullness of that judgment, that is the actual coming of Christ.

Israel had never been judged by the presence of God Himself. It was always in a philosophical sense, with the prophet proclaiming judgment and then some curse would come. The Pharisees expected a prophet who would call judgment down but would give signs demonstrating the truth of His message. Then the judgment would come. The Pharisees were philosophical, and being prosperous saw themselves as not under a curse. Thus they questioned the statements of Jesus. Jesus' point is that the resurrection is the sign of Israel's imminent judgment in His soon return.

Literary Argument of Matthew

I. **Setting** (Introduction of major characters and the situation).

Matthew introduces Jesus as the long awaited Davidic King who will restore Israel to their promised place in the Abrahamic covenant. God will send His Christ into the situation where the Gentiles are ruling during the “Times of the Gentiles.”

- A. **The Christ of the Protagonist:** God through Jesus, the Davidic King, the Christ, forecast from the Old Testament to deliver Israel from the Gentile oppression.

Isaiah 7:14: The virgin birth validates from the Old Testament promises to Abraham and David that Jesus is the Greater Davidic King, the Servant of YHWH who will restore Israel from bondage into the earthly kingdom.

The introduction focuses on the prophecy of the One who would fulfill the Davidic King promises to restore the Abrahamic Covenant to Israel from the Gentiles. This announcement is made by an angel, who proclaims that the Davidic “Son” from Isaiah will arrive, fulfilling Isaiah’s “sign of the virgin”.

- B. **Introduction of the situation (Rome in Herod):** The Times of the Gentiles.

Tension: Herod (Rome) introduces a problem (deceiving wise men to reveal location of baby) to oppose the establishment of Jesus as the Davidic King, the ultimate Shepherd of God from Micah 5:2 identified by His birth in Bethlehem.

Response: God responds by revealing to righteous Joseph that he should “flee” to Egypt for protection (like Moses “fled” to Midian) so as to be able to return the Messianic child to Israel so He could deliver them (later) from Rome in a new Exodus as the New Moses (Hosea 11:1).

Increasing Tension: Herod (Rome) continues to oppose the establishment of Jesus as the Davidic King in a continuation of the Times of the Gentiles by killing the babies in Bethlehem.

The situation (Times of the Gentiles, antagonist ruling) is revealed through the continuation of the oppression of Israel by Gentile rule. The New Exodus is continued as Herod tries to kill the Messiah by killing all the male babies in Herod’s day, just like Pharaoh tried to kill the Seed of the Woman by killing all the male babies.

Response: God responds by revealing to righteous Joseph to return after Herod dies to announce deliverance from Rome to Israel.

God instructs Joseph to return the Messianic Child following the death of Herod (like God told Moses to return after the death of the Pharaoh that sought his life), thus indicating a New Exodus and a New Moses.

C. **Introduction of the Antichrists of the Antagonist** (Satan through the Scribes and Pharisees).

John the Baptist, representing the Old Testament,² calls Israel to repent so as to be restored from the Times of the Gentiles (Isa. 40-66) in the appearance of the Davidic King. He identifies the Scribes and Pharisees as the ones who had caused the exile through disobedience in rejecting God. It is these Jews who will act on behalf of Satan and the Gentile rulers to oppose God.

John the Baptist calls the Scribes and Pharisees “seeds of serpents,” which refers to them as followers (“seeds”) of their disobedient fathers (serpents) who followed the original serpent (Satan).³

D. **Introduction of the Main Character (The Protagonist and His Christ)**

Jesus, at His baptism, is confirmed by the Hero of the Biblical Story (God), as the Christ (Ps. 2) and the Davidic King (Isaiah 42:1) in the voice from heaven (God identifying Jesus as the Son of Psalm 2:7. This “Son” is the One who will destroy the Gentiles (Psalm 2:8-9) and establish rule back to the Father.

E. **Summary of Setting:**

The sides are set. Herod (Rome) is ruling on behalf of Satan. Israel has succumbed also to the rule of Satan and is seeking to destroy Jesus and this is implemented through the Scribes and the Pharisees. God delivers His Ruler temporarily from Herod and introduces Him at His baptism as the One who will overthrow the Gentiles.

II. **The Tension** (The Protagonist’s Christ confronted by the problem)

Satan, the great antagonist, introduced the conflict (after a preface by the Pharisees). Here Satan will offer his philosophy, that he is the rightful ruler of this earth and that man (Jesus) has the right to determine His own destiny apart from God under the rule of Satan. This is Satan’s definition of life; that is, the enjoyment of physical life without God. Jesus rejects this while indicating that God alone possesses true life.

² John the Baptist is presented as the last Old Testament prophet, and as such is the one to take all the Old Testament prophecies and identify Jesus as the fulfillment. He was the only Old Testament prophet who could actually see the One of whom he spoke.

³ In Matthew 23:33 and the surrounding context, Jesus identifies the “serpents” as those fathers who rejected the message of Messiah through the prophets, which identifies them as followers of the original serpent from Genesis 3. They are “seeds of the serpent” from Genesis 3:15. Thus these Scribes and Pharisees are their “seeds” who do the same thing, but now in the very appearance of Messiah. Thus these are “seeds of serpents.”

- A. **The situation:** The Protagonist's Christ and the ultimate antagonist meet.

Introduction of the Antagonist: Satan appears to introduce the conflict to the Lord's Christ.

- B. **First conflicting offer and response:** Life is on earth, not from God.

1. **Situation:** Jesus hungry for 40 days.
2. **Tension:** Feed oneself from one's own abilities (reversal of life's true source, God).
3. **Response:** Human desires (physical life) to be directed and supplied by God according to His word (real life).

Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8 where Israel was warned that they would be tested to see what was in their heart. So when they went without food they should have confidence that God would provide according to His promise, thus testing their faith in Him. They were always to acknowledge that it was never their own abilities through which they were filled, but God. Thus, Jesus quotes this, since He as the King of Israel would be the ultimate faithful one to God. So as He is tested, He waits on God to fulfill His hunger, not on His own abilities apart from God.

- C. **Second conflicting offer and response:**

1. **Situation:** Jesus at the top of the Temple.
2. **Tension:** Force God's hand apart from God's desires (reversal of submission).
3. **Response:** Man is to submit to God's desires alone.

Jesus again quotes from Deuteronomy to establish that the Christ was to be the ultimate Representative of God. Adam failed because he tried to reverse that command.

- D. **Third offer and response:**

1. **Situation:** Jesus on a high mountain viewing kingdoms of world.
2. **Tension:** Ability to rule on behalf of Satan (death).
3. **Response:** Rule (life) only under God.

Here is the contrast to Psalm 2:7-8 where God offers the nations to His Son simply for the asking. Yet Satan states that he will give them to Jesus if He bows down and worships.

Of course, the command of God will only come through suffering as Satan will move to kill Jesus, since He will not be deceived, like Adam.

- E. **Conclusion:**

1. Satan departs (will now operate through Scribes and Pharisees, his antichrists for this generation.)
2. Jesus is ministered to by God's angels.

3. Jesus preaches the appearance of Himself as the Davidic King and does wonders to indicate His ability to bring the Kingdom.

III. God's Representative Speaks (Philosophy) followed by Signs of the Kingdom

A. Discourse #1: The Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 5—7)

The Philosophy of the Protagonist by His Christ

[The following notes are a brief survey of the Sermon on the Mount. The fuller and more detailed Sermon on the Mount are located at www.BiblicalStory.org under "Commentaries:" "The Sermon on the Mount."]

Here, Jesus establishes that God alone is righteous and He, as the King (the anticipation of the Old Testament) is the only one righteous. He will demonstrate that His character is the perfect righteousness of God, and He will give God's righteousness to those who would recognize their need of it (being evil) and value it (ask). There is no righteousness apart from God's righteousness.

1. **The righteousness of God, revealed by the Law and the promises but not observed in mankind, is now observed in Jesus on earth.⁴ (5:1-16)**
 - a. The situation: Jesus, like Moses, ascends the mountain to explain the Law and the Prophets and their fulfillment in Him to His disciples (5:1-2)
 - b. The Old Testament saint who knew about righteousness from the revelation of the Law anxiously awaited the appearance of God's righteousness in the Son, who is Jesus is now blessed in the appearance of this Christ ("The Beatitudes; 5:3-9).
 - c. Those who stood for the righteousness of God anticipated in the Old Testament in Messiah were persecuted for it and they are blessed (5:10).
 - c. Those who now witness the righteousness of God, now in Christ, will be persecuted for the message until the fullness of the Kingdom on earth (5:11-16)
2. **The Righteousness of God revealed in the Law and the Prophets requires perfection and only Jesus will fulfill it.** All others, who have missed even the smallest commandment, will not enter the kingdom (5:17-20).
 - a. Point #1 application: Jesus is the righteousness of God revealed in the Law; the only One able to enter the Kingdom (17-18).
 - b. Point #2: Those who are anything short of the character of God will not enter the kingdom (19a)

⁴ The "Kingdom" is defined as the justice or righteousness of God implemented on earth. While Jesus was here it was implemented in Him alone, but not expressed throughout the world. That will wait for His Second Coming where it will be expressed through every creature.

- c. Point #1: Only those who have the character of God completely (only Jesus, see 5:17-18) will enter the Kingdom (19b).
- d. Point #2 application: The Scribes and Pharisees do not have enough righteousness to enter the Kingdom since they come short of the full righteousness of God required to enter (5:20, compare with 19a).

3. The Righteousness of God, the Love of God, is revealed by God through love for His enemies and is demonstrated in the love of one's brother demonstrated by reconciling with one's enemy at his own cost (cf. Point #1, vs. 17-18, 19b) (5:21-48)

- a. The Law stated that one must love his brother from his heart (character). (5:21-25)

Jesus is referencing, in particular that one's love for brother is not to come in external deeds, but from the heart. Thus, it is not that one does not murder, but that one does not even conceive of it in his heart, since he is looking out sacrificially for his brother's good. Jesus is referencing Leviticus 19:17 to show that it was the heart that the Law identified as evil.

¹⁷ 'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. (Leviticus 19:17)

- 1) The Law stated that one must love his brother from his own character at his own cost.

¹⁸ 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:18)

- 2). If one judges his brother as worthless his character is unlike the character of God (cf. Point #2, vs. 19a) since he is judging from his own value system, not God's who gives Himself for the brother.
- 3) The character of God reconciles with one's brother at one's own cost. Thus if one does not reconcile with his brother, God will judge him as wrong though his brother is the one who has offended.

- b. The Law stated that one must love his wife sacrificially from his character and not selfishly desire another man's wife (at her and her husband's cost). (5:26-32).

- 1) If one desires to have another man's wife (or woman, given to another man by God), then he has taken what is not his (Jesus is referencing the Pentateuch, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," Exodus 20:17, Deuteronomy 5:21).
- 2) One must eliminate even the smallest erring part of one's body to enter the kingdom (cf. Point #2, vs. 19a) and thus should eliminate one's violating organ (i.e., the eye here is

not the problem when one “looks on a woman to covet her . . . “ but is one’s lust from one’s coveting heart. (The eye in the Sermon represents the value system of the character, i.e., heart)⁵

- 3) Divorce was not allowed in the Law since it displayed, not sacrificial love for one’s wife, but selfish desire.

In the context of this chapter, divorce is contrary to the character of God who reconciles with His enemy at His own cost. He loves His enemy. Thus the point is that when one’s spouse becomes one’s enemy, they should love her sacrificially, as God does.

- c. The Law stated that man was not to tempt God through vows (5:33-37).

Vows were typically made to force God’s hand in some way to provide a benefit for the representative. Jesus’ point here is that the representative should accept the desire of the Sovereign God as opposed to trying to get God to implement his desires personal selfish desires for temporary goods.

The point of this section is to recognize that man is the humble servant of the Sovereign God and as such should be totally submissive to His will, not trying to manipulate or to call God’s blessing or ordaining on his own desires.

- d. The Law stated that man was to love his neighbor (5:38-47).

The context here is that of a persecutor. Note the use of “him who is evil” (lit. “he who is the evil one”)⁶ as one in opposition of Godly behavior.⁷ Thus, the representative of God is being persecuted (offenses). His response must be that of patient endurance. Each of the first three examples (39, 40, 41) are in opposition. The fourth may also be seen as opposition since it is sandwiched between 41 and 43 which begins the section on the enemies of God.

The exhortation not to exhibit vengeance in judgment is due to the reversal of God’s rule through the Gentile nations due to Israel’s sin. The “Times of the Gentiles” are upon them and Israel

⁵ The “eye” and “looking” all carry a connotation theme in the Biblical Story. Refer to the article in www.BiblicalStory.org , “Resources,” “Articles,” “The Knowledge of Good and Evil.”

⁶ Note the use of “the evil one” in 5:37.

⁷ Note that Jesus calls his readers “evil” in 7:11.

is under unjust persecution. Thus the crimes here infer a Gentile dominion. The quotation is whether one obeys things that relate to a civil infraction within Israel as a theocracy, which is not under judgment and Gentile dominion. Jesus is saying that vengeance enforcement under Gentile dominion is not appropriate (not having dominion) and now must submit to the oppression of the Gentiles. (Recall that judgment was only allocated to the appointed Judge, Levite, King or Prophet in Deuteronomy 16—18, and thus judgment was only in Jesus, and He was delaying that judgment allowing the Times of the Gentiles to continue. But when He returns He will take vengeance as the Rightful Ruler). Thus applying a civil law that was for Israel when they were ruling is no longer effective in a Gentile godless society. Israel is to accept its judgment.

