

***11-12 The Person & Authority of Jesus Questioned***

***13 Parables of the Kingdom***

***14-18 The King/ Messiah Rejected & the Church He will Build***

**Verse numbers and brief quotes only are given - it's assumed you will be studying these comments to supplement your reading of your own Bible. May God give you joy in your studies as He has in mine. E Read**

Explanation of Abbreviations: OT= Old Testament. NT= New Testament. BRETHREN/brothers is KJV/Niv. [RT]= Received Text. [Nes]= Nestle Text. LXX= Greek Septuagint Old Testament. Mss= Manuscripts. Cp= Compare with the Scriptures that follow. (DP)= Divine passive. A statement about what God will do that avoids naming God.

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Him, while applying the principles He teaches us. HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES - The Lord has sent them out as Apostles, 101, but Matthew returns to calling them Disciples - men with the same relationship to the Lord as every other Christian has, 238-10 HE.. PREACH IN- Having taught them what they were to do and what to expect in response, He takes up His work again which they now share.

## 1:1-19 John Baptist & Jesus Christ

*(John, who had witnessed to Jesus, seeks reassurance that Jesus is the Messiah. The Lord points to what He is doing, speaks well of John, and gives His verdict on the unresponsiveness of Israel under its leaders.)*

11:2-3 JOHN IN PRISON- 4:12 CHRIST was doing- As recorded in 510 SENT.. to ask, Are you the One to COME?- The Coming One John had expected and proclaimed, 3:11-12 Jn 1:29 Cp 2430 2664 Ps 11826 Dan 7:13 Mal 2:17-3:1; Jn 1:15, 27, 6:14. Should WE LOOK FOR someone else?- Jews were uncertain how many Messiahs there would be. John had proclaimed Him as coming in power, winnowing fork and axe in hand, to deal fiery judgment on those needing it. Messiah was to free prisoners, Isa 61:1; Lk 4:18. Yet Herod remained on his throne, and John was in his prison. Jesus was doing only works of compassion, and sending out disciples 101-42 to do the same in meek submission to enemies. And the miracles were done in Galilee, not Jerusalem where His acceptance as Messiah was essential. Godly men DO doubt, and take their doubts to the Lord so they can be redirected, and strengthened. John's difficulty is still Israel's difficulty - Jesus doesn't seem sufficiently Messianic - isn't there a different kind of Messiah to come? The Lord summarises for John what had been happening. Jesus witnesses to the facts, and expects people to make up their own minds. We too must rely on presenting Biblical facts - Christ died for our sins. rose again, etc. Those Christians who rely on political action, or methods used successfully in business, may despise what the obedient Church does, but in doing so are despising Christ and obedience to Him.

11:4-6 Report to John.. what you hear - Now, or hear about the recent miracles in 8 & 9. SEE - Happening as Jesus was speaking Lk 7:21. The Lord Jesus was providing the evidence that fitted some Messianic Scriptures. John could deal with God about the OT promises and their fulfilment witnessed by his disciples. Hearing

clearly bringing peace, but to the Lord it's the central part of His ministry. After the Cross, miracles were rare, and used only to confirm that the Word spoken was from God, Heb 2:1-4. This list fits the predictions in Isa 26:19, 29:18, 35:4-6, 42:7, 61:1, but leaves out the judgment on Israel's enemies, Isa 34:1-17; 61:5-6. The Lord adds to the Isaiah passages leprosy.. CLE ANSED/cured- 8:1-4. These signs may not have been the ones that John Baptist was enthusiastic about, but they were Messianic predictions to which he must give due attention.

BLE SSED.. NOT OFFENDED IN/does not fall away because of ME - Cp 1:35-7, 2:63-1-33 The path to blessing is to continue trusting Christ even though what He does doesn't fit our hopes. Israel had hoped for a Super Joshua or Super David bringing dramatic deliverance and prosperity. Jesus had come as a carpenter, and in gentleness, patience, and humble service John, Israel, and we today have no right to set the specifications which Christ must fulfil to warrant our approval! Either we let God be God, and accept His high purpose for us, Rom 8:29 or miss out on any blessing. The behaviour, program, and requirements set out for His disciples offer no assurances of happiness, success, personal fulfilment, wealth, or public recognition that our human natures delight in. We're tempted to give up. Cp 1:35-7, 2:63-1; Jn 6:61-71; 16:1. John isn't blamed for his doubts, nor are we, as long as, like John, we tell them to the right person, our Lord and Saviour, Great High Priest, Heb 4:14-16 and place ourselves in His hands loaded down as we are.

