

THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL - THE LIFE OF CHRIST

PART SIX - A PERIOD OF MINISTRY IN GALILEE AND ABOUT THE SEA OF GALILEE

44. Plucking Grain on the Sabbath (Lk. 6:1-5) [Mt. 12:1-8; Mk. 2:23-28]

- (1) This is probably the first Sabbath after the Passover. The disciples were probably plucking barley or wheat.
- (2) The objection was not to plucking grain, but to doing it on the Sabbath Day. It was within the Law to eat from any field through which you might be passing (Deut. 23:25). The Pharisees believed this act would be considered reaping, which would be a form of work forbidden on the Sabbath.
- (3,4) It seems that Jesus is asking a rhetorical question, the Pharisees prided themselves on their knowledge of the scriptures. Jesus is referring to an incident in 1 Sam. 21:1ff. According to the Law, only the priests were to eat this bread, but David and his followers ate it anyway. Some commentators say that this passage indicates the unimportance of the ceremonial laws, however, this theory conflicts with 2 Sam. 6:6,7 (Uzzah) and 2 Chron. 26:16-23 (Uzziah). Jesus condemned law breaking of even the smallest kind in Mt. 5:17-20.

Let's visit the Matthew account (12:1-8). Jesus gives two more examples for our learning.

- (5) The priests worked hard on the Sabbath day. They committed only an apparent profanation of the Sabbath because they were doing the will of God. The law concerning working on the Sabbath probably referred to labor for earthly profit. The disciple's actions did not fit that category.
- (6) The argument here is perhaps this: if the priests could "labor" on the Sabbath to serve the Temple, then perhaps the disciples could "labor" to serve Jesus. It is probable that what the Pharisees are accusing the disciples of violating is tradition, not Law. If the priests can abrogate the Law by serving the Temple, then the disciples can abrogate tradition by serving Jesus.
- (7) Jesus quotes Hos. 6:6. He is suggesting that inward life is superior to outward form. This is the idea Paul presents in 1 Cor. 13:3.

Now let's return to the Luke 6 passage and incorporate Mk. 2:27-28 into our thoughts.

- (5) Only Jesus being the Son of man, God on earth – the infallible One – had the complete understanding of the Sabbath day. Man had added so many traditions to the original Sabbath laws that their lawyers could not sort them out. However, Jesus the Lord of the Sabbath, could explain the difference between man's traditions and His Father's Law.

McGarvey and Chumbley give this explanation of these passages in their Commentaries on Matthew. The disciples were not breaking the Sabbath because they were not laboring for earthly gain. The example of the priests showed that all work was not prohibited. The Jews lacked knowledge of the scriptures or they would have known that the Hosea passage allowed for feeding the hungry on the Sabbath. The Pharisees were being hypocritical because they would not condemn David for a direct violation of the Law, while condemning the disciples for a violation of their man-made tradition.

45. Defends Healing on the Sabbath (Lk. 6:6-11)[Mt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6]

- (6) "On another Sabbath" means a different one from the one mentioned in verses 1-5. Jesus chose to enter the synagogue and teach. A withered hand would be useless, incapable of work.
- (7) The motives of the scribes and Pharisees were evil. They watched Jesus with malicious intent. They hoped that Jesus would be caught in a dilemma, that is, wrong if he healed or wrong if he refused to do good.

- (8) Jesus could read their minds (Jn. 2:25). The afflicted man was commanded to stand. Notice that Jesus performs the healing itself without a word.
- (9,10) Jesus turns the tables on the Jews by asking them a question that they will not answer. Obviously the answer is that man must do good, and to fail to do good when the opportunity presents itself would be a form of evil. Mt. 12:11,12 inserts the point concerning the sheep that had fallen into the pit. The “look” Jesus gave the Pharisees is further explained by Mk. 3:5. Anger here means righteous indignation because of the hardness of their hearts. Jesus spoke, the man obeyed, the hand was healed.
- (11) The Jews were mad because nothing was done to provide them with the grounds for condemning Jesus publicly. They were so angry they plotted against Jesus with the Herodians, a secular group of Jews that generally Pharisees would avoid contact with (Mk. 3:6). Compare the anger of the Pharisees to the anger of Jesus. Sinful wrath versus righteous indignation.

46. Jesus Teaches and Heals Many by the Seaside (Mt. 12:15-21)[Mk. 3:7-12]

- (15) Instead of confronting the Pharisees, Jesus chooses to remove Himself from their presence. Jesus continued to do great miracles, healing the entire multitude that followed Him.
- (16) Jesus is still not ready to reveal Himself completely so He forbids the multitude from giving Him unnecessary publicity.
- (17) Their silence would guarantee the fulfillment of Isa. 42:1-4.
- (18) This verse is descriptive of the person and character of Jesus. 1) Chosen servant, 2) loved and obedient, and 3) will bring salvation to the Gentiles.
- (19,20) The fulfillment of these verses is contained within the preceding verses. His retreat from the Pharisees fulfilled verse 19 and His healing of the multitude fulfilled verse 20. A broken stick and a burned out lamp wick represented the ill, lame, and blind. Jesus would continue to heal these people until the Gospel was sent forth.
- (21) This verse is not fulfilled at this time, but refers to the future reception of the Gospel by the Gentiles. Another view says that based on Mark’s account, Gentiles were present at the healings of verse 15. Let’s look at the Mark 3 account.
- 8 – Idumea is Edom, others came from the regions to the east of Jordan as well as Phoenicia. The people of these countries would be considered Gentiles unless of course only Jews living in these countries came to Jesus.
 - 9 – Once again Jesus has a ship at His disposal to use as a speaker’s platform. The ship solved two problems by separating Jesus from the crowd, it made it easier for Jesus to be seen and heard and it gave Jesus some protection from inadvertent physical harm.
 - 10 – The ship also prevented the crowd from pressing together and injuring one another.
 - 11 – Notice the similarity of actions between these unclean spirits and those previously cast out.

47. Jesus Spends a Night in Prayer (Lk. 6:12)

- (12) “These days” means during the time when Jesus was disputing with the Pharisees and healing the sick. There are several mountains on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The significance of this verse is in Jesus’ attitude of prayer. Jesus always prayed before important events (Mk. 6:46; Lk. 22:41-44; Jn. 11:41,42; 17:1)

48. Jesus Chooses the Twelve (Lk. 6:13-16)[Mt. 10:2-4; Mk. 3:13-19]

- (13) First they were called to discipleship (Jn. 1:35-45); second, to be constant attendants (Mt. 4:18-22) and now, to apostleship. They were endowed with miraculous gifts and sent out on

their so-called “limited commission.” Of all of Christ’s disciples, twelve were chosen. For a discussion of the possible significance of the number twelve see McGarvey’s *Fourfold Gospel* p. 220. (14-16)

The four lists should be compared. Mt.10:2-4; Mk. 3:16-19; Lk. 6:14-16 and Acts 1:13. The apostles can be divided into three classes of four apostles each. The order of these classes is constant among the four lists, as is the name of the apostle that heads each list. Peter heads the first, Philip the second and James the third. Iscariot is always last except in Acts where he is omitted.