In the context of God's love, then the message is that one is to love his enemies, these Gentile persecutors. In the Old Testament under Israel's rule (the Law), these enemies were to be executed. However, the Times of the Gentiles are upon them and judgment has been taken from them. Thus they are to act in a loving merciful response to their God-established authority, who are, in fact, their enemies.

Note: It is important to note that while God loves His enemy (extends mercy), it has not always been the case. It was not the case under Israel's kingdom where the Law executed the enemy of God and Israel was commanded to level the cities inside Canaan with all their inhabitants. Nor will it be the case when Jesus returns and executes judgment on the enemies. Thus, turning the cheek, will not be what Jesus does when He returns.

- e. Summary: God's love is completely perfect and His representative should also be as God is (5:48).

The point is that God's character (righteousness) loves even His enemy. Thus the representative (sons of God) should also love even His enemy.

4. The Righteousness of man (the antagonist's philosophy) is found in man's value system, apart from God's (6:1-21).

- a. The (Scribe and the Pharisee) measure their (self) righteousness by the acclaim (value system) of men as opposed to the acknowledgment (value system) of God.

- 1) Giving to the poor is done for men's admiration (self-righteousness).
- 2) Praying is done for man's admiration (self-righteousness)
- 3) Fasting is done for man's admiration (self-righteousness)

5. **God's Righteousness is to be demonstrated through God's representatives on earth as God enables one by providing food and clothing (6:22-34).**
6. **God's righteousness must be used to judge man's depravity before he can receive God's righteousness by seeking it as valuable and asking for it (7:1-14).**

Man is not to judge from his own perspective (self-righteousness) but to judge from God's perspective ("perfectly holy") and determine that he is depraved in his value system and needs God's value (righteousness) and ask for it (7:7) and God will give it to Him since He will give man what He needs. It is this perception of God's righteousness and man's depravity that allows man to enter the narrow way (the one not validated by popularity as the Pharisees).

6. **False prophecy (self-righteous works) will be characteristic of those who are not representing God and are false prophets (7:15-23).**
 - a. Their true character (like a "tree") is not of God and is shown by their speech ("fruits) as it justifies itself through public deeds.
 - b. They will not stand in the judgment into the kingdom as they stand before Jesus as YHWH, the Davidic King and justify themselves through their works, but do not have enough righteousness, that of the King.
7. **Those with the wisdom (righteousness) of God will stand in the judgment. Those who have the foolishness of man will not stand in the judgment (7:24-29).**

B. Miracles which show Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies verify the attributes of the King as reflected in the Sermon (8—9).

The miracles in this section are to demonstrate this authority, which Jesus has to bring the righteousness of God to man (forgive sins) and implement His justice on earth. These are demonstrations, alluding to the Old Testament, to show that Jesus has the attributes listed in the Sermon as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

The following section is related to the Sermon in that the miracles are characteristics of God's mercy given to man through the King. It should be noted that the response to the Sermon is listed in the first story regarding the leper. The leper perceives Him as "Lord" (which if related to 7:21-22 would indicate "YHWH" or "Adonai") and then requests (cf. 7:7) cleansing (leprosy was considered unclean and one could not enter the temple) and God gives Him what is "good" (7:11). Thus the lesson of the Sermon is illustrated. God is a loving, giving God, who desires to give His righteousness to those who perceive their evil condition and ask for it through His Anointed One.

1. Jesus demonstrates imputed cleansing to a leper to demonstrate the Sermon's righteousness to men (8:1-4).

8:1 And when He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2 And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." 3 And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus *said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

After a discourse on application regarding those who understand His words and ask ("The Wise and Foolish Man," 7:24-29), and those who do not understand His words and try other things to enter the Kingdom, the first illustration is the story of the leper who reacts to the Sermon, showing he understands and values it. He thus asks for imputed cleanliness, an illustration of receiving God's imputed righteousness. The request is to Jesus as "Lord," meaning he recognizes Him as the God of Israel who has the ability to change him ('I am willing,' 6:10, also 7:11).

2. A Roman Centurion (Gentiles) demonstrates the faith that is missing in Israel in recognizing Jesus as the Christ, the Representative of God on earth regarding Jesus' claim in the Sermon (8:5-13).

5 And when He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, entreating Him, 6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering great pain." 7 And He *said to him, "I will come and heal him." 8 But the centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 "For I, too, am a man under authority,⁸ with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*." 10 Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled, and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. 11 "And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west⁹, and recline *at the table* with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of

⁸ As the centurion received his authority from the Caesar, so also he had those under him who listened to him. His relating of this to Jesus is clear. Jesus is the Authority from God and has those under His authority. Whether he is speaking of angels or men seems likely as men since there are no angels here in the context.

⁹ The 'east and west' may recall Psalm 107:3 where the exiles return to the kingdom. The context seems to indicate that the Gentiles will come, however, the O.T. reference seems to indicate that it is a scattered, exiled, remnant that will come, however, Isaiah may give a hint that the Gentiles will be included (cf. also Isaiah 43:5).

heaven; 12 but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. " 13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; let it be done to you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that *very* hour.

Setting: A Roman Centurion seeks to have his servant healed.

Tension: As a Gentile, particularly one who is oppressing the nation Israel, he does not see himself as worthy to approach the Jewish Messiah, nor even to have Him come under his roof (unclean).

Response: The Gentile is the one who offers a response. He suggests that since Jesus has the authority of God, that He simply say the word, and this will eliminate the problem of Him coming to a Gentile's house.

Jesus' Response: Jesus confirms that the Gentile has perceived correctly and announces that this Gentile has realized who Jesus is, while Israel has not.

There are several things to notice here in the context of Matthew and the Biblical Story. First of all, the man is a centurion. As such, he was one of the oppressors of Israel (reversed rule of the Times of the Gentiles). Thus, in terms of Israelites, he is coming to the Messiah out of sequence since he is to receive the message through Israel. However, he approaches Messiah directly, since in the Sermon, Messiah is the message.

Secondly, he does understand the message of the Sermon when he states, "I am not worthy." This relates to 5:17-20 where if one looses one of the least of these commandments, he will be least in the kingdom (not in the kingdom). And he also recognizes Jesus as the full representative of God in His keeping of the Law (5:17-18).

The next thing to notice is that he recognizes the exact position of The Christ of Psalm 2:2, that is the representative of God who operates under the authority of God. As he is a centurion who is empowered by his authority, the Caesar, so he sees Jesus as the authority of God.

In that context, he addresses Jesus as Lord, which indicates either YHWH or Adonai, and in this case is likely YHWH since he sees Him as God in a Man.

Jesus' response is to state that Israel as a rejector of the message in the Old Testament and about to reject Him in Chapter 12 does not exhibit the understanding of who He is. Yet this Gentile does, thus emphasizing the massive depravity of Israel in their rejection.

Jesus' reference to the "east and west" is likely referring to the exiles of Israel. He puts the Israel who rejects Him as this generation who is comfortable with their status as being in Israel and thus feeling they have returned. But Psalm 107:3 and Isaiah 43:5-6, uses "east west north south" to indicate the returning Israelites who are in exile and are considered to be under a curse and thus less than those who live inside Canaan.

3. Jesus heals a woman to show He is the ultimate Davidic Servant King of Isaiah 40-66 (8:14-17).

As in the earlier chapters, Jesus does this miracle to show that He is going to fulfill fully the prophecy later (“that it might be fulfilled”). Thus a prophecy about sickness and disease is done in part to demonstrate that He is the One to bring in the ultimate kingdom, and that He is the One who will fulfill Isaiah 40-66, the Great Davidic Servant King who will deliver Israel from exile under Gentile control. Quoting Isaiah 53:4 indicates particularly that chapter where the Servant King dies for the sins of the nation.

4. This King who can bring in the Kingdom is going without physical comforts and so must those who follow Him (cf. 6:33), now and during the age to come (8:18-22).

Having demonstrated that Jesus can restore all things (health in the last story), He then explains that He and those who follow Him must forsake the physical for the Gospel during the coming age.

5. Jesus rebukes wind and waves as God¹⁰ to demonstrate His dominion over the Gentiles for the sake of the remnant who believe in Him (8:23-27).

No Old Testament reader would miss this story’s recollection of Jonah’s peril on the sea, as Jonah sleeps in the boat while the pagan sailors are dying. The captain asks also there about Jonah’s lack of concern that they are perishing. There God caused the storm and removes it. However a greater than Jonah is here. This One is God who controls the storm. Note that the storm is not on account of the one who is sleeping but for His benefit to demonstrate His Person as God. Also, He, unlike Jonah desires to go to minister to the Gentiles on behalf of God (see Matt. 12:38-41).

The story of Jonah is one of Israel who refuses to take the mercy that has been offered to them, to the Gentiles, which is their representative role. Jonah is thus sent symbolically into exile in the deep (representing the Gentile chaos) into a fish (refer to Genesis 3 and how an animal represented Satan), thus symbolizing the nations’ death by being sent into exile in the Gentile lands, as they were in Jesus’ day. Jesus resurrection is a sign of overcoming the Gentiles (as He rises out of their grasp) in His second coming and thus being Himself resurrected out of exile and death, and thus able to return Israel from exile and death. Yet Israel will reject Him and thus Jesus will take the message of resurrection to the Gentiles in the apostolic doctrine.

¹⁰ This miracle is based on Psalm 107:23-30 where God stills the sea and guides them to a safe haven. Thus the point is here that Jesus is acting as the Representative of God. That is the answer to “What kind of man is this”

This story is a recollection of Psalm 107:23-30 where the restoration of those in peril on the sea is appreciated. There it is God who calms the sea, and thus the disciples recognize the connection as they say, “What kind of Man is this, that even the wind and the seas obey His voice.

6. **The Gadarenes see a demon (Satan) cast out, preferring that the demon keep residence in the man instead of their swine (8:28-34).**
7. **The fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31-34 has come in Jesus. In order to demonstrate that the fullness of the forgiveness of sins has come in Messiah, Jesus heals a paralytic (9:1-8).**
8. **The application of Jeremiah 31:31-34: The prophecy of forgiveness of sins comes true for those who see their depravity and value God’s righteousness in the King as seen in the Tax Gatherers and the outcasts coming to Jesus (9:9-13).**
9. **Jesus of the New Covenant is greater than John the Baptist who represented the Old: He brings a New Covenant, not an improvement of the Old (9:14-17).**
10. **Jesus and the New Covenant, Jesus brings life to Synagogue official's daughter, heals an unclean woman (hemorrhage) demonstrating forgiveness is for the clean and the unclean (9:18-26).**
11. **Jesus heals two blind men to demonstrate He is the Isaiah 40-66 Davidic Servant of YHWH (9:27-31).**

Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would heal the blind eyes of Israel as well as the real literal blind (Isaiah 35:4-5). These blind men realize that He is the “Son of David” indicating His fulfillment of the Great Davidic Servant King of Isaiah 40-66.

III. The Problem (The Antagonist continues his antagonism by confronting the Protagonist): The Pharisees seek to kill Jesus.

A. The Sermon is offered to Israel and they reject (10—12)

1. Discourse #2: The offer of the Christ to Israel so they can take the message to the Gentiles (10)

Here Jesus authorizes 12 disciples to take the message of the arrival of Messiah as the fulfillment of the Old Testament to Israel. The disciples will go out to Judah, without any sustenance, and those who receive their message will respond by taking care of them and then sending them on their way.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the Sermon on the Mount, or forgiveness of sins and imputed righteousness through the King, who has arrived as the fullness of the Old Testament.

This message will continue to go (the apostolic doctrine) to Israel until Messiah returns at the end of the age of delay.

2. Jesus explains that He has come to deliver Israel from Rome (11)

Jesus is explaining His fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies to come and overthrow Rome and establish the Kingdom of God. “His yoke (dominion) is easy (He equips totally), and His burden is light.”

John the Baptist is the Old Testament prophet who sums up the Old Testament in Jesus and then points to Jesus. His question (somewhat rhetorical) is why judgment is not coming in Jesus (why he continues in prison under Rome) as the Old Testament forecast. Jesus’ reply is to explain that the Old Testament prophesied that mercy would be extended prior to the judgment.

3. The response of Israel to the offer of Messiah is to reject and attempt to kill Him (12)

The Pharisees reject the Messianic gift of righteousness, accusing Jesus of being from Satan and trying to get them in trouble with Rome. Jesus identifies them as the same Israelites who were judged by the Times of the Gentiles.

Jesus points out that He is the New Jonah, will be resurrected in order to provide resurrection for Israel into the Kingdom. But they will reject and will be judged by the Gentiles who did receive the message of mercy from Jonah, the Ninevites.

B. The response to train the disciples for the coming age (13—17).

1. Discourse #3: The Parables of the Delayed Kingdom (13).

Following the rejection of the King by the nation Israel, Jesus now moves to take 12 disciples, a believing remnant of the nation Israel, who will minister on His behalf during the delay (and those who will take their word to the world). This chapter explains that the Kingdom will be delayed, the Sons of the Kingdom will be those who believe (as opposed to physical inheritance of Israel which has not believed) and are identified through their confession of the Word of the King, in the Sermon on the Mount, i.e., the Gospel. Note that this chapter will not deal with Gentile inclusion into the church. The physical separation will become evident at the return of the King in the eschaton.