11: 7-8 JESUS BEGAN TO speak about JOHN- Lk 7:24 A REED swayed by THE WIND- A man whose life was, like reeds swayed by the wind, a response to external pressures, Eph 4:14; Heb 13:9; Jude 12 Cp 1 Ki 14:15; Isa 7:2 John's questioning Christ might have made him LOOK unstable, but the Lord knew Him/ knows us, and doesn't judge us by our doubts and despairs. John didn't adjust his message to make himself a popular preacher, but spoke the truth fearlessly, so was in prison.

A MAN dressed in SOFT/fine clothes?- A well-dressed, visibly-successful-in-this-world man. Such preachers may build a great following, but they're not representing and preaching Christ crucified, 1 Cor 1:17-25 Gal 2:20 and He disowns them in 7:22-23 Contrast John with Mystery Babylon using Religion to live in selfish luxury ruling this world and corrupting it, Rev 17. Christ Himself

was predicted in it - the promised second-to-last man, who would usher in the LAST Man, the God-man. I will SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE your FAC E - The Face/presence of Messiah. In Mal 3:1 God says "Before MY face" God would intervene personally, and He did so in the form of the eternal Word made Flesh, Jn 1:1-15 Jesus is God-with-us, 1:23 but so as to lose nothing of the OT reverence for God as Holy, in a sense unknowable, He patiently, progressively revealed Himself. Only later in the History of the Church were men ready to receive reverently the emphatic statements of Jn 1:1 and 1:14, 18 2028

PREPARE your WAY - In Ex 23:20 God's presence in the Angel of His presence would lead Israel to the promised land. Israel's refusal to enter, Num 13-14, delayed them 40 years. John's place as the last OT prophet, after a gap of 400 years from Malachi, was to lead Israel to Christ - the full and final revelation of God and His will in the Son, Heb 1:1-3. Refusing Christ has delayed them 2000 years already.

AMONG those BORN OF WOMEN- Human beings brought into life indirectly through man's creation of Adam and Eve, as distinct from beings directly created by God - Angels, etc. Adam's creation, and the conception of Jesus were also direct from God, 1:20 Gen 27. NOT ARISEN- Or been raised up as a prophet, 24:11, 24 Amos 2:11, etc. GREATER THAN JOHN.

LEAST IN THE KINGDOM- The Disciples, etc, in contrast to those who prophesied His Coming IS GREATER- John towers above all his predecessors in the OT/under the Old Covenant because He brings it to its climax in the Coming of its promised Messiah. And, Messiah proves to be God come down for our Salvation His Kingdom being offered to Israel, will, being rejected, be transformed into a spiritual Kingdom, entered only by the New Birth, Jn 3:3. In this Kingdom, under the New Covenant, its least member personally knows God/ is indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, Heb 8:10-13 So they stand in position and privilege higher than anyone could in earlier times. There's no reason why John or anyone, should be disappointed that Jesus as Messiah didn't conform to human wishes or expectations. John like Moses, led his followers to the border of the Kingdom, but was prevented by death from entering it. John is born of women. Christians are also born of the Spirit, born of God, born from above.

negatively or even attacking the wolf, Jn 6:15, the wolf attacking sheep, Jn 10:12, and in Jn 10:28-29 (For Positive uses of Harpazo, see next paragraph.) John had been confrontational, but the Lord Jesus, and His Kingdom had been presented in nonviolent compassion. The violence was from Herod who had imprisoned John, and would kill him. The Pharisees, sons and controllers of the visible Kingdom, 8:11-12, were becoming violent in their opposition, 12:14, and in keeping others from entering the true/invisible Kingdom, 23:13. The Lord Jesus would be treated violently and killed, 16:21. Paul constantly insists that the only true Gospel is that of Christ crucified, and the only true greatness for His servants is in identification with Him and His Cross, 1 Cor 1:18-31; 15:20-28 Gal 2:20 6:14; Phil 3:8-21; Col 1:13-20 2:15

