Matthew - Commentaries by Sidney (Sid) Gill

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 9:14-26, The New Wine of Grace:

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“Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?” The Lord gives two reasons why He could not submit to the demands of the Pharisees. Fasting was a mark of sorrow and humiliation, whereas the Lord was Himself the source of His disciples’ joy and gladness, so for them to fast while He was among them would not make sense.

Secondly, His mission was to bring in that which would be far better than all the ritual of the Pharisees! Furthermore there could be no mixing of the two. There could be no putting the principles of the law together with the gospel of His grace. “No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.” Christianity is an entirely new thing and cannot be added to the old system of law –as a sort of improvement on it. To attempt to do so will only make the old worse, and yet this is what many are doing today.

“Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish.” The old bottles had been stretched by what had been put into them before. If new wine were put into them they would be unable to stretch any more; so they would burst and all would be lost. The power of the coming kingdom would be lost if the attempt was made to make it conform to the old order of things. “But they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.” The Lord has brought in the new wine of grace and He must have new bottles.

After this we read that a ruler comes to Him doing Him homage, saying, “My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thine hand upon her, and she shall live.” The Lord Jesus followed him with His disciples. On the way a poor woman with an incurable disease came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment, “For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.” The Lord felt that touch of faith and knowing what had been done, He would not allow her to go away with just that. He desires that she might have the assurance of His word that she was healed. How many, like this woman, depend on their feelings as to their standings before God. The fact is we can only have real peace as to our faith by resting simply on His Word.

When Jesus reached the ruler’s home, He found a crowd of mourners there, some of them flute-players and all apparently making a considerable noise. The Lord commands them to withdraw, saying, “The maid is not dead, but sleepeth,” for that is what death is in His presence. They laughed Him to scorn, but when they had been put out, He went in. He took the maid by the hand, and she arose. “And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.”

The ruler’s daughter, raised from the dead, is a picture of Israel whom the Lord will raise as from the dead in a coming day. In the meantime, while He is on the way, whoever comes now and touches Him in faith gets the blessing.

1. Why would new wine burst an old bottle?

2. What allows us to come without fear into the presence of a holy God?

3. A wonderful, short and reasonably simple pamphlet on grace is The True Grace of God Wherein Ye Stand by J. N. Darby.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 9:1-13, The Deliverer:

We saw in the last chapter how that after the Lord had delivered the two possessed with demons, the people of the city came out and requested Him to depart out of their coasts. They showed no regard for the two who had been liberated from Satan’s power. This shows their hardness of heart against the Lord, who had gone forth among the people in the power of Jehovah according to Psalm 103:3, “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.” He presented Himself to the nation as their Redeemer and Deliverer. To prove His title as such, He carried out this last part of the verse first.

It is a very solemn thing to ask the Lord to depart, for He will do so. But it may be the last opportunity to have to do with Him while He is dealing in grace. By and by He will be the One who will tell those who refused Him to depart, and that will be to everlasting punishment.

In chapter 9 the Lord enters into a ship and passes over to the other side to “His own city” — Capernaum. It was where He lived and wrought His mightiest miracles. “And, behold, they brought unto Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed.” The Lord appreciates their faith and speaks kindly to the afflicted one: “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven Thee.” Some of the scribes, who were familiar with the law but very critical of the Lord, said within themselves, “This man blasphemeth.” But the Lord knew their thoughts and asks why they thought evil things in their hearts. To Him it meant the same to say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” as to say “Arise, and walk.” Any sins must be forgiven before the man could be healed of his affliction. But that they might know that the Son of Man had power to forgive sins, He saith unto the sick of the palsy, “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.” The man departed to his own home. In the man sick with palsy we have a picture of Israel. The day is coming when the Lord will both forgive all their iniquities and heal all their diseases.

“When the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.” They did not see that the One who wielded that power was God Himself.

The Lord goes on from here and sees a publican named Matthew sitting in the tax office. Knowing him to be a man of faith He says to him, “Follow Me,” which he did. The publicans were commonly classed as sinners, but this only brings out the Lord’s grace all the more in calling such. Matthew not only followed the Lord, but he invited Him and His disciples to his home where they sat down to eat at his table. Many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him also. But the Pharisees, who were always ready to find fault with Him, question the disciples as to why their Master would eat with publicans and sinners. When the Lord heard it He said unto them, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” They should have learned that the prophets had spoken of a time coming when Jehovah desired them to show mercy, rather than offer sacrifices to Him. They, however, claimed to not need a physician, but in heart they were far from Him and so did not hear His voice.

1. What two people are delivered in this passage of scripture?

2. Why weren’t the Pharisees glad to see people being healed?

3. For a wonderful commentary that includes the book of Matthew you would most likely enjoy The Evangelists by J. G. Bellett.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 8:19-34, Following Whom?

“And a certain scribe came, and said unto Him, “Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest,” but he did not realize where such a path would lead. Doubtless he thought that following Jesus would get him a good place with the Messiah in the kingdom, but the Lord tells him, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” He had no place to give to the scribe. It is sad to think that in spite of all the love the Lord had shown to Israel, yet they had no heart for Him. He was rejected and a stranger here — He had no place to lay His head.

Next we read of another, one of His disciples, who said to Him, “Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.” Here we have a different case. When the Lord calls, how often difficulties and trials are felt. The Lord, however, tells this one, “Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead.” That is, all are looked at as dead in the sight of God until quickened through grace, and natural ties must not come first. How often natural relationships come in as a hindrance between Christ and the soul. He must have the first place — “that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18).

We then have the Lord with His disciples in a little ship crossing the Sea of Galilee. “And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep.” The disciples, experienced sailors though they were, were afraid, and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us: we perish.” But how could they perish when the Lord was with them in the ship? “And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.” The men marveled, saying, “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and sea obey Him!” They had not yet discerned Him as the One who was the Creator and Sustainer of even what is commonly spoken of as nature.

On the other side of the sea the Lord was met by two people possessed by demons, and they were so fierce that none could pass that way. “And, behold, [the demons] cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?” Here we have a picture of the terrible power of Satan in this world. The demons acknowledge the authority of the Lord Jesus over them, and they know of a time appointed when He will send them into the bottomless pit. They ask if that is what He was doing now. But, no, the Lord was now showing mercy to those afflicted by them.

There was a herd of swine feeding on a hillside and they request that they might go into that herd of swine. The Lord commands them to go. “And ... they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.” Why did the Lord allow this? Partly because, we believe, He was testing the hearts of those in that area to see which they thought most important, their swine, which were forbidden by the law, or Himself as their Messiah. How sad the attitude of the people in the city who, when they heard what had happened, came out and asked the Lord Jesus to depart out of their coasts. How many there are today who desire to be left alone, even though they know they are going on in a way that’s completely contrary to the Word of God. They prefer the power of Satan to the liberating power of the grace of God.

1. What does it mean to have Christ be more important than natural relationships?

2. Why were the swine considered unclean animals?

3. For more on the fascinating subject of discipleship consider reading Discipleship — Its Terms, Tests and Rewards by B. Anstey.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 8:5-18, The Healer:

After the cleansing of the leper, the Lord Jesus is met by a Roman officer, a representative of the Gentile power that held the Jews in bondage. In general the Jews despised their Gentile masters. The centurion recognized the power in Jesus, but, unlike the leper, he does not doubt His willingness to heal. He comes to Jesus, beseeching Him and saying, “Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.” The Lord expresses His sympathy and willingness in His response, “I will come and heal him.” But the centurion realizes that as a Gentile he had no right to Jewish privileges, and so states that he is not worthy to have Jesus enter his house. He says to the Lord, “speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth . . . and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” He expresses the confidence that Jesus need only speak the word and his servant would be healed. The Lord marvels at the man’s faith and says to those who followed Him, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

The Lord goes on to say, “That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.” If Israel rejected their Messiah, then they as a

nation would be rejected. In the meantime blessing has come to the Gentiles.

“And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.”

Next we find the Lord Jesus in the house of Peter. There He saw Peter’s wife’s mother sick with a fever. “And He touched her hand, and the fever left her.” Usually a fever leaves one very weak, but here it tells us, “She arose, and ministered unto them.” It was divine power that healed her.

The Lord was unwearied in His love, for we read that “When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick.” This, the Evangelist records, was a fulfillment of that which the prophet Isaiah had spoken of Messiah, “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” Some have said that the Lord Jesus did this on the cross, but here it is shown to be in His life that He accomplished this. The Messiah was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities and we are healed by His stripes. This the New Testament speaks of His having done on the cross (Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24).

“Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side.” The Lord does not seek the admiration of the crowd, nor would He satisfy mere curiosity. It is His Father’s work that He has before Him, so He withdraws.

1. What made the centurion’s faith different from the faith of the leper in the previous verses?

2. What details show that the Lord healed by His divine power?

3. You would likely find Faith by H. P. Barker to be an excellent resource in considering that subject further.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 8:1-4, A Healed Leper:

The Lord Jesus comes down from the mountain and great crowds follow Him. “And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” Leprosy, that dread disease which only God could heal, is a type of sin, and only God can cleanse from sin. The leper was a type of Israel as they appeared in the presence of their Messiah. In fact it represents all men everywhere — sinners before God. But here we have Messiah as the great Physician come near in grace to heal.

The leper recognizes in Jesus One who had the power to heal, but he seems to doubt His willingness to do so. This seems to be the way that men in general think of the goodness of God. It was back in the garden of Eden that Satan succeeded in implanting in the heart of man that distrust of the goodness of God. The gospel is God’s answer to the lie of Satan. It tells how God, in the gift of His Son, has come out in the richest display of His grace and goodness toward lost, guilty man who is under the power of Satan. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son ” (John 3:16). The cross shows the greatness of that love and its application to us.

The leper says, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.” The Lord does not take offense at being approached in this way. Not only did He have the power, but He is also the sympathizing Jesus. The need of man could only draw out the compassions of His heart. He responds immediately to the poor man’s request and says, “I will.” Stretching out His hand, He touches him. He was the only one who could touch a leper and not be defiled by the dread disease. His whole pathway was through a defiled world, yet in no way was He defiled by it. He could say as He neared the close of His pathway down here, “the prince of this world [Satan] cometh, and hath nothing in Me” (John 14:30). He was holy, harmless and undefiled. He alone could go to Calvary’s cross in order to bear “our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24). There He bore the sins of those who put their trust in Him.

“And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” No medicine was needed. The Lord of life Himself had come down to heal. “And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.” Had the man gone telling every one instead of the priest, Satan might have gotten busy trying to misrepresent the work, perhaps seeking to make out that it was not he who had been the leper but another man, and so deny the miracle. He was to go to the priest, for it was the priest who had first pronounced him unclean and put him outside. Now the priest would see the unmistakable evidence that the man was healed. It was to be a testimony to him that Jehovah was Himself in the land, and that Jesus was God.

1. Had the priest in this story ever met a healed leper?

2. What other portions of scripture deal with the subject of leprosy?

3. The Law of the Leper by G. C. Willis is an excellent and simple introduction to the subject of leprosy in the Bible.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 7:15-29, False Professors:

The Lord had been speaking of the wide gate and the broad way that leads to eternal destruction, “and many there be which go in thereat.” How many profess the name of Christ who are mere professors and not possessors of eternal life. They go along with the multitude in the broad way. There has been the widening of the gate and the broadening of the way in contrast to the narrow separated path the Lord has marked out for His own in this world.

It is here in this connection that the Lord says: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” They might have a great many charming ways about them. Sadly it was faith merely in the natural man and not what would lead them to have no confidence in the flesh. Of these false prophets the Lord says, “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. … Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

The Lord's words that follow are very solemn for those who profess to know Him. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

The Lord closes His discourse with a word commending the wisdom of one who heeds His word. But He points out the sure ruin for every one that names the name of Christ who is not hearing and not doing His sayings. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock." It would stand with the violence of the wind and waves which were sure to come. On the other hand, "every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew . . . and great was the fall of it." It is a vivid picture of how mere profession without true faith will fall under the great onslaughts of Satan.

Here the Lord Jesus ends His teachings on the mount. He had held the attention of the people who were astonished at His doctrine. It was so different from the way the scribes taught, for there was a power there which was absent in their way of commenting on the Scriptures. The officers who were sent to take Him had to confess, "Never man spake like this Man" (John 7:46). Every one who enters the strait gate must own that His Word is far different to that of man. It is to abide after heaven and earth have passed away.

1. Where else does the Lord Jesus speak about hypocrites in the Word of God?

2. What is the outward proof of faith in God?

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 7:1-14, Pearls:

In this chapter the Lord speaks of that spirit which should characterize those who were called to enter into the kingdom. It is what their conduct should be towards one another and to men in the world. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."

It does not become them to judge others individually as to the motives which govern their actions before God. (This is not to be confused with that which the assembly is called upon to exercise when certain members have fallen into sin. Assembly discipline is presented in 1 Corinthians.) "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" A mote is used to illustrate small failings in contrast to larger faults, called "beams." Here the Lord Jesus is exposing the hypocrisy of those who see and magnify small faults in others, and pass over greater ones in themselves. He shows that the way to deal rightly, if we desire the good of His people and seek their deliverance from evil, is to begin with self-judgment. Often we will find that when one gets rid of a great fault in himself, the small failing in another will have disappeared too.

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." The Lord is not speaking here of the gospel of the grace of God which is for all men everywhere. The pearls would be those precious things which are the special treasures of those who belong to Christ. Examples include the love of Christ for the church His bride, His coming again for her and the place that she will share with Him in His glory. These blessed truths are to be enjoyed by the Lord's own and are not to be spread before those who have not received the Lord. They are counted as unclean through not having been cleansed from their sins. Such neither value nor appreciate these sacred things and so to place such treasures before them would only cause them to turn and attack the Lord's disciple.

Then we have the Father's care over His own in answer to the prayer of faith. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

After this He tells them that in their conduct toward others they should manifest the same spirit that their Father had shown toward them. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." It was only in acting according to these principles of faith that they could expect others to act in kindness toward them.

Finally the Lord puts before them the energy of faith. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." This way is in contrast to the natural desires of those who had not heeded the voice of Him who pleaded with them. They would attempt to make the gate large and the road broad and to deny the separated path in which God leads His own in the knowledge of Himself.

1. What other pearls can you think of?

2. What is meant by the "strait" or narrow gate?

3. You might find Self-Judgment by H. E. Hayhoe an excellent extension of the material in this chapter.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 6:19-34, Your Father Knows:

After His instructions as to prayer and fasting, the Lord Jesus lays down divine principles for guidance, to keep His own in separation from this world. The world doesn't know God and is under the prince of the power of the air, which is Satan. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." We're happy if our hearts are set on things above where Christ is. But if our hearts are

set on things down here, then those very things will prove a sorrow to us sooner or later. The Lord shows that “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.” Our hearts will be with what we value most. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon,” which means riches, here personified as man’s master in seeking to get on in this world. And so He says, “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . .” He would have us to have a peaceful trust about these things in the sure knowledge of the Father’s love and care. The Apostle could say, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Again, “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Then follow further lessons to be learned. “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. . . .” “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” If God takes care of these things in such a marvelous way, will He not take care of those who are His own through faith?

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” To the Jews the Gentiles were those without God, but we Christians have a Father in heaven who knows that we have need of these things. Why should we doubt His love?

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” If we make His glory down here our main concern, whether in our walk or in our service for Him, and if we give Him the first place in our lives, it will be His joy to take care of all our needs along the way. The Father is dealing with us in love for the glory. We can confide in Him, knowing that He knows best how to accomplish His purposes of grace.

“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” How often there are those anxious fears about some evil coming tomorrow. But then how often when there is submission to the Father’s will about it, the dreaded sorrow is taken away, and the Lord meets us with unexpected kindness and goodness. He can turn even the sorrow into a blessing, for He makes all things work together for good to those that love Him, to them who are called according to His purpose.