- **Identity of the Sons of the Kingdom:** Those who embrace the Sermon on the Mount as valuable and understand it and thus trust in Messiah for imputed righteousness as known by their confession. They will be identified fully and visually at the end of the age in the coming of Christ.
- **Delay of the Kingdom:** In response to Israel’s rejection, the Kingdom of God (in Israel) will be delayed until the Son returns in judgment.

a. **The Sower and the Seed: The determiner of new life (Deut. 30:6), the implanted word (13:1-23).**

The point of these four soils and the evaluation of them is the observation of the fruit. While the first three soils ultimately do not identify with the word for various reasons, the final one is the only one who is identifiable with the life promised in the O.T. The fruit, here as well as throughout the gospel, is the teaching (or profession) of the Sermon on the Mount (the message of the King as fullness of the O.T.). Thus, one's life is determined based on one's own continuing and verbal identification with the righteousness given to them through the King. Others will reject the message based on riches, persecution or other misunderstandings of life (Life = representation of God on earth).

The parable of the soils is primarily an instance of salvation where only the last fruit-bearer is the one who enters the kingdom. However, the soils also are applicable to sanctification as well, where soils two and three represent a believer who loses his sanctificational life due to all these conflicts that enter his life.¹¹

b. **The Wheat and the Tares: The true Sons of the Kingdom are to live among the false prophets during the age of delay and will be separated at the end of the age (13:24-30).**

Recall that Jesus is speaking to 12 disciples that He has called apart from the rejecting Israel. He is pointing out to them that they (as the believers in God's Anointed One, the true 'sons of God') will be unidentifiable physically from the nation of Israel, the claimants of the title 'sons of God', Deut. 14:1). However, they will become physically evident at the visible separation at the return of the Lord.

Note the similarity between this and chapter 7 in the Sermon. The 'good seed' is the Word of the King while the 'bad seed' is the deceit of Satan, seen in the false prophets with their false teaching. "You shall know them by their fruits" (7:16) quickly identifies the wheat from the tares by their confession (their "fruits"). However, they cannot be separated on physical identification or genealogical inheritance. While they can be known by their confession to one another, they are not separated publicly until the judgment when their fruits (confession) identifies them and they are judged.

c. **The parable of the mustard seed: God will bring about the ultimate Jewish kingdom by the end of the age when Gentiles**

¹¹ It appears that James is using this illustration for sanctification in his book where he urges his readers to "receive the seed implanted," thus indicating that one has the seed and should operate on the basis of this seed which is the Sermon on the Mount, the gospel of mercy through Jesus Christ (James 2:1).

will enjoy their ministry of the gospel during this new age (13:31-33).

While the reader might think, based on the former parable, that the 12 genealogical tribes would pass away, Jesus points out that the Jewish Kingdom will be fulfilled and Gentiles will enjoy the benefits of YHWH through the Jews as prophesied in the O.T. This would be in contrast to the 12 disciples so that it is clearly stated that they will not replace Israel. The birds of the air is a reference to Ezekiel 17:23 who nest in the branches of the tree which is Israel and the Abrahamic Covenant.

d. The parable of leaven: The ministry of the kingdom will grow until it penetrates the whole world (13:34-35).

This is not a new concept. The O.T. had established Israel as priests to the world (Exodus 19:5) who would establish the knowledge of YHWH throughout the earth (Isa. 11:9). It would be through the King (Isa. 52:10). The revelation is through the King and His message now, which is going through the 12 apostles to Gentile nations. It will become thorough by the end of the age (Matthew 24:14).

e. Jesus explains the judgment of the tares and the wheat (13:36-43).

f. The treasure hidden in the field (13:44).

Exodus 19:5 refers to Israel as a treasure. However, as stated previously in the parables, it is a believing remnant that will be saved. God sells all that He has (a reference to the death of His own Son) and purchases the whole world for the sake of the remnant who will be saved.

g. The pearl of great price (13:45-46).

This parable tells of something of great value, a 'good' pearl. The word here for 'good' is always used in Matthew as something of rightness, normally with respect to God. In Matthew the only thing that is "good" is the righteousness or holiness of God. The merchant here is a "Son of the Kingdom," who abandons all his own righteousness ("sells all that he has") in order to obtain the true value of God's righteousness. So the merchant here is imitating God in the previous parable by valuing only God's righteousness, who gave up all He had, the Son, to redeem His people. Here the merchant realizes the true value of God's righteousness and sells all he has, devaluing everything for the sake of God's righteousness that God will give him.

h. The Dragnet: The fish parables picture the judgment at the end of the age (13:47-50).

Continuing on with the theme of the identification of the ‘sons of God’ through their testimony and not their physical genealogical identification, Jesus points out that in the judgment at His return, the separation will occur and not earlier.

i. Jesus explains that he who understands would benefit from the knowledge of how the Old Covenant would complement the New (13:51-52).

Here the treasure which the scribe possesses is the “word” and its understanding (13:51). Thus he is able to perceive the Old Testament as fulfilled in his eyewitness of Jesus.

2. The disciples are to found the church on the Rock of Christ, the Gospel (14—17).

During these chapters Jesus is training the disciples as they are going to take the message of the Christ to the Gentiles (in lieu of Israel while they are in rejection). Jesus will tell Peter that the church will be begun (the body of Christ who will embrace the sons of the kingdom apart from identification in Israel) and founded on the Rock (see the Rock reference in the Sermon in the Wise and Foolish Man. The Rock is Christ and His Gospel).

a. The people misunderstand about the new relationship of Jesus to men, that is through faith in Him, not in genealogy (13:53-58).

Having finished His explanation of the coming age of delay to the disciples and the identification of the ‘sons of God’, a reaction is seen in the people of Israel. While they recognized His wisdom, they immediately rejected His claims based on His physical genealogy (not on His Word), something Jesus had just warned them against. Deut. 13 pointed out that a prophet was to be judged on His Word, not on externals.

b. Jesus teaches the disciples to lead the New Age (14:1-20:34).

1) Jesus the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets (14:1-16:4).

a) The proofs of the greatest prophet (14:1-36).

(1) The rejection of the last of the Old Covenant prophets in John the Baptist: Herod kills John the Baptist against his better knowledge since he fears the people. Herod feels Jesus is John the Baptist resurrected. (14:1-12).

(2) Jesus feeds the five thousand as evidence of his being a greater than Moses and Elijah and also John the Baptist (14:13-21).

- (3) Jesus demonstrates His power over the wind and waves, showing that He is not simply a prophet but is God's Son (14:22-33).
 - (4) Jesus fulfills the Messianic obligation and heals all the sick (14:34-36).
- b) The rejection of the Pharisees of the Greater Prophet (15:1-16:4).
- (1) Jesus conflicts with the Pharisees on the obedience to the Law. Jesus points out to them that they worship God only with their lips, not with their hearts. (15:1-20).
 - (2) Jesus heals a Gentile woman's son when she shows willingness to receive God's mercy (15:21-28).

The woman here, though not a Jew, recognizes the place of the Gentile blessing through the Jews, and the Jewish King as Representative of Israel.

- (3). Jesus again demonstrates His credentials as Messiah by healing all who come to Him (15:29-31).
- (4) Jesus feeds the four thousand to show again His credentials as the Greater Prophet than Moses or Elijah, the true revealer of the Father; the Messiah (15:32-39).
- (5) Pharisees ask for a sign. Only the sign of Jonah the prophet will be given to them (16:1-4).

Note here again that Israel is offered the 'sign of Jonah' as their only sign. The Book of Acts will chronicle rejection on the basis of that sign.

- 2) The disciples are taught concerning Jesus teaching, the church, led by the apostles to operate during the delay, begun by His death and resurrection, and the resurrection as the basis for the teaching of the King (16:5-17:13).
- a) The disciples are taught to avoid the false doctrine of the Sadducees and the Pharisees (16:5-12).
 - b) Disciples revealed that Jesus is the Christ. Church with apostles as leaders revealed. (16:13-20).
 - c) Jesus reveals His death and return for judgment (16:21-28).
 - d) Jesus reveals Himself as the glorified King with Moses and Elijah witnessing (17:1-8).

- e) Jesus reveals Himself to fulfill the sign of Jonah. John the Baptist the fulfiller of the Elijah prophecy (17:9-13).
- 3) The disciples are taught concerning faith, Jesus death, and being true sons of Israel.
- a) Disciples fail to perform miracle due to unbelief (17:14-21).
 - b) Jesus reveals His death and the sign of Jonah (17:22-24).
 - c) Jesus argues that the true sons of Israel should be exempt from tax, but since the leaders are perverse, they must pay tax (17:24-27).

C. The Sermon on the Mount is the foundational theology for the church (18—23).

The Righteousness of God given to man in mercy is to be the message of the church as representatives. All other messages (works) are to be judged, with mercy for the repentant and judgment for the unrepentant.

1. Discourse #4: The Sermon (the Righteousness of God in Christ) is the foundation for the church (18).

The disciples are warned against teaching anything other than the imputed righteousness through the Christ and the forgiveness of sins. All violations of this are to be put under discipline, which is approved by God.

This is the third discourse of Jesus Matthew has presented. This one takes the lesson of the Sermon on the Mount and applies it to those who will establish the church during the age of delay. In summary, it requires that the church preach the gospel for salvation and sanctification. That is, everything comes from the hand of the King, particularly righteousness, and to teach otherwise (self-righteous works) is to cause believers to stumble and incur the discipline of God Himself.

a. To disciples¹²: Repentance based on humility before God (God's righteousness versus man's depravity, cf. Matt. 5--7). (18:1-4).

The question asked is who is the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus answer is that there are two categories, the greatest and the

¹² Note here that He is addressing the disciples, but is exhorting them (use of "you") to turn so that they might enter the kingdom. Thus the address must be taken as differentiating the claimants of 'sons of the Kingdom' (which would include Pharisees) and the true 'sons of the Kingdom' (based on the teachings of the King).

least. The greatest are all those who enter the kingdom, while the least are those who do not.

Jesus illustrates who will be in the kingdom through the use of a little child. One must be turned, or be humble to enter the kingdom. While humility by itself does not explain the ability to enter, Jesus will define that in the next verses to be that of belief in Him. Thus one believes in Him for their righteousness and is turned from their own righteousness, which requires humility.

It is important to notice that the 'greatest' is a resident of the kingdom, not necessarily indicating that this one is greater than someone else in the kingdom. He is greater with respect to the one who is outside the kingdom ('the least' in Matt. 5:19). The 'humble' are those who see their own depravity (lack of status with God) and ask. The 'repentance' here is a change from their understanding of their present self-'righteousness' to that of God's righteousness in Christ.

b. Warning to teachers: Teaching false doctrine (doctrines of self-righteousness) instead of God's righteousness is ultimate opposition to God (18:5-9).

In this next section Jesus will encourage those who teach imputed righteousness through the King, but will give dire warnings to those who teach works and self-righteousness and so lead the young believers away from God.

- 1) Requirements of representatives of God and the King: Receiving the humble into the Kingdom indicates an understanding of the King's reception of themselves (18:5).

Now that they have repented and are running the church they must insure that they teach the doctrine of righteousness from God. These therefore are ministers of God's mercy.

- 2) Identification of, and warning to, those who teach otherwise: Rejecting the humble (believers in the mercy of God in the King) through their teaching¹³ results in serious consequences (18:6-14).

¹³ Note that in 18:3-6, there is parallelism giving definition to exactly what defines this child that Jesus is using as an illustration.

18:3 “. . . unless you are turned and become like children . . .”

18:4 “. . . whoever humbles himself as this child . . . ”

18:7 “. . . one of these little ones who believe in Me . . .”

- a) Serious consequences to those who oppose the King's teaching (18:6).

The stumbling here is the fact that one moves to works due to the teaching of the false teachers. Since true teaching of imputed righteousness is the only means to God, He issues dire consequences for those who teach otherwise.

- b) There is no physical possession that is as valued as the understanding and representation of God (18:7-9).

The stumbling blocks here are the world's teaching regarding having their own righteousness. Since there is no mercy in them they affect the young believer by trying to entice them to be proud and arrogant as they are. Thus, exhortation is to take on the Sermon on the Mount, where one is exhorted to get rid of anything that causes them to not enter the kingdom. All should get rid of their Adamic, selfish heart through forgiveness and allow Christ to enter and give imputed righteousness (new character).

- c. **God values the humble repentant sinner greatly and desires to pursue him for repentance if he should be affected by false teaching (18:10-14).**

- 1) **Believers have great value as their representative angels have immediate and primary access to the Father in heaven (18:10).**

The point of this is to state that the young believers are of such value that they have protecting angels who are very close, and thus important, to the Father, so much so that they are able to see His face from their position. Any problems encountered by this young believer will be immediately brought before the Father, who cares very much for their welfare.

It is clear to see the definition of "turned" is the nature of humbling oneself before God, which is defined in the Sermon as being the representative of God and receiving all things from Him including righteousness. The parallel phrase to that in 18:7 is "believing" in the King for that imputation of forgiveness. Note that this forgiveness as a main theme is continued in 18:15 through the end of the chapter. The Pharisees were not at all interested in forgiveness.

2) **The King has been sent from God to bring them to God (18:11).**

The very point that God sent His Son for was to save these from hell. Thus, for the antagonist to take them back to their own righteousness through his teaching of works is to go against the very Son of God.

3) **God's desire is seeking the humble one who has strayed into self-righteousness like a sheep owner who risks losing the seemingly secure sheep (18:12-13).**

While a sheep owner (or shepherd) is very interested in saving his possessions, which are his sheep, God is also very interested in saving His possessions, which are the naïve believer. The character of God is such that it rejoices over a returning lost sheep than it does those who have not needed to repent.