The kingdom.. has been forcefully advancing- Biasto- Assuming it's in the middle voice forceful men lay hold of it- Biastes Harpazo. That Biasto, Biastes have this good meaning is most unlikely. \*\*3 Harpazo is used in a good sense of being snatched away for a good purpose- Philip, Acts 8:39 Believers, 1 Th 4:17, and in Acts 23:10 2 Cor 12:2, 4; Jude 23 Rev 12:5. But nothing recorded shows the kingdom of God making forceful progress/advancing triumphantly at this stage. God's violent intervention will be when the Son of Man comes in Glory and Judgment. Although the Church has at times made great progress, its VIOLENT efforts weren't done in Christ. The Church was launched amidst persecution, and opposition from the world has continued. That opposition uses physical violence at times, but spiritual violence opposes all God's servants say or do. Bruner says today the greatest violence done to Christ is by "The value-system of sensualism, secularism, and sensationalism that permeates TV."

11:13-15 ALL PROPHETS- Put first as they give most of the promises about the Messiah. AND LAW PROPHESED UNTIL JOHN- John marked the end of the old era, giving its last witness by announcing the Kingdom was at hand- right there ready to come in and change the scene, and urged people to prepare for it. The coming of Jesus is now the full and final Word, Heb 11:3. He Himself fulfils the Law, 5:17, in His Person, and in His own, Rom 8:1-4, by indwelling them. The promises of the Prophets all find their fulfilment in Him, 2 Cor 1:20 As at the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah fade out, and God's Son alone is to be listened to, 17:1-5. Prophecy shouldn't be treated as world-centred - as a code to decipher events.

Disciple-making not by our trying to apply puzzling Scriptures to even more puzzling future events. We're to preach Jesus as the meaning of the past, present, and future.

IF YOU are willing to accept IT - Accept/Believe what Moses and the Prophets say, then John is/ will be Elijah, and bring in the promised Kingdom because you (Israel) will accept Me as Messiah. The Greek text could equally mean willing to accept him- John as Elijah/ John in his Elijah-role, and obey his call to repentance, 11:10-11; Mal 3:1. he is the Elijah who was TO COME - John in his Elijah-role wasn't discredited by the failure of his hearers, Israel, to respond. The failure was their sin in failing to believe /obey what the Prophets and the Law had said. Cp Jn 539 \*\*4

HE who has EARS TO HEAR - See 139, 43 etc. Cp Rev 27; Ezek 122. The truth is the truth, whether it's believed or not. Whether any person gets the GOOD the truth offers depends on them alone - whether they choose to believe what the Scripture says, or refuse. The Lord came to save, not condemn, yet His words and actions which they refused to believe, will damn them forever, Jn 84247, 1247-48

## 11:16-19 Israel's Frivolous Attitude to John & to Jesus

(John avoided the comforts of life to concentrate on calling Israel to mourn over their sins, and repent. Jesus came to share with them the joys and sorrows of normal living - to lessen the sorrows and increase the joys. The crowds at first responded enthusiastically to both, 35-6; 4:23-25 Lk 19:47-48 Jn 22-24, enjoyed the excitement of miraculous healings, etc, while generally avoiding any life-saving commitment, Jn 6:26. But the religious and political core of Israel behaved like fretful children refusing John and Jesus, and insisting Israel as a whole join them in this, Jn 12:42-43)

11:16-19 To what.. compare THIS GENERATION- This generation stood at the hinge point of Israel's history. They had been blessed by having the greatest Prophet sent to them, followed by their Messiah. They had responded LIKE CHILDREN.. WE HAVE played the flute- A happy tune suitable for a wedding. You did not dance- Play at dancing in a circle as men danced at a wedding

JOHN CAME NEITHER EATING OR DRINKING - He lived in the wilderness cut off from normal life, with its enjoyment of food and wine, 3:3-4; Lk 1:15 THEY SAY HE has a demon- today they'd say he was crazy. Through John God had warned of their need to repent, and forsake their sins of self-indulgence and proud self-righteousness, 3:7-12 They wouldn't "Play Funerals" when John urged them to do to sin.