1. Who in the Bible was given refreshment when they were in a time of great stress?

2. What other promises does the Lord make to be with us in trial?

3. You might find The Last Words by H. Smith to be packed with help on resting in the Lord.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 6:1-18, Prayer:

In Chapter 6 the Lord takes up His people’s relationships with their fellowmen and with the heavenly Father. All their activities are known to Him and they are to conduct themselves accordingly. “Take heed that ye do not your alms [or your righteousness] before men, to be seen of them.” The giving of alms is first mentioned. It is to be done in secret: “let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” Those who do these things openly to be seen of others are called hypocrites, for it is “that they may have glory of men.” The same principles are applied in the matter of prayer. It is to be done in secret before the Father. It is not a question here of the prayer meeting. Among the Jews it was a custom at a certain hour of the day to be engaged in prayer, even in public. There were those who desired the praise of men for their devotions and so they did these things on the street corners, using empty repetitions. Such, the Lord said, were like the heathen, who were without God, and idolaters.

He then tells them how the Father should be addressed. This was appropriate to His coming kingdom and His moral character, which the Lord was revealing to His disciples. When the kingdom was come there was to be perfect obedience. His will would be done on earth as it was in heaven. Needless to say His kingdom has not come in that manner yet. The King was rejected by those who should have received Him. When He does take up the kingdom in power and reigns, His will will be carried out on earth as it is in heaven. He will put down all rebellion against Himself when He takes that place.

In the meantime there exists through the forbearance of God a moral kingdom, the King Himself being absent. In the Gospel of Matthew it is called the kingdom of heaven. The rule of heaven is respected by His disciples. However the world rejects Him, so suffering and persecution become the lot of His disciples.

Then we have what is commonly called “the Lord’s prayer.” This prayer expresses daily dependence, need of pardon and the desire to be kept from the evil one. These principles apply to the Lord’s people at all times. But the prayer itself was really for those disciples individually who needed to be instructed in the first principles of Christianity, or part of that which is spoken of as “the word of the beginning of the Christ” (Hebrews 6:1 JND): “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” There was that which Christ here below brought out and this was perfectly suited to His disciples in their state then. There is no thought of giving up those blessed truths, but now believers ought to go on to the understanding of Christ as He now is above. He was made “perfect through sufferings” and is now glorified in heaven. We believe that this prayer will be more suitable to the condition of the Lord’s own in that time of tribulation which is to follow after the Lord has removed His church to heaven. Those of this present dispensation know the Lord as the One who has redeemed them by His blood shed on the cross, and they know their sins are forgiven.

1. What is unique about a Christian’s prayers?

2. You would most likely find Prayer by H. P. Barker to be an excellent introduction to the subject.

3. For a more in-depth consideration of prayer you might read Prayer and the Prayer Meeting by C. H. Mackintosh.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 5:13-16, Salt and Light:

The rejection of the Messiah by the Jews resulted in their being set aside and dispersed by the Lord. In the meantime the church has been brought in through the death of Christ on the cross. After His definite rejection by the nation the Lord told His disciples He was going to build His church. “Upon this rock I will build My church” (Matt. 16:18).

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

Whatever the specific way God is dealing with the world, His own are the salt of the earth. That means they are its preservative, even though the world is ignorant of it. The gospel still going forth hinders the development of evil to a certain extent. The end of verse 13 shows that when those who proclaim the gospel mix it with the wisdom of this world, its power is lost and it is fit for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot by men. We can see this very thing taking place in certain parts of the world where there was once a power felt in the proclamation of the gospel. But when humanitarianism was first brought in, that power declined. Then later those very ones, who in an outward way benefited from the introduction of the gospel, turned on their benefactors. They have trodden them under foot and literally driven them out.

“Ye are the light of the world.” Salt would speak of that inward preserving power, but light sheds its rays abroad. “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” “Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.” How often has the gospel been followed with a commercial spirit, and thus the light has truly been hidden “under a bushel.” “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” The light of the gospel which should have shone out has often become dim, and so there has not been the glorifying of the Father in heaven.

It is good to notice that the Lord here is revealing the name of the Father to His disciples. The name of the Father had not been known in this way to the children of Israel in Old Testament times. When the birth of the Lord Jesus was foretold by Isaiah, one of the names He was to be known by was “The everlasting Father,” besides His being called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God and The Prince of Peace. These names show that the Messiah, while coming into this world in human form, was also divine. The nation of the Jews failed to recognize this fact, though it was spoken of in many ways. They had not received the Word of God in faith but only as a historical record of their own people.

1. In what way does a Christian let his light shine in this world?

2. In thinking about the different names of the Lord Jesus that are mentioned here, you might find The Names of God by P. Wilson helpful.

3. An excellent reference for considering salt, light and many other Bible topics can be found in the Concise Bible Dictionary by G. Morrish.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 4:11-22, Fruit of Victory:

The Lord had said to His adversary, “Get thee hence, Satan,” and the devil had left Him. In a later day when Peter, prompted by Satan, would have turned his Master from the cross, the Lord said to him, “Get thee behind Me, Satan.” Satan was the source of that prompting, but Peter needed the rebuke, as we need it at times. Yet no matter how sadly he may have failed, the Lord will never say to one of His own, “Get thee hence.” Nothing can separate us from His love (Rom. 8:38-39).

After Satan’s departure, the angels come and minister to Jesus, the victorious Son of Man. It is comforting to know from Hebrews 1:14 that the angels are ministering spirits unto them who shall be heirs of salvation. We are told to resist the devil and he will flee from us, for he is a defeated foe. We cannot command him, as the Lord did, but we can follow the pattern here set by the Lord Jesus. We look to Him for guidance that we may be able to quote from the Scriptures that which is suited to the occasion, which will cause Satan to flee.

We read in Luke 11:21-22, “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.” The Lord Jesus had overcome the strong man — Satan — and now He goes forth to bless and deliver man. But first we are told that John the Baptist had been cast into prison. The Lord Jesus sees in this John’s rejection by the responsible leaders of the nation. They had rejected John’s ministry which told them of the coming of the Messiah, and in so doing they rejected the Messiah personally. Accordingly He leaves Judea, the center of the religious activity of the people, and goes into Galilee, where the poor of the people lived. He first remains for a while at Nazareth where He had been brought up, that despised city in a despised part of the country. He was to be known as Jesus of Nazareth. We are told elsewhere (Luke 4:22) that they were offended at His lowly origin and refused His ministry. So He leaves Nazareth and comes and lives in Capernaum.

His coming to Capernaum was the fulfillment of that which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” That part of the land was regarded as the scene of darkness, yet it was just there that God caused light to arise in a most wonderful way. The people living there had been despised and neglected by those who had professed to have the light of God’s Word, but now they were visited by the One who was the Light of the world. Nazareth was in lower Galilee; Capernaum was in upper Galilee, and here was to witness His wonderful ministry of power and grace.

Satan had well nigh succeeded in drawing all men after him, but now the victorious Saviour begins to gather around Himself those who in their sorrows were awaiting the Deliverer. Some He calls to be His disciples, to be witnesses of His ministry and works of power, among them Simon Peter, Andrew his brother, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, all of whom were poor fishermen.

1. What does it mean when it says that the strong, armed man was overcome?

2. How does the Lord Jesus use His victory?

3. Our resources against Satan's power are nicely explained in the pamphlet Satan's Operations on the Lord's People by B. Anstey.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 4:5-10, Temptation:

"Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple." Again the tempter challenges Jesus: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." Perhaps we may frustrate Satan once by our dependence upon God, but he will come back again. If he cannot get in the front door, he will try to come in the back door.

The Lord Jesus had quoted Scripture in answering the devil. Now the devil will quote Scripture also. But since he had not loved the truth from the time of his fall, he distorts the Word. He quotes from Psalm 91, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most high," which speaks of the faithful Messiah. But he leaves out part of the verse. For where it mentions "He shall give His angels charge over Thee," it has for its purpose, "to keep Thee in all Thy ways." Those are the ways of Messiah as the faithful, dependent Man. Had He heeded Satan's suggestion, He would have placed Himself in Satan's ways. It was as if Satan said, The promise in this scripture plainly applies to You. Cast Thyself down; the Almighty has promised to keep You; test Him to see if He will be as good as His word. But surely we ought never to doubt that the Lord will be for us. If we do anything to prove Him, to see whether He will be for us, this is at once unbelief of the goodness of God and disobedience. The Lord would not allow for a moment the thought of putting God to the test to see if He would be true to His word. So He answers Satan in a way that is wonderfully instructive for every child of God when confronted by the enemy who distorts Scripture: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

In the Lord's saying, "It is written again," it shows that we are not to direct our ways in this life by the application of only one scripture. We need the whole Word of God.

In the third and last temptation the devil tries the Lord in a different way still. "The devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." Satan must have put on a grand display for the natural eye, because men like glory and power. But the Lord Jesus is the only one who is worthy of these as we learn from the Revelation. No doubt Satan knew that all glory and power and blessing belonged to Jesus. They would be His in a future day, after His time of suffering was over. Yet he would show the Lord an easier way of obtaining them. But here the Lord says, "Get thee hence, Satan," and He silences him with another word of Scripture: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." So the arch enemy leaves, defeated. God receives glory in the victory by the obedient and dependent Man. Jesus is seen here as the moral Conqueror of that one who has upset every man but Himself.

1. What did the tempting of the Lord Jesus show about Him?

2. How did the Lord respond to Satan's misquoting of Scripture?

3. For an in-depth study of this and the rest of Matthew's gospel you would probably find Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew by W. Kelly to be quite helpful.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 4:1-4, Dependence on God:

The Lord Jesus had taken His place among men, and the heavens had opened upon Him. He had been sealed and anointed with the Holy Ghost, and the Father had owned Him as His beloved Son. How blessed that He should come down here and take our place at the cross. We, through redemption, may now have His place. For heaven is now open to the believer; he is owned as a son of God and the Holy Ghost is given to him. He is loved with the same love with which the Father loves the Son.

But grace provokes the enemy. It is when souls are thus blessed that Satan's temptations are apt to come.

The Lord must now pass through a time of testing. He goes forth from that blessed event at the Jordan into a different scene — the wilderness — to be tried by the one who had caused Adam to fall. Satan would find out whether this Man would succumb to his wiles. How different the circumstances were in which Jesus was tested from those in which the tempter first found Adam! The Lord was in the wilderness among the wild beasts (Mark 1:13), but Adam, when tempted, was in a wonderful garden where everything was provided for his benefit by his Creator. Ever since then Satan has been tempting mankind. Over and over again it has been proved that man cannot withstand his wiles.

But what about the One who came to take man's place and to answer to God for him? Would He be able to stand? Satan stood ready to challenge Him with all that he had learned in dealing with men over the centuries.

"And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward [hungry]." It would appear that the temptation was going on all during those forty days, but after they were passed the tempter comes with the challenge: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." This temptation grew out of the Lord's circumstances. However He was a man who had no other will than His Father's will and so He answers, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Though hungry, He would not act upon Satan's suggestion to satisfy His hunger, which would take Him out of that place of dependence upon God. He would wait upon God. He rested upon the Word of God. To Him it was everything. He lived by it. Faith knows that God will take care of one who trusts in Him. It is a faith-filled person's business to keep God's Word. God will not fail to watch over and protect him.

It is interesting to notice that the three scriptures the Lord uses in silencing Satan are quotations from the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy contains the instructions and warnings given by Moses to the people just before they crossed the Jordan to enter the land of Canaan. If they were to possess and enjoy the land God gave them, there must be obedience to Him and dependence upon Him. Satan found in the Lord Jesus only perfect obedience and perfect trust in God. It was this that gave such power to His word. Thus He was preserved from

the snare of the enemy who was utterly beaten. It will be so with us if we seek grace to follow the pattern He has set for us.

1. What does the testing of the Lord Jesus by Satan show us?

2. How many different natural disadvantages did Jesus have in dealing with Satan compared to Adam?

3. An excellent set of thoughts on the Lord's humanity can be found in The Holy Humanity of Our Lord Jesus Christ by W. Kelly.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 3:7-17, Baptism:

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, and many came to him from Jerusalem, from Judea and from the country around about the Jordan. They confessed their sins and were baptized by him in the Jordan. We learn later that those who accepted John's message also accepted the message of the Lord Himself; those who refused the testimony of John also refused the testimony of the Lord Jesus.

The Pharisees and Saduccees, who were the religious leaders of the day, also came to hear John, but he called them a generation of vipers and asked, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" He told them that they would have to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, for every tree not bringing forth good fruit would be cut down and burned up.

John spoke of the One coming after him who was mightier than he, who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit, which was connected with His first coming. He would also baptize with fire, when He would appear in judgment. He was to gather the wheat into His garner but He would burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. The Holy Spirit would be the source of the energy of those who received the Lord Jesus. They would be born again as we learn in other Bible passages. He was to redeem them from their sins by His death on the cross.

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him." He would take this place among the poor of His people, who came and confessed that they needed to repent. There wasn't anything in His life which needed repentance, but He chose to be identified with those whose hearts were subject to the Word of God. If He did not accept John's baptism, it would link Him with the mass of the people who did not repent at the preaching of John. So when John remonstrated with Him as to there being no need for Him to be baptized, the Lord replied, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." So He allowed John to baptize Him. He came to take the lowest place among those of God's people, so that He might enter into their sorrows and sufferings and difficulties. He must be a true pattern and a perfect representative of everything which His children are expected to go through.

As the Lord Jesus came up out of the water, something happened which had never before taken place in the history of man upon earth. The heavens opened unto Him, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and lighted upon Him, while the Father's voice from heaven was heard, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Never before had there been one who by His life could call forth such a wonderful testimony from God. There had been men of great faith on earth at various times and God had used them, but it was only through His grace that He could do so. There was always some failure in every one of them. But the Father's eye could look down in love upon His beloved Son and see nothing but perfection. "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

1. What does it mean to "baptize with fire"?

2. Why did Jesus ask John to baptize Him?

3. An excellent introduction to the subject of repentance can be found in the pamphlet Repentance by H. P. Barker.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 2:7-15, Worshipping Wise Men:

Herod inquired of the wise men how long it was since they had first seen the star. Then he told them to go to Bethlehem and search diligently for the young child and to come back and tell him. He made it appear that he, too, would go and worship Him, but we know his real purpose was to destroy Him. Disappointed, no doubt, at Jerusalem the wise men departed; "and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was." Then it says, "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." They had good reason to rejoice since they were finally nearing the object of their quest. They must have taken that last lap of their long journey with eager anticipation, for Bethlehem was only about five miles from Jerusalem.

"When they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother." It is instructive to notice that they were not at all taken back to find such a wonderful Person in such humble circumstances. They simply went into the house and when they saw the young child, they "fell down, and worshipped Him." This was a blessed moment in the history of their souls. They bowed in adoration. What a beautiful sight for God the Father and for all heaven to look down upon. "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight." And all those who bow before Him, now as the risen exalted Saviour at God's right hand, experience this same blessedness in a richer measure. "And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." These were very costly gifts but the best they had were for Jesus.

It might be helpful to point out that the visit of the wise men was not at the same time as the birth of the Lord Jesus. We are not told how long after His birth it was, but it must have been multiple months. In all probability the star first appeared to these men in their own land at the time of His birth. It would then take some time to make preparations for such a long journey which together with the journey itself would occupy some months. Then too they did not go directly to Bethlehem but to Jerusalem, where they inquire, "Where is the King of the Jews that has been born?" (Matt. 2:2 JND). When the shepherds came to Bethlehem, they found "the babe lying in a manger," but in the case of the wise men, it says, "When they were come into the house, they saw the young child." Furthermore we read that Herod diligently sought to find out the time when the star first appeared as if it were then that the child was born.

The wise men found that God was watching over the young child they had come to worship, for He warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their own land by another way. After their departure the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told them that Herod would seek to destroy the young child. He was to take the young child and to flee into Egypt and stay there until He brought him word again. It is nice to see Joseph's simple faith in his willingness to carry out these instructions. He arose and took the young child and His mother by night and went into Egypt.

1. What's the best we can have that's for Jesus?

2. How did God care for the man Christ Jesus?

3. For more on the essential theme of worship you might find Five Letters on Worship and Ministry in the Spirit by W. Trotter to be both helpful and challenging.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 2:1-6, The Star:

This chapter opens with the visit of the wise men from the East. They come to Jerusalem asking, "Where is the King of the Jews that has been born? for we have seen His star in the east, and have come to do Him homage" (Matt. 2:2 JND). How many there were in their company we are not told, but it is likely there were more than the three usually depicted in pictures.