1. Peter – given the keys of the kingdom, prominent in the early church, wrote two books of the NT, NOT the first pope.
2. Andrew – brother of Peter.
3. James the “greater.” – the first apostolic martyr.
4. John – the beloved apostle, wrote five books of the NT.
5. Philip – former disciple of John the Baptist.
6. Bartholomew – Nathaniel
7. Matthew – called Levi, a publican, wrote the first book of the NT.
8. Thomas – Didymus (twin), “doubting Thomas.”
9. James the “less” – possibly a cousin of Jesus (Lk. 24:10; Jn. 19:25) and brother to Joses (Mt. 27:56).
10. Simon – the “zealot,” (Canaanite).
11. Judas – (Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus) possible author of Jude however, most believe that Jude was authored by one of the Lord’s brothers.
12. Judas Iscariot – the traitor, probably the only non-Galilean apostle.

Peter Not the Pope

The scriptures do not show Peter to be the supreme apostle. Jesus places the apostles on an equal basis (Mt. 23:8-11). Also examine Mt. 18:18; 19:27,28; 20:25-27; Jn. 20:21; and Acts 1:8. Peter claims only equality with the rest (1 Pet. 5:1,4). Paul withstood Peter to the face and ranked him second to James the Lord’s brother (not one of the twelve), Gal. 2:11-14, 9. Did James defer to Peter in Acts 15:13-21? No, James had the last word in the matter. There are no scriptural facts supporting the Peter as the first pope theory. There are 3 baseless assumptions: 1- Peter had supreme authority, 2- he was the first bishop of Rome, and 3- his powers passed from pope to pope.

The Sons of Thunder (Boanerges)

Why this nickname for James and John? Their temper (Lk. 9:51-56)? We know John had a forceful way with words (1 Jn. 3:9,10) and was not afraid to call the names liar, antichrist, deceiver, children of the devil (1 Jn. 1:6; 2:4,22; 3:15; 2 Jn. 3-11). The word thunder is only found in John’s writing and there it is found eleven times.

49. The Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6:17-49) [Mt. 5,6,7]

See notes on the Sermon on the Mount.

50. Jesus Heals the Centurion’s Servant (Lk. 7:1-10) [Mt. 8:1,5-13]

- (1) Sometime after the Sermon on the Mount Jesus returns to Capernaum. The wording here indicates that he was not far from Capernaum.
- (2,3) What is a centurion? We know from Mt 8:10 that he was a Gentile. Perhaps he was a proselyte, but it cannot be known for certain. Three other centurions are mentioned in the NT, can you name them? (Lk. 23:47; Acts 10:1; 27:1,3,43) The servant was sick and in much pain; he was about to die. The centurion had heard of the powers of Jesus, so he sent elders of the Jews to ask Jesus to heal his servant. Compare to the Matthew account and reconcile the

differences. Something done through representatives is like doing it yourself; you take the fame or the blame.

- (4,5) The elders introduced Jesus to the deeds of the centurion, trying to show that he was worthy of mercy. The centurion had built a synagogue in Capernaum at his own expense.
- (6,7) The centurion is following eastern custom. It was traditional to send messengers continually to one of which you were asking a favor. After agreeing to perform the favor, the messengers were then sent to say that the recipient was unworthy and the one doing the favor was not to put himself out. The centurion knew he was unworthy because he understood the Jews beliefs concerning consorting with Gentiles. Therefore he had a solution that would heal his servant and keep Jesus from violating the Jewish customs.
- (8-10) The centurion understood the power of the word of one with authority. In his civil occupation the centurion could command soldiers and servants and they would obey. Matthew names the disease as palsy, but Luke the physician refrains from naming it. Jesus told his followers that this centurion had greater faith than any Jew that He had found. Does this include the apostles? We have an example of Jesus healing over a distance. By the time the messengers had returned home, the servant was healed.
 - Note on faith – The less faith we have, the less we esteem Jesus. The more faith we have, the less we esteem ourselves. As we decline, Jesus increases. That Jesus would marvel at the centurion’s faith is proof that Jesus did not miraculously bestow faith on him. Faith, or belief in facts, concerning scripture or Jesus comes to a man the same way belief in any facts come, the process is the same.
 - Mt. 8:11,12 contains material not recorded by Luke. First, a prediction of a massive Gentile conversion and second, a great apostasy by the Jews. How do we know the children of the kingdom are the Jews? Jesus is talking about heaven and hell in these two verses.

51. Jesus Raises the Widow’s Son (Lk. 7:11-17)

- (11) It seems that Jesus has been followed by the multitude since He chose the twelve. Nain is located about 20 miles south of Capernaum. Luke is the only writer to record this incident.
- (12) The burial grounds were located outside the city. To the Jews the death of an only child represented an extreme sorrow. The sorrow in this case was increased because the mother was a widow and probably depended on her son for support.
- (13) Jesus and His disciples alongside the funeral procession made a large group of witnesses for this miracle. The eastern people will shriek and scream when they weep for their dead.
- (14) The Jews rarely used a coffin in our sense of the word, but instead usually carried the body on an open pallet. When Jesus touched the bier, the bearers stood still. There are two additional records of Jesus raising the dead: 1- the daughter of Jarius and 2- Lazarus. Overall there are seven instances of the dead being raised in the Bible. In addition to the three mentioned there are 1- the child of the widow of Zarephath (1 Ki. 17:22), 2- the son of the Shunammite woman (2 Ki. 4:33-36), 3- a man raised by touching Elisha’s bones (2 Ki. 13:21), and 4- Peter raises Dorcas/Tabitha (Acts 9:36-42). What distinguishes these resurrections from that of Jesus?
- (15) The son rose and began to speak. Jesus presented the son to his mother.
- (16) The people knew they were in the presence of a man of God, they were yet to realize that He was the Son of God. Remember no dead had been raised since the time of Elisha, this indeed was a rare event.
- (17) The news of this miracle spread to Judea and it seems from what follows that even John the Baptist heard of it while he was imprisoned.

52. John's Inquiry and Christ's Answer (Lk. 7:18-35) [Mt. 11:1-19]

- (18) Word comes to John while he is imprisoned concerning the fame of Jesus (Mt. 11:2).
- (19) John sent two disciples to inquire of Jesus. The question is, if John sent them to relieve his own doubts or to clear up doubts among his disciples. The latter is most likely the case.
- (20) John was imprisoned at Machaerus, about seventy miles from the Sea of Galilee. It would take about two days for John's disciples to make the trip. They were to inquire if Jesus was the Messiah.
- (21) Jesus chose to demonstrate His Messiahship instead of vocalize it. The three categories of illnesses were disease, plagues, and evil spirits. Blindness was also healed.
- (22,23) Jesus charged the disciples of John to report the things that they had seen and heard. This verse indicates other possible resurrections besides the ones previously mentioned (Jn. 21:25). The climax of Jesus' summation is that the gospel is preached to the poor. Blessings come to those who are not put off by the true mission of Christ.
- (24,25) Jesus has some things to say concerning John. Jesus is characterizing John as the opposite of a reed shaken in the wind. He would not be blown about by "changing winds of doctrine;" he was a spiritual oak. John was not a soft man but rather a rough man (Mt. 3:4). He chose to work in the hard places.
- (26,27) Whatever anyone might say of John, he was first and foremost a prophet – a forthteller. Jesus ranked John above the prophets. John was the special messenger and forerunner of Jesus (Mal. 3:1).
- (28) There was none greater than John, his relative position to Jesus, elevated him above all others. However, it is possible for the least in the Kingdom to exceed John. Remember that John was not in the Kingdom (church) so he could not attain the greatness of the least member of the kingdom.
- (29) The people perceived, confessed, and declared God's justice. Had they previously been baptized? Or were they baptized after Jesus' speech?
- (30) The Pharisees and lawyers rejected God and refused the baptism of John.
- (31) What are these men like?
- (32) They were playing games like children. First, the game was a wedding feast, but some refused to play, then they played funeral procession and others refused to play.
- (33) Jesus applies the previous example to John and himself. John was ascetic; they hated him for it and called him demon possessed.
- (34) Now Jesus comes living a life similar to the Jews. This mode of living did not suit them either.
- (35) They were as unreasonable as a group of children.