THE SON OF MAN CAME EATING AND DRINKING - Joining in the ordinary life of people, including feasts, Jn 21-11. He ENJOYED God's good gift of food as we all should, 1 Tim 4:1-5; 6:17-18, fed 5000, turned water into wine. His ministry was one of healing, setting men free to enjoy life in thankful fellowship with God. He was disposed to go when invited 1 Cor 10:27, but never took part in social wickedness. When Jesus invited them to "Play Weddings," and enjoy a taste of the blessings of His Kingdom, their response was a lying slander. THEY SAY .. a gutton a drunkard- He's self-indulgent, enjoys life too much to be in fellowship with God. FRIEND OF .. SINNERS- He's in with that crowd who use their sinfully acquired money to party all the time. they wouldn't respond to sombre judgment, or joyful mercy, because neither John nor Jesus would flatter their pride by endorsing their hypocritical, fussy self-righteousness - the only games they were willing to play centred on themselves!

BUT WISDOM IS JUSTIFIED/proved right BY HER CHILDREN- Teknon [RT]. actions- Ergon- Works, [Nes] All Mss of Lk 7:35 have Children, the older ones of Matthew have Works. The meaning is the same. In Jewish thinking the actions produced by Wisdom, God's Wisdom as in Prov 1:20 3:19, 8:1, etc, are the "children" of wisdom. Jesus was wisdom embodied, 1 Cor 1:30 His friendship with sinners was justified by the transformation of their lives, Matthew, 9:9-13, the sinful woman, Lk 7:37-47, Zacchaeus, Lk 19:1-9, the Samaritan woman, Jn 4

(They accepted the blessings of His loving compassion, while ignoring that these showed He was the Messiah to whom they should commit themselves. Spitting out the pill that would have saved their lives after licking off the sugar coating was their form of childishness. Now, as an encouragement to repent, He gives a preview of His verdict on the eternal consequences of their attitude. He preached Judgment and Hell to those who thought they had Salvation as God's chosen people. Today He would warn those who are proud of their Pastor but refuse to let the truth he preaches change their lives. Judgment is based on use of opportunity. Of the cities around Galilee only Tiberias, largely Gentile, and placed out-of-bounds by the Pharisees still stands.)

11: 2022 THEN- As often, Matthew groups items together. Lk 10:12-15 puts it in a different context. Jesus.. denounced THE CITIES.. MIGHTY WORKS/ miracles- Things beyond human ability that have a spiritual meaning and should draw a spiritual response. not repent- Didn't turn to God from their sin, 4:17. If the miracles of God's Grace don't bring repentance they bring Judgment. WOE - How tragic it will be. The opposite of blessed, 5:3, etc. An expression of fear or anguish as a warning that fear and anguish are ahead if they don't avoid it by repenting. Korazin.. BETHSAIDA - Galilean towns, Mk 8:22-26 IF.. IN TYRE, SIDON- Evil towns where Baal was worshipped, Isa 23 Ezek 26:28 Amos 1:9-10 THEY WOULD HAVE REPENTED- Worn coarse, rough SACK CLOTH for clothes, and rubbed ASHES into their face and hair, as a sign they were miserably unhappy about their sinfulness See Gen 3:7-4 2 Sam 13:19, 2 Ki 19:2, Job 4:2.

IT SHALL BE MORE TOLERABLE /bearable- The punishment they have to face won't be as bad as what you (Korazin and Bethsaida) will face. Only the Lord can KNOW this, and only He knows what those who have never heard the Gospel would have done about it if they had heard it. As Judge of all the earth He will do right, Gen 18:25 Prov 24:12 Rom 2:12-16. There is no Salvation out of Christ, Acts 4:12. God has brought enough of the Gospel to save some people by odd and indirect means. But nothing exempts us from the responsibility of getting the Gospel to everyone. And we must make it clear that God must judge those who know of Christ's death for sinners yet prefer to stay unsaved.