Their coming was all the more remarkable since at this time the Jews were under the sway of the Roman Empire, and they had a foreign king over them, Herod an Edomite. This fact shows that the Lord was displeased with His people, for according to the law an Edomite could not come into the congregation until the third generation, yet here was one who was their king.

Surely God Himself must have moved these eastern men to undertake that long weary journey of perhaps a thousand miles, more or less, for it is likely they traveled on camels over dangerous routes. We do not know how much spiritual intelligence they had. However there is no doubt that the word that God had put into the mouth of that wicked prophet Baalam long before had spread abroad in Gentile lands: "there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel. . . . Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion" (Num. 24:17-19). It has been said that many Gentiles in the East had long expected the rise of some great one in the land of Palestine. It may be that the wise men connected this report with the sudden appearance of the star; at any rate they had set out for Jerusalem, the capital of the land of Israel.

Herod and all Jerusalem were greatly troubled to have these representatives of an eastern nation come and inquire after One who had been born as their King. And to think that they in the religious center of that nation knew nothing of His birth! In the Gospel of Luke it tells us that an announcement of this wonderful event had been given by the angels to some poor shepherds watching over their flocks by night in the country near Bethlehem. But the angels had passed Jerusalem by. Their message to the shepherds was announced as "good tidings of great joy," and the shepherds had received it with joy. Although different effects are produced in souls when Christ is presented. The shepherds praised God, and later the wise men rejoiced, but Herod "was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." It seems they did not share the desire of the shepherds to go and see. Still the high priests and scribes had the intelligence of the Scriptures. They could tell Herod that Bethlehem of Judea was the place where Messiah was to be born, according to the prophet Micah, chapter 5:2. This shows that it is possible to have a certain knowledge of the Scriptures and yet have no love for Him of whom they testify. These men from the East had only a little light, but they acted on what they had, and they got the blessing. That's the way faith will always act.

Bethlehem means "The house of bread," and Ephratah means "fruitful." Many precious memories were connected with Bethlehem-Ephratah. Rachel died there; Ruth first met Boaz there; David was born there, and best of all, Jesus was born there. Those who seek Him find in Him the place of all blessing and fruitfulness.

1. Why was Herod so disturbed?

2. How does faith respond to hearing about the Messiah?

3. For more on Baalam and his prophecy you might find Jonah and His Experiences and Balaam: His Words and Ways by W. W. Fereday to be quite helpful.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 27:45-66, Death and Burial:

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." It was during those three last hours that the Lord, shut in from man and all around, was alone, drinking that awful cup of the judgment of God against sin. It was then that He was "made sin"; "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). It was then those mighty waves and billows of eternal judgment rolled over His holy soul. It was all this that forced Him to utter that cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was there making atonement. He was forsaken that sinners who believe might never be forsaken. There He destroyed the power of him who had the power of death, that is the devil.

Then, having cried again with a loud voice, Jesus yielded up His Spirit to the Father. All was over. Atonement was made. Redemption was accomplished. "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." Like the bursting of a mighty dam, the river of God's grace could now flow forth to a world of sinners. God could come out in all His grace to man, and man could now go into the presence of God in virtue of the perfect work of Christ.

"The earth did quake, and the rocks rent." It was a token of the passing of the old creation and the bringing in of the new, founded on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out

of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

When the Roman centurion and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw all these things, they feared greatly and said, "Truly this was the Son of God." The heart of the heathen was bowed while the hearts of the Jews remained unmoved.

We read of the suffering Messiah in Isaiah 53:9 (JND): "Men appointed His grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death". God had a vessel prepared to fulfill that prophecy. Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, came to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Pilate gave consent and Joseph took that precious body of the Saviour, wrapped it in a clean cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb. Then he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, however, sat by the sepulchre and watched.

The bad conscience of the Jews is seen in their coming to Pilate and asking that the sepulchre be sealed until the third day. They remembered that the Lord had said He would rise the third day, and they suggest the thought that His disciples might come and steal His body away and claim that He was risen. Pilate, however, in contempt for their malice, tells them to look after the matter themselves. So the stone is sealed and also a watch set. But what were guards and seals against the power of God? We see how God only used the wicked thought of the Jews to accomplish His purpose, for they themselves were made witnesses of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

1. Why was there an earthquake when Jesus died?

2. How did the Jews' carefulness in sealing the tomb work out for God's glory?

3. Notes and Reflections on the Psalms by A. Pridham might be helpful in considering the Psalms such as Psalm 22 which was quoted in this chapter.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 27:24-44, Golgotha:

Led on by their guilty leaders, the Jews persevere in their enmity against Jesus and raise a tumult crying, "Let Him be crucified." The Roman governor, though bound to protect one whom he knew to be an innocent and just man, was nevertheless a man with little conscience. In the pride of careless greatness, he despised all those that surrounded him there. His own position and the peace of the city were worth more to him than a poor man of no apparent human importance, no matter how just He might be. So in cruel indifference he washes his hands of the whole matter and puts the responsibility of the death of Jesus on those who desired it.

The foolish Jews answer, "His blood be on us, and on our children," and there that curse remains. In a coming day sovereign grace will work in the hearts of a little remnant who will own the sin they committed. Grace will then change the blood of the curse into the blood of atonement. The blood they shed will be that which will cleanse them from their very sin in shedding it. We are saved through this same grace now. That blood washes whiter than snow every sinner who believes in Jesus.

Pilate released Barabbas, and, having had Jesus scourged, he delivered Him to be crucified. Pilate had set the example and the soldiers now subject the blessed Lord to the very worst insult and outrage. In mockery they strip Him and put on Him a scarlet robe — which signifies Jewish royalty. They put a crown of thorns on His head and a reed in His right hand, and, bowing before Him, hailed Him as King of the Jews. "And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head." Then they put His own clothes on Him and led Him away to crucify Him. The bulls of Bashan were there and these dogs surrounded the Saviour (Psalm 22), yet He bore it all without a murmur — He was the patient, suffering victim. On the way they compel one, Simon a Cyrenian, to bear His cross — something they would not do themselves. Finally they come to Golgotha, "a place of a skull" — symbol of man's empty intelligence when the world's leaders unite — both Jew and Gentile — to put to death their Creator, the blessed Son of God.

When they came to Calvary, the soldiers offer Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall, the purpose of which was to make the victim less sensitive to suffering, but the Lord refuses such relief. He would drink the cup the Father had given Him in peaceful submission and would know its whole bitterness.

They crucified the Lord at the third hour, which, we believe, would be nine o'clock in the morning. They parted His garments, casting lots for them, "And sitting down they watched Him there." Pilate caused to be written over His cross, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then to add further insult, two robbers were crucified along with Him, one on each hand, with Jesus in the midst.

The awful state of the unhappy priests is seen in their mocking Him and saying, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." The thieves also joined in railing on Him.

In those first three hours man did his worst to insult and degrade the Son of God. Then God, as it were, drew a veil over the whole scene.

1. What does Golgotha mean?

2. What made Pilate's act so unjust?

3. The Lord's sufferings at this time are expressed in Psalm 69. Excellent help on this and other psalms can be found in Psalms by H. Smith.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 26:69-27:23, Denial and Trial:

Peter, who had been so bold in declaring he was ready to go to prison and death with the Lord, now shows what feeble man is even when love is sincere. Before the world the flesh has no power, and poor Peter denies His blessed Master with oaths and curses. Still his heart was true and the Lord had prayed for him that his faith might not fail. The Lord's look, so full of grace, broke him down, and he went out and wept bitterly. But unlike Judas, his was not the sorrow of despair but of repentance. The blessed effect in his heart was that when he was restored,

he was able to strengthen his brethren, having learned what human strength is in the things of God.

At the early morning council the Lord was formally condemned to death, after which he was bound and sent to Pilate the Roman governor.

Then we have the sad end of Judas. No doubt he thought Jesus would escape as He had often done so before, but this only made his iniquity the worse. When he saw that the Lord was condemned, he “repented himself,” and in despair brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. What comfort is there in money to one in despair? Still less is there any to be found in Satan who had led him into his awful sin. Nor did he find any sympathy in those religious chiefs, his companions in wickedness, who ought to have led him in the right way.

If the sin of Judas was frightful on the one hand, the cruel heartlessness of the chief priests was as appalling on the other. When the poor wretched Judas confesses to them, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,” they answer, “What is that to us? see thou to that.” They had gained their end and did not care how it affected him. Judas, on receiving their answer, threw down the money in the temple, and in the blackness of despair he went out and hanged himself. Then, in the following act of these unscrupulous chiefs, we see how that the most outward religiousness and the worst wickedness are found together. They did not scruple to buy the blood of the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver, yet to put that money into the treasury was defiling. So they purchased with it the field in which to bury strangers — Gentiles. They counted themselves, and any Jew, too holy to be profaned by being buried there, yet it was good enough for Gentiles.

Next the Lord stands before Pilate and witnesses a good confession. The governor asks Him, “Art Thou the King of the Jews?” The Lord answers, “Thou sayest.” When He is accused by the chief priests and elders He answers nothing — He is still the willing victim; “as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth” (Isa. 53:7). Pilate, struck by the moral dignity of the prisoner, marvels at His silence. He could see that it was for envy they had delivered Him up to him, and he seeks to release Him. He takes advantage of a custom whereby he would release one of their prisoners at the passover feast. They had at that time a notable prisoner, Barabbas, who had led an insurrection and was a murderer. Pilate asks, which of the two he should release unto them — Barabbas or Jesus? Furthermore Pilate had received a warning from his wife to have nothing to do with that just man, for she had suffered many things in a dream because of Him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and to destroy Jesus. It shows how entirely under the power of Satan they were to choose such a notoriously wicked man instead of the Lord of life and glory.

1. Why was Judas’ pay used to buy a burial plot for strangers?

2. What do Ahithophel, Saul and Judas have in common?

3. Judas’ suicide was Satan’s use of his servant. God’s care can be found in Do Thyself No Harm by J. A. Kaiser.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 26:47-68, Betrayal:

Matthew 26:47-68

The Lord had been practically alone in the Garden of Gethsemane, for even his disciples had slept while He prayed. If He had looked for some one to watch with Him, it was to feel that there was none. But He had gone through it all with His Father as to His path, and it was settled. The time had now come that the Son of Man should be betrayed into the hands of sinners.

“And while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves”. Here man and the blessed Lord are again in contrast. The Lord could have disappeared in the darkness after having warned His disciples, but He hadn’t come for that. He must be the obedient and submissive victim, the lamb led to the slaughter (Isa. 53:7), the perfect sacrifice for sin, in order to make atonement and to lay down His life for the sheep. It was His perfect love that held Him fast. On the other hand unhappy Judas comes and betrays his Master by that very act which expresses intimacy and love. “He came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed Him.” What a terrible thing it was to betray the Son of God and Lord of glory! Yet even in that awful hour the calmness and dignity of the blessed Lord shines above all, and His only answer to the deceit of Judas was “Friend, wherefore art thou come?”

Then they lay hands on Jesus and take Him away. And here one of those with Him draws his sword and strikes a servant of the high priest and cuts off his ear. From the other gospels we learn that it was Peter who struck the blow and that the Lord healed the wounded man. The Lord commands His disciple to put up his sword, saying, “all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?”

The Lord’s words to the multitudes only showed His tenderness and compassion towards them. “Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take Me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on Me.” They were led by others, but they would not have been led this way if they themselves were not far from God. At this point the disciples forsake their Master and flee. They save themselves, leaving the Lord in the hands of His captors. They lead Jesus away to Caiaphas the high priest where the scribes and the elders were assembled, awaiting His capture. All was prepared. Peter follows afar off, and going in to the high priest’s palace he sits with the servants to see the end. The chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death, but none could be found. At last two came forward and declared that He had said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.” But to all their charges the Lord was silent.

However, when the high priest turns and adjures Him to answer if He be the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God, He could not be silent. He at once answers that He was, for He must confess to the truth of His Person. “Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” They would only see Him coming in power and glory for judgment. The Lord was condemned for the truth that He confessed. “Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him.” He was again the victim of insult and outrage.

1. Had the Lord said He would “destroy the temple of God”?

2. Why did the Lord remain silent?

3. For more on this epic day read 33 Prophecies Fulfilled in One Day.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 26:31-46, Gethsemane:

On the way to the mount of Olives the Lord warned His disciples that that night they would all forsake Him, as it is written in Zechariah 13, I will “smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.” Nevertheless, after He was risen, He would go before them into Galilee, the place where He had labored so much among the poor of His people.

Peter had not yet learned his lesson that he could not trust his own heart, for he said to the Lord, “Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.” The other disciples expressed themselves likewise. Poor Peter had to learn through bitter experience that his love for the Saviour would never keep him but only the Saviour’s love for him. The Lord told him, “this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.”

Then they arrived at the garden of Gethsemane where He left His other disciples and took with Him Peter, James, and John, the same three who had been privileged to be with Him and to see His glory on the mount of transfiguration. They were now to be witnesses of His humiliation. He began to be sorrowful and very heavy. “Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me.”

Going a little farther He fell on His face in His earnestness and prayed, “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” The Lord underwent the awful anticipation of the cross. He felt what it would mean for Him who knew no sin to take upon His holy soul our load of sin and to be made sin for us. He felt the awful pressure on His soul of death as the power of Satan. He was perfect in shrinking from such a judgment, and yet He was perfect in submitting to the Father’s will, for it was His will that His beloved Son should drink that cup. Surely our hearts ought to be bowed in worship and thanksgiving before Him who underwent all this agony for us, who took our place and bore the judgment that we deserved. He has set us free to serve Him down here and to be with Him above forever!

“And He cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep.” They went to sleep on the mount of transfiguration, and they go to sleep here in the garden. Such we are. Nature, the flesh, appreciates neither the glory of Christ nor His humiliation. He “saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” The Lord sets the perfect example for them. He watched, and prayed, and entered not into temptation, though tempted as none other ever was.

“He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.” When He came back He found the disciples asleep again. He went away the third time and prayed, saying the same words, and coming to His disciples He said, “Sleep on now, and take your rest.” The time of their watchfulness was now over. The hour of His betrayal had come as the traitor drew near.

1. Why did the Lord say, “not as I will, but as Thou wilt”?

2. Where else in Scripture is the humiliation put before the glory?

3. More on what the Lord went through at this time can be found in The Sufferings of Christ by J. N. Darby.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 26:17-30, The Passover and the Lord’s Supper:

The first day of the feast of unleavened bread had now come and the disciples ask the Lord, “Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the passover?” He instructs them to go into the city to such a man and to say to him, “The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with My disciples.” It is noticeable that the Lord acts as the One who has authority over the place. In Mark He speaks of it as His guest-chamber. He might be rejected, yet He speaks with the calm dignity of One conscious of who He was — the rightful Messiah and Lord of all.

When the evening comes, He sits down with the twelve. Now He tells them of the deep grief of His heart. “Verily I say unto you,” He says, “that one of you shall betray Me.” His sorrow draws out the grief in the hearts of the disciples and they begin to ask, “Lord is it I?” Judas hears his own doom when the Lord answers, “He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish . . . it had been good for that man if he had not been born.” Then, afraid that he might be detected if he kept silent, Judas also asks, “Master, is it I?” and the Lord tells him, “Thou hast said.”

At the close of the passover supper, the Lord institutes that which later the apostle speaks of as the Lord’s supper (1 Cor. 11:20).

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” The Lord well knew that Satan would enter into Judas to betray Him, that the leaders were plotting His death, that the multitudes whom He had healed and fed would turn against Him, and that His own disciples would flee and leave Him alone. Yet nothing could stop the outflow of His love. His heart was filled with thoughts of infinite love, both for His own and for man, of which these memorials of His death so simply speak.

How precious to us now that He should say, “this is My blood . . . which is shed for many.” It was in those purposes of love that we, who were outside Israel, sinners of the Gentiles, should come under the blessing of the new covenant, for in Him “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7).