This is interesting. It shows that the character of the Father is to give mercy. Thus it is not someone's behavior that is the issue, but that God is giving to the believer's request for righteousness. The believer's behavior then is not just to have good works, but to have good works that are caused by the mercy given to him by God, since God enjoys the request from the needy Christian.

4) **Summary: God's will is that the humble, those who perceive God as forgiving, and themselves as deprived, receive forgiveness (18:14).**

The point here is a summary. God does not want believers, once having been given life through the Son and imputed righteousness, to ever go back to self-righteousness and thus lose their sanctificational life. Losing one's sanctificational life is not the same as losing one's salvation life (which one cannot do since he/she is eternally secure). Losing one's salvation life is to return to the position of belief in self-righteousness that they had before they were saved. Since walking in imputed righteousness of Christ is what makes one alive, when they turn from this they are walking in death,¹⁴ not glorifying

¹⁴ "Perish" is a covenant word which means separation from blessing as one under a curse. This could range from suffering in hell (eternally perishing) or physical death. The case here is that one of these little ones is straying from imputed righteousness and thus ends up being separated from God. This would be the "perish," which in this case is referencing sanctificational death, that is that they are practically living apart from God (not losing their salvation, which cannot happen). However, if he teaches others, which is almost inevitable from his confession then he would be subject to the punishment of death (sanctificational and/or physical) as in the Book of James (5:19-21).

God, but self. This results in not having life in their walk now, but also not having rewards in the kingdom (though they will be there), not having represented the King.

[The reader is urged to review James and the notes at www.BiblicalStory.org “Resources,” as this is likely the place where James’ book is identified. James teaches that one is to be warned who becomes a Christian and then returns to self-righteousness, justifying himself through his own selfish ambition, which James claims is “death.”]

d. Thus the representatives of God (the church) should pursue an errant believer until he has rejected his error and asked for forgiveness (18:15-22).

1) The representatives, the church, should seek the repentance of an erring believer and offer him forgiveness (18:15-17).

This is a list of the processes by which one is to attempt to restore the brother (either the teacher of self-righteousness or the brother who has now been captivated by it). It appears as though the witness here is not confirming the offense as such. This seems to be already confirmed. This first attempt is by one who is seeking to have them repent and to have it rectified simply. The goal here is restoration through mercy, not punishment.

It may very well be that this is an elder as opposed to just someone who has been offended by their brother. This appears to be a deed of self-righteousness in the church, and thus would not be addressed to all, but here to the apostles, and later to the elders who would be the enforcers of the apostolic doctrine on behalf of the elders.

The second process is to take two or three witnesses to confirm his repentance or rejection of this confrontation. Again this is likely the elders. It appears that the offense has already been confirmed as true. The issue here is not whether the person has committed it, but will he repent or will he reject. The witnesses thus are to witness the rejection or repentance of the errant believer.

The third process is for this unrepentant one to come before the church where they as a body exhort him to repent led by the elders’ witness. The final result of his rejection here is to be expelled from the church, and from then on he is treated as one of those who lives in self-righteous behavior – a Gentile.

2) The representatives, the church, should recognize that they have the ability to execute this forgiveness and

excommunication as representatives of God who confirm it with the apostolic doctrine (18:18-20).

These verses as the ones previous are not to be seen as generally applicable to anyone, but these are applicable to the elders (and the church through them), in that if they approach someone and then discipline them, as they have done it on behalf of God (according to the Scriptures) then God has effectively done it. Thus if the elders expel the person from the church, it is in effect, that God has done it.

The point of the “two or three” is not to establish a minimal gathering for Jesus to be present, but is based upon the past verses, that if the two or three witnesses (elders who went to the brother) are gathered together and decide a church member’s judgment then Jesus is united with them in their decision.

3) The representatives of the church should be prepared to forgive to the maximum degree as often as is required (18:21-22).

Peter then illustrates the purpose of this exercise in church discipline by asking the Lord how far the mercy should be granted. As was stated in the Sermon on the Mount, God loves His enemies and extends forgiveness, seeking reconciliation to any extent. Thus the Lord’s exhortation is to be merciful as God has granted you mercy, that is, without limit.

Thus, when Peter does not extend ultimate forgiveness, he is not acting like God and thus stands himself, self-righteous, and thus self-condemned (unforgiven). Interestingly, Peter is exhibiting the very sin that he is not forgiving in another, and would himself come under church discipline should he not forgive.

Note here that the forgiveness is after one has been approached by the truth and is either repentant or not. If he is repentant then the forgiveness is administered. If he is not then he is excommunicated. One is not to lower the bar by allowing sin into the church without repentance.

e. Illustration: Those who do not perceive God’s heart of forgiveness (perceive God as judgmental based on man’s personal efforts), will not forgive others and thus will not be forgiven themselves (18:23-35).

- 1) God (the king) seeks to bring men (slaves) into relationship (settle accounts) with Himself (18:23).

Now the illustration is given to relate to the forgoing lack of forgiveness that Peter has stated, and what happens if one does not give this forgiveness to others.

All men owe God immensely and this slave owed his master more than could be repaid in several lifetimes.

- 2) The debtor (evil man) owes the king (holy God) more than he can ever repay (18:24).
- 3) The King righteously (under the Law) condemns men to death (all that he has) for inability to pay (18:25).
- 4) The debtor wrongly perceives that he can pay back if given enough time (self-works) (18:26).
- 5) Due to the attribute of the king (God's heart in the Law) He offers forgiveness to the debtor (through Christ to the character) (18:27).
- 6) Yet the lack of understanding with regard to the King's heart (God's heart) is shown by the large debtor's heart as he continues to insist that others pay back manageable debts to him through works instead of being like the king and offering mercy (18:28).

Note here that all of the large debtor's money had been gained by borrowing from the King's funds. Thus when his debt was forgiven he should have forgiven others since it was that very money that the King had lent him that the others owed.

- 7) The others respond like he did, asking for a delay in judgment (they actually could repay the debt since it was smaller). (18:29). Thus, what is being seen is a small offense to the large debtor, in relationship to his large debt to the King.
- 8) The large debtor rejects mercy and insists on self-righteous acts, which serve himself instead of the King.¹⁵ (18:30).
- 9) Others (fellow elders of the church) inform the King of his trespass (18:31).

As in the previous passage, the elders take this person's offense to God (the King) and he is excommunicated from the church (put in prison).

¹⁵ Note that the large debtor is serving himself in both actions. He takes the remission of his debt from the King (which enhanced his fortune) and then takes the money from his debtor (which would enhance his fortune). Everything serves the self-righteous.

- 10) The Lesson: One should represent God as God has acted toward them (18:32-33).

This is the fullness of the verse that if one does not have mercy, mercy will not be extended. And if one has mercy on others, mercy is extended. Thus a believer is one who is identified by his testimony and the fact that he extends mercy. In other words if one perceives the value of the King's character, and the debt he has been forgiven, he will forgive. If he does not perceive the King's character and the debt, he will not forgive thinking he is a self-made man.

- 11) The Result: Those who do not perceive the heart of the King do not act similarly and will be judged by being turned over to Satan and his realm by being excluded from the body (18:34).

Jesus Christ had established His church, of which the gates of hell would not prevail. The church then is His body. To be excommunicated from the church is to leave the body and thus the protection that is afforded the body of Christ. Thus, the one is thrown out into the realm of Satan (self-righteousness) and is thus subject to all its death (both physical and spiritual).¹⁶

- 12) The Application: Forgiveness of brothers is related to the perception of forgiveness by God and reveals one's heart (18:35).

2. Lessons for the church in the delay in the training of the disciples (19—23)

- a. Jesus tells the Pharisees that there is no divorce, since it is due to the selfishness of man.¹⁷ But some men are unselfish to dedicate themselves to God by remaining unmarried. (19:1-12).

¹⁶ New Testament examples of this are in 1 Corinthians 5:5 (one in the church who has committed immorality with his step-mother and is advocating that it is acceptable to do so; 1 Corinthians 10:30 where they have abused the Lord's supper and thus have advocated self-righteousness in the church; James 5:14-15 where the brother has advocated such self-righteousness against the body and is confronted by the elders; among other passages.)

¹⁷ The issue of divorce in 19:1-12 is related to forgiveness and humility in the preceding chapter in relationship to brothers and in relationship to God. One is to seek God's desires instead of one's own. In the divorce case Jesus makes clear that it is not God's desire for divorce according to Genesis 2:24, but (by contrast) it is man's hardness of heart that resulted in Moses' regulation of divorce. Now the question of fornication, contextually, could not be marital infidelity in general since in the previous chapter one is exhorted to pursue forgiveness until 70 times 7. Since there is no end to the pursuit of reconciliation with respect to God, there would

- b. Jesus illustrates representation of God's mercy to the humble, thus goes against the disciples and welcomes the children (19:13-15).
- c. Jesus illustrates His lesson on the humble, by ministering to a rich man who felt he was keeping the law, but could not love his neighbor by giving to the poor¹⁸ (19:16-22).

16 And behold, one came to Him and said, "Teacher, what good¹⁹ thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?"²⁰ 17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good,²¹ but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 He *said to Him, "Which ones?"²² And Jesus said, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER; YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY; YOU SHALL NOT STEAL; YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS; 19 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR

not be an end to the pursuit of reconciliation in any case for the offended partner in the marriage. While adultery is a serious offense, God pursued Israel by giving His own Son to reconcile back to Israel. And since this is a reference to the Sermon on the Mount, the "fornication" there refers to Joseph in Matthew 1 and Deuteronomy 22 (see the Notes on the Sermon on the Mount).

But what of the case where the errant partner remarries, and thus reconciliation (forgiveness) is impossible. That, of course, prevents remarriage to the original partner (Deut. 24), but does not prevent forgiveness and repentance.

Remarriage in any case is not to be permitted here. Even if one's lifetime covenant vow is not "keep-able" in the sense that the other has remarried, it does not justify the taking of another vow, which one cannot keep since they are already obligated to another (which they cannot keep as they should). In other words, one failure does not justify compounding it with another vow. There is no case where a lifetime vow becomes ineffective and thus negated.

¹⁸ Actually this story relates to 13:44 which demonstrates that God had sold all that He had for those He loved. Thus the rich man had said he kept all the Law (particularly those that allowed the man to imitate God's love for the brother), yet could not take care of the poor, demonstrating that he did not comprehend God's love as being something that he could not imitate fully (being evil).

¹⁹ The word here is "*agathos*" which is always used in Matthew as a reflection of God.

²⁰ "Eternal life" is a phrase that occurs in Matthew three times, all in relationship to the eschaton, or life in the Kingdom.

²¹ Jesus is proposing the question to the man as to who He (Jesus) is. Recognition of Him as the Anointed One of God is essential to the recognition of His words as truth and Himself as the impartor of life.

²² The interrogative here demonstrates that the man did not know the nature of the Law. It was not that one could keep some of them, since all of them showed the heart of God.

NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."²³ 20 The young **man** *said to Him, "All these things I have kept;²⁴ what am I still lacking?" 21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete,²⁵ go and sell your possessions²⁶ and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven;²⁷ and come, follow Me."²⁸ 22 But when the young **man** heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property.²⁹

- d. The relationship of the humble to the kingdom reward (19:23-20:34).
 - 1) Jesus points out that those who have sacrificed much for the kingdom shall receive great reward (19:23-30).
 - a) It is impossible for evil, depraved men who find their value in their possessions, to enter the

²³ Jesus uses the last six of the commandments, which were reflective of man's representation of God's heart toward the brother.

²⁴ While this word is a *hapax* in Matthew, it is the very word used in the LXX in Exodus 19:5 where they are told to "keep the covenant".

²⁵ This word "*telios*" shows up in Matthew only in Matt. 5:48 and here. "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." While this word is frequently translated "final", "mature", "complete", "perfect", it would likely here be translated the same as in 5:48, i.e., "perfect".

²⁶ Cf. 13:44, which relates this practice to God who sold all His possessions to purchase the treasure in the field. Selling one's goods and giving to the poor displays an act of the heart to sacrifice oneself for a love for the hopeless.

²⁷ This relates back to the Sermon (6:19ff.) where one's treasure on earth is compared to that of following God's word for treasure with God.

²⁸ This relates back to the original premise in the story, that of who is Jesus. If Jesus was the Representative of God (which He was), then following Him was following God. Jesus was the One who would give up all for mankind. In essence, as the "selling one's goods and giving to the poor" was representative of the Father, so also following Jesus was following the Representative of the Father, the fullness of the Old Testament.

²⁹ There are several things to recognize here in the failure of the man. First, he did not know who Jesus was. Second, he did not recognize his failure in representing God through the commandments (as representing the love of God). Third, he did not recognize the connection between the love of God in the commandments and the expression of God's love in giving everything for the needy. So the point is that he did not understand the message of the Sermon on the Mount.

kingdom of heaven without God doing it (19:23-24).

19:23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

- b) Jesus explains that those who have understood God's love (in Christ) and respond accordingly with respect to their possessions shall be rewarded many times over in the Kingdom, even though they are rich (19:25-30).

25 And when the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"³⁰ 26 And looking upon them Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." 27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?"³¹ 28 And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones,

³⁰ Contextually this means "delivered" into the kingdom.