53. Jesus Upbraids Cities of Galilee (Mt. 11:20-30)

- (20) Jesus is upset with the people of the cities where he had performed the most miracles. Since we have no record of miracles being performed in these two cities it is obvious that we do not have the complete record.
- (21) This is an exclamation of pity more than anger. Chorozin was two miles north of Capernaum and Bethsaida was a suburb of Capernaum. Tyre and Sidon were cities of Phoenicia noted for their impiety. History shows us that the pagan cities eventually accepted Christ while cities such as Tiberias (near Capernaum) became all the more entrenched in Judaism. Sackcloth was a material made from camel's hair and was used to make bags and mourning clothes. The symbol is that these cities would have repented thoroughly.
- (22) Tyre and Sidon were wicked cities, but better in proportion to their opportunities than the Galilean cities.

- (23,24) Capernaum was also in jeopardy. Today the city does not exist. Now we have seen four great truths taught in these verses. 1- Every hearer of the gospel is left either more blessed or more wretched. 2- The miracles of Jesus were performed to lead men to repentance, by demonstrating His authority. 3- There might be degrees of punishment in the after life. 4- God takes into account our opportunities when He measures our guiltiness. See also Mt. 5:21,22; 10:15; Lk. 11:47,48; Jn. 9:41; 15:22-24; Rom. 2:12.
- Note: Capernaum had been exalted because Jesus had picked it as His headquarters. In less than 30 years these cities were destroyed. Sin will destroy cities and nations. Any temporal prosperity of a semi-permanent nature depends upon the righteousness of its inhabitants.
- (25) This time of displeasure brought the following prayer to the mind of Jesus. The gospel had been rejected by the wise and understanding (the selfish, shrewd, scribes and Pharisees). The pure and childlike were the apostles and disciples. How had things been hidden from the "wise?" Through the natural operation of their own corrupted and perverted minds. The "babes" had a more teachable and moral condition.
- (26) Jesus reiterates His thoughts of verse 25.
- (27) Jesus was entrusted with all things needed for the full execution of His office. The glorification of Jesus would be the climax of His investiture of power. (Mt. 28:18; Col. 1:16-19; Heb. 1:8). This authority will be eventually returned (1 Cor. 15:28). Five more great truths: 1- We cannot know Jesus completely as His nature is beyond our comprehension. 2- The only correct knowledge we have concerning deity has come through revelation. 3- The revelation of the Father was begun by Jesus and will not be completed until the after-time. 4- The relationship described in these verses is an assertion of the divinity of Christ. 5- Christ has His power because He is the Christ.
- (28-30) The reasons we should come to Jesus have just been discussed: His nature and His knowledge (which He is willing to share). This labor and rest refers to our souls. Sin imposes a heavy burden; forgiveness of sins provides a rest. A side effect of getting yourself together spiritually is that physical burdens are often relieved. The meekness and lowliness of Jesus makes Him an easier taskmaster. To "take the yoke" means to submit and become a disciple. The yoke is a symbol of servitude. (Jer. 26:3; Isa. 9:4; Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1; 1 Tim. 6:1.)

54. Our Lord Dines With Simon (Lk. 7:36-50)

- (36) This account is not to be confused with Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9 and Jn. 12:1-8. Simon was a very common name; the NT mentions nine different men with that name. The Jews had taken up the Greek custom of reclining to eat. The motives of Simon are somewhat similar to Nicodemus, namely, curiosity. We will see that Simon does not provide Jesus with the ordinary courtesies usually paid to an honored guest. Why?
- (37) Some have held that this woman was Mary Magdalene but the evidence does not bear this out. (See Lk. 8:2) Ointment of this type was used by NT people as a cologne or perfume. The vases used to carry the perfume were generically called alabasters whether made of that material or not.
- (38) Jesus is reclining on a couch on His left elbow. The woman stood at His feet. His sandals would have been removed and left at the door. Her weeping caused tears to fall on Jesus' feet - she kissed them and wiped them with her hair - then anointed them with ointment.
- (39) Simon was thinking Jesus might not be a prophet if He could not foresee that this woman was a sinner. If she were a sinner, then the Pharisee tradition would call for Her to be repelled. Simon's conclusion: Jesus had neither knowledge nor holiness, therefore He was not a prophet. Actually, Jesus was condescending Himself just to sit with the Pharisee, much less contact the sinful woman.

- (40) Jesus read Simon's thoughts. Jesus will now answer the doubts Simon has kept within his own mind.
- (41) Jesus uses a story to illustrate His point. Jesus is discussing two debts; one ten times greater than the other does. In terms of their currency, we are talking about the difference between 500 days wages and 50 days wages.
- (42) Who do the principles of this parable represent? The case of Simon was equally hopeless to that of the woman even though she was ten times more sinful. Jesus would be willing to forgive both sinners, but will choose one as we shall see. Notice Jesus' question that causes the Pharisee to convict himself, compare this passage to Lk. 10:36,37; Mt. 21:40,41.
- (43) Notice the noncommittal tone of Simon's answer. Jesus emphatically affirms the truthfulness of Simon's answer.
- (44) Simon will have to contrast the woman's actions to his own. Point 1 - Washing of the feet was a necessity to keep from soiling the home of the host. Simon offered no water while the woman offered her tears.
- (45) Point 2 - A kiss is the ordinary greeting of respect in the Oriental countries. The host omitted even the least familiar kiss on the hand, while the woman administered a kiss that was humble even by Oriental standards.
- (46) Point 3 - An honored guest was usually anointed with oil on the head but Simon neglected this tradition. It was seen as an extreme honor to have one's feet anointed. Note: Ointment was more valuable than oil.
- (47) By coming to Jesus, the woman demonstrated by her contrite heart that she knew she needed a Savior. Simon's attitude demonstrated that he did not have a contrite heart.
- (48) Jesus spoke her sins forgiven.
- (49) Those at the table were surprised at this assumption of authority. They did not express their thoughts aloud however.
- (50) The forgiveness of the woman's sins is attributed to her faith.

Four Lessons

- 1- Our sense of our own guilt may differ, but regardless, we are all unable to atone for our own sins.
- 2- Sin is against Christ; therefore He has the right and power to forgive sin.
- 3- Those that do not have the flagrant and open sins should also be conscience of their need of forgiveness.
- 4- Those brought back from the deepest depths are often the most appreciative. However, to say that sin produces love or that much sin produces much love is not in accordance with scripture. "Should we sin more that grace may abound?" God forbid!