Then the Lord tells them, “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.” A Nazarite must not drink wine nor strong drink (Num. 6:1-21). Here the Lord sets Himself apart as the true Nazarite. If He must give up the companionship of His disciples, it is that He might accomplish their redemption. Now He waits, and we wait too, to renew it in better and brighter scenes above — in His Father’s kingdom.

After the supper they sang a hymn together, and then they went out to the mount of Olives where the Lord frequently went.

1. Why did the Lord take the place of a Nazarite?

2. What are some differences between the passover and the Lord’s supper?

3. More on the subject of this chapter can be found in the simple pamphlet The Lord’s Supper by C. H. Mackintosh.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 26:1-16, Hatred for Christ:

We now come to the closing scenes of our Lord’s life on earth. He had left Jerusalem, and sat down upon the mount of Olives where He told His disciples of the judgment of the latter days and of His coming as the Son of Man. Having finished all these sayings, He now recalls their attention and their thoughts to the solemn hour that was approaching — the hour of His sufferings and His cross.

“Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified.” This is what the passover would mean to Him. The chief priests, the elders and scribes — the great and wise of this world — had already decided on His death, but they said, “Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.” The people, who in vast numbers had enjoyed the effects of His power and goodness, might stir up a tumult if the authorities attempted to get rid of Jesus in a violent and unjust manner. However, man’s heart was thoroughly wicked, for when the time for Him to die actually came, the only tumult that was raised was the cry, “Crucify Him, crucify Him.”

We know that it was in the counsels of God that His beloved Son should die at this time as the true Lamb of God. The priests might take precautions to avoid having the deed carried out on that day, but God disposes of their plans and uses their very plots to accomplish His purpose. How wonderful, beyond all thought! that God should use the occasion of man’s awful wickedness at the cross, where they nailed His Son, to triumph over man’s sin and Satan’s power. He opened up the way whereby the glory of His grace could shine out to a lost guilty world. For “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). The cross is the measure and the pledge of God’s love to man. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

We now return to Bethany where the Lord with His disciples was found in the house of Simon the leper. “There came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as He sat at meat.” We learn from John’s Gospel that this was Mary of Bethany, and that the box of ointment could have been sold for three hundred pence. How vast the difference between Mary’s estimate of Jesus and the value the chief priests and elders put upon Him! They bargained with Judas to sell Him to them for a mere thirty pieces of silver — the price of a slave was enough for the despised Lord of all.

The disciples recognize the cost of the ointment and even they consider it a waste to use it in such a manner. But the Lord vindicates Mary, and though she might not know what was to take place, nevertheless He credits her with anointing Him for His burial. They would have the poor always with them, but they would not always have Him, and what she had done would be told out in the gospel publicly.

Judas leaves this solemn scene and goes to the chief priests to whom he agrees to sell the Lord. He had been with His blessed Master for a long time and had witnessed His acts of power and grace, yet he was a false disciple. His heart had never been touched in any way by the Lord’s goodness. Instead it had become hardened. He is a solemn instance of how far one might be under the influence and power of the gospel, and yet become an apostate.

1. What value was placed on the Lord?

2. How does Peter express the Lord’s value?

3. A wonderful discussion of Mary of Bethany can be found in Three Marys by E. Dennett.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 25:11-46, The Gospel of the Kingdom:

The Lord has told us in Matthew 24:14 that the “gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” This will be after the church has been caught up to heaven. Those who will carry this message to all the world will be the faithful servants of Christ from among the Jews. The gospel of the kingdom that they proclaim will not be the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus, which tells of an accomplished redemption. But it will announce to all the world that the King is coming to set up His kingdom, that He is about to crush the serpent’s head and to take His great power and reign.

We can see how contrary the course of this world is to the purposes of God with respect to His beloved Son. Satan, the Beast, and the men of this world, who want the earth for themselves, will be set to oppose any interference from God with their schemes. But “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision” (Psa. 2:4). Yet the tidings of the coming kingdom will bring upon the Lord’s messengers such fierce persecution that those who dare to show them even the smallest ordinary kindnesses will do so at the risk of their lives.

Now in our chapter, from verse 31 to the end, we have the judgment of those living nations to whom this gospel of the kingdom has been sent.

“When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations.” Here it tells us that the holy angels will be with Christ when He sits in judgment. Elsewhere we learn that His saints shall also accompany Him when He comes from heaven (2 Thess. 1:10; 2:1; Rev. 19:14). During this present interval of grace, the Lord is in heaven sitting upon the Father’s throne, but in that day He will sit upon His own throne, for all things in heaven and earth shall be put under Him.

The judgment of the wicked dead at the great white throne, one thousand years later, will be in heaven (Rev. 20:7-15). The solemn judgment scene before us is on earth. It is not a question of a general judgment, as many believe, but the living nations are judged according to how they treated the messengers of the gospel of the kingdom. It is of this only that they give an account to the judge.

There are three classes spoken of here — the sheep, those who received the messengers kindly; the goats, those who did not; and the brethren of the Judge, the messengers themselves. The sheep are set on the King’s right hand and He says to them: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” The sheep do not pretend to have shown any kindness to the King personally, but all that they had done to His messengers He takes as having been done to Himself. He credits them as having received Him.

The goats on the other hand, those who had rejected the messengers, are set on the King’s left, and He tells them, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” They might only have shown indifference to the messengers or they might have rejected them outright, but the King takes it as having been done unto Himself. We can see from this that even now it is a solemn thing to hear the message of God’s love and grace and to turn from it.

1. Who are the goats referred to in this passage?

2. Where else is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom referred to?

3. A thorough book on the subject of the kingdom can be found in Lectures on the Second Coming and Kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by W. Kelly.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 25:1-10, Ten Virgins:

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.” This characterized the early Christians at the very beginning. He who had just died for them had gone away from them into the glory of God. But before going away He left them a promise, that He would return to take them to that same glorious place where He was going Himself. “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself” (John 14:3). Cheered by this promise and filled with this hope, they went forth to meet Him. The world, which had just cast out and rejected Him whom their hearts loved, presented no attractions to them. They coveted not its glories nor its honors, and they sought not its pleasures. Thoughts of their absent Lord filled their hearts and they longed for the moment when they should see Him and be with Him. They “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven” (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

“Their lamps” set forth the light of their profession. Their calling was to meet the Bridegroom and to light Him on His way. “And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.” Ten speaks of complete human responsibility, while five speaks of weakness. The wise have oil with them for their lamps, and they represent those who are “born again” and have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. They have the Bridegroom’s interests at heart and so are prepared to carry out that for which they are called.

“They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them.” They have only a formal interest in the wedding and so do not think it necessary to have oil for their lamps. They represent those who have professed the name of Christ, but they are not really “born again” and have not the Holy Spirit, which alone can fit them to welcome the Lord or to enjoy His presence.

“While the bridegrom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.” The early Christians had expected the coming of the Saviour in their lifetime, and they had taken up their cross to follow Him. But the months and years rolled by, and still there was no sign of His return. No doubt their faith was being tested, but alas, their hearts grew weary of waiting. The world, too, grew weary of persecuting them and began to spread before their eyes its glittering attractions. Worldliness came in like a flood, and the church began to seek her home and portion in the scene from which her Lord had been cast out. “They all slumbered and slept,” as the centuries rolled by.

“And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” Doubtless it was the Spirit of God in grace that brought forth that cry that awakened the slumbering church. We believe this cry went forth over a century ago when the truth of the Lord’s coming, so long lost sight of, began to be preached throughout Christendom.

“Then all those virgins” — the foolish as well as the wise — “arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone [going] out.” One might be baptized, confirmed, a regular churchgoer, a Sunday school teacher, and even a preacher, and yet if still unsaved, all this is like the lamp without oil which before long will go out. Then the lifeless, Christless professor will be plunged into the awful darkness of eternal night. No Christian can impart the Holy Spirit to another; one must obtain it himself from the Saviour whose only terms are “without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1).

1. What did the “slumber” of the virgins represent?

2. How does worldliness keep someone from looking for the Lord’s coming?

3. The Lord’s Coming by C. H. Mackintosh gives fascinating insight into this important time.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 24:28-51, Judgment:

When the Lord as Son of Man comes in judgment it will be with the brightness and suddenness of lightning. But the Lord adds further: “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” The “carcass” represents the lifeless, apostate part of the nation of Israel. The eagles symbolize the penetrating eyes of God and His swiftness in judgment.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” No doubt this is symbolic language. When God interferes in that day, all authority which governs the world shall fall, and all the powers in rebellion against Him shall be overthrown forever.

The disciples had asked the Lord, “What shall be the sign of Thy coming?” (vs. 3). Here He tells them, “then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.” It was in heaven the sign of His coming would be seen. “And then shall all the tribes of the earth [land] mourn.” We believe it is more the land of Israel the Spirit of God has in view here. “And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

“And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Not only in Israel will His elect be delivered, but from the four winds of heaven (Zech. 2:6) shall His chosen ones be gathered in. It is a sweet and comforting thought that while He will send His angels to gather back His earthly people when He comes for the church, His bride, He is coming Himself. “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout ... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

After this the Lord gave His disciples another sign of His coming in the parable of the fig tree — a type of Israel as a nation. “When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.”

All that He had spoken would surely come to pass. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.”

But no one would know the day nor the hour of His coming except the Father. The wickedness that filled the earth in the days of Noah would characterize the last days at the coming of the Son of Man, who will judge with righteous discernment. “Then two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” One shall be taken away in judgment, and the other left to enjoy Christ’s blessed reign.

In the end of the chapter we get principles that would apply to a Christian now in view of all that the Lord had said. The faithful and wise servant would continue in the work the Lord had given him to do and would receive a blessed portion at His coming. The unfaithful servant would be judged as a hypocrite.

1. Where else was the fig tree used to represent Israel?

2. Why do eagles represent penetrating sight and swift judgment?

3. A more in-depth exposition of Matthew 24-25 can be found in The Olivet Discourse by B. Anstey.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 24:3-28, The Olivet Discourse:

The Lord had just pronounced the solemn words of judgment with respect to the temple: “Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” After leaving the city He goes to the mount of Olives and His disciples come and ask Him: “Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the [age]?” — that is, the end of the time during which the Lord should be absent from them.

This leads the Lord to speak of many things which should take place before His coming. There would be false Christs appearing and deceiving many, and there would be wars and rumors of wars. There would be famines, pestilences and earthquakes in many places. But these would only be the beginning of sorrows for that guilty nation on account of their rejection of Him. His disciples would be persecuted and killed and hated for His name’s sake. False prophets would arise and deceive many, and on account of the prevailing lawlessness many would give up their profession of faith. But those who would endure through this time of trial would be saved. Also there would be those who through this time of trial would carry the gospel of the kingdom unto all nations before the end would come.

It is clear that what the Lord is speaking of here does not refer to Christians, but to the Jewish disciples as they were then and to the Jewish remnant of the future day. The Jewish remnant’s hope is for Messiah to come in His glory back to earth to reign over them and to set them free from their Gentile oppressors. Then His presence will put an end to all their sorrows and bring in everlasting joy. The Christian’s hope, however, is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and to reign forever with Him in heavenly glory and eternal happiness.

The Lord then refers to the prophecy in Daniel 9:27 and 12:11, when the nation should be given over to idolatry, and an idol would be set up in the temple. This would bring about the great tribulation. Those who refused to worship this idol would have to flee into the mountains to escape. It would be the greatest tribulation that ever had taken or ever would take place. But the Lord has set a definite limit on how long that tribulation could last. “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”

The Lord warns them of false prophets and Christs who should show great signs and wonders and who would, if it were possible, deceive the Lord’s own people. “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.” Christ’s coming will not be in secret when He returns to deliver His own. “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.” Every eye will see Him then. His appearing will be as sudden and

rapid as the lightning.

God “hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man [Jesus] whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).

1. What is the beginning period of the coming tribulation called?

2. How many different portions of Scripture point ahead to this time?

3. A wonderful way to read through the scriptures that refer to this coming time is with the chronologically arranged Prophetic Scriptures by C. E. Lunden.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 23:1-24:2, Coming Destruction:

The Lord in chapter 23 instructs the multitudes and His disciples concerning their attitude toward those who were in the place of authority. He acknowledges the scribes and Pharisees as being in that place. They were attempting to rule the people by the law of Moses, though they themselves were not walking according to it. The disciples were to yield obedience to all they commanded; “but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.” They liked to pretend that they were doing what was commanded and to be acknowledged by the people as devoted, godly men. Also they loved the chief seats in the synagogues. They liked to be called Rabbi, or Master, but the Lord commands His disciples not to desire such titles, “for one is your Master, even Christ.”

Furthermore they were not to call any one Father on earth, “for One is your Father, which is in heaven.”

Then the Lord pronounces woe upon the scribes and Pharisees, calling them hypocrites because of the things they were doing, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.” Here the Lord evidently means the apostles and prophets who went about among the people, as we read in the Acts.

After this the Lord mourns over Jerusalem, His own city. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” It was no longer His house, but theirs, and it is left unto them desolate. They in their lack of faith had placed themselves under the Romans for protection, and it had proved to be a heavy yoke. But in their delivering up the Lord to Pilate, they had said, “We have no king but Caesar.” The Romans did come about forty years later and destroyed Jerusalem. It is said that over a million Jews at that time were either slain or sold into slavery.

Nevertheless, there is hope in the end for faith, for the Lord tells them that they would see Him no more until they shall say, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Israel will yet see their King, but not until a remnant is converted to welcome Him back. They will not be ready for this until they have passed through the great tribulation.

Then in chapter 24, as has often been noticed with the disciples (who had not yet received the Holy Spirit), they failed to enter into the Lord’s most solemn teachings. They now desire to show Him some of the magnificent buildings of the temple. The Lord has to tell them, “Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

1. Why was Jerusalem destroyed in 70 A.D.?

2. What will Israel go through before they see their Messiah again?

3. A long but interesting account of the history around the time when Jerusalem was destroyed can be found in Josephus: The Essential Writings translated by P. L. Maier.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 22:1-14, Grace:

In the last chapter we had how man under responsibility failed utterly and went on to slay the Son of God. But, wondrous grace! God would still act in grace for He is rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4). In the next parable, which presents God the Father as the king with the son being the Son of God, we have the way in which grace goes out to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. He likens the kingdom of heaven to a king who made a marriage for his son — the King acts for the glory of His Son, “and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.” Thus the kingdom was announced while the Lord was Himself here below, but it says, “they would not come.” However, after Jesus died and rose He sent out a new appeal by other servants, saying, “Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.” But the gospel was not appreciated by the Jews, and grace was only despised. “They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.” Then growing bolder in their slight and opposition, “the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.” Not only had they rejected Jesus as their Messiah, but they also rejected the ministry of the apostles and others, as is described in the Book of the Acts. “But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their cities.” Many were imprisoned while many more were slain, and finally the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

The parable proceeds with the king saying to his servants, “they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.” This no doubt is the gospel call going out to Gentiles — to all men everywhere. “So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.” It wasn’t a question of character — one might have a bad character like the dying thief, or a good character like Cornelius. Grace not only invites sinners but makes them acceptable to the King.

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.” The king doesn’t inquire whether the man were a good character or bad; he might have been morally upright in every way like the rich young ruler. But this is not the ground of acceptance for a sinner. The man had no sense of the grace which invited him nor of the holiness which the presence of God requires. How many there are who hear the gospel but only receive it partially, and, thinking they are not as bad as others, they do not receive it into their hearts. But such will not find acceptance because they have to do with One who knows the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The king says to him, “Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.” Men may boast of pleading their own case before God, but they, too, will be speechless in that day. “Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.”

1. Why did the king send his servants out to the highways?

2. What makes someone like the man without the wedding garment gnash their teeth?

3. For more on the reality of eternal punishment consider reading Hell and Eternal Punishment by F. C. Blount.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 21:28-46, Wicked Husbandmen:

The Lord then asks the chief priests and the elders, those religious leaders, a question. He tells the story of the two sons, in which he convicts them of being farther away from God then the publicans and harlots, whom they scorned. “A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not.” The Lord asks them which did the will of their father, and they answer, The first. Then He says to them, “The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” These leaders covered up their pride and self-will with a cloak of religiousness, which made them harder to reach than the most depraved, whom they despised. The latter had believed the preaching of John the Baptist and had repented. But the leaders had not received the testimony of John; and now, after hearing and seeing the testimony of Jesus, they still refused to believe.