³¹ Peter's question here is interesting. Jesus has just told him that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom, except that with God it is possible. Peter clearly recognizes that he does not fit into that guarantee given the rich man, else he would not have had to ask the question (had he sold all his goods and given to the poor and followed Jesus). Thus Peter is recognizing, not the ultimate that Jesus has suggested, but some measure short of that. And thus he reflects that he has abandoned his goods and followed Jesus, and wants to know what that sacrifice will return for him in the kingdom. This is different than "selling one's goods and giving to the poor" which was a loving (one-way) sacrificial act of one toward another who was hopeless. What Peter had done (ref. 4:16-22) was to recognize that Jesus (and His mission) was more desirable than what he had (father, mother, fishing). In fact in the following section it will be seen that the reason they were following was not out of a self-sacrificial heart love for the poor, but for self-benefit, that of enjoying the Kingdom in an honored position (20:17-34). In fact, the story of the blind men, which follows, gives a further illustration that the disciples (I have included them into "the multitude") had not had their heart changed toward the hopeless (blind men) but were in fact, following Jesus (at least in part) for their own self-glorification which was position in the kingdom.

judging the twelve tribes of Israel.³² 29 "And everyone³³ who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit³⁴ eternal life. 30 "But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.³⁵

- 2) Those disciples who come in the last days (under Christ) and realize the graciousness of God are contrasted with those who feel they have deserved that graciousness (20:1-16).

In this story, somewhat comparable to the two debtors of chapter 18, those of the Old Testament who were paid in accordance with the requirement of the Law to enter the Kingdom show their true heart when they resent the Master's graciousness. What they did not realize was that the Master was gracious in hiring anyone and it was up to Him who and under what conditions the Master issued requirements. Thus the latter group who received entry into the kingdom under the same conditions as the first were very appreciative, but those who had measured their worth by their work instead of by the graciousness of the King did not understand.

20:1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner³⁶ who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 "And when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.³⁷ 3

³² This is a note to the twelve disciples that their reward is to judge Israel, who has not followed Christ.

³³ Now Jesus moves beyond the disciples to anyone who gives up temporal goods for His sake (and thus the gospel's).

³⁴ 'Inheritance' is an important word here since it designates the giving of the Father's possessions to the rightful sons to share and enjoy. Thus, the one who reflects God, like Jesus in serving the Gospel and ignoring temporal possessions, will enjoy all that God has.

³⁵ This phrase essentially means that those who are first in this life (physical possessions, stature, honor in lieu of honoring God through Christ) will be last in the Kingdom as relates to the service of God through Christ. Those who are last in the kingdom actually do not enter (positionally), or those saved who continue to search for possessions will be least in the kingdom (rewards).

³⁶ The landowner would be God.

³⁷ This is the making of the Old Covenant with the nation Israel.

"And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market place; 4 and to those he said, 'You too go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' And so they went. 5 "Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did the same thing.³⁸ 6 "And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing; and he *said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day long?'³⁹ 7 "They *said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He *said to them, 'You too go into the vineyard.' 8 "And when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard *said to his foreman⁴⁰, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.' 9 "And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius. 10 "And when those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; and they also received each one a denarius.⁴¹ 11 "And when they received it, they grumbled⁴² at the landowner, 12 saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.' 13 "But he answered and said to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 'Take what is yours and go your way, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. 15 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is

³⁸ The groups in the third, six, and ninth hour are those throughout time that were brought into the kingdom.

³⁹ These are those who will be brought in under the New Covenant, that is Israel (and others) who, as time goes on would receive Christ (without works as part of the covenant) and enter into the kingdom.

⁴⁰ The foreman here would be Christ who would be the Anointed One who executes justice and reward for the Father.

⁴¹ The promise of the New Covenant was the same as that of the Old Covenant, life in the Kingdom. However it was always through the Messiah (coming or arrived) and always gracious.

⁴² It is interesting that the first group grumbles, showing that they did not perceive their contract as gracious, but what was deserved for their works.

your eye envious⁴³ because I am generous?⁴⁴ 16 "Thus the last shall be first, and the first last."⁴⁵

- 3) Jesus announces His own fulfillment of the love of God in the covenant (20:17-19).

In Matt. 19:16-22 Jesus had explained to the rich man the requirements for eternal life as stated in the covenant. They were, simply, to keep the commandments. The commandments were the demonstrations of the love of God for the brother and man was to imitate that. The hesed (love of God based on His character) of God was stated to be like a man who sold all his possessions and gave them to the poor. It was the one way, self-sacrificing, love of God. Now Jesus states that He is about to go to the humility of the cross, yet will be raised up by God as the rightful ruler. Thus, the love of God will lead to life, and Jesus is the fullness of that.

17 And as Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, 18 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, 19 and will deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up. "

- 4) James and John's mother requests a high place for her sons. Jesus points out that they needed to be humbled to be great (20:20-28).

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, bowing down, and making a request of Him. 21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She *said to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left." 22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about

⁴³ Literally: "evil", cf. Matt. 7:11.

⁴⁴ Literally: "good", cf. Matt. 7:11.

⁴⁵ The "first" is the nation Israel under the Old Covenant, who had placed their confidence in their own deserved works. They would receive their promised reward (grace), but their heart was different, they did not understand (which is the basis for reward in the kingdom in the realization of righteousness). The story is primarily about the nation Israel. There is no reaction in the story by any of the later laborers. The last, is of course, those who have seen the King and receive His mercy without the works of the Law.

to drink?" They *said to Him, "We are able." 23 He *said to them, "My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father." 24 And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 26 "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. "

The love of God, now being stated by Jesus, is missed by the disciples as they selfishly desire their own elevation. Yet Jesus points out to them that elevation in the kingdom is not based on position on earth, but on humble (unseen, character motivated) service to God. Since Jesus will make the greatest service to God, He will sit on the throne. The rulership will come through sacrificial obedience to God. Thus the right and left hand will also be granted based on that evaluation, not on being first in line.

- 5) Jesus heals two blind men as an illustration of His servanthood (humility for the sake of man) (20:29-34).

It should not escape the readers' notice that Peter had stated that he had left all, but had not claimed to give his goods to the poor (the heart of God). Now the disciples (assuming they are part of the multitude) do not show the heart of God, as the blind man (poor) does not receive their welcome to Jesus due to the self-centered hurry to the kingdom.

- e. Jesus presented as King. The nation Israel rejects (21:1-23:39).
- 1) Jesus presented as King. He finds the Jews in a state of disrespect of God. They reject the authority of Jesus (21:1-46).
- a) Jesus presented as the King on a donkey as a fulfillment of the prophecy of the King in Zech. 9:9 and the people cry out for Jesus to save them⁴⁶ (21:1-11).

⁴⁶ The statement in 21:9 is mostly from Psalm 118:25 where the cry is to "save us" (הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא).

In Zechariah 9:9 the forecast of the One who will conquer the Gentiles is revealed as the One who comes humbly on a donkey. This continues the humility of Jesus as the ultimate Servant of God.

- b) Jesus shows the anger of God on those who profit in the temple, shows the compassion of God as He heals the sick. The Scribes and Priests are indignant. Jesus leaves the city (21:12-17).
- c) Jesus reveals that the disciples can pronounce judgments according to God's word. (21:18-22).

Jesus curses the nation by cursing the fig tree that has not born fruit (fruits are the testimony of God in Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount). Jesus then authorizes the disciples to be able to pronounce the same curse on Israel (or on those who reject God and Jesus). This means that in their preaching they can declare Israel under a curse (as well as the Gentile nations who reject God).

Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry.¹⁹ And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered.²⁰ And seeing this, the disciples marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?"²¹ And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it shall happen."²² "And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive."

- d) The Chief Priests and elders question Christ's authority. He shows them that they have rejected John's teaching that He was the Christ. (21:23-32).

This is quite revealing about the Pharisees and their doctrine. Jesus had compared His authority to that of John the Baptist. Since John the Baptist had testified that the Old Testament spoke of Jesus the Pharisees had rejected Him and thus the Old Testament's teaching. However, since the Pharisees were double minded; that is they sought self-righteousness (the applause of the people), they could not reconcile this since John was loved by the

people. This revealed the Pharisees' double-mindedness and thus their own condemnation. The only thing they could do to reconcile this was to see that the O.T. forecast Jesus and trust Him.

- e) Jesus tells them the parable of the landowner to show the Chief Priests and Pharisees that they are rejecting God's Anointed just as they have rejected the former prophets. (21:33-46).

Jesus point in this story is to say that the Pharisees were rejecting Jesus just as the Old Testament nation of Israel had rejected God. This comes from Isaiah 5:1-11 where the nation had rejected God and He would destroy the vineyard; thus sending Israel into exile.

- 2) Jesus confronts the leaders of the Jews as they try Christ. They will not be invited to the Kingdom (22:1-46).

- a) Jesus tells of the wedding feast, God invites the Jews, they reject Christ, and so the lowly are invited (22:1-14).

The wedding feast is a picture of God and the Kingdom. The Jews had rejected Christ (and the Prophets), so He invited those who were humble and valued the Kingdom to accept the invitation. However, the point is emphasized because someone wants to enter the dinner without wedding clothes (here is the imputed righteousness of Christ) and is clearly identified as different and is rejected. Of note is the fact that the man has no confession (no answer to defend his entry into the kingdom).

- b) Jesus comments to the Herodians on subjection to authority; submit in the physical to government and in the spiritual to God (22:15-22).

The Jews try to trap Jesus by setting Him up. If He is the King then He will need to reject the Gentile rule since He is saying He has the power to throw them out of power. If, however, He rejects the tax, then the Gentiles will come and kill Him. So Jesus would seemingly be in a trap; either show your power to remove the Gentiles, or quit stating that He is the Christ of Psalm 2. Jesus simply points out that God has placed Israel under Gentile rule and as such they must submit to the Gentiles and in doing so are submitting to God for this period of time.

- c) Jesus comments to the Sadducees concerning the resurrection; there is a resurrection in order to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant (22:23-33).

The answer of Jesus in this case is that there must be a resurrection since God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must come true. Thus, if there is no bodily resurrection, then there is no kingdom on earth as the Kingdom was promised to Abraham specifically and thus He must be raised.

- d) Jesus informs a lawyer that the two greatest commandments are to love God and love your neighbor (22:34-40).

The statement of these two great commandments are that they would be fulfilled in Jesus who loves God and loves His neighbor in that He would die for all mankind, His enemies who had rejected God.

- e) Jesus confronts the Pharisees with the fact of the Messiah's humanity and deity (22:41-46).

By using Psalm 110 Jesus shows that the One who would rule after a time of waiting at the right hand of the Father is, in fact David's son. Thus David would be ruled over by His Son who was Deity, the Second Person of the Trinity.

- 3) Jesus speaks to the multitudes and the disciples concerning the Pharisees and Jerusalem (23:1-12).

- a) Jesus gives warning to avoid the actions of Pharisees, and to live humbly (23:1-12).
 b) Jesus pronounces woes on the Pharisees and others for in their pompousness they deceive others, and are hypocrites themselves (23:13-28).
 c) Jesus pronounces that the Pharisees would have been in league with those who killed the prophets, and accordingly the apostles may expect persecution (23:29-36).
 d) Jesus prophesies the downfall of Jerusalem, and His rejection by Jews (23:37-39).

D. The Sermon in the end of times and the kingdom (24—26)

1. Discourse #5: The Olivet Discourse: The Sermon in the end of the delay (24—25).

The Righteousness of God is implemented on the earth in the coming of the Righteous Representative, the King to judge and thus implement the Sermon.

[Refer to the detailed notes on “The Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24—25, located at www.BiblicalStory.org, “Resources,” “Commentary.”]

a. Introduction: The disciples inquire regarding the destruction of the temple, and the return of Jesus as King (24:1-3).

“When will these things be” is the question of, when will the temple be destroyed? While the Pharisees thought everything was fine with the Temple intact, nevertheless the temple would be destroyed shortly after the Messiah was cut off.

Thus it is clear that it is following the removal of the Messiah by Rome (Gentile control) that the temple will be destroyed by Rome also.

Daniel 9:27 then details the last seven years before the coming of Christ to end the Times of the Gentiles and bring in the Kingdom. It begins with the covenant with the antichrist and Israel to allow them to resume sacrifices. Three and one-half years later he breaks the covenant and declares himself to be god. The end of the final three and one-half years will be marked by the coming of Christ to destroy this antichrist and his followers.

b. The events prior to the ‘end’ are not to be mistaken to validate “another” or “the end”. (24:4-14)

Jesus is referencing the first 3-1/2 years of the tribulation from Daniel 9:24-27, particularly verse 27. It begins with the antichrist’s 10-kingdom federation making a covenant with Israel to restore their temple worship (Daniel 9:26-27). For 3-1/2 years Israel is able to continue their temple worship, but at the end of that period the antichrist, also known as “The Beast,”⁴⁷ enters the temple and declares himself to be god and requires all worship come to him. This is known as the “Abomination of Desolation.” This then begins the second 3-1/2 year period, called “The Great Tribulation.” This is what is referred to in Matthew 24 as the “end,” when the pinnacle of Gentile, Satanic rule, will occur in a renewed nation, Rome.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ He is called “The Beast” because he is the ultimate “seed of the serpent” of Genesis 3:15.

⁴⁸ The Times of the Gentiles are indirectly being referred to here. The same period of time referred to in 24:15ff. is paralleled in Luke 21:20-24 where the “Times of the Gentiles” phrase is utilized. Refer to www.TheBiblicalStory.org, video sessions #1--#3 where the

1) Do not mistake the sign of another to be the Christ (24:4-5).