55. Women Who Ministered to Christ (Lk. 8:1-3)

- (1) Not long after the events of Luke 7, Jesus continued touring Galilee. His purpose for making this circuit was to preach and bring good tidings concerning the kingdom.
- (2) See also Lk. 23:55; 24:10; Mt. 27:56; and Mk. 15:40. Jesus cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9).
- (3) Joanna was the wife of Herod's Steward (administrator or superintendent). These women spent their own money and gave of their own goods to see to it that Christ was ministered to. It is thought that Chuzas, Joanna's husband is the nobleman of Jn. 4:46,47 and if so, that would explain her devotion to the Lord.

56. Concerning Blasphemy (Mk. 3:19-30) [Mt. 12:22-37; Lk. 11:14-23]

- (19) Whose house is not known?

- (20) There were so many people following Jesus now that He and the apostles could not take a common meal together without interruption.
- (21) It appears from verse 31 that these friends are His brothers. They felt that Jesus had become fanatical, carried away with religious enthusiasm. They felt that He had no regard for His own safety. Even Mary sympathized with her sons, even though her faith was fuller.
- From Mt. 12:22,23 we see that Jesus is once again casting out demons. The multitudes are once again amazed. The power of this miracle was more than evident since a demon was cast out and the victim's speech and sight was restored.
- (22) The enemies of Jesus are from Jerusalem - the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 12:24). They accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan. It is unknown how Satan came to be called Beelzebub in Jewish history. Notice that they did not deny the miracle, only the power behind it.
- (23) Jesus chooses to use parables to reply to these accusers. His main theme is "How can Satan cast out Satan?"
- (24) The thrust of the Pharisees' argument destroyed the very power that Satan wanted to possess - a triumph over a living man. Jesus' explanation then is that Satan would not destroy what already belonged to his own kingdom.
- (25) Here is a similar illustration.
- (26) From these arguments we see that Jesus professes the following truths: 1- The powers of evil are organized into a kingdom with Satan as its head and 2- Division leads to destruction.
- Two more arguments are gleaned from the Lk. 11:18-20 passage: 1- If there are those among the Pharisees claiming to cast out demons, then by whose power are they doing it? And 2- Jesus argues that if He is not casting out demons by Satan's power, then He must be using God's power.
- (27) One final argument: Jesus had entered the house of Satan and robbed him of his possessions (the demoniac), therefore, Jesus had the power to bind Satan.
- (28) These men had committed the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
- (29) If one rejects the Holy Spirit and instead attributes that evidence to Satan, then he has no basis for faith in God and without faith in God there can be no forgiveness.
- (30) The Jews committed this sin when they said Jesus had an unclean spirit. That is, His works were due to a satanic influence. It would be impossible for us to call God - Satan or the Holy Spirit - a demon unless our state of sin was beyond reform.
- Other notes from Mt. 12:33-37
- (33) Either Jesus is an evil tree or He is a good tree. That is, He and His works are evil or He and His works are good.
- (34) Jesus informs these men of the condition of their hearts.
- (35) Summarizes verses 33 and 34.
- (36,37) Notice that Jesus makes "words" as a basis for judgment. Other scriptures show "works" as the basis for judgment (Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10). Elsewhere "faith" is said to be the basis for judgment (Rom. 3:28). The bottom line is that faith will finally be based upon one's character. Our character is formed by faith. Our works and words are measures of our character.

57. Sign Seekers (Mt. 12:38-45) [Lk. 11:24-36]

- (38) Did the Pharisees want just a miracle? They probably wanted a sign from heaven showing Jesus as the chosen one. Other prophets and leaders had been given such signs (Ex. 9:22-24; 1 Sam. 7:9,10; 1 Ki. 18:36-38). Compare this verse to Jn. 2:18 and the wilderness temptations.

- (39) Jesus is representing Israel as being an adulteress in the spiritual sense. That is, married to God but untrue to Him. (See Ex. 34:15; Jer. 3:14,20.) The only sign that these Pharisees would see would be the sign of Jonah. How was Jonah shown to be a true prophet? How would Jesus be shown in like manner?
- (40) According to Jewish reckoning, Jesus was in the grave three days. "Whale" (KJV) would be better translated "great fish." The phrase "heart of the earth" simply means buried in the ground.
- (41) Those of Nineveh changed their way of living and began to follow a course of life prescribed by Jonah's preaching. In Jewish courts were required to stand when giving testimony. Christ was a greater preacher than Jonah was and Israel knew God better than Nineveh. Nevertheless, Jonah's preaching succeeded with Nineveh while Christ's preaching failed with Israel.
- (42) The queen of Sheba traveled a great distance to listen to Solomon. Jesus brought His wisdom to the Jews and they rejected it.
- (43) When the unclean spirit is out of a man the spirit is like a man in the desert - miserable. He seeks a place to rest.
- (44) The unclean spirit returns to its original resting-place and the place is ripe to be reoccupied.
- (45) The abode is so inviting that the evil spirit finds kindred spirits to help him enjoy this refreshed home. This parable compares two conditions experienced by one man. The comparison is within the existing evil generation. The reference is to the continually increasing wickedness of the Jews.
- From Lk. 11:27,28 we see the following:
- (27) This woman fulfills Mary's prediction of Lk. 1:48. Is the woman suggesting worship of Mary? The woman is simply bragging on the Son by bragging on the mother.
- (28) Jesus does not deny that His mother is blessed, but points out that those who hear God's word and do it are equally, if not more, blessed. Which was more important, Mary's blessedness because she was a disciple or her blessedness because she was the mother of Jesus? (2 Cor. 5:15,16)

58. Christ's Mother and Brethren (Mt. 12:46-50) [Mk. 2:31-35; Lk. 8:19-21]

- (46) This verse helps show that Jesus had natural brothers.
- (47) The preaching of Jesus was interrupted by a message concerning His mother and brothers. The messenger assumed that the business that Mary had with Jesus was more important than His business with the people. See Mk. 3:21,31.
- (48) Earthly relationships did not take precedence over His spiritual work. Jesus was not subservient to His mother.
- (49,50) Any who do the will of God are counted as brothers, mothers, and relatives of Christ. Do these verses help repudiate the worship of Mary?

59. Dines With a Pharisee (Lk. 11:37-54)

- (37) The original text shows this meal to be an early meal, such as breakfast.
- (38) Jesus did not follow the tradition of the elders. The Jews at the very least washed their hands before eating.
- (39) Jesus did not object to outward cleansing, only that the inward cleansing was being neglected. As a cleansed body does make a pure heart, fine clothes do not make a noble character.
- (40) If God made both the outward and inward man, then each should be treated equally.
- (41) If you give love, mercy, compassion, etc., these inner gifts will show your true character. The Pharisees believed that they could lawfully use anything no matter how they came to possess it - as long as they gave alms of it.