Next, the Lord gives them the parable of the householder and the wicked husbandmen. He describes with wonderful exactness the conduct of the nation of the Jews toward the messengers of God, even His own Son. He makes them pronounce their own sentence. “There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard ... and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants . . . that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.” How patient God had been to them — “daily rising up early and sending” (Jer. 7:25).

“But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.” It was a last hope. But his presence brought forth their crowning act of iniquity, for when they saw him they planned to kill him, thinking that having done so the vineyard would be theirs. “And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.” This pictures to us the climax of man’s sin. All was over as far as man under responsibility to God was concerned. Not only had the Jew — the natural man — failed to bring forth fruit for God, not only had he failed to appreciate the mercy and goodness of God by whom he had been blessed, but he slew the Lord Jesus who came in grace.

The Lord then asks those leaders, “When the lord ... of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?” They reply rightly, “He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.” In this way they pronounce their own sentence.

Jesus then goes on and quotes to them from Psalm 118:22: “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.” The rejected Saviour would be the exalted One in that coming day. “And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” These leaders saw that He spoke these parables of them and would like to have laid hands on Him. But they were afraid to do so, for they feared the people.

1. How did the leaders pronounce their own sentence?

2. Where else in Scripture did someone announce their own sentence?

3. For more on the parables of the New Testament consider The Parables of Our Lord and What They Teach.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 21:12-27, Hypocrisy:

After riding into Jerusalem and having been hailed as Son of David, the Lord Jesus enters the temple area and casts out all them that bought and sold in the temple. He overthrows the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves, saying, “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.” In this He was quoting from Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11.

It is remarkable that after thus acting in judgment in the cleansing of the temple, it says, “the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple.” He casts out the selfish hypocrites but receives the poor, the lame, and the blind, and He healed them. But all these wonderful happenings, together with the crying of the children, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” only draws out the sore displeasure of the chief priests and scribes. They complain to Him, “Hearest Thou what these say?” In reply the Lord quotes to them part of Psalm 8, saying, “Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?” Yet they were blind to what Scripture had to say of Him.

The Lord therefore leaves them and goes out of the city to Bethany to pass the night there with those who were the true remnant of His people.

In the morning the Lord returns to the city and, being hungry, as He passes a fig tree, He looks for fruit but finds nothing but leaves. The Lord curses the fig tree, saying, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever. And presently the fig tree withered away.” The fig tree is a type of Israel as a nation, but the time for Israel’s fruit bearing was long since past. Man after the flesh can never produce fruit for God.

On entering the temple the Lord is challenged by the chief priests and elders who demand to know, “By what authority doest Thou these things?” They would have Him recognize their authority. With admirable wisdom the Lord answers them by asking them a question: “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” This would prove either their dishonesty or their blindness. They had rejected John’s ministry and so they reason among themselves, saying, “If we shall say, From heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.” Their consciences told them only too well what the truth really was. But they refuse to admit it, and attempt to cover up their hypocrisy by pretended ignorance. They answer, “We cannot tell.” To have given them an answer would only have sanctioned their iniquity, so the Lord refuses to tell them the source of His authority.

1. How did the chief priests show that they didn’t love the Lord?

2. Where else in Scripture are figs or fig trees used to represent the nation of Israel?

3. For a much broader and more in-depth view of prophecy Outline of Prophetic Events by B. Anstey is quite helpful.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 20:30-21:11, Beggars and a Donkey:

At the close of this chapter, as they departed from Jericho with a great multitude following Him, two blind men sitting by the wayside cry out, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David.” Jericho was the city of the curse (Josh. 6:26), and these two blind men are a picture of the nation of Israel — and man naturally — blind morally and spiritually, but Israel was unconscious of it in the presence of Him who alone could help them.

The blind men’s chief desire might be to be healed of their blindness. Nevertheless, in their cry, they address Jesus as “Lord, Thou Son of David.” The Gentile wise men had honored Him as such (Matt. 2), but Israel had refused Him this honor. However, in these two blind men God raises a testimony to His beloved Son as the true King of Israel.

“And Jesus stood still.” How wonderful it was! Joshua had commanded the sun to stand still in the heavens, and it “hasted not to go down about a whole day” (Josh. 10:12-14). But here the Creator of the universe, the Lord of glory, stops still at the cry of two blind beggars. And He who had called children to Himself calls these two blind men to Him. Touching their eyes He restores their sight to them immediately; “and they followed Him.”

This act of power at Jericho, the place of the curse, foreshadows the future restoration and blessing of Israel. When the Lord returns to earth as Son of Man, Israel will acknowledge Him as their Messiah, Son of God, and King of Israel (John 1:49). The Lord will heal their blindness, and they will become willing followers of Him whom they once rejected. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power” (Psa. 110:3).

As Jesus draws near to Jerusalem He comes to the mount of Olives. Here He sends two of His disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village . . . and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto Me.” In Zechariah there was a prophecy which had to be fulfilled: “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” “And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.” The lowly Jesus, while not actually owning the animals, could as the Lord of all, command them for His use.

“And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.” This was a fulfillment of Psalm 118.

Apparently they had little intelligence of what they were saying for when they come to Jerusalem, “all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?” and the crowd answer, “This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.” They did not rise to the intelligence of the two blind men.

1. How were the beggars more intelligent than the people of Jerusalem?

2. How close was the Lord to His crucifixion on the day He entered Jerusalem to shouts of “Hosanna”?

3. For more on Jericho and its meaning in the Scriptures read Holiness and Communion, formerly known by the title Jericho and Achor or Privilege and Responsibility by C. H. Mackintosh.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 20:1-29, Future Reward:

Matthew 20:1-29

In this chapter the Lord further illustrates the grace of God by telling the story of the householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a penny a day. Later on at the third, sixth and ninth hours he hired others. Finally at the eleventh hour he hired still more laborers and sent them into his vineyard. When the evening came he told his steward to call the laborers, beginning with the last. When they came every man received a penny. Then those whom he had hired first murmured against him for they thought they should have received more, having borne the burden and heat of the day. But he told them that he was only giving them what they had agreed upon, and if he chose to give the same to those who were last, he had the right to do what he wished with his own. Those who were hired later had confidence in their master’s goodness and knew he would deal with them according to his just

appreciation of what was due to them. So in the ways of the kingdom of heaven, our rewards will not be according to the length of time of service, but according to the Lord's abundant grace. Some have been called later in life than others, yet who but He can justly decide what their rewards should be. God is sovereign and will act according to the grace of His own heart.

This was the Lord's last journey to Jerusalem, and knowing that His time with His disciples was to be short, He talks with them privately. The Son of Man would be rejected, delivered over to the Gentiles, and crucified. On the third day He would rise again.

It must have been a matter of sorrow to His heart when, after speaking to His disciples in this way, the mother of James and John comes with them with the selfish request: "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom." The Lord meets this request with gracious wisdom and tells them they knew not what they were asking. He points out what lay ahead of them as His followers along the path which leads to glory. The cross must come first before the crown. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" "They say unto Him, We are able," though it is obvious that they didn't know what they were talking about. The Lord tells them that they shall indeed share in His path of suffering, which is the highest honor a believer can have on earth. As to their reward, He leaves that with His Father.

When the other disciples heard of this request they were filled with indignation against James and John. But their strong feelings against their brethren expressed the feelings of worldly ambitions. Their hearts were no better. The gracious Lord meets this, however, by showing them that the principles of the kingdom were not according to the course of this world. He who would be greatest in the kingdom must go down lowest of all. This place the Lord Himself took. "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

1. What did the servants hired later in the day count on?

2. On what basis does God give out rewards?

3. Listening to the CD Grace Reigning by R. Thonney would provide a nice foundation for the topic of grace in this chapter.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 19:22-30, Riches and Rewards:

The rich young man went away sorrowful. His possessions meant more to him than the lowly Jesus. It is always sad when one who has had to do with the Lord, goes away sorrowful. The Lord would certainly have it otherwise, for it is His joy to bless. What greater privilege is there, what pathway more rewarding, than to follow in the footsteps of the blessed Saviour?

The Lord uses this occasion to illustrate the blinding effect of riches on those who would seek to enter the kingdom of heaven. "Verily I say unto you," He says, "That a rich man shall hardly [with difficulty] enter into the kingdom of heaven." He doesn't say he cannot enter in, but it is with difficulty. How often does wealth or anything that gives a man advantage or position in this world prove a hindrance to the working of the Spirit of God in him. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The disciples, who evidently were led to regard riches as a sign of God's blessing on a Jew, are astonished at such teaching. They ask, "Who then can be saved?" But the Lord goes on to point out to them that what is an impossibility to man naturally is not an impossibility with God. "With God all things are possible."

Peter then tells the Lord how they had forsaken all and followed Him and wishes to know what their reward would be. The Lord gives him a very blessed answer. "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The Lord will work a great change in this world in that day when He sits on the throne of His glory, and the disciples are to have a special place of honor in association with Him in it.

Furthermore, nothing that a believer does or suffers for the Lord will be forgotten of Him in the day of His kingdom. "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Eternal life is the present possession of every believer, but it is also looked at as future as well. It dwells in the heart of the believer now, but here it looks on to the glory where it will be enjoyed in all its fullness. When speaking of sufferings for and with Christ, we are reminded of the words of the Apostle who endured sufferings in a way that perhaps none other has since the Lord was on earth: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). Again, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:7-8).

"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first," the Lord tells us, for it is not according to man's estimate but according to the estimate of Him who has both called and chosen them.

1. Why were the disciples alarmed when they heard how hard it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven?

2. What other rewards does the Bible say can be received by a believer?

3. To look at a time when rewards will be given consider reading The Judgment Seat of Christ: for Believers by G. H. Hayhoe.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 19:1-22, The Perfect Teacher:

The Lord leaves Galilee and begins His last journey to Jerusalem. He is approached by the Pharisees. They knew His graciousness, and tried to get Him entangled with the law of Moses on the matter of dissolving the marriage tie. He refers them to the beginning of man's history. When the Lord God created Adam and Eve, He had said of man and wife, "they shall be one flesh." The Lord upholds the sanctity of the marriage

bond and adds, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

But they come back with another question, Why did Moses give a commandment as to divorce? The Lord’s answer is, “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives.” It was not a command, but God allowed it because of the hardness of their hearts. It was not so from the beginning, and there really is only one ground for divorce. It appears that divorce was a very common thing in that day, so that even the disciples say to Jesus, “If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” The Lord tells them that while there were some who for the kingdom of heaven’s sake did not enter into marriage, yet everyone was not bound to do the same.

Some brought little children unto Him at this time, that He might lay His hands on them and pray for them. A child is a little thing in the eyes of the world. The disciples in their zeal, thinking little children were unworthy of the Lord’s notice, but rather an annoyance, would have driven them away. The Lord, however, sets aside these unbecoming thoughts of His disciples who had misrepresented Him and sets forth His own feelings as to little children. His words on this occasion have ever since been an encouragement to parents and to those who work with children. He says, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And He laid His hands on them.”

Next there comes to Him a young man who had “great possessions.” Elsewhere we read, and “Jesus ... loved him,” for he seemed to have been a naturally beautiful character, whose heart was not hardened by sin. But the question he asks shows the purpose of his heart, which only He who searches the heart could bring out. He addresses the Lord as “Good Master.” He had no thought that the One whom He was addressing was God Himself. He merely sees Jesus as a good man. “What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” He knew the provisions of the law which promised life as long as one fulfilled its demands, but it seems he had some misgivings about that. The Lord answers him, “Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life,” (He doesn’t say eternal life, which can only be had as a gift from God) “keep the commandments.” He refers him to those commandments which have particularly to do with man’s responsibility to his fellow-men. The young man says, “All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?” The Lord then tells him to sell all that he had and give to the poor, “and come and follow Me.” This revealed a covetous heart. The young man went away sorrowful, unwilling to part with his wealth and to become a follower of the lowly Jesus. This was sad, for we never hear of him again.

1. Why did the disciples think that children would be an annoyance to the Lord Jesus?

2. Where else in the gospels does Jesus expose the true heart behind a questioner?

3. If you have children you may find bound volumes of Messages of God’s Love to contain a treasure trove of stories to share with them.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 18:18-35, Forgiveness:

The Lord Jesus has been speaking to His disciples about matters of discipline. He shows them that what has been done in His name is very far reaching. Their action in such matters is a very solemn thing and is regarded by Him as the carrying out of His will in discipline. These actions are recognized in heaven. “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” How encouraging this is!

Peter then supposes the case of a brother who sins against him over and over again, and he asks the Lord, how often should he forgive him? “till seven times?” This was the limit of grace in Peter’s mind, but the Lord teaches us that forgiveness is always to be in the heart of a believer. “Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”

This is brought out in the beautiful parable of the unjust debtor. A certain king had a servant which owed him ten thousand talents — a debt which a servant could never pay. He entreats the king saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” The king graciously forgives him the debt. The same servant goes out and finds a fellow servant which owed him a hundred pence — a small debt compared to that which had been forgiven him. But he takes the man by the throat and demands, “Pay me that thou owest.” The poor man entreats him saying, “Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.” But he refuses and casts him into prison. When the king heard of it he was angry at the man and, denouncing him as a wicked servant, turned him over to the tormentors. In a typical way this was true of the Jews. They had accumulated a debt toward God which they could never pay. They had broken the law and had slain the Son of God. However, God in His mercy, through the gospel preached by Peter, sent them a message of forgiveness. Yet in spite of the grace shown toward them they acted the part of the unjust servant in their attitude toward the Gentiles. They proved themselves enemies of the grace of God which would go out to Gentiles as well. As a result, they are given up to punishment, until the time when the Lord shall say of Jerusalem, “she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Isa. 40:2). The blood of Christ will be applied to their great debt; the believing remnant will be forgiven and set free, while the unbelieving part of the nation will go into everlasting judgment.

But the teachings of this parable surely apply to us individually. We as children of the kingdom, as imitators of God, ought always to be ready to forgive where it is a case of personal trespass. One who has tasted of the mercy of God, if walking with Him, will have that same spirit of grace and be ready to pardon those who have wronged him. When we read of the Lord in the gospels and of how He conducted Himself here on earth, we find that He did not resent in His ministry that which was merely against Himself, but He did denounce in the strongest terms that which affected the operations of God in this world by His Holy Spirit.

1. Why should we be ready to forgive personal trespass?

2. What other examples are there in Scripture of the effect of an unforgiving spirit?

3. An excellent introduction to the subject of forgiveness can be found in Forgiveness of Sins by H. P. Barker.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 18:1-17, Offense and Trespass:

In chapter 18 the disciples come to Jesus and ask Him, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” This draws out His further teachings on the kingdom and the church. The Lord sets a little child in their midst and tells them that they must be converted, or born again, and become as little children to enter into the kingdom of heaven. To humble oneself as a little child was the way to become greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The Lord Jesus, though ever conscious of His glory, took the place on earth of a little child in humility. This was entirely opposed to Jewish thoughts of greatness. In the last chapter the Lord has shown us our place as sons of glory; here He is teaching us the humility that is appropriate to us as well.

The Lord goes on to say, “Whoso shall receive one such little child in My name” shall be counted as receiving Himself. But He then warns about offending one of these little ones who believe in Him, to turn them aside from following Him. If one did offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck and he were drowned in the sea. These little ones are the special objects of the Father’s care. They were not to be despised, “For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.” It does not say that they are innocent; every child is born with a sinful nature, but the Lord Jesus went to the cross that they might be saved. He does not speak here as He does in Luke 19:10 —“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” There He is speaking of those of a more mature sinful nature. He has to seek such.

Then we have the beautiful story of the lost sheep. The shepherd leaves the ninety and nine, who have not the sense of being lost, and goes after the lost one. He rejoices more over it than over the others. How beautifully He adds: “Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” It is a sweet illustration of the interest of the Father and all heaven in those who work among children.