Jesus is referencing people coming and claiming to be “The Christ,” which is culminated in the one claiming to be the Christ, the antichrist. Thus Israel will follow another, the antichrist, who is ruling for Satan. This is the one with whom they make the covenant of Dan. 9:27. This is Israel’s apostasy.⁴⁹

2) Do not mistake the judgments during the first period of tribulation be the end (last half of the tribulation), for God is cursing Israel to bring them back to Him. (24:6-8)

First note that most of references in the Gospels are references to the Old Testament, declaring their fulfillment in Christ. Thus these references are also from the Old Testament, particularly Leviticus 26:16-33. In that passage God details the specific curses that He will place on Israel during their disobedience, to bring them back to Him. Thus when these are mentioned, the references are not to world-wide judgments, but specifically relate these judgments to Israel and their return.

Judgments #1 (wars) and #2 (famines) are among those listed in Leviticus 26 (and Deuteronomy 28) as judgments on Israel to bring them back to God. Earthquakes, while not listed among the war, famine and

overview of the Bible is presented and defines “The Times of the Gentiles” as the time from the exile of Israel into Babylon, through three more Gentile kingdoms (Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome), until the Jewish King arrives (Jesus) to destroy their rule and return the rule to Israel.

⁴⁹ This apostasy is referenced in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 where it is stated that “³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for it (the “Day of the Lord”) will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. The views on “apostasy” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 are many. Some (J. D. Pentecost) held that it was the rapture and would be translated the “departing.” Others hold that it is the “apostasy” of the church (probably in Revelation 17—18 where they would hold that Babylon is a symbol of the false church.) But the passage in 2 Thessalonians 2 is a summary of Daniel referenced events, and so also this one. Thus the covenant with the Beast is the point at which Israel declares formally its apostasy. However, another alternate view is at the middle of the tribulation when the beast enters the temple and (some of) Israel follow him.

death trilogy of Leviticus 26, are also a judgment on Jerusalem (cf. Zech. 14:5, Amos 1:1, Isaiah 29:6, Rev. 11).

a) The judgment of war (24:6; see Leviticus 26:17, 25, 33)

God will plague Israel with wars so that they will return to God and repent. This is reflected in Leviticus 26, 17, 25, 33, and detailed historically in Daniel 11.

b) The judgment of famines (24:7, see Leviticus 26: 16, 19, 20, 26)

c) The judgment of earthquakes (24:7; see Zech. 14:5, Amos 1:1, Isaiah 29:6, Rev. 11)

d) Conclusion: These are only the beginning of the events that indicate the ‘end.’ (24:8).

The “end” is used here for the final 3-1/2 years of the tribulation, the “Time of Jacob’s trouble.” It is God’s final move to establish His kingdom by calling Israel to repentance and beginning to crush the Gentile powers and the antichrist who opposes Him. The “birth pangs” are the pain that Israel will have to go through to bring forth the re-birth. The end is where God now moves to remove finally the threat of the Gentile armies and restore the kingdom to Israel. Before this the judgments on Gentiles have always been of temporary value, always requiring a further judgment. Now this will end all the judgments.⁵⁰

1) The persecution of the elect will be the deceit of “another” and the “end,” but is the time still prior to the end (24:9-14)

The deceit of Satan is strong. Israelites will turn on their own as many begin to trust Christ. These Jewish believers will be suffering while those who worship the antichrist will have pleasure. These unbelievers will take

⁵⁰ There is one other uprising against Jerusalem following the millennial kingdom in Revelation 20, but this one will be met with quick and decisive “fire from heaven” destruction.

this to be apparent blessing and an enjoyable life and they will feel that they are indeed following God. Thus the Antichrist will use these things (physical blessing, and judgment on believers) as an indicator of His Messiah-ship.

- a) **Death and hatred will occur on those faithful to the King (24:9)**
- b) **Apostasy and betrayal by those unbelieving Israelites against the Jewish believers) (24:10)**
- c) **The increase of false prophets who promote self-righteousness (24:11).**

Jesus had warned of false prophets (identified by their teaching of self-works or other gods apart from the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ the King, see “The Sermon on the Mount” notes, Matthew 7:15-24). The antichrist and his followers will promote their own self-righteousness and so teach others. Their identity is clear if one understands the “Sermon on the Mount” since they are known by their “fruits,” which is their teaching of justification (whether self-justification or imputed righteousness as their justification.)

- d) **The increase of covenant rebellion against the Law of the King (24:12)**

These false prophets who promote self-righteousness, and a rejection of the imputed righteousness of the king, are lawless. Jesus called them this in Matthew 7:23, and thus this anti-christ movement of self-pleasure fighting against God and His Christ will increase greatly.

- e) **Those who understand the words of the king will persevere in faithfulness to be saved into the kingdom. (24:13).**

It is not saying that all who persevere will be kept alive until the kingdom, but that of those who have remained alive at the end, the one who has persevered will be the one who is saved into the kingdom. In other words it is affirming that the physical kingdom will be kept alive in a believing

physical remnant to establish the Kingdom, and that this physical remnant will be made up of those who have persevered, based on the understanding of the King (Matt. 5--7).⁵¹

f) The ministry of the remnant to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant prior to the end, that is they will preach the gospel of the King (24:14)

The “Gospel of the Kingdom” is the gospel preached here in the Gospel of Matthew, that of the King, particularly in Matt. 5--7. In short the world will be presented the truth of God’s righteousness, man’s depravity and most importantly the imminent appearance of Jesus as King to judge.⁵²

c. The Great Tribulation: The events of ‘the end’ will bring judgment and escape of the elect. (24:15-22)

1) Begun by the Abomination of Desolation, the identification of “another” (24:15).

The Abomination of Desolation is when the antichrist enters the temple and declares himself to be God (Daniel 9:27). He stops all worship of other gods and their sacrifices, and all men must worship him or die.

2) The recognition of the false messiah and the fleeing of the remnant (24:16-22)

a) The revelation of the false messiah and his imminent wrath (24:16).

⁵¹ It might be more easily understood if the contrary was stated. The one who does not persevere (understand) will not be the one who establishes his presence in the Kingdom. Thus perseverance in understanding is valued by the King. And it is clear that the elect will persevere in the Great Tribulation. It does not appear as though any believers will turn away from Christ during this period of time.

⁵² This is likely a reference to Dan. 12:4: "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase." “Knowledge is increased” indicates the fullness of times coming in the revelation of God in man (Jesus Christ). This revelation will go forth (better translation than the literary “to and fro”) through the apostles in the church age and in Israel in the tribulation (“many” in Daniel indicates the Jewish remnant of believers).

The abomination of desolation is the sign of the false messiah. As his forces come to Jerusalem, Jesus instructs the believers of that day to flee into exile into the Gentile nations to avoid subjection to the Beast and subsequent death. At least 144,000 are in this number (Rev. 7:1-8) and flee to the nations for protection.

c) The fleeing of the remnant (24:17-20).

The details of the flight are now given to show the immense fear that this antichrist brings. Escape must be made without care for anything else. Believers in Israel now flee to the nations of the world to protect themselves from the persecuting antichrist who is advancing on the city with his armies. The Gentile nations, not at this time under the direct control of the antichrist, take the Jewish believers in, not being threatened by them or the antichrist, since his rule is over the 10 kingdom federation and against Israel.

Like Israel entered Egypt for protection from the famine in Genesis 37—50 to be delivered by Joseph, now Israel is going into the nations for protection from the antichrist. This is a setup for the New (and ultimate) Exodus from the Gentile Nations back to the land under the New Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15), Jesus. Hosea and Isaiah particularly saw this exodus from Assyria (Israel) and Babylon (Judah), which now had progressed under the Times of the Gentiles to this renewed Roman government.

c) The intensity of persecution on the remnant (24:21).

Yet the antichrist pursues this believing remnant into the nations of the world. He becomes a fearful world leader. Following his gathering these nations under his control, he then insists that they persecute these believing Israelites.

d) The preservation of the remnant for the Kingdom (24:22).

The last half of the tribulation will be so bad that God will have to cut it short⁵³ with Christ's return. Otherwise there would be no Israel left to populate the kingdom.

d. The Sign of the Son of Man is the visible coming of the King to earth (24:23-31)

1) Not to be verified by signs and wonders since the false prophet(s) will do signs⁵⁴ (24:24-25).

According to Deut. 13:1ff. a false prophet was not to be identified by his signs and wonders but by his word. Jesus reaffirmed this in the Sermon in chapter 7. However, the identification of the true and false Christ was by knowing His word in the O.T. and in the Sermon. This would allow them not to be deceived by the antichrist and his self-righteous propaganda.

2) Not to be a philosophical or unseen judgment, but His identity will be clear as there will be a specific appearance by the King in the sky to come and judge the earth (24:26-28).

The identity of the Son of Man will be clear for He will appear like lightning, that is, in the sky and visible to all.

The indication of the messiah in the "wilderness" or the "inner rooms" is that they will say he has come in secret (unable to be validated) or is invisible, i.e., philosophical). This would be a philosophical coming (unseen) but testified.⁵⁵ A sample of this would be when people

⁵³ The point is that the 3-1/2 years will still be the length of time of the Great Tribulation. Cutting it short is not that the 3-1/2 years will be cut short, but that God will intervene at 3-1/2 years since if it continued the antichrist would totally destroy the remnant. Thus God is saying He is intervening to stop what would happen if He had not.

⁵⁴ Refer to Deut. 13:1-5, 18:20-22, for the Law's statement on the identity of false prophets.

⁵⁵ This is the problem in 2 Thessalonians, where they argue that the "Day of the Lord" has already come. The Day of the Lord was the day of visitation of the Lord to the earth. It was fairly common in the Old Testament that this meant a judgment (not the literal visitation), which

advocate there is no heaven or hell or there is no Kingdom and judgment. Their belief would be something like “you get what is coming to you in the here and now” or “what goes around, comes around”. This type of belief espouses blessing (riches, good things happening) now for good works (self-righteousness) as well as a judgment (poverty, ill health, bad events happening) now for being unspiritual. Jesus is clear. His sign will be His own personal appearance in the sky with the mighty angels to do judgment on the earth. (See 2 Thessalonians 1:1-10 for the same argument by Paul.)

3) The validation is a fulfillment of prophecy (24:27-31)

a) Not an earthly presence but a heavenly appearance (24:27-28)

Jesus points out clearly that He will be seen as the King of the earth in a visible coming in the air referenced also in Zechariah 14. The reference to the corpse is a reference to the dying of Israel at the hand of the antichrist and his armies (Zechariah 14:1-4), where these Gentile armies are the vultures (literally: “eagles”).

b) The accompanying heavenly signs (24:28-31).

(1) The creation: sun, moon and stars (24:29)

The point that is being made is that things do not continue as normal. These are

would establish His desires on earth. Thus, it was quite common for Israel to think that the Day of the Lord might be only spiritual and not a physical visitation. Thus, they would think that the Day of the Lord had come (in a spiritual sense) and since they were prospering they judged themselves as righteous and felt that was the judgment (i.e., no ultimate judgment). 2 Peter 3:1ff. talks about this very attitude, “. . . where is the promise of His coming . . . “ which is a denial of a cataclysmic, physical, appearance of the Messiah as the mighty warrior Judge.

This is also the case in 2 Timothy 2:18 where Hymaeneus and Alexander are saying the “resurrection has already taken place.” In Philippians 3:12 Paul asserts that he has not “attained it (the bodily resurrection) yet,” since the antagonists were claiming a health and wealth gospel (3:2-3, 18-19), which proclaimed a “philosophical” resurrection (no physical cataclysmic judgment in Messiah’s presence), but a present tense judgment/reward.

supernatural occurrences so as to make one pay attention to something that is very important in relationship to God. Multiple Old Testament passages are being alluded to here. They reference the final judgment of God on the Gentile nations, which is accompanied by these great signs in the heavens.

(2) The Son of Man: Coming on the clouds

³⁰ and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. (Mat 24:30)

No one has the ability to come on the clouds of heaven but Jesus. The “coming on the clouds” is a reference to His coming to remove the rule of the Gentiles from Daniel 7, particularly verse 13. It is referenced by Jesus when He is on trial in Matthew 26:64 to answer the High Priest’s inquiry as to whether He is the Son of God of Psalm 2:7 and the Christ of Psalm 2:2 who was to come and judge the nations? By answering from Daniel 7:13, he pointed out that He indeed was this One who would destroy the enemies and set up the Kingdom of God.

The appearance of the Christ in the sky will be visible to all. Israel, having begun to repent earlier in the tribulation as individuals, now has a national mourning as they see the One whom they pierced. (Also referenced in Revelation 1:7).

So now in quoting Daniel 7:13 He is pointing out that this is the return of the King to judge the Gentile opposition according to Psalm 2:8-9.

(3) The Elect: Gathered to return to the land supernaturally (24:31)

It is at the same time that the angels will go throughout the nations and gather the elect⁵⁶ of Israel for the return to the land prophesied. In the physical realm the nation of Israel is returning to the land, guided by the call of the Greater Moses (Jesus) as He returns to the Mount of Olives.

At the appearance of the Christ in the sky, He calls Israel to move back to the land and a massive exodus begins to return to the land under the New Moses.