- (42) The Pharisees were extremely careful in their tithing even down to the herbs in their garden. But while they were careful about these little things they neglected weightier matters such as justice and love of God. Compare to Mt. 23:23.
- (43) The Pharisees loved to be honored by man (Jn. 5:44). They lived to be spoken to in public and envied the best seats in the synagogue.
- (44) The Jews were careful to keep their tombs and graves marked because of Num. 19:16. Jesus says that the Pharisees were like men that touched graves unknowingly, unclean but not aware of it. We see Jesus has pronounced three woes on the Pharisees for three sins: 1- hypocrisy, 2- vainglory and 3- moral corruption.
- (45) The lawyers or interpreters of the Law were usually Pharisees. These lawyers felt Jesus' comments not only condemned them as Pharisees, but also as lawyers.
- (46) Jesus makes sure the lawyers understand that they are condemned. First, he showed them to be hypocrites. They made the law hard for the people to bear but easy for themselves.
- (47) While they say that they honor the prophets, their kind had previously killed them. The lawyers did not condemn their predecessors for killing the prophets.
- (48) You are guilty of the sins of others if you consent to or endorse the crime. Just as their fathers had killed prophets, they would soon have murder on their own minds.
- (49,50) What Jesus says here is not found specifically in any one prophecy, but it is the gist of several prophecies, such as: 2 Chron. 24:19-22; 36:14-16; and Prov. 1:20-33.
- (51) Abel's form of sacrifice pre-figured Christ's. His murder is described in the first historical book while that of Zechariah is described in the last historical book. For Jesus' commentary on this passage, see His parable in Lk. 20:9-16.
- (52) The third woe was pronounced upon the lawyers. The lawyers had taken away the spiritual knowledge of the people by teaching their trifles, hobbies, traditions, etc. and ignoring the contents of the books of the Law. Not only did they refuse to study the scripture correctly; they prevented others from studying it also. Compare this to the Catholic Church of the Dark Ages.
- (53,54) The questions now come hot and heavy. They wanted to entrap Jesus. Matthew 22 shows the methods the Pharisees used to attempt to entrap the Lord.

60. Discourses on Preparedness, Covetousness, Hypocrisy, and His Sufferings (Lk. 12:1-59)

This section will be covered under topic # 93.

61. Repent or Perish, the barren Fig Tree (Lk. 13:1-9)

This section will be covered under topic # 94.

62. Parables by the Sea (Mt. 13:1-52) [Mk. 4:1-34; Lk. 8:4-18]

Introduction to Parables

Definition: To put one thing alongside another for the purpose of comparison.

Purpose: To take some situation from everyday life and place it beside a spiritual truth in order for the listener to better understand the spiritual truth.

How to Understand a Parable of Jesus:

- Ø Generally a parable contains only one main point.
- Ø Our understanding must agree with the scriptural explanation, summation, or context.
- Ø If the meaning is obscure, the interpretation cannot be a contradiction of other scripture.

- (1) Verses 1 and 2 constitute an introduction leading us to believe that the events of Chapter 12 caused Jesus to begin to teach in parables.
- (2) The presence of such a large crowd caused Jesus to use a boat as a podium.

- (3) **The Parable of the Sower.** The ancient farmer broadcast the seed by hand, scattering it across the field.
- (4) Some seed would inevitably fall on the well-trodden paths surrounding and running through the tilled fields. The seed would be unable to penetrate this hard-packed soil, so it would be "easy pickings" for the birds.
- (5,6) The stony ground had a thin layer of soil over an underlayment of rock. The seed can germinate here, but it cannot take root. Rootless plants spring up quickly, then die under the heat of the sun.
- (7) Among the thorn bushes, the seeds would have to compete for sunlight, nutrients, and water. The stronger, hardier thorn bushes would choke out the new growth.
- (8) The properly prepared soil will bring forth an abundant harvest.
- (9) If the people were to learn the lessons of the parables they must listen and ponder them carefully. Beyond that, this phrase is a call to obedience. Jesus expects a response.
- (10) **The Purpose of Parables.** The disciples were unsure of the parable's meaning (Mk. 4:10) and were wondering why Jesus chose this method of teaching.
- (11) The disciples had direct access to revelation via the Holy Spirit and Christ. The multitudes do not have this access. Jesus' intent was not to conceal truth, but to make it more understandable by engaging their interest and imaginations.
- (12) Resisting the revelation of God will cause its possession to be lost. (Heb. 6:4-8; 2 Pet. 2:20-22) Being receptive to the truth will bring increased blessings. (Mt. 5:3-12; Prov. 1:5; 9:9)
- (13) The majority of Christ's listeners were Jews. They thought they were in possession of the truth, but actually they had no clue as to the nature of the kingdom.
- (14) Isa. 6:9,10 shows Isaiah prophesying of this very situation, not only among his own people - but as Jesus points out here - among the generation of the first century as well.
- (15) The minds of the people were sluggish. It is their own spiritual ignorance that has caused them to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy.
- (16,17) Here Jesus contrasts the minds of the disciples with the minds of the multitude. Note, as we study the parables in this chapter, these two groups of people are always in view. The disciples were privileged to participate in the coming of the Messianic Kingdom (Heb. 11:39,40; 1 Pet. 1:10,12).
- (18) The parable of the sower explains why the same Gospel produces different results in different hearers. When the Gospel is not received, it is the fault of the ground, not the seed. Jesus names His parable. His primary thrust seems to be aimed at the sower, namely for the sower to keep on sowing and let the results determine the soil. This parable would later stand as an encouragement to the Apostles when they were given the limited and great commissions.
- (19) The seed is the Gospel (Mk. 3:14; Lk. 8:11). The wayside soil represents a closed-minded individual (Eph. 4:18). The devil uses various means to prevent the Word from penetrating this hearer's heart (Col. 2:8; Eph. 4:17-19).
- (20,21) The stony soil represents the hearer who will not finish what he starts. His response is temporary because it is strictly emotion based. Tribulation, persecution and hypocrisy are just the excuses this type of hearer needs to quit the kingdom.
- (22) The world and its cares are the spiritual enemies of this hearer. Anxiety and greed add up to a surefire spiritual crop-killer. The devil brings a four-pronged attack against the Seed: 1-stop the sower, 2-harden the ground, 3-cause tribulation and persecution, and 4-never give up.
- (23) The good soil represents the hearer that welcomes the Word (Mk. 4:20) and obeys it (Lk. 8:15). This hearer's understanding must move beyond mental assent. Good ground will not always yield a consistently good crop, but it will yield a crop. Which soil describes you?
- (24-26) **The Parable of the Tares.** Many Jews were expecting the New Kingdom to come via a miraculous overthrow of the Roman government. This parable teaches that patience will be needed while waiting for the ultimate results of the kingdom to come. In the meantime those of the kingdom will coexist with those of the devil. The phrase "is 50