In verses 15-20 for the second time the Lord in His ministry speaks of the church, or the assembly. With Himself in the midst, it was to occupy the place He had with them during the years of His earthly ministry. Later, when He would be no longer present, the assembly would be where difficulties arising among His people should be settled. “If thy brother shall trespass against thee.” A case of personal trespass is mentioned, and a course is laid out whereby the offending brother might be gained and set right. In the spirit of love he was to go to the brother and tell him his fault and seek to win him. If this failed he was to take one or two witnesses and go to his brother again. Perhaps in their presence he might be humbled and thus gained. But if these means aren’t effective and the offending one manifests a willful spirit, refusing to listen to the entreaties given in the presence of witnesses, then — and not till then — was the matter to be brought to the attention of the assembly. There are then entreaties and admonitions by the assembly, and if not received, he is to be regarded as a heathen — afar from God. He’s also viewed as a publican who uses his position in the world for personal gain, without considering the cause of righteousness.

1. Why is it so serious to offend a little one?

2. How did an Israelite in the Old Testament handle a problem with his brother?

3. On this subject you’d probably find Brotherly Care and Personal Trespass by G. Cutting to be quite helpful.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 17:10-27, Faith in Christ:

The Lord had called Peter, James and John to witness that wonderful scene on the mount of transfiguration, where He had displayed His glory. Now as they descend from the mountain they witness another scene — the display of the power of Satan. While they were on the mount the other disciples had remained below. A distracted father comes to the Lord saying, “Lord, have mercy on my son; for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him.” The disciples were unable to use the power which the Lord had committed to them. Their faith was not equal to the occasion. The Lord answers with the words, “O faithless and perverse generation ... bring him hither to Me.” He rebukes the evil spirit which possessed the child, the demon departs, and the child is cured.

The disciples want to know why they could not cast out the demon. He tells them it was on account of their unbelief, for “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” This incident shows that while they had faith as to the Person of the Lord, they did not bring that faith into the circumstances of everyday life. However, the Lord did not allow the unbelief of His disciples to hinder the outflow of blessing. He acts and the faith of the poor father is rewarded. Whatever power is available to the servants of the Lord, it can only be used in the same spirit that the One who gave it used it. It was only available by prayer, fasting and self-denial.

“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” Faith brings down the power of God into our circumstances; that faith may be small, but if it is in exercise, it will avail for present trials. Even mountains, symbol of the world’s power, or whatever may hinder the child of God, will vanish before faith.

It was after this, while they abide in Galilee, that the Lord again tells His disciples of His betrayal, His death and His resurrection. “And they were exceeding sorry.”

They now come to Capernaum where Jesus dwelt. The tax-gatherer who received the tribute money for the temple came to Peter and asked him if his Master paid the tribute. It seems that, for the moment at least, Peter had forgotten the vision and the Father’s voice from heaven. Desiring that his Master be considered a loyal Jew, he answered, Yes. When they were come into the house, the Lord, who knew all that Peter had said, demanded of Peter, “What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?” Peter rightly answers, “Of strangers.” What wonderful grace there is in the Lord’s words, “Then are the children free.” He is the King, and while He is about to prove His divine glory, He shows us the place that we have with Him. Peter was to go to the sea and cast in a hook. The first fish that came up would have a piece of money in its mouth — exactly the required amount for both Himself and Peter. This showed His divine power as Creator, for a fish does not hold anything, but swallows whatever enters its mouth.

1. Besides faith in the person of Christ, what faith do we need?

2. What other mastery over the creatures of creation does the Lord show in the gospels?

3. A real encouragement to faith in the Lord Jesus for everything can be found in Looking Unto Jesus by T. Monod.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 17:4-9, The First Place for Christ:

Prior to this scene on the mountaintop, the disciples had never seen the faces of Moses and Elias before, yet Peter recognizes them perfectly well here. In heaven the redeemed of the Lord will surely know each other. “Not one will seem a stranger, though never seen before.”

Peter, rejoicing to see His Master in company with two such honored Old Testament servants of God, makes the mistake of thinking that they were on an equality in that glory, and says: “Lord . . . let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” He had forgotten his confession of Jesus as the “Christ, the Son of the living God,” of whom no Old Testament worthy could be an equal.

The Father could not allow the suggestion of such equality to stand. Even while Peter was speaking, “Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them.” It was the cloud of Jehovah’s presence. Moses and Elias disappeared, and they heard the Father’s voice from the cloud saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” Whatever might be the honor God had put upon Moses and Elias, they were not to be compared with His beloved Son. The Person of Christ eclipses all. Furthermore it was not the voice of the lawgiver nor of the prophets, but the Son in all His love revealing the Father, whom they must now hear. “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17).

The disciples were frightened and fell on their faces. “And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.” The vision had vanished, but Jesus remained. What a comfort this must have been to their hearts! The disciples hardly understood the meaning of this scene then, but afterwards the Spirit of God recalled it to them. Peter in his second epistle, speaks of “the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” of how they “were eyewitnesses of His majesty . . . when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory ... when we were with Him in the holy mount.” The vision of coming glory was to strengthen the faith of the servants of the Lord in the sorrows and persecutions they had to endure for His name’s sake.

The wonderful scene the disciples had just witnessed had passed away, and now we find them descending the mountain. But the same One in whose blessed company they had been on the mount now goes down with them. And this is the precious portion of the Christian — he has Christ and His glory before him at the end of the journey, and he has Christ as his companion along the road.

The Lord tells His disciples not to speak of what they had seen until after He was risen from the dead. The vision of glory was for them only and not for the world, for the kingdom of Christ had been rejected.

It was according to God’s counsels that we should be with Christ, like Moses and Elias, in that same glory with Himself. This is our place — the Redeemer with His redeemed. God has marked us out beforehand to be conformed to the image of His Son in order that He might be the firstborn among brethren.

1. Why did the Lord not want the disciples to share what they had seen?

2. What are some of a Christian’s unique privileges?

3. For very uplifting teaching on the person of Christ read A Short Meditation on the Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ by J. G. Bellett.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 16:24-17:3, Transfiguration:

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.” The Lord had spoken of His going to the cross, now He tells His own that they must be prepared to follow Him, in that path of shame and rejection in this world. They were not to allow the great trials of life to hold them back from following Him. Those who sacrifice everything to make headway in this world will be disappointed. But those who do not allow such things to hinder them from following Him will find comfort in Him.

Then He asks, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” There have been those who have sought to gain a large part of this world, but have also found out too late that they had lost their own soul.

Then the Lord speaks of a time coming when the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward men for their works. This will be after He has taken home to the glory those of this present age who have put their trust in Him. Then He will come back and take up the cause of those who have passed through the great tribulation (Psalm 2).

After this the Lord tells the disciples, “There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” This takes place in the next chapter.

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart.” The three disciples who were to be witnesses of His humiliation in the garden were witnesses of His glory on the mount. It is wonderful to think that not only could the Lord Himself ascend into that glory, but He could take others there with Him. For us He went to the cross in order that He might have us with Him in that glory.

Here on the mountain the disciples see the Lord in His glory — the glory that belongs to Him as Son of Man when He comes in His kingdom to judge and reign. “His face did shine as the sun” — which speaks of supreme glory, “and His raiment was white as the light” — His walk, His ways, His manner of life on earth were such that they shone in all the brightness of the heavenly glory.

“And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him” — they were associated with Him in that glory. Moses represents those who have died in faith and will be raised from the dead, while Elias represents the living who are caught up at His coming. In Luke 9:31 it says, they “spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem,” and no doubt they spoke of what His decease should mean. They were not looking back to the law and the prophets, but on to redemption. Their being in glory with Him depended on the redemption that He would accomplish. What a privilege for poor sinners to have been able to gaze upon the Son of God in glory and to have been manifested with Him in the same glory upon earth. They were His companions to talk with Him and to know that they were loved as He was loved of His Father.

1. When will the Son of Man come in glory?

2. What did Peter have to say about the transfiguration in his epistles?

3. A thrilling account of Christ’s coming for His church and later coming to reign can be enjoyed in Christ as the Morning Star and the Sun of Righteousness by E. Dennett.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 16:18-23, Confession and Confusion:

Peter had just confessed the Lord as “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Immediately then the Lord unfolds to Peter that there was to be something new founded here on that revelation, and this is what He calls the church or the assembly. It was to be built upon the solid rock of Peter’s confession of Christ. “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church.” Peter (whose name means “small stone”) was to be a living stone in this building. Then He refers to the unseen world: “and the gates of hell [hades] shall not prevail against it.” Death could not separate those who were a part of the church from its privileges. Death had separated His people of old from their earthly inheritance in the land of promise. Furthermore Satan, who wielded the power of death (Heb. 2:14), could not destroy it. The true church of God would continue here in this world until He called it away. The devil might confuse the minds of men as to its true character, but it will abide in the sight of God as He founded it. Where Christ is looked at in Scripture as the builder, no false material is introduced into the church. But where man is looked at as the builder, there can be a great deal there that is not real. In our chapter Christ is the builder, and not Peter.

Next, the Lord gives Peter a special place for having received this communication — “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” — that new dispensation which was about to begin on earth. There are no keys to the church. So Peter in Acts 2 uses one of the keys in opening the door to the Jews to enter into the new order of things. In Acts 10 he uses the other key to open the door to the Gentiles, so that they might enter in on the same basis as the Jews.

After this the Lord tells His disciples not to tell any one that He was the Christ or the Messiah. This is what He was to the Jews, and Peter had confessed Him as such. He had been rejected by them, and so for the time He drops His Jewish title. He was not the Messiah to the church but the Saviour. So from that time forth He speaks of His death and resurrection on the third day. This must all take place before He could begin to build His church. It was still a future thing and had to await the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

Though Peter had had such a wonderful revelation from the Father as to Christ, he was slow to grasp its real meaning. In his thoughts he still clung to the Lord’s mission as the Messiah, the teacher of the people. So when the Lord spoke of His sufferings and death, he began to rebuke Him, saying, “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee.” Little did Peter realize what sin was, nor did he think that it was for Peter that the Lord was going to the cross. Otherwise he would never have said what he did. The thought he expressed was of man and of Satan. He stood in the way of the Lord going to the cross and the Lord who had just called him Peter has to say to him, “Get thee behind Me, Satan ... for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” It shows how one can be used of God in a remarkable way. Through pride coming in and lack of dependence on the Lord, he can be used of Satan to break down what he had been used to build up.

1. What was Peter’s great confession?

2. Give a few more examples of leaders who failed in their area of great strength.

3. Lectures on the Church by F. G. Patterson gives a clear and helpful presentation of the church in the New Testament.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 16:1-17, The Son of the Living God:

In this chapter both the Pharisees and Sadducees come tempting the Lord. These two sects of the Jews normally had no dealings with each other, but their hatred of Jesus unites them here, and they ask Him to give them a sign from heaven. It was only unbelief and disobedience that prompted them to ask for a sign, for what more wonderful token could God give to man than the presence of His Son on earth. What abundance of signs there had been, manifesting the power of God by the miracles and teachings of the lowly Jesus! But on account of the hardness of their hearts, these men had closed their eyes to all this wonderful display.

In their professing to honor God, they had shown the shallowness of their profession. The Lord calls them a wicked generation and tells them that no sign should be given to them but that of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonah had been three days and nights in the belly of the great fish (the figure of death), so Christ would be lost to Israel in the grave — to be given back to them in a future day.

“When it is evening,” He says, “ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” They were unable to see what their unbelief would bring upon them, and at this point the Lord leaves them and departs.

The Lord then tells His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. At first they think He is referring to their not having brought along bread, but He goes on to show that He is referring to the doctrine of these people. In Luke's gospel He adds that the great sin of the Pharisees and Sadducees was hypocrisy.

After this the Lord goes away to Caesarea Philippi which was in the extreme northern borders of the land. Far from Jerusalem, and from the influences of its religious leaders, the Lord speaks for the first time of that which was dearest to His heart — the church. What wonderful acts of power and grace He had displayed along His pathway that led up to this point! The earth had never witnessed such great acts before. Now He asks His disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" They reply, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Their answer shows that even though some would give Him a place among those honored of old, they had not discerned who He really was, nor the purpose of His mission. Various opinions were formed, but it ended there.

Next the Lord asks the disciples themselves, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter's answer sets forth that blessed truth which is the foundation of man's blessing and of God's glory. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus is not only the true Messiah, the King of Israel, but His glory goes far beyond that. He is the Son of the living God, in whom is the eternal power of life, the One who can impart life to those who are dead in sins. This was indeed a glorious confession Peter had made. The Lord then told him that he had been blessed by God the Father in heaven with this revelation, for such knowledge could only come from Him. The natural man could not discern that which was divine.

1. What warnings did the religious leaders receive?

2. Why does it matter so much who Jesus Christ is?

3. For more help on who Jesus is consider reading Jesus Is God: the Deity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 15:21-39, Children and Dogs:

In the first part of this chapter the Lord showed the evil of man. In the latter part of the chapter we see the display of the goodness and grace of the heart of God.

The Lord leaves behind the scribes and Pharisees with all their reasonings and ritual and goes to the extreme borders of the land to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Both these cities had been noted for their hardness of heart and had been especially visited by the judgments of God. A Canaanitish woman comes out of those coasts to meet the Lord and she cries, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." She was a descendant of the Canaanites, that accursed race, whom the people of Israel were to destroy when they took possession of the land. Her case was a desperate one, but the Lord answers her not a word. What claim did she have on the Son of David?

The disciples would have liked to have the Lord grant her request just to get rid of her, "for she crieth after us," they say. But the Lord answers, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she comes up and pleads with Him, saying, "Lord, help me." The Lord's answer may seem to have been very hard, but He was really testing her faith. He tells her, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to [Gentile] dogs." But the woman takes this place too, acknowledging herself to be only a dog. She owns the promises to Israel — "the children" — but her need drives her right to the heart of God Himself. "Truth, Lord," she says, "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." How good it is for a soul to be brought to the point where he realizes that he has no claim upon God for anything; that he is a lost sinner, and that apart from the grace of God he has no hope.

But the goodness of God cannot be limited to Israel. This poor woman believes that there is goodness and riches enough in God for even a dog without a title such as she.

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." He granted her desire, for her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

After this the Lord departs and comes into the land near to the Sea of Galilee. Going up into a mountain He sits down. "And great multitudes came unto Him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and He healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered . . . and they glorified the God of Israel."

In the last of the chapter the Lord again feeds the multitude — a great company of four thousand men, besides women and children — with only seven loaves and a few little fishes. "And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full." No doubt the seven baskets that are left speak of the moral perfection of the One who satisfies the poor of His people with bread.

1. What are the differences between the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand?

2. Why were the Gentiles referred to as dogs?

3. For insights on Bible times in Matthew and other books of the Bible, you would likely find Manners and Customs of the Bible by J. M. Freeman a helpful resource.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 15:1-20, Traditions of Men:

The Lord had crossed the sea and had entered the land of Gennesaret. Here He was met by “the scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem.” They prided themselves in being superior in holiness, in devotion to God and in learning, but the Lord rebuked them for their pretensions and laid bare their hypocrisy. They wanted to know, “Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.” The washing of hands was only an outward thing, but the Lord goes deeper and seeks to reach their conscience. He shows that their traditions were from man — fallen man — and had their root in the desire to set aside the Word of God and bring in the words of men. But there is nothing from fallen man which is not evil. There is nothing really good but what is from God.

The Lord cited a case in which they positively set aside the law of God with respect to honoring one’s father and mother. In the law God commanded, “Honor thy father and thy mother.” But these religious leaders allowed, and perhaps encouraged, sons to devote certain things they possessed, supposedly to God, and then refuse to assist their parents with the excuse that their possessions were “corban” or devoted. The Lord criticized them for this as one of their traditions, by which they made the Word of God of no effect. He called them hypocrites and quotes from Isaiah 29:13, “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.” There are many in the world today of whom this is true.