This is at the same time as the “Trumpet” judgments of Revelation 8—9, which are plagues on the Gentile nations, where they have sought refuge, to release Israel to return to the land under the New Moses who is descending in the clouds approaching the Mount of Olives. Just as in the first exodus when Moses led out the Children of Israel, so now the New Moses is leading them back to the land from the Gentile nations.

c. The signs of the coming with respect to the identity of the Sons of the Kingdom (24:32--25:46).

1) The Parable of the Fig Tree: The sign of the coming perceived by Israel prior to the end: Israel to return to God (24:32-35).

One should recall the fig tree that had been cursed earlier by Jesus in 21:19 which represented Israel. The meaning of “fruits” comes from Matt. 7 and is confession of Christ and imputed righteousness. Now Jesus states that Israel is approaching their confession of Jesus Christ. This would be indicated by the fact that many Israelites are coming to Christ and the nation as a whole is about to confess Christ publicly and undergo great persecution from the antichrist.

⁵⁶ The “elect” here is referring to Israel. It is not that Gentiles are not “elect” as well, but only that Jesus is referencing Israel here to show that God is sovereignly protecting a remnant to continue into the kingdom.

“This generation” is the generation of Christ’s day, as it is throughout the book; the generation of those who were hearing His words and the Sermon, and who would reject Him. The words “until all these things take place” should be translated “until all these things are born (generated)”. In other words, Jesus death on the cross and resurrection would bring forth the beginning (particularly Jesus as the Firstborn from the dead), thus initiating the resurrection life for believers to be realized finally in their own bodily resurrection later. Since Jesus was the ideal Israelite, He would be the firstborn of many to come. Now that the Jewish Messiah was here, Israel would begin their return. It would be a trickle at first, but nevertheless it would begin a Jewish repentance that would culminate in a national repentance prior to the return of Christ.

1) The Time of His Coming: One should be prepared at any time by obtaining the imputed righteousness of the King (24:36-51)

The 'time of His coming' is related to the Old Testament. God’s “coming to earth” signified God's presence to the world to judge. He had 'come' in the Old Testament but it was an unseen coming, only seen by its effects, i.e., the Exodus, or famine, etc. to Israel. Thus, Israel does not think He (the Father) is coming for a long time, i.e., there is no physical and actual judgment, only a philosophical one. Thus they feel they can continue in their own self-righteousness since the judgment, in their eyes, is not coming in a blaze of angelic warriors and God coming to earth.

In the days of Noah, it was not that Noah did not know what 'time', but the wicked world did not believe it was coming at all (and thus did not know what time). The point of “not knowing the time” is another way of saying “one should be prepared at any time.” Thus Noah was prepared as if he “didn’t know the time,” while the wicked world was not since they “didn’t know the time” and assumed it wasn’t coming.

The context of 24—25 does not seem to be limited in its principles, but is limited in its application. Thus the Gospel of the Kingdom is the Gospel from the Sermon on the Mount, which is not different when preached in the

Tribulation. However the focus of 24—25 is the Tribulation period and the Second Coming. Thus this slave who the master puts in charge of his household (i.e., Israel is the “household of God;” Numbers 12:7) to give them food at the proper time is an Israelite (like the Pharisee) who is to give believing persecuted Israelites food and mercy from God in the Sermon’s Gospel. This is similar to Matthew 10 where the believing remnant is identified by the fact that it takes care of those who are announcing the presence of Messiah. It is specifically related to the ones who give Israel the message and whatever else they need as they are being persecuted. Note the connection to the Judgment of the Sheep and Goats where they are to feed them (Israel in this story). But, the servant who rejects the remnant and persecutes them is also identified as one who is to be identified with the enemies of God and thus to eternal judgment. Note also the connection to the Parable of the Talents where one is also judged by what he does with the Gospel of the Sermon on the Mount.

C. The parable of the virgins: Those Israelites who are not prepared for the return of the Messiah (believe in His return and His righteousness in judgment) will not be able to enter the kingdom. (25:1-13).

This parable is a parallel to the wise and foolish man in Matt. 7:24-27, where the wise man was one who built his house on the rock (the gospel of imputed righteousness in Christ) and the foolish man was one who built his house on the sand (self-righteousness).

The virgin symbol is used for Israel in Jeremiah as well as other places. Israel was to be betrothed as a virgin only to YHWH. However, here the question of her worthiness to enter the kingdom is based on her preparation for this kingdom by having the full righteousness required (see Matthew 5:17-20). There are 10 virgins. Five are foolish (from the Sermon we know they have not perceived the words of the King and are self-righteous). Five are wise and thus perceive the words of the King and have asked for His righteousness.

Note that all have oil in their lamps, but the wise take some extra along with them. Thus the foolish perceive that their righteousness is enough for the present and do not perceive that the true righteousness requirement of the kingdom is beyond them (cf. Matt. 5:17-20). When the

Bridegroom appears, they do not have enough to enter the Kingdom (like the Scribes and Pharisees in 5:20). The wise virgins tell them to depart and get their own (purchase it⁵⁷) since they cannot share theirs (it could not be given by the wise virgins since the foolish did not value it . . . like the swine in the “pearls before swine,” 7:6⁵⁸). The foolish then approach the Bridegroom later and request entry, but the King does not recognize them as His own (no relationship to Messiah’s character by obtaining His righteousness).

1) The Parable of the talents: The “Sons of the Kingdom” enter based on their understanding of the value of the King’s words (25:14-30).

Like the former parable, the talents also relate to the value of the message of the King in the Sermon. Two slaves (slaves are Israelites) value it as having the ability to reproduce more life while the third does not value it as able to produce, but sees it as something with which not to identify. Thus he hides it rendering it useless for this period of time. When the Master shows up, the first two are rewarded based on the use of the Sermon as the Word of Life, while the third felt it was death (persecution, etc., see the Parable of the Soils, Matthew 13, soil #2, #3), preferring rather to be judged on his own righteousness to stand before the harshness of the judgment. Thus, he is rejected since he is judged on the basis of his own perspective (7:1-2) of his righteousness against the Master’s criteria (God’s righteousness).

“The Hard Master:” The issue of his identification of the Master as “a hard Master, reaping where He did not sow,

⁵⁷ It does not appear here that the “purchase” is a negative thing, since it is likely the wise virgins purchased theirs as well, only that they purchased enough. Thus the foolish are told to go back to the source and purchase it. Their statement is that their own righteousness that they received cannot be shared. Each individual must go to the source to receive their own. This refers to the Sermon on the Mount where one cannot cast their “pearls before swine” (7:6). In other words one cannot give their righteousness (from God) to someone who does not value it.

⁵⁸ See the commentary on “The Sermon on the Mount,” for this explanation (www.BiblicalStory.org “Resources,” “Commentaries”).

and gathering where He scattered no seed . . .” is, in fact, correct. The Master (God) acknowledges that in the next verse, “you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no *seed*.²⁷ “Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my *money* back with interest.”

While most, when questioned, would deny that God was like that, the Master Himself acknowledges that this is true, and that He is indeed a “hard Master.” The point is clear. One MUST have the full righteousness of God, no less, not even a little bit (5:17-20). Thus He is very judgmental on those who have anything less (see 5:22 for the fact that one who calls his brother a fool deserves hell fire.)

“Reaping where you did not sow:” As to the issue of “reaping where He did not sow,” this is simply that God, in judgment, takes everything from His enemies so that they end up with absolutely nothing . . . and then He gives it to His people. He took from the Egyptians when Israel left in the Exodus as they gave to the escaping Israelites booty. When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, they did not have to plant or build since the Canaanites were planting and building for them before they arrived. God was going to take it from the Canaanites and give it to His people.

Deuteronomy 6:10-11: Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build,¹¹ and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied . . .

Joshua 24:13: “I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.’

He notes that God reaps where He did not sow, relating God to His judgment of the Canaanites where the Israelites entered and were given mature fruit trees, etc. This “third slave” is like the Canaanites in Jericho (Joshua

2) who knew that YHWH's people were going to demolish their city (a hard Master), but they stood and fought, and died. They decided to stand on their own abilities against the abilities of YHWH (since all they could see was a physical army). Rahab demonstrated the one who was like the first and second slave. She recognized the value of YHWH and took what she had, the opportunity to participate, and was saved.

1) Jesus to judge the sheep and the goats:⁵⁹ The “Sons of the Kingdom” enter based on their perception of Jesus as the King in the treatment of His followers (25:31-46).

This mirrors the judgments in Joel 3 where God judges the Gentile nations for their treatment of Israel. This will occur in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, otherwise known as the Kidron Valley outside the Eastern Gate of the City of Jerusalem (cf. Joel 3:13).

This “sheep and goats” is a reference to Ezekiel 34:17 which is the judgment of the Sheep and Goats, although not a direct quotation. The passage in Ezekiel refers to the Jews who have taken God's blessings and have fouled the streams for others. In other words, their mercy has been received from the hand of God and has not manifested as was intended, but they have kept it for themselves, feeling they had deserved it, and thus others did not.

1. Jesus will judge when He returns with His angels (a reference to Zechariah 14) and the return to judge as He then sits on His Davidic throne.

This is a very premillennial verse and the fulfillment of the Davidic promise in 2 Samuel 7 when the Davidic Heir will sit on the eternal throne. This throne is, of course, in Jerusalem and begins the rule of Christ on earth.

⁵⁹ Note here that the way that men extend mercy to the unbelievers (or believers) is the manner in which they perceive their own forgiveness. These are the true representatives of God.

2. The King will separate those Gentiles who enter the Kingdom against those who do not have that right.

“Judgment of Gentiles Alive on Earth:” The question of who is involved here is important. Most see the word for “nations” as *ethnos* and interpret it correctly as “Gentiles,” and so its use in the plural throughout Matthew (except 21:43, where its sense is debated.) In addition, this would agree with Joel 3, where the Gentile nations are gathered together and judged since they came against Israel. Note specifically that these are judgments of those who have lived through the Great Tribulation and are on this earth in the Adamic bodies at the time.⁶⁰

“Treatment of Apostolic Doctrine:” Notice in Matt. 10—12 as the disciples take the message to Judah, they are told that they will continue to take it to the cities of Judah until the Son of Man returns. Thus, Israel has been taking the gospel to the nations when they become saved and exile from Jerusalem at the mid-point of the Tribulation. However, it is the Apostolic Doctrine of Matthew 10 that they are carrying, and now being judged on their treatment of these messengers and the message.

3. The basis of the judgment is how they responded to the least of Jesus’ brethren, which indicates that they acted on behalf of Jesus fulfilling His desires (25:34—26:1).

“Who are the “Least of these, My brethren?” When considered against the parable of the (Israelite) slave at the end of chapter 24, who treated believing Israel badly, now these Gentiles are being judged on their treatment of the “least of these.”

⁶⁰ It is interesting that the readership of the Book of Matthew is the church and thus the reader will not be in any of these judgments since the member would not be part of living Israel, nor the living Gentile nations.

Who are the “least of these my brethren?” There are three options here; the nation Israel, apostles, and/or other believers.

Apostles (i.e., Apostolic Doctrine):

Apostles are referenced with the “little” adjective in 10:42 when the disciples are taking the gospel of the “Sermon on the Mount” to Israel.

In Matthew 10:9-14 where the disciples take the word of the present Messiah to Israel, it is by taking care of the disciples that one demonstrates their acceptance of the apostolic doctrine. This is the only place in Matthew where the giving of food or other necessities is an indication of one’s trust in their message.

In addition, the term, “My brothers,” is used in Matthew, but only in one paragraph where He refers to the disciples (but then appears to broaden it to all believers) (12:46-49).

The summary of this is that the Gentile here is being judged on his reception of the gospel as he took care of those who brought him the message and helped them whether, apostle or Israel. There is no record in Matthew of encouraging anyone to give sustenance, visit prisoners or otherwise, except in the case of the apostles in Matt. 10 and Israel (the household) at the end of Matt. 24. However, the apostles and the message of Messiah have acted instead of the rejecting Israel in their rejection (Matt. 13—28), but Israel comes back to minister the apostolic word in the 2nd half of the tribulation.

Israel:

This goes back to the evil (Israelite) slave at the end of chapter 24. Likewise this judgment then would be a judgment on the Gentile nations for their treatment of Israel during the last part of the tribulation when they were on the run from the antichrist. They would exhibit their trust in Christ

by the helping of these Jews, who bear the message of the Apostles during this time of need. This would parallel the same test of the faith as they respond to the Apostles in Judea in Chapter 10. There the true Israelite believers showed that they received the message of the Messiah by receiving the Apostles and feeding and clothing them. In this chapter it would be the Gentiles receiving the message through Israel who are carrying the Apostolic Doctrine of the Christ.

Fellow Believers

While this seems to naturally fit since one is always to take care of his brother, it is the least likely in terms of Matthew defining his own terms. The thing going for this is that “little” ones is used in Matthew 18 for new (or naïve) believers. However, there is no exhortation to take care of them in any physical way, but only a warning not to teach them self-righteous behavior and doctrine. However, one verse states that one should be sure not to despise one of these “little ones” (18:10). This is probably enough to include these in on the application of this judgment.

One could go systematic theology on this case and see that Jesus is referring to His brothers as those of humanity who have become children of God and thus share with Him in the family. In addition, the term, “My brothers,” is used in Matthew, but only in one paragraph where He refers to the disciples, but then appears to broaden it to all believers (12:46-49).

Conclusion

It appears that Jesus is here, as in chapter 7, sitting on the throne and testing the applicants for the kingdom as to whether they possess the requirement of Matthew 5:17-20, that of full righteousness. That full righteousness is the character of mercy given to them through imputation.