- likened unto" compares what the kingdom will be like with the parable as a whole. "Tares" probably referred to the weed darnel, which looks like wheat in its early stages of growth. It was a crime under Roman law to introduce darnel into someone's field.
- (27-28a) The farmhands wonder where these weeds came from? The owner knows that he planted only good seed, so he immediately realizes that these weeds are the work of an enemy.
- (28b-29) To pull up the weeds prior to the harvest could very well damage the wheat crop. The root systems of the two plants would be intermingled, thus making them hard to separate.
- (30) At harvest time the weeds would be gathered and burned, while the wheat would be stored up.
- (31-32) **The Parable of the Mustard Seed.** This parable along with the next one emphasizes the growth of the kingdom. While the black mustard seed is indeed one of the smallest in the plant kingdom, its resultant (a tree up to ten feet high) is large enough for the nests of birds. The small beginnings of the kingdom would result in unbelievable growth.
- (33) **The Parable of the Leaven.** Three measures of leavened meal would produce enough bread for several days. Often leaven is used in the Bible as an example of an evil influence (Mt. 16:6,11; 1 Cor. 5:7) but here it is used to show how a small agent can unleash a great power. This parable and its predecessor indicate that the beginnings of the kingdom will start with a small source - a source so unexpected that its result would be beyond human comprehension.
- (34,35) **The parables fulfilled prophecy.** Psalms 78:2 predicted that the Messiah would use parables in His teaching. It is clear from v. 35 that parables were meant to reveal the kingdom and not conceal it.
- (36) Now Jesus sends the multitude away, goes back inside the house (v. 1) and answers the disciples' questions concerning the parable of the tares.
- (37-39) In these verses Jesus defines the terms used in the parable. The sower is Jesus. The field is the population of the world, not the church as some teach. The field cannot be the church for at least three reasons. 1-It would contradict Christ's explanation. 2-A congregation could not obey v. 30 without violating Mt. 18:15-17. 3-If the field represents the church then the wicked children of the devil are in the kingdom. The good seed are the righteous and the tares are the children of the devil. The harvest is the judgment day (Jer. 51:33; Joel 3:13). The reapers are God's angels (Mt. 16:27; 24:31).
- (40-43) The wicked are allowed to exist side-by-side with the righteous here on earth. Sometimes it is hard for man to distinguish between the righteous and the unrighteous, but God will cull out the wicked at the judgment day and cast them into a place of "unrelieved torture, lamentation, and agony." The phrase "gnashing of teeth" occurs only once outside of Matthew's Gospel (Lk. 13:38).
- (44) **The Parable of the Treasure in the Field.** The next two parables emphasize the value of God's kingdom. In the ancient world, burying one's wealth was one of the safest methods of protecting and retaining it. If someone were to find a hidden treasure he would be willing to go to any extreme to possess it. The point of the parable is that if something is truly precious it should be sought out and obtained at any price without any consideration as to the sacrifice. (Mt. 6:33; 16:24; Lk. 14:33; Phil. 3:5-8) The man in this parable realized that his potential gain would more than make up for his loss.
- (45,46) **The Parable of the Pearl.** Jesus makes exactly the same point again. To set aside the things of this world is nothing compared to the possession of Christ. It is possible that the Treasure parable refers to the Gentiles and the Pearl parable refers to the Jews. Why?
- (47) **The Parable of the Net.** This parable once again brings to mind the sorting process that will take place at judgment. The net referred to here is a large seine drawn between two boats. The phrase "every kind" means every race. A reminder that the "Gospel is for all!"
- (48) Here the sorting takes place. The good fish are kept and the bad fish are thrown away.

- (49-50) As long as the net is in the water all of the fish remain together, but once the net is removed then the sorting begins.
- (51) **Exhortation.** Jesus asks the disciples if they now understand? They actually give themselves a little too much credit because they will once again misunderstand a parable in Mt. 15:15-16.
- (52) Christ does not dispute their answer but uses an illustration to explain their responsibility. The true disciple must be able to help others understand what the disciples already understand by being able to teach the Gospel (new) as a fulfillment of the prophets (old). See 1 Jn. 2:7,8. Matthew may very well have viewed his own role as a "scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven."

63. **Stilling the Tempest (Mt. 8:18,23-27) [Mk. 4:35-40; Lk. 8:22-25]**

- (18) Jesus decides to temporarily escape the crowds so he commanded the disciples to secure a ship and sail them all to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.
- (23) After a short delay (vv.19-22) Jesus and the disciples board a fairly large ship (lake going vessel) and depart.
- (24) The geography around the Sea of Galilee makes it prone to violent evening storms. The boat was being swamped by the fury of the wind and waves. In direct contrast to both the turbulence of the weather and the fear of the disciples, Jesus slept. The ability to sleep under these circumstances is indicative of His weariness and His faith in His Father's care.
- (25) The disciples are convinced that their survival is at stake. Remember, there were those among the disciples that fished the Sea for a living and would be familiar with the storms that raged there from time to time.
- (26) Jesus awakens and immediately rebukes the disciples and then the storm. He actually accuses the disciples of cowardice based on their inadequate faith. If they truly believed every word that their Savior spoke, then they would have known that they would make it to the other side safely (v. 18 - See Chumbley p. 162). After rebuking the disciples, Jesus calmed the storm. The weather went from a rage to perfect stillness in an instant.
- (27) No body of water behaved in this manner. The disciples realized that the Sea answered only to God (Ps. 107:23-31). Next time He stills a storm (Mt. 14:33) the disciples will display an obvious growth in their faith.

64. **Jesus Heals the Demoniacs (Mt. 8:28-34) [Mk. 5:1-20; Lk. 8:26-39]**

- (28) Upon arriving on the other side Jesus performs an exorcism near the village of Gergasa in the district of Gadara. Immediately two men approached Jesus, possessed by many demons. These men were so savage and fierce that people were afraid to travel near the cemetery where they lived (Mk. 5:9).
- (29) These demons did not want Jesus interfering with their possession of these men. They claimed that the time of their dispossession had not yet come. They knew who Jesus was and that His arrival spelled their doom to torment.
- (30) Mark indicates that the nearby swine herd numbered 2000. This has led many scholars to believe that "Legion" was a possession of at least 2000 demons.
- (31) While the reason why the demons asked to be released into the swineherd is not explained, it probably was a tactic to delay their imminent consignment to torment.
- (32) Christ complies with their request. Their respite is short-lived however as the swine herd immediately commits suicide. Critics have said that this incident points out two character flaws in Jesus, an inhumanity towards animals and disrespect for private property. The stampede did prove that the demons really did transfer from the men into the swine thereby proving that NT demon possession is not a psychosomatic illness as some liberal theologians suggest.

(33,34) Upon hearing of Jesus' accomplishments, the entire city asks Him to leave - because they feared Him. The power exhibited by Jesus was just too much for their uneducated minds to comprehend. They understood the demon possession and stayed away from the tombs, but they obviously did not understand Jesus. While Jesus complies with their request, He leaves the two men as His witnesses. (Mk. 5:18-20) Jesus will visit the area again (Mt. 15:30).

65. Jesus returns To His Own City - Capernaum (Mt. 9:1) [Mk. 5:21; Lk. 8:40]

(1) See Chumbley p. 168. Leaving the country of the Gergesenes, He returned by boat to Capernaum.