11: 23-24 CAPERNAUM.. EXALTED /lifted up to HEAVEN/the skies- Like the Pharisees too proud to see any need to repent and claim God's Mercy, Isa 14:13, Ezek 26:20 Obad 4 Lk 18:11-12. Or having God the Son in human form make His home there exalted them. To be proud of privileges is dangerous. will go



## 11:2530 Thanksgiving & Rest

(Hopeful contacts may end in rejection, seemingly hopeless ones flourish. All is to be met with thankfulness to the Father, and confident rest in Him and His will.)

11:2526 I THANK /praise. HIDE FROM WISE- Israel's religious experts the Scribes and Pharisees. An effective way of hiding something may be to place it in an obvious place where clever searchers will never look for it. Besides, the proud never see God because they look down on everyone. Only humility will look up and see God. The process of the Coming into the World of Christ the Saviour, His life as a Carpenter, the style of His ministry, had the effect of hiding who He was from the proud self-righteous religious leaders. They refused to recognise that they, and Israel, needed God's mercy in the Friend and Saviour of sinners, 9:13 Jn 1:8-11. Instead they prided themselves that their rejection of Him demonstrated their superiority, Jn 7:4849 \*\*7

REVEALED UNTO BABES- Nepios- Too young to use language. Those the proud religious leaders despised as ignorant. Jesus is thanking God for His sovereign Grace not praising the humility of those who receive Him - it's a gift of Grace. Human wisdom turns faith into an intellectual discipline and uses it to personal advantage. True wisdom requires purity of heart, and humility, Job 28:28 Ps 25:14; 1 Cor 3:17-20 Jas 3:13-18 Only those who love God can know Him, 1 Jn 4:8. The babes didn't argue about the Kingdom and just accepted Christ and what He offered. Cp Lk 1:53 Those who consider themselves too wise to need instruction miss out, those without wisdom are granted it freely from His unlimited resources, 1 Cor 1:30 Col 2:3; Jas 1:5-8. Note in Jn 9 the Pharisees, blinded by pride and prejudices, and the Blind man receiving his sight from a man he knew nothing of. The poor and despised. 21:15-16, didn't insist on Jesus meeting their expectations, and took what God offered them in Christ Jesus. Cp Ps 19:7.

Footnote \*\*6 Matthew records Jesus speaking of Judgment- Crisis 12x. The Day of Judgment 4x. Outer darkness 3x. weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth 6x. Hell- Gehenna 7x. Total 32x. A Jesus who accepts us as we are without repentance isn't the NT Jesus.

choice from the first. To worldly wisdom God should reveal Himself to the finest men - intelligent, gifted, or earnest spiritual seekers. But PRIDE is the great barrier to blessing. Such rich could cast a little of their wealth into the treasury of God's work, but remain unchanged, still in control of their lives. God has the universe at His disposal. That He came as the Saviour of Sinners put everyone within reach of Salvation, as all are sinners. That the Religious leaders felt no need of being saved from sin, OR in their pride refused to stand with the sinners to receive righteousness as a gift, meant that they disqualified themselves, and had none but themselves to blame - now, or on Judgment day. This reversal of the world's standards and expectations is stated in 1 Cor 1:18-30 Cp 5:3-6; 19:23 23:12 Isa 57:15; Ezek 21:26 Mk 12:43-44 Lk 14:11; 18:14; Jas 4:6.

11: 27 ALL THINGS- Not material possessions or instant success but His present mission and its outcome, via the Cross. Jn 8:20 5:4 10:17, 29 11:16-24 20:21; 1 Cor 15:24-25 Rev 22:7, 5:5-14 committed to ME - He could speak confidently as His role was decreed by the Father and agreed to by the Son. That God doesn't give His glory to any other, Isa 42:8, and the Father has given ALL to Him suggests Jesus was saying He was God. Matthew unfolds the fact that Jesus is the Son of God in 1:20-23 2:15; 3:17; 4:3, 6; 8:29 14:33 16:16-17; 17:5; 21:37, 24:36