The Lord then calls the multitude at this point and tells them: “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth” — that which proceeds from the heart. The disciples were concerned because the Lord’s words offended the Pharisees, for even His disciples looked up to them as the leaders of their nation. But the Lord tells them, “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.” These Pharisees were not of His planting. Furthermore He says, “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”

The Lord then goes on to speak of all the evil things that proceed from the human heart. It is good to notice that He doesn’t mention anything good as coming from the heart of man. It is hard for one to believe that there is not some good in him, but it is not until he comes to Christ that he finds out “that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18). Until this truth is known, the heart is not reached and all is futile. The truth of the gospel is connected with the truth of the complete ruin of man. The Lord then explains that what came out of the mouth really came from the heart. The heart was far more important to watch than whether they washed their hands before eating, according to their traditions.

1. What other traditions set aside the truth of God?

2. What other scriptures describe the natural heart of man?

3. An excellent work on this subject can be found in The Beauty of Humility by G. V. Wigram.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 14:22-36, The Storm:

“And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And ... He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.”

This is a picture of what takes place now while the Lord is absent in heaven. It also pictures the experiences of the faithful Jewish remnant in a coming day. The storm is a consequence of His rejection. His disciples must cross the stormy sea alone, as the enemy stirs up opposition to their going on in faith. But He is on high in prayer for them. He is not indifferent to their trials. “And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him . . . they were troubled ... and they cried out for fear.”

However, at the proper time the Lord comes to His people. He comes walking on the water — He is above the storm, He is the Master of the waves. Yet His people cry out for fear. The remnant in that day cannot be at peace until they own Him as their rejected Messiah.

“But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.” Those comforting words lead Peter to say: “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” In response the Lord says, “Come.” Peter in faith leaves the ship and walks on the water to go to Jesus. The storm is still at its height, but the Lord’s word, “Come,” is enough for Peter. He pictures to us those in this dispensation who, having heard the Lord’s voice, and owning Him as Saviour, now seek to walk in faith, by divine power, across this world to Him. They walk by faith, not by sight.

Peter’s faith carries him almost to Jesus, but seeing the wind so boisterous, he becomes afraid and begins to sink. As long as he keeps his eye on Jesus and has His word before his heart all is well, but it is when he looks at the waves he begins to sink. In truth it makes no difference whether the sea is stormy or calm — it is not a matter of circumstances — it is a question of faith looking to the Lord who alone can keep us in the storm or in the calm.

When Peter cries out, “Lord, save me,” the Lord immediately stretches forth His hand and catches him, saying, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” Peter fails — as many of us have since — but it is to prove the faithfulness of the Lord who never fails.

In this case Peter sees in Jesus One who goes beyond simply fulfilling the promises to the Jews as a nation. The disciples cling to Him personally, and so as His sheep they are led out of the Jewish fold. Later on after His ascension they become the church. Everything centers in Him.

The Lord and Peter rejoin the remnant of the disciples in the ship. “And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.” This tells us of the time when the Lord will come back again bringing His heavenly people with Him. The Jewish remnant, those who pass through the great tribulation, will be delivered. The storm will cease and they will acknowledge Him as the Son of God.

1. What prophetic illustration can be found in this study?

2. How is this account of the storm distinct from the story in John 6:16-21?

3. If you are dealing with difficult times, you might find God’s Providence by R. Elliott to be quite encouraging.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 14:13-21, Feeding the Multitude:

The Lord reads in the death of John the Baptist His own rejection. When the word of John’s death reaches Him He departs, for He could not continue His service there under such circumstances. He could not be indifferent to the rejection of one who had borne such a faithful witness to Him in his public ministry. Herod’s murderous act was to Him but a token of a sin of far deeper dye, that awful wickedness in the heart of the people, which would rise to its height in their rejection of Himself. The religious leaders had also rejected John, yet not openly, for they feared the people who held John in such high regard (see Matt. 21:25-26).

The Lord withdraws and crosses the Sea of Galilee by ship to a desert place apart. But the multitude follow Him there on foot out of their cities. “And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick.” The rising tide of evil could not stem the outflow of His grace, for He was above it, and would always act as God. He was ever ready to minister to those who sought Him out in their need.

The evening comes on and the disciples ask the Lord to send the multitude away to the villages to buy food for themselves. Send them away from Jesus? The Lord could never consent to that. He would fulfill that which was said of Him prophetically in Psalm 132:15: “I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.” He tells His disciples to feed the people, but their faith does not rise to such a need. They only look at what they have; they do not reckon on Him. They say, “We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.”

And He said, “Bring them hither to Me.” The Lord would have us in simple faith to bring both our wants and what little we have to Him whose grace is sufficient for every need.

“And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.”

What a peaceful scene this is out there in the wilderness. In His richest grace the Lord spreads a table and feeds the poor multitude. He makes the feeble disciples themselves to be the dispensers of His goodness, as afterwards they must gather up what remained. As then, so it is now. He gives His servants the privilege of carrying that which will meet the need of those who feel the emptiness of what this world has to offer.

1. Why did the Lord Jesus feed the multitude?

2. How does the Lord feed us today?

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 13:51-14:12, Further Rejection:

The Lord closes these parables on the similitudes of the kingdom by asking His disciples if they had understood all these things. They reply that they had. He does not question them further but tells them of a responsibility which goes along with such an understanding. “Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.” There were things old and new contained in these parables. The disciples had thus the old things of prophecy in the earthly things of the kingdom, as well as the new things they had learned from the Lord Himself.

His teachings on the kingdom of heaven ended, the Lord departs, and goes into His own country. There He teaches in their synagogue. They are astonished and ask from where could a man of such lowly station in life get such wisdom and power. “Is not this the carpenter’s son?” they ask. “Is not His mother called Mary?” Thus they stumbled at His lowliness. He was a rock of offense to them. They well knew that He had not studied at Jerusalem as all their men of learning had done. But Jesus tells them, “A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in His own house.” And on account of their unbelief, His works of power and grace in that locality cease. He was rejected, not only as their King, but as a prophet as well.

The fame of Jesus reaches into Herod’s palace (chap. 14), so that he is forced to own that these acts are works of divine power. Herod’s guilty conscience causes him to think that John the Baptist must be risen from the dead. It is here we learn the circumstances of John’s death. Herod was a false and wicked king who reigned in the land. He had taken Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, and John had been both fearless and faithful in speaking out against this unlawful act. Herod had him put in prison. Herod would have had him put to death earlier, but he feared the people would raise a tumult.

But Herodias seizes an opportunity to get rid of John, which was provided at Herod’s birthday feast. The daughter of Herodias came in and danced before Herod. Herod was pleased and made the rash promise that he would give her whatever she asked. Instructed beforehand by her mother what to ask for, she requested the head of John the Baptist. The king was sorry at the request, but feeling he could not go back on his word in the presence of his distinguished guests, he ordered John the Baptist beheaded in prison. This act in itself only shows the sad state of things among the professed people of God — a faithful witness and prophet of God had been slain at the request of a dancing girl.

But it is lovely to see the simple fearless faith of John’s disciples who went and claimed his body and buried it. Then they go and tell Jesus, to whom John had borne witness. To what better Friend could they go to tell out the grief of their hearts? Who could comfort them like He could in the hour of their deepest sorrow?

1. How did the people show their low spiritual state?

2. What were all the ways the people showed their disregard for Christ in this gospel of Matthew?

3. For more on the moral beauty of the Lord shining through His rejection read A Short Meditation on the Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ by J. G. Bellett.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 13:45-50, The Pearl and the Net:

In the next parable we have the kingdom of heaven brought before us in a still different manner. Here we learn something of what believers are to Christ. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” Here is a man of experience seeking goodly pearls. He knows the value and beauty of what he is seeking. He is willing to part with all that he has and he does so. Some would have us believe that the Lord Himself is the pearl of great price and that this is the experience of one finding Him as his Saviour. But the Lord shows us that He is the seeker. He knows what a thing of beauty the pearl can become under His care. This parable would tell us of the loveliness of the church in the eyes of Christ. This is all beautifully brought before us in Ephesians 5:25-27. In verse 25 we have His great love for the church: “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” In verse 26 we have His present service for us: “that He might sanctify (set apart for Himself) and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.” The church needs cleansing in its passage through this world, which is a defiled place, under the influence of Satan, its prince and its god. Only the Spirit of God through the Word of God can enable us to see this defilement. The Spirit of God also gives us power to walk in separation from its influence.

In the figure of the pearl we have not only the beauty and perfection of the church, but also its unity. Every believer is precious to Christ, but He also sees us as one in Him — “one pearl of great price.”

The last parable brings before us a fishing scene. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.” Here we find that those who handle the net are used in separating the good from the bad. They are only occupied with the good and gather them into vessels. It is the same ones who cast the net into the sea — the masses of peoples — that bring the net to shore, and then separate the good from the bad. They know the good fish and that is their business. This parable shows the part the servants of God have in the work of the gospel now. The good are not only brought to shore but are separated into companies for blessing.

This parable does not go beyond this present age to the time that takes place after the church has been caught up to heaven. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the age to come, but there will be no gathering in of both good and bad then. Those who receive the gospel message then will do so amid great persecution from those who will not receive it. Some will suffer death on account of it, but they will receive a heavenly portion instead of an earthly one.

They cast the bad away, but “at the end of the [age]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.” This is the work of the angels. “There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Such will be the portion of those who have professed to have received the gospel but without any work of faith in their hearts.

1. In what ways does the pearl represent the church?

2. Why does the Lord use figurative language to describe the church?

3. You’ll find further help on these figures of the church in The Church Seen Under Twelve Figures in the New Testament by B. Anstey.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 13:40-44, Tares and Treasure:

The wheat and the tares are to grow together until the harvest. The Lord will then send His angels to gather the tares — mere professors — and bind them in bundles to be burned. The wheat will be gathered in to the heavenly granary. The tares are being separated now into bundles — or groups in which the vital truths as to Christ and the church are left out. They are to be cast into the fire, the terrible end of those who, while professing Christ, yet know Him not as Saviour. “The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Earth, where once the Son of Man was rejected, is yet to be the scene of the display of His glory. God the Father has decreed that His beloved Son will be honored in the very place where He was cast out.

Before He comes back in judgment, the Lord is coming first to receive His own, those whom He has redeemed from earth, to be with Himself forever. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” Theirs will be a heavenly portion. What blessing and glory for them, and all because of Him that “loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” Well might we ascribe to Him everlasting glory and praise!

In the next three parables we have brighter pictures of the kingdom of heaven, as it is brought before us by the Spirit of God. It is not now a question of man’s responsibility.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” Christ has purchased the field — the world — and thus has established His right to work in the field. He has paid the price by giving Himself as a ransom, and thus has established His rights over this world. He gave all that He had to obtain it. He humbled Himself, laid aside His glories which belonged to Him as the Son of God from heaven, and came down to this earth as a man — God manifest in flesh. But He further humbled Himself unto death, and that the death of the cross. He bore the wrath of God for those who were to become His peculiar treasure, to wash them in His blood and to redeem them to God. God has raised Him from the dead, He has exalted Him above every name that is named, and, as such, He has the right to seek for His treasure.

This treasure — the church — was a hidden thing at that time. It was not Israel, for Israel was well-known. Also His operations in this world, both past and in the time when He was here were well known, being objects of the prophetic word. So having accomplished all this, He is now absent in the heavens, and the Spirit of God is here. The Spirit is directing these operations of grace, working through the servants of the Lord.

1. Why doesn't the treasure refer to individuals or to Israel?

2. What other scriptures show how Christ valued the church?

3. You might find The Treasure and the Pearl by C. E. Lunden an encouraging extension to your study on this subject.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 13:31-39, Mustard Seed, Leaven and Tares:

The Lord now puts forth another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Mustard in Palestine will grow ten feet high, quite large enough for the birds to come and rest in its branches. The figure of a tree has often been used in Scripture for a great power on earth, such as Egypt (Ezek. 31) and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4). That which professed the name of Christ, while it had such a humble beginning as regards this world, has become a system of vast power and influence in the earth. Furthermore, the emissaries of Satan, which preyed on the seed that Christ sowed (see verses 4 and 19), are found sheltered by that which is seen in its outward form as the kingdom of heaven.

Again, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Leaven is always used in Scripture as a type of evil. It would seem to all outward appearances that she was preparing food for the household. The three measures of meal would perhaps present Christ in His perfection — three speaking of completeness — as the food of God's children. Here, through carelessness or evil intent, corruption has been allowed to enter and remain until all is corrupted. We can see in the church the sad effects of corrupting the Word of God, and these things are allowed to go on unchecked. Thus we have the Lord disclosing the sad end of the outward effect of the kingdom of heaven in this world.

In explaining the parable of the tares, the Lord tells His disciples that "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." The tare is a noxious weed resembling wheat, and answers to those who, while professing to be Christians, nevertheless show by their ways that there is no real faith in them. When Christianity began to grow popular in the world, instead of being persecuted and a reproach, we read of great crowds being brought in. Now there are vast multitudes in Christendom today who are mere professors and not possessors of Christ.

The servants had asked in verse 28 if they should go and gather up the tares, but the master tells them no, lest they root up the wheat also. The Lord has not yet come to judge the earth, but to save souls. Believers now are called to be witnesses of the mercy of God and of the love of Jesus to the world. This does not refer to discipline in the assembly, for there it is not a question of whether one is saved or lost, but whether one's ways are contrary to the Word of God.

1. Where else in Scripture is leaven used as a picture of evil?

2. Did New Testament Christians find prominent positions in the Roman world of their day?

3. For a simple presentation of what the church was meant to be, consider The Church of God as Found in the Scriptures by C. Stanley.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 13:5-30, Sowers:

Matthew 13:5-30

In the second case, the seed falls upon stony places, "where they had not much earth." The real condition of the soil is thus hidden. "And forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away." The one who hears the word in this case may be occupied with something else than its real worth, yet he sees something in it which attracts him. There is a professed joy in receiving it, but it is only a shallow work, with little or no sense of sin. When there arises persecution for the name of Christ, they which are not born again cannot take it, so they give it up and continue on in their old way. Such is the heart of the natural man, whose nature remains unchanged.

"And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them." So there is no fruit produced here. It is not persecution in this case, but the effect of the influence of the world. The world, with all its attractions, the deceitfulness of its riches, is arranged by Satan, its prince, and comes in to choke the word. Neither was the word allowed to produce any sense of need in the soul. The love of God, in giving His Son as a ransom for the lost is neither appreciated nor desired.

But last of all there was that which "fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold." Here there had been a previous work of the Spirit of God in preparing the ground for the sower. The amount of fruit is not the same everywhere in this field but it is all called good ground. The class represented here is said to have heard the word and understood it. They receive it as a treasure and consider it a privilege to be entrusted with it. We learn from Romans 2:4 that the hard lessons of life, which we are passed through, are after all the riches of God's goodness, His forbearance and longsuffering to us, to lead us to repentance. The deep heart searchings which He passes the children of men through on earth are for our eternal welfare that we might become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

In verses 24-30 we have another parable of a sower. “The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field.” Later the Lord explains that He as the Son of Man is the sower, but He has turned it over to men, His servants, to watch over His field in His absence.

“But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.” The tares are a useless weed resembling wheat. “The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.”

When the wheat came up, the tares appeared also. The servants are at a loss to know where the tares came from, but the master says unto them, “An enemy hath done this.” The servants wish to know then if they should go out and gather up the tares, but He says to them, “Nay; lest ... ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into My barn.”

1. How was the ground prepared for the good seed?

2. What part of this passage shows that we can expect some professing Christians to be real and some to be pretenders?

3. For more on the subject of hard lessons, you might read The Purpose of Trials by B. Anstey.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 13:1-4, A New Way:

In the last chapter, we saw how the Lord disowns the old links with the flesh, with Israel, on account of their rejection of Him. Israel had been spoken of as a vine brought out of Egypt and planted by God (Psa. 80:8). But from here on He is no longer seeking fruit from them as a nation. He is a sower scattering good seed. He begins in a new way, and these new ways of God are not to be confined to the limits of Israel. The Lord now has before Him the unlimited field of the world.

“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him.” The sea often in Scripture portrays the great masses of peoples in the world. This was to be the scene of the display of the new testimony that the Lord would raise up.

“And He spake many things unto them in parables.” In these are hidden sayings, but they can be understood when there is faith. However, the religious leaders of the day, who were both blind and deaf spiritually, could not understand them. Nevertheless the disciples, who had eyes to see and ears to hear, had entered by faith into the kingdom of heaven and so had the privilege of knowing its mysteries.