66. Levi's Feast - Concerning Fasting (Mt. 9:10-17) [Mk. 2:15-22; Lk. 5:29-39]

- (10) Matthew hosts a reception for Jesus in his home (Lk. 5:29). Among the guests were the disciples, Matthew's colleagues and other so-called sinners. So-called by the Jews for various reasons.
- (11) The Jews believed a rabbi could teach sinners, but not eat with them. Having social intercourse would be seen as endorsing their sins. The fact that they approached the disciples with their accusations shows their true cowardice.
- (12) Jesus replies to their accusation with this rejoinder: The physically sick need a doctor, while the sinners need a spiritual physician. The chance of becoming physically unclean is set aside when the great Physician is at work.
- (13) The Pharisees obviously had no clue as to the meaning of Hos. 6:6 - "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Christ was not willing that any should perish in their sins. Jesus was willing to go where the sin was; taking the Good News to where it was needed most - among the sinners.
- (14) The disciples of John also had a question concerning Jesus' failure to fast or have his disciples fast. Fasting was a private matter, but the Pharisees had imposed it on all who would be religious (Lk. 18:12). (See notes on the Sermon on the Mount concerning fasting.)
- (15) Jesus presents His answer in the form of three analogies. 1- For the disciples to fast in Jesus' presence would be no more appropriate than imposing a fast at a wedding. Here Jesus represents Himself as the groom. As long as the groom is among the guests fasting is inappropriate. When the groom is gone, then the time for fasting will be upon the disciples (Jn. 16:5,6).
- (16,17) 2- An old garment cannot be properly patched with new cloth. 3- New wine belongs in a new bottle, as old bottles are brittle, cracked, and contain the dregs of the old wine that would hasten the fermentation of the new wine. Luke includes a fourth analogy concerning the preference of old wine to new (Lk. 5:39). This fourth analogy refutes the argument that Jesus is contrasting the New Law to the Old Law. Jesus' point is simply this: Sometimes fasting is not appropriate. If the situation does not call for it - then why do it? It has always been man's tendency to elevate the less important (sacrifice, v. 13) over the most important (mercy). The only value in fasting (or praying, singing, communing, etc) is if the circumstances demand it and it is in keeping with the teaching of Mt. 6:16-18. Fasting for its own sake is spiritually worthless!

67. Jairus' Daughter and An Invalid Woman (Mt. 9:18-34) [Mk. 5:32-43; Lk. 8:41-46]

(18) This section includes the third set of miracles recorded by Matthew. Jesus will perform a miracle that assures, to all that believe, His claim of authority in verse 2. Jesus' conversation with John's disciples is interrupted by Jarius, a ruler of the synagogue (Mk. 5:22). As ruler, he was responsible for maintaining order during meetings, dealing with disturbances, and

assigning duties to those participating in the services. For him to seek help from Jesus at this point in time shows his desperation. This situation was hopeless from a human viewpoint - the girl was dead.

- (19) To demonstrate "mercy" Jesus immediately quits His discussion with the disciples of the Baptist and follows Jairus.
- (20,21) On the way Jesus encounters a woman suffering from a menstrual disorder. She believed even the slightest contact with Jesus would heal her. It was because of her uncleanness that she decided to approach Jesus in a stealthy manner.
- (22) Christ would not let her approach unnoticed. This is the only recorded use of the endearment "daughter." He draws attention to her to show her faith to those in the company. Her disorder was relieved within the hour. No one has ever exhibited the empathetic powers of Jesus Christ. His ability to distinguish between a touch of faith, a touch of curiosity or a touch of hostility speaks to this sensitivity (Mk. 5:30,31; Heb. 4:15)
- (23) When Jesus reached the ruler's house, the professional mourners were already busy. The Jews did not embalm their dead, so they held their funerals and burials within the hour if possible.
- (24) Jesus dismissed the mourners and incurred their derision. They misunderstood His comment concerning the girl's death. To Jesus, her death was not permanent (Lk. 8:49). People even today deride the diagnosis of the Great Physician for the very same reasons - ignorance and lack of faith.
- (25) The unbelievers are shown out the door and the girl is resurrected.
- (26) The news of this miracle spread throughout the country. Jesus Christ solves man's ultimate problem (death).
- (27) Isaiah foretold of a day when the blind would be healed. Here we see that day arriving during the ministry of Jesus. The two blind men are seeking mercy and obviously regard Jesus as the Messiah (Son of David).
- (28) Instead of healing them immediately, he takes them inside a house and challenges their faith - "Do you believe I can do this?" Their answer - "yes Lord."
- (29) Jesus chose to heal these blind men because of their faith, however, it was not the level of their faith that healed them, it was God's will (Heb. 2:4). Jesus performed miracles to strengthen faith (Mk. 9:22-25); in the presence of defective faith (Mt. 14:31); and in the absence of faith (Lk. 22:49-51).
- (30) Their sight is restored immediately. Jesus strongly charges them not to disclose the miracle. Why would Jesus want this miracle kept quiet? John 6 explains that miracles often did more to attract crowds and curiosity than to convert hearts to a life changing faith.
- (31) The blind men did not keep quiet. Now, why do we who are charged with spreading the Word often keep quiet?
- (32,33a) A demon-possessed man was brought before Jesus. The demon held the man speechless. The release of the demon frees the man's tongue.
- (33b,34) Note the contrast in the reactions to the miracle. While the multitudes marveled, the Pharisees attribute Jesus' power to Satan. This was a charge made in desperation.

68. Rejection at Nazareth (Mt. 13:53-58) [Mk. 6:1-6; Lk. 4:15-30]

- (53,54) The polarization of opinion concerning Jesus escalates. Upon finishing His parables He returns to His home country. He had visited earlier (Lk. 4:16-30) but left after an attempt on His life. His teaching in the synagogue caused people to reflect on His wisdom and miracles. Where could He have acquired such insight and power?
- (55,56) Christ's fame did not meet the expectations of His home-folks. He came from an ordinary family. His father had an ordinary occupation. His brothers and sisters lived locally and showed no signs of unusual gifts. His background and training were not of a theological nature. "Where did He get all this?"

- (57) The Nazarenes understood none of what they saw or heard (Mt. 13:13-15). They refused to accept the facts at their face value. Why would the home-folks reject Jesus as the Christ? 1- Familiarity breeds contempt. 2- True prophets bore bad tidings as well as good, because they dealt in truth.
- (58) Because they refused to believe, the Nazarenes lost out on many blessings that could have come their way. Deciding that further miracles were useless, Jesus leaves home for the last time before His death.

69. Jesus Followed by the Multitudes, Taught in Villages, Sends Out the Twelve (Mt. 9:35-11.1) [Mk. 6:7-13; Lk. 9:1-6]

CHAPTER NINE

- (35) **Summation** - This verse is almost identical to Mt. 4:23. Jesus embarks upon a comprehensive ministry throughout Galilee. The threefold nature of Christ's work can be seen in "teaching, preaching, and healing."
- (36) **The Twelve Commissioned** - The time has come for Christ to prepare His work so it may continue after His departure. He selects twelve men to a special apostleship. These men would learn at His feet and then be sent out with power and authority. Jesus is disheartened at the terrible tribulation the people were under. The Greek wording indicates He was "sick to His stomach" over the people's plight. They had no shepherd because their leaders were incompetent and spiritually negligent.
- (37) While many good hearts existed among the people, there were no teachers available to take advantage of them.
- (38) Jesus asks for the prayers of the disciples. Pray for harvesters. To begin a spiritual harvest without God's blessing would be folly.