NO one knows- Epiginosko- Full fellowship knowledge that provides a special relationship. \*\*8 It's used of the exclusive, full, constant communion between the Father and the Son, Jn 1:18 14:10 etc. The OT prophets knew God through visions and dreams, Moses knew Him mouth to mouth - speaking face to face Num 12:6-8, Jesus knew Him heart to heart, Jn 3:35 THE SON- Of God as in 2:8:19, Mk 13:32 1 Cor 15:28 Heb 1:8 except THE FATHER, No one knows- Epiginosko THE FATHER except THE SON- Jesus stands in a unique relationship with the Father, and vice versa. Cp God's special relationship with Israel, Amos 3:2. The nature of God's Being and the inter-relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit contain secrets beyond our understanding - our responsibility is to accept, enjoy, and pass on what God has revealed to us, Deu 29:29 God is unknowable in the eternal nature of His person, Jn 17:25 1 Tim 6:16 except as revealed in/by the Son, Jn 1:18

And those to whom THE SON chooses to REVEAL HIM- Mutual knowledge is inherent in the Nature of the Father and Son, but it isn't natural that we should

shorn of credit or pride, Gal 6:14. This led to His rejection by the Scribes and Pharisees, 11:16-19. Cp 2337. They, and the worldly-minded people of the Galilean cities, were shut out by their own attitudes from knowing God

11:2829 COME - To COME is to believe, receive, accept the gift of eternal life, etc Isa 45:22 Jn 1:12 3:13-16 5:24 6:35 7:37, 10:9, Acts 16:31; Rom 6:23 10:9, 1 Jn 4:2; Rev 3:20 22:17, etc. UNTO ME - The Knowledge of God which is Salvation, Peace and Rest is a PERSON. ALL - None are to shut themselves, or others out THAT LABOUR/are weary HEAVY LADEN/burdened- The Pharisees made the knowledge of God into a source of pride for themselves, and a heavy burden \*\*9 for others, 234; Acts 15:10 Gal 5:1, hindering their coming into blessing, Lk 11:52 The Lord was eager to reveal the Father to people who were wearied with the burdens of sin, failure, and misery, and to give them rest in fellowship with Himself. In due course this would enable them to do a better job at Law-keeping than the Pharisees, 5:20 on a new and different basis, Rom 8:1-20 In the Gospel Christ is offered as a rest for the non-coping who realise they're falling short of the glory God intended for them, Rom 3:23-24 Cp those who came to David, and through being with him became Mighty Men, 1 Sam 22:1-2; 2 Sam 23:8-39

I WILL GIVE YOU REST - The rest of the finished work of Christ on the Cross and the liberating rest of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, Rom 8:2; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 3:23-24; 5:1. Jews saw the Messianic age as the great Sabbath. But Christ was bringing the rest of individual Salvation, rest of conscience, peace with God - ceasing from our own works and entering Christ our Sabbath Rest, Heb 4:9-11. The next chapter debates the nature of the Sabbath/God's intention for it.

TAKE MY YOKE - The yoke worn by cattle to enable them to pull a cart, plow, etc is a symbol of submission - plowing, etc isn't what a beast does as self-expression! In Jer 27-28 Jeremiah wears a yoke as a symbol of the nation's need to submit to Babylonia. Cp Isa 9:4. It was also used of God's service, Jer 2:20 Lam 3:27. Jews later talked of taking up the yoke of the Law. \*\*10 He explains that taking His yoke meant LEARN from ME - Manthano Be my disciple, under my instruction and discipline. The rest the Lord offers isn't a chair, a bed, or a holiday, but a yoke - sharing with Christ, in the life He had been teaching and demonstrating as recorded from 5:2 on Christ Lived, as those He justifies must live, by Faith, Rom 1:17. As He lived in loving obedience to the Father, we're to live in loving

Footnote \*\*10 But I will also give his people a yoke of wisdom with an invitation to come and learn from him to take up the yoke of Wisdom, and find rest.