However, as the Pharisees these deeds of mercy (alms, chapter 6) were done in public to glorify themselves. The contrast here in chapter 25 is that the deeds are done for the King, and were unknown to others (in secret only to God as in 6:1-18).

In Chapter 10 the response of the faithful was to take care of the apostles. As they treat the apostles so also they are treating Christ. This is the only place in Matthew, where this is emphasized that they are representing Christ and thus treatment of them is treatment of Christ. However, 18:1-6 has a similar phrase, that is, “little ones.” Thus it would seem that what Jesus is saying is that the first thing is the treatment of the apostles as representatives of God. Then comes (perhaps) the extension of the apostles to the family of believers – any treatment of them is a treatment of Christ, and thus James 2:14-18 seems to enter to some degree.

Now there is another question, and that is that these righteous (and the unrighteous) do not seem to be aware of how they got (or did not get) into the kingdom. First of all they were pondering how they could have done these deeds for Jesus when He wasn't present. And that lack of presence is accounted for by apostles and the apostolic doctrine. Thus, how they treated the apostles (and the apostolic doctrine) which testified of Jesus, while He isn't here, is the issue.

In addition, they did not let their left hand know what their right hand was doing. They did their deeds in secret, which in Chapter 6, meant that they were doing them for God and not the acknowledgement of men. Thus, they were doing them from their character, because they wanted to, not because they got credit from men. Thus, they seem not to know that God was counting, since they weren't.

Mercy, when it is given, is not measured by the receiver since it is his character. His deeds also are done in secret since they are a natural response of his character (i.e., his desires). As such, one does not think of them as measurable, but simply one getting to do what one wants to do. Also as such, they are not done to be seen by men (ch. 6), but done in secret – not to be seen by God, but they are seen by God. Thus as in ch. 6, one does not let his left

hand know what his right hand is doing. They did not even give themselves credit but God, who saw in secret rewarded them.

2. The preparation of the disciples for the end (26)

The trials of Jesus by Jew and Gentile show that He is perfect and has not committed any crime, keeping the Law. However, the disciples all abandon Him and so Jesus fulfills prophecy by dying alone.

1. The chief priests and elders plot Jesus' death (26:1-5).

Jesus prophesies His ultimate humiliation in order to serve God and pay for those who enter the Kingdom.

The fulfillment begins to take place as the rulers plot against him, but since they fear the people (are self-righteous) they do it by stealth. Note that Jesus had always dealt publicly since He dealt in truth. The Pharisees do not work in truth so they must hide it.

2. A woman pours perfume on the head of Jesus to prepare Him for burial (26:6-13).

The responses to His death are varied. One values the presence of Christ with her alabaster bottle of perfume. The disciples, by contrast, oppose this worship and justify it by requesting it be given to the poor. The point is that Jesus is the One who will remove the curse of poverty and by His worship they are glorifying the One who will remove the curse at His own cost.

3. Judas makes a deal with the chief priests to deliver Jesus to them (26:14-16).

4. The disciples prepare the Passover for Jesus (26:17-19).

5. Jesus identifies Judas as the betrayer (26:20-25).

6. Jesus inaugurates the supper as the symbol of his death for the forgiveness of sins under the New Covenant (26:26-30).

The tension continues as Jesus prepares for His death by teaching them of His death and its benefits; that of the forgiveness of sins. He then forecasts a delay of the Kingdom promising them to drink wine again in the Kingdom with the disciples. Their assurance of the Kingdom was given, for in a moment they were told they would all fall away. But they would rejoin Him again in Galilee.

7. Jesus prophesies their apostasy. Peter refuses to believe that he will be included (26:31-35).

What is interesting here is that Peter rejects what Jesus says. In rejecting Jesus' words, he is showing that He will indeed reject Him in His deeds.

8. Jesus prays that the cup be taken from Him. The disciples sleep. (26:36-46).

The suffering of Jesus is apparent that it would be alone as the disciples do not enter into relating to Him in His prayers and suffering. The question is often asked regarding Jesus' seeming desire to not go to the cross as He desires the cup pass from Him as would be His will. The question is rhetorical. Jesus' will is exactly the same as the Father's. He is not showing weakness as if He did not want to go to the cross as His ultimate desire (although at the same time it would not be easy), which was the Father's desire. His desire was the same as and ultimately to fulfill the Father's desire. Rhetorical means that He brings it up simply so that He can answer it. The temptation to avoid suffering is real as He is human as well as Divine. But He does not truly consider it as His nature is exactly the same as His Father's. Thus, He asks the question as to whether the cup can pass, but knows (and ultimately desires) that it can not pass. But since He has brought it up, the reader understands that the question must be asked so as to reveal that He is fully tempted. Note that He states that the Father's desire is His choice and thus His desire as well. He did not change His desire, because to say that He did would be to state that it was not His character to want to die for sinners, but that He was a reluctant participant.

9. Jesus is betrayed and the soldiers take him. The disciples flee. (26:47-56).

The Trials of Jesus declare Him innocent

10. The trial in front of Caiaphas. Jesus testifies that He is the Christ. They accuse Him of blasphemy. (26:57-68).

Note in the following that the Council knew Jesus was innocent in that they had to find false witnesses against Him.

⁵⁹ Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain **false testimony against Jesus**, in order that they might put Him to death; ⁶⁰ and they did not find *any*, even though **many false witnesses came forward**. ⁶¹ But later on two came forward, and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'" ⁶² And the high priest stood up

and said to Him, "Do You make no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against You?"

In verses 64-64 the high priest asks Jesus some very important questions. He is asking Him if He is the Psalm 2 Christ, the Son of God. An understanding of Psalm 2 is very important here. He is not asking Jesus if He is going to save people from their sins, but is He the One who will conquer all His and God's enemies. This is important as the high priest will become His enemy if He convicts Jesus. If Jesus is telling the truth, then He will come under the judgment of God.

⁶³ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God."

Jesus' response is first to agree with His question – "you have said it." Then He adds more Scriptures. The statement about the Son of Man "coming on the clouds of heaven" is a quotation from Daniel 7 which references the One who will act for God, set up His kingdom and destroy the Gentile kingdoms. "Sitting at the right hand of Power" is a quotation out of Psalm 110 where the Son of God will sit at the right hand of the Father for a time through a delay and then He will return to conquer the world.

⁶⁴ Jesus said to him, "You have said it; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

11. Peter denies that he was with Christ, three times (26:69-75).

IV. The Climax: Satan's Antichrists strike the Seed of the Woman on the Heel (27)

While detailing the crucifixion, this chapter virtually reads out of Psalm 22 and others in order to show the fulfillment of prophecy, that in fact, the One who comes for God would be humiliated and killed by those who thought they were acting for God, and that they were destroying an evil one. On the basis of these prophecies Jesus declares that they show that these Jews and Gentiles were the evil ones and He, in fact, though dying and seemingly weak, was the Righteous One.

- A. In the morning the chief priests and the elders deliver Him to Pilate (27:1-2).
- B. Judas returns the money. The priests buy a field of blood, fulfilling prophecy (27:3-10).

As the trials have continued, the text is interrupted by Judas who declares Jesus as innocent and condemns himself to death.

- C. Pilate seeks to release Jesus instead of Barabbas, but the multitude insists on taking the responsibility themselves (27:11-26).

Pilate, the Roman representative of the ungodly nation, declares Jesus innocent, yet hands Him over to be crucified at the Jews' request. In fact, a murderer, Barabbas (lit.: "son of father"), is preferred by the people instead of the innocent Jesus.

- D. The soldiers mock Him as a King of the Jews (27:27-31).
- E. Simon the Cyrenian bears Jesus' cross (27:32).
- F. Jesus is crucified between two thieves, as the King of the Jews, while people hurl insults at Him. (27:33-44).
- G. Jesus dies, the soldier recognizes Him as a representative of a god⁶¹ (27:45-56).
- H. Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus in a new tomb. (27:57-61).
- I. Pilate makes a guard and seals the tomb lest the disciples steal the body (27:62-66).

This part is very important to understand the point of the resurrection. The Jews (enemies of Jesus) join with their enemies, the Romans, because they both now have found a common enemy, that is, Jesus. Since they fear the people will go against them for the killing of Jesus, they want to insure that the disciples do not steal the body and thus make it appear that they have killed the Son of God, who is able to escape the threats of the Jews and Gentiles by making his death ineffective.

So they join with Rome to be sure the body is not stolen and they are humiliated before the people. The Jews would be considered evil and the Romans would be considered weak, as they could not hold a dead body! But the friends of Jesus would say He was resurrected thus validating His power to conquer His enemies when He returned.

This is just what God wants to happen. He is going to resurrect His Son and that is true, so He wants them to put their best efforts to hold the dead body so that He will demonstrate clearly that He can rule over the Gentile enemies on His return.

V. The Resolution: The Lord's Christ is bodily resurrected as a sign of His return to conquer the Gentiles and rule (28)

- A. Jesus is resurrected. He appears to the women who are leaving the tomb to go to the disciples (28:1-10).**

⁶¹ The translation of this by the King James is in error, as the centurion says, "Truly this was (a) son of (a) god. There is no article in the Greek before either "son" or "god". By contrast, the high priest's statement contains an article before each, "the Son of the God." The centurion, a pagan Roman would not likely have been familiar with Psalm 2 from where the title is derived as the high priest was. It would be more natural for him to recognize in response to the cataclysmic events that Jesus was someone who represented God and thus would explain the reaction in the creation, darkness.

B. The guard is paid by the chief priests to lie concerning the resurrection (28:11-15).

Now that Jesus has shown by His resurrection that He can overcome the Gentile armies, and what that means when He returns to devastate them, the Jews have a problem. So between them and the Gentiles they pay off the guards to have them give false testimony – that He was stolen while they slept.

The problem is that Roman guards lost their lives when they lost their prisoner, so they were witnesses to a lie – and thus showing that Jesus had indeed been resurrected. Since if He was stolen, they would be dead!

V. The Denouement: The disciples are to make disciples of Gentiles based on the teaching of the five discourses of Matthew, the Apostolic Doctrine (28).

The denouement is the tying up of strings, the results that could only come because of the climax and resolution, the crucifixion and resurrection. Thus, Jesus is now going to send the apostles to carry the message of forgiveness of sins and resurrection in the Christ to the Gentiles as Israel was supposed to do. The message to Israel when out in Matthew 10 and so continues as well.

One must remember that the imperatives contained in Matthew 28:19 are in the denouement of a story, the story of Matthew's Gospel. The gospel story has moved from the appearance of the long awaited Messiah, through His temptation and faithful life to the climax of His crucifixion and validation of Him as the Son of God (Psalm 2:7) and finally an imperative to the apostles in Matthew 28:19.

Within this story, the apostles were eyewitnesses of His words and works. As they saw Him speak and act they would record it later as an eyewitness testimony that Jesus had fulfilled the expectations of the Old Testament (e.g., Matthew). This record is then given to the church so that they would be able to believe (see John 20:31) in this Christ as their ultimate Deliverer.

In Matthew 10, this appearance of Messiah is revealed to the Jews through 12 apostles throughout Judea. The purpose was that the Jews would receive the message of Messiah and then begin to take it to the Gentiles (Genesis 12:1-3) as was the purpose of the Abrahamic Covenant. So within the story, until the Jews determined whether they would accept the Messiah or not, the message was restricted from the Gentiles (Matthew 10:6).

The Jews in Judea rejected the Messiah in Matthew 12 and Jesus then gave it to a remnant of these Israelites; 12 apostles. These apostles would then build the foundation of another alternate group, the church (Matthew 16). This foundation would be none other than Jesus. Thus the church would be founded on Jesus. Yet the church would have to receive the proof that Jesus was the Christ and this would be the function of the apostles, to take the message beyond Israel to the Gentiles (since the Jews had already received the message in Matthew 10 and it would continue). It was the "message" that

would be important. Thus, Matthew 28:19 tells the apostles to take their eyewitness testimony, which they would record (e.g., Matthew, John) and this “apostolic doctrine (see Acts 2) would found the basis for the church. Thus the church would be founded on the apostolic doctrine (eyewitness testimony) of 12 Jews, who would become followers of these 12 Jews, being taught all that Jesus had taught them about Himself. This teaching is what Matthew recorded in order to follow the imperative given to them in Matthew 28:19.

So the “Go” is not an imperative (aorist passive participle), but a helping verb for the main imperative, “make disciples.” They are to go to the Gentiles (Israel was already given the message in Matthew 10) and teach these Gentiles the five discourses of Matthew so they know where they are in the story of Messiah, and what they are to do.

So what is the point? The point is that the church is founded on the Gospel of Matthew, otherwise known as the Apostolic Doctrine. Thus, the church is to find their hope only in teaching the Apostolic Doctrine, not self-help, not an incomplete Old Testament (as the Jews), but a doctrine which teaches the atonement on the cross, the resurrection of Jesus as the Christ, and the final eschatological Second Coming to establish an earthly kingdom and a final bodily resurrection of the saints.

The movement in evangelism or missions must be from the development of the apostolic doctrine in the church that motivates the believer to “give an answer for the hope that is within him” or support other churches in other lands as one body, or support those who are missionaries or will go as missionaries to take the gospel to others. Thus, Matthew 28:19 is a realization that the church is to be impacted only by the Biblical text that speaks only of Jesus. That impact should motivate one to move beyond his own needs to those of the church to those spiritual needs of a dying world. One must make disciples of Jesus Christ by taking the apostolic word to the believer in the church and the unbeliever wherever they are.