CHAPTER TEN

- (1) **The Apostles Named** - Jesus follows through on His promise to make some disciples "fishers of men" (Mt. 4:18ff). Jesus responds to the need for laborers by sending out 12 men with powers to heal and cast out evil spirits.
- (2-4) An Apostle is "one sent out on a mission." This is one of four lists of the Apostles found in the Gospels. (Review point #48 to remind us who these men were.) The listing here shows that the Apostles were sent out in pairs. The outstanding characteristic of this group was that they were just ordinary men chosen to do extraordinary work.
- (5) **The Limited Commission** - The Apostles are sent only to the Jews (Acts 3:26; 13:46; Rom. 1:16).
- (6) The very people Jesus referred to as "fainting and scattered" (9:36) are now said to be "lost." The phrase depicts their spiritual state.
- (7,8) **Their Message** - "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Where have we heard this before? Their supernatural powers were to be used to confirm their message. They were not to charge for their services.
- (9,10) **How They Were To Go** - They were to travel light. There were to take no money, luggage, spare clothes, shoes, or a walking staff. Those that received their message would provide their needs. While this passage by no means sets down rules for the traveling preacher today, he should not be held back by "excess baggage."
- (11) **Where They Were To Stay** - They were to find a worthy family in each town and stay with them while in the area. The family's worthiness was probably measured by their open-mindedness, not necessarily their initial commitment to the cause.

- (12-14) **How They Were To Behave** - They were to be gracious guests. When they were accepted they were to bless that household and community. If they were rejected, they were to "shake the dust off their feet." This represents a dramatic gesture of repudiation (2 Jn. 10-11).
- (15) The seriousness of a city rejecting the Gospel is seen here. To fare worse in judgment than Sodom and Gomorrah is a fate beyond comprehension.
- (16) Jesus warns them of the rejection that they might encounter, not only now, but also under the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19). The twelve were sent to sheep as sheep in and among the wolves. Opposition would come from the Jews, the government and their own families. The disposition of the Twelve must exhibit a wariness and innocence - at the same time.
- (17) Jesus warned them of open hostility. They would be handed over to religious councils where they would be beaten with up to forty lashes at a time.
- (18) They would not be safe from Gentile persecution. Examples in the NT include Peter and John before the Sanhedrin and Paul before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. When they were charged the Apostles were to use the opportunity to bear witness of Christ.
- (19,20) The Apostles did not need to be seasoned public speakers. The Holy Spirit would provide the words they needed to impart the message (1 Cor. 2:1-5).
- (21) Family strife and religious persecution would disrupt the work of the Apostles. Families would turn against one another because of the Gospel.
- (22) The Apostles must not be tempted to avoid doing their duty because of this hatred and strife. Jesus expected His messengers to hold on to the end (Heb. 11:35ff, Rev. 2:10; 12:11).
- (23) Persecution was to be the signal for the Apostles to withdraw. Their message of "the Kingdom coming" would be followed very soon by "the Kingdom is here." It was imperative that their message be spread among all Israel before the Pentecost of Acts 2.
- (24,25) **Motives To Endurance** - If your master or Lord (boss) endures a hardship, then you should endure that same hardship. When we suffer as disciples we need to compare our suffering to Christ's and see that we have no right to complain.
- (26,27) The Gospel will be revealed by the disciples. It would be futile for them to attempt to conceal their faith, because the light of truth cannot be hidden.
- (28) Those that can kill the physical body are not to be feared. The word "destroy" here means, "bring to ruin." Therefore the sense of the verse is that the soul can be brought to ruin by someone and that person deserves to be feared. Hell lies beyond the final judgment due to the statement "body and soul in Hell." It cannot refer to Hades, the resting-place of the disembodied spirits.
- (29-31) Another motive to endure is that God extends His protection to the innocent. We are more valuable to God than the sparrows and He watches over them; how much more is His concern for us?
- (32,33) The final motive to endure is the support Jesus will lend to His disciples when under judgment of the Father. Jesus supports His disciples and condemns His detractors.
- (34) **Persecution Intended as a Test** - The violence Jesus describes here is among His disciples and His enemies. Luke 2:14 concerns the peace among believers. The sword here would be raised by the foes of Jesus against His disciples.
- (35,36) It seems that religious quarrels are some of the few quarrels that will actually split families. Abandoning the religion of your ancestors brings shame upon the family. The family members are upset with the "apostate" in direct proportion to their nearness to that individual.
- (37) The test is to see whether the disciples will cling to earthly affiliations rather than spiritual.
- (38) The cross was a symbol of dishonor; being a disciple of Jesus would be viewed similarly. Jesus may also be alluding to possible death as part of discipleship (see v.28).
- (39) The word "life" is used to mean spiritual and physical life. Reread the verse inserting these words in the appropriate places to see the gist of the verse.

- (40) **Kind Treatment of Disciples to be Rewarded** - Now Jesus switches from detailing persecutions to examining the rewards for discipleship. By receiving a Christian, Christ is received; by receiving Christ, the Father is received.
- (41,42) God is honored by acts of kindness performed for His earthly emissaries, whether prophet, righteous man, or child. The reward mentioned here is not necessarily eternal life.

ASIDE: Would Jesus make a good salesman in today's world? Compare His technique of describing His "product" with today's salesman. Today the salesman would paint a wonderful picture of His product and conceal the bad points. Not so, with Jesus!

[The Apostles' Mission and Christ Continues His Travels. (Mk. 6:12,13; Mt. 11:1)]

Mk. 6:12,13 - The message of the Apostles was that men should repent. The anointing with oil outwardly represented the healing that had been done inwardly. The Jews never used oil on a sick person or one that was fasting. The oil was used only after the healing was complete.

Mt. 11:1 - Most commentators believe that Jesus and the disciples labored separately for a time.

70. **Herod Antipas Supposes Jesus to be John (Mt. 14:1-12) [Mk. 6:14-29; Lk. 9:7-9]**

- (1) Antipas controlled Galilee and the land beyond Jordan. Each of the rulers of the divided kingdom is referred to as a tetrarch, which means ruler of a fourth. (See McGarvey p. 128.)
- (2) Read Luke 9:7-9. Antipas adopted this view. Herod believed that Jesus was literally John the Baptist risen from the dead. According to superstition, the dead were empowered with superhuman abilities and Herod believed John was now using these powers.
- (3) Matthew now relates the circumstances surrounding the death of John. The imprisonment of John had been previously mentioned (4:12), but not the cause of it. Here we will examine the cause and the outcome of John's imprisonment.
- (4) Herod was living in adultery with his brother's wife, who was also his niece. John had rebuked Herod for this and was immediately put into prison.
- (5) Herodias would have John killed, but his popularity among the people restrained Herod from executing John. (See Mk. 6:19,20.) The violence, which Herod feared would have occurred except for one thing, we will examine later.
- (6-8) (Mk. 6:24) When the daughter obtained the promise from her stepfather, she consulted with her mother to help select the prize.
- (9,10) The King knew he had made a mistake when the request was made. However, "his oath" and peer pressure won out over his personal feelings. Did the King imagine any such request when he made his promise?
- (11) The commission of this crime gave Herod and Herodias an infamous reputation that the world would have never given them for the sin of adultery. Their loss of standing in the world's eyes is the fruit of their revenge against John.
- (12) The disciples of John sought Jesus as a leader as well as for spiritual reasons. They were ready to revolt and establish Jesus as King. (Jn. 6:1,2,15).