The kingdom of heaven, in its successive mysteries, fills up the interval between the rejected Christ’s going back to heaven, and His returning again in glory.

There are seven parables contained here in the Lord’s discourse. The first four were addressed openly to the multitude on the seashore, while the last three were spoken to His disciples alone, after the Lord had sent away the multitude and had gone into the house again (vs. 36).

The Lord Jesus as Son of Man begins to sow the word of the kingdom. “Behold, a sower went forth to sow.” It is the same good seed in each of the four cases described. The seed tests the soil where it falls. It reveals the conditions which prevail there. Was the soil such that His blessing could rest there, or such as would call forth His judgment?

“Some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up.” The wayside was a place where the soil might have been good at one time, but it was now hardened, having been trampled on by those coming and going. The seed lay there exposed in full view to everyone. The fowls could readily see it and come and devour it. The fowls in the parables were those who were the servants of Satan. Those who have had to do with the Word of God over and over again without ever being affected by it generally become hardened to it. The enemy can come and occupy them with everything else, so that the good seed is taken away, and there is no fruit produced for the sower.

1. What hardened the ground by the wayside?

2. What are some of the differences between the first four and the last three parables in this chapter?

3. A more extensive discussion of these parables can be found in Notes on the Parables of Matthew 13 by W. Kelly.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 12:38-50, New Relationships:

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee.” They had disregarded entirely all the miracles that He had wrought in their midst. Such is unbelief. The Lord’s answer was that no sign should be given to such an evil generation, “but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” He was referring to His death and His being in the tomb. Jonah had been sent away from Israel with a message to the Gentiles, and in figure he had passed through death and resurrection. So the Lord was about to leave the Jewish nation on account of their unbelief, and God was about to take up the Gentiles.

Then the Lord goes on to cite two remarkable cases in the history of His people in a way which ought to have reached their consciences.

“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon here.”

In the next three verses the Lord shows what the final condition of the Jews would be before He came back in judgment. “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man. ... ” The Jews had been possessed with the unclean spirit of idolatry at the time they were carried away to Babylon — the seat of idolatry. After a time the unclean spirit comes back to his house, and “he findeth it empty, swept and garnished.” After their return from Babylon the Jews had gotten free from idolatry and have stayed free of it since. However the unclean spirit “taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

At a future day the idolatrous spirit would once more enter the Jews and their state would be seven times more wicked than ever it was. They will accept the worship of man. They will set up an idol — the abomination of desolation — in the holy place of the temple ({vi 23973-23980}Matt. 24:15-22). This will bring down the judgment of God upon them as a nation. Taught of God by this very circumstance the faithful remnant in that day will flee into the mountains, before the judgment of God falls on that unbelieving, guilty nation.

The Lord was attached by natural ties to the Jewish people: “Who are Israelites; . . . whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came” ({vi 28160-28161}Rom. 9:4-5). His mother and His brethren came pressing this claim, but on account of the nation’s rejection of Him He will acknowledge those relationships no longer. Of course the actual severing of those links was at the cross. But stretching forth His hand toward His disciples, He says, “Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.” The only relations which He acknowledges from here on are those that having received His Word into their heart, do it, and are now in relationship to the Father in heaven.

1. Why would the examples of Nineveh and the queen of the south speak to Jewish consciences?

2. How did the Jews become the Lord’s chosen people and why were they temporarily set aside?

3. For a nice introduction to prophetic subjects like the ones in this chapter, you’d likely benefit from Simple Summary of Prophecy by C. E. Lunden.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 12:9-37, Dried-up Souls:

After this the Lord departed and went into the synagogue. There He found a man with a withered hand. This was a picture of what Israel was in the sight of God on account of their dried up condition of soul. They were unable to lay hold of the real privileges open to them in that which God had provided for them.

The Lord Jesus was always ready to show them grace and to heal them of their infirmities. But before He could do so in this instance, He is challenged by them with the question, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days?” This they ask “that they might accuse Him.”

The Lord’s simple reply ought to have humbled their pride and silenced their objections, but they were bent on maintaining their own system of things and proved themselves to be enemies of grace. “What man shall there be among you,” said the Lord, “that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.”

Then the Lord commanded the man to stretch forth his hand, and on his doing so, it was healed immediately. The Pharisees went out and held a council as to how they might do away with Jesus.

After this the Lord withdrew, “and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.” This was a picture of what He would do when He was put to death. But He desired that they should not make it known as His testimony to Israel as a nation was now over. Henceforth grace would flow out to the Gentiles, as the quotation from Isaiah 42:1-4 shows. But as for Israel, they were as “a bruised reed” and “smoking flax.” They would be left in that condition “till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.”

But the Lord would give one more testimony of His grace to Israel. “Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him.” Here was another picture of what Israel was to be — without eyes to see Jesus as their true Messiah and without a voice to sing His praise.

The people — the poor and unlearned — ask “Is not this the Son of David?” but the Pharisees, when they heard of it said, “This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” This showed their true state before God as being void of understanding. The Lord knew their thoughts and exposed their folly, saying, “If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself.” His kingdom could not stand.

For anyone to attribute the power of the Spirit, which was being displayed in their midst, to the power of Satan was to commit a sin which could never be forgiven. The Lord as Man might submit to humiliation, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, He declared, “shall not be forgiven ... neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

The Lord then calls them a generation of vipers, using at the close of His ministry the very term that John the Baptist had used at the beginning. Furthermore “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.”

1. Why was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit unforgivable?

2. What other testimonies of God have been rejected?

3. For a thorough consideration of the subjects in this passage you would, no doubt, find Lectures on the Gospel of Matthew by W. Kelly to be very helpful.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 11:28-12:8, The Sabbath:

The increasing rejection of the Lord Jesus as King of Israel only had the effect of bringing out His higher glories as the Son of God from all eternity. He was the Revealer of the Father, full of grace and truth. How great the grace that had been shown to Israel, but now it was to have its widest and fullest expression. It would flow out to Gentiles as well as Jews, to man wherever he may be found. And here it is that we have the blessed invitation in the Lord's words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"They come from Him who knew the depth of woe,And felt for sinners as none here below."

All are invited — the sin-burdened, the weary, the sad, none can be too wretched — "Come . . . and I will give you rest." The Lord does not say here how these burdens will be removed, but we know it could only be by the way of the cross.

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The Lord had spoken of a rest that He gives to needy souls that come. Now He tells of a rest that they would find who having put their trust in Him, submit themselves to His yoke and seek grace to walk with Him. We experience this rest of soul through being in subjection to His Word in the daily circumstances of life. Those who do so prove the truth of the Lord's words, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

In chapter 12 the Lord Jesus no longer is presented to His people as their Messiah. Now He comes into conflict with the leaders over their traditions as to the Sabbath, and He takes the position that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. Upon their rejecting Him as the Messiah, He shows that God's covenant relationship with them as a nation is set aside.

It was on the Sabbath day and Jesus went through the cornfields with His disciples. His disciples were hungry and began to pick the ears of corn and to eat them. When the Pharisees saw it they found fault saying that it was not lawful to do so on the Sabbath. In reply the Lord cites the case of David. David, when rejected, went into the house of God with his followers and ate the showbread, which ordinarily was only lawful for the priests to eat. Things were in a sad state in Israel when their anointed king was persecuted and in rejection and had to eat the showbread. It was the same now, only One greater than David was there. The true King was in rejection and His followers were hungry. Therefore, what the Pharisees contended for was but empty formality. The Lord lets them know that the One who was greater than the Sabbath had power to change it. They had been attempting to carry out that which had been instituted by God in a carnal and intellectual way. They had not discerned the spirit in which these things should have been kept. They had not learned what was meant by the prophet of old when it was said, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." So they were unable to understand that the Son of Man had come who also had authority over the Sabbath.

1. How do we get rest for our souls?

2. What did God's covenant relationship with Israel depend on?

3. For more on the subject of the Sabbath you might find The Sabbath, the Law and Christian Ministry by C. H. Mackintosh to be very enlightening.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 11:16-27, Rejection:

The Lord had borne testimony to John the Baptist now in prison. Then He shows how that generation had rejected John's ministry, because he was in his ministry as one separate from the nation. "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."

John's ministry had called them to repentance and sorrow, but they had no heart for it. Then the Lord Jesus came and His birth was announced with "good tidings of great joy," but they did not want His ministry either, though it was accompanied with power and great blessing. He had sought out the most wretched among them to show them the kindness and love of God, and He was accused of falling into their evil ways. Such is man naturally. He dislikes God. But "wisdom is justified of her children," the Lord adds. They had rejected the voice of heavenly wisdom, and the wisdom which they professed to have was but the wisdom of this world.

"Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not: woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" They had witnessed His works of power and grace and yet had not repented on account of it. "For if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes." Those great cities of the past, because of their wickedness, had been overthrown by the judgment of God. They had rejected the testimony of God in creation, but the Jews, in rejecting the works and testimony of Jesus, were far more responsible to God. Capernaum had been exalted to heaven through the mighty acts of power and blessing performed there, yet it would be brought down to hell. For if those same mighty works had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. It will be more tolerable for those of old in that final day of judgment than for those who rejected the Messiah spoken of by Moses and the prophets.

After pronouncing these solemn woes on those who rejected Him, the Lord turns and addresses His Father. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." He gives Him His broadest title, as "Lord of heaven and earth." He was now no longer simply the God of Israel. Those who thought that they were wise and prudent had rejected both the ministry of John and that of the Lord Himself. Therefore He will be revealed as "the Father" to whoever comes.

"All things are delivered unto Me of My Father." Men might refuse Him the throne of Israel and all His earthly honors; He might be despised and rejected, yet He stands in all the conscious dignity of His heavenly Person as the eternal Son of the Father.

1. What testimonies did the Jews reject?

2. What amazing thing did the Lord do when He was rejected?

3. For an excellent, if “deep,” treatment of this time of transition consider reading in Synopsis of the Books of the Bible by J. N. Darby.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 11:1-15, The Kingdom:

Having finished His warnings and instructions to His disciples, the Lord Jesus departs to teach and to preach in their cities. John the Baptist had been put in prison by Herod some time before (Matt. 4:12). While there he hears of the wonderful works that Jesus had done. Though John had announced the coming of Jesus earlier and had even said of Him, “He must increase, but I must decrease,” he seemingly did not understand the way in which it should come about. He had heralded the coming of the King. Why then was he still in prison when such wonderful works of power were taking place? So he sends two of his disciples to Jesus saying, “Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?” John had been an honored and faithful servant, but even John’s faith wavered in that long wait in prison. There was only one perfect Servant — the Lord Himself. The Lord tells the disciples of John, “Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” Then He adds a word especially for John: “Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.” There were special blessings for those who would not be offended in Him, no doubt referring to Isaiah 8:14: “He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel.”

The messengers of John depart and then the Lord in a most gracious manner takes the occasion to testify of John to the multitude. He refers to John’s life of self-denial in the wilderness. “What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? . . . A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses.” Had they gone out to see a prophet? John, He says, was more than a prophet. “Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.” He was the greatest of all who had come before.

“Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” The privileges and blessings of the kingdom of heaven were far more wonderful than those which belonged to the old order of things. John was a part of the old order which closed with his testimony.

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” Satan, the great enemy, would bring about many hindrances to those who would seek to enter; he would use the religious leaders of the day to confuse and discourage. It required real purpose of heart on the part of those who would seek to enter. They must seize the opportunities set before them, and so it is until our own day.

“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John,” the Lord says. John stood as the last and greatest witness of that dispensation which was about to close; “And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” Elijah’s mission was to prepare the way for the Lord, and John was to come “in the spirit and power of Elias.” But when the King was rejected, the establishment of the kingdom on earth must await a future day. John’s witness then to faith was a testimony to the kingdom that will be displayed in power and glory some day soon.

1. Why is the least in the kingdom of heaven said to be greater than John the Baptist?

2. When will the kingdom come in power and glory?

3. For a very thorough treatment of the subject of the kingdom you should consider The Kingdom of God and of Heaven by J. A. Savage.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 10:16-42, Persecution:

The Lord goes on to tell His disciples what they must expect in preaching the gospel of the kingdom among their own people. “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.” They might go forth in love, yet they would meet with “wolves.” They would need heavenly wisdom also: “Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”

“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils.” The Jews despised the Gentiles, but they would not hesitate to bring the power of their Gentile masters against the servants of the Lord. “Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.” This is quite a different way of bringing the gospel before those in high places. The means usually employed to reach such persons is through compromising the truth and in conformity to the world.

Furthermore the Lord prepares them as to what to expect from their nearest kin in rendering this testimony to Him as the Messiah. “The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child. ... And ye shall be hated of all men for My name’s sake.” In 2 Timothy 3:12 we are told that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” However, the Lord gives the disciples a hope that this special period of trial would be for a limited time and that he that should endure to the end would be delivered.

Then the Lord says, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.” The mission of the disciples to Israel came to an end with the death of Christ and in a final way with the destruction of Jerusalem. After the mission came the calling of the church. The preaching of the gospel of the grace of God to all men everywhere has been going forth since. But after the church is called home to glory, the testimony to the coming kingdom of the Messiah will again go forth until the Messiah comes as Son of Man in His glory. Daniel the prophet spoke of Him coming with the clouds of heaven. This would be in judgment on the ungodly, but it would mean deliverance for the faithful remnant then.

“Fear not them which kill the body,” that is, their persecutors; they cannot touch the soul. Nothing can happen to a child of God but what the Father allows. The only thing one ought to dread is grieving and sinning against God. “Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” — such would be the portion of the enemies of the Lord.

Then He speaks of the Father's care for them in the very smallest details. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

After this He presses on them the need of confessing and not denying Him before men. "Him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven."

"He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me." The cross here represents those trials in life which Satan uses to keep people from coming to the Lord. If we would follow the Lord, we must make up our minds to experience trials, suffering and reproach. Yet if we take these things from Him, He will turn them for our blessing. He makes all things work together for good to those that love Him.

1. What other examples are there in Scripture of prisoners being used to reach prominent leaders with God's Word?

2. What does the Bible say about the godly and persecution?

3. Outline of Prophetic Events by B. Anstey gives an excellent overview of prophecy.

The Kingly One: Bible Talks On Matthew, Matthew 9:27-10:15, Compassion for Lost Sheep:

"And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." The two blind men come to Him in the house and He asks them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened."

Next they bring a dumb man, possessed of a demon, to the Lord Jesus. The Lord casts out the demon and the man speaks.

In all these miracles we see the wonderful grace of the Lord. He gives proof after proof of His mercy to Israel and of what He will yet do for them in a coming day. But we can see in them types of what we are ourselves through the fall of man — blind and dumb spiritually. How wonderful the grace that delivered us from sin and Satan's chain, opened our eyes to see beauty in Jesus, God's beloved One, and loosed our stammering tongues to sing His praise!

"The multitudes marveled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils." What could be more terrible than this? And yet it does not turn the Lord aside from His mission of showing mercy to His people. He "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." When He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Then He tells His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

Then in the beginning of chapter 10 the Lord acts according to what He had just said as to sending forth laborers into His harvest. He calls to Him His twelve disciples and gives them the power which He Himself had displayed. They were to cast out unclean spirits and to heal all manner of disease.

We then have their names given, and they are told not to go to the Gentiles, nor to the Samaritans, but to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." They were to announce, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." They were to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. The people might be Israelites, yet as such they no longer had the right to enter into this kingdom, for they are treated as lost, and could only enter by faith. Some of the cities into which they would enter might not receive them, but it would be more favorable in the time of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those who refused them.

From verses 16-42 we can see that this testimony also applies to a future day. It is very evident that it also refers to that spoken of by the prophets of old — the time of Jacob's trouble. The burden of the prophets' testimony of old was the coming of the Messiah in lowliness, His rejection, His sufferings, and the glory which should follow.

1. What was required for an Israelite to be blessed?

2. How did the Pharisees respond to the Lord's power and goodness in casting out the demon?

3. To further enjoy the care of this true Shepherd consider The Lord Is My Shepherd and Other Papers by H. Smith.

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