I AM MEEK /gentle, LOWLY /humble IN HEART - As promised of Messiah, Isa 42:2-3; 53:1-2; Zech 9:9. See how He dealt with Sinners, Lk 19:1-10; Jn 4:1-26 & 1:11. Cp Ps 18:35-36; 103:13-14; Isa 49:15-16; 63:9; 2 Cor 10:1. In inviting people to share a yoke with Him He gives assurance that He despises no one, is gentle-hearted, and shows consideration for those who share life with Him. It will be a steady quiet process. You will FIND REST for YOUR SOUL - Not merely future rest. Sharing life with Christ, though death to self, will bring joyful peace and fulfillment in our innermost being because we're experiencing something of what God made us for. \*\*11 Ruth burdened with loneliness and poverty gladly took up the "rest" of being a busy Farmer's wife, and mother, Ruth 3:1. The Scribes and Pharisees, rich in religious matters found such meekness hard to stoop to, but Paul stooped and found a busy "rest," in Christ, Gal 2:20. For what this meant see 2 Cor 1:3-11; 4:5-5:10; 11:22; 12:10; Phil 1:18-24; 3:3-21; 4:4-9.

11:30 FOR MY YOKE IS EASY - Easy on us even in hardships because He doesn't leave us to our own efforts/resources. MY BURDEN IS LIGHT - As He shares it with us His strength functions perfectly in our conscious weakness, 2 Cor 12:9-10, and our weakness is safely shared with His strength as He comes alongside to help, 2 Cor 1:3-5. To the flesh/human nature the way He opens to us through the Cross is narrow and hard, 7:14, and its Sermon-on-the-Mount standards are impossibly high. But the popular Broad way leads only down to darkness and its burdens increasingly chafe and cripple. In fellowship with Him there is increasing light and joy, until the ultimate spontaneous outburst of Joy in Glory, Prov 4:18-19; Jude 24-25. Cp Ex 33:14; Ps 23:2-3; Col 1:1-17; 1 Jn 5:3. To be crucified with Christ and live in the power of His resurrection life Eph 1:15-21; 3:10-21, etc is a light burden, and satisfying in comparison with the burden of human religion when it's taken seriously - their stairway to Heaven is a treadmill on which no progress can be made.

Footnote \*\*11 Man's restlessness dates from his rebellion in grasping at a God-likeness that would make him the centre of his own universe, and getting his own way his most sought-after good - the Self-worship that sees self-expression as the road to self-fulfilment. For the first time in history the modern world brings this within reach of large numbers of people to claim as their "right." As a result the Gospel offer of rest in Christ crucified has less appeal than ever, and the frantic efforts to remodel the Gospel so that it offers the self-fulfilment that fallen man eagerly

Righteousness, 2Cor 5:21. To enjoy sharing His yoke requires us not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, 2Cor 6:14. And to keep from taking up the Yoke of bondage - the Law Gal 5:1, while not lapsing into lawlessness. Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 2:16.

## CHAPTER 12

### 12:1-14 Christ & the Sabbath

(Jesus has offered the REST of sharing His yoke. The Pharisees confront Him about the Sabbath REST which they had turned into a burdensome yoke. The Lord challenges them with quotes from the OT Scripture, then deliberately heals on the Sabbath.)

12:1-2 JESUS WENT ON THE SABBATH - God had decreed that Israel was to rest on the Seventh Day of the week, as a witness to God's finished work of Creation, and to His covenant with Israel, Gen 2:2; Ex 20:8-11; 31:13-17. \*\*12 This gave a weekly rest to them, their servants and working beasts - a time for worship, family fellowship, and a reminder that life didn't depend entirely on their activity.

THROUGH grain fields - Walking along a path through the fields of ripening wheat or barley. HIS DISCIPLES hungry BEGAN TO pick EARS OF CORN / heads of grain AND EAT - Jesus and the disciples were wandering preachers dependent on hospitality. None having been offered, the disciples exercised their right under the Law, Deu 23:24-25 to ease their hunger by nibbling corn from ears as they walked along THE PHARISEES.. SAID.. your DISCIPLES.. unlawful on the SABBATH - By their rules picking a head of grain was reaping, taking the grain out was threshing, to chew the grain was grinding wheat into flour. They allowed this only if the alternative was death by starvation - and the disciples were merely hungry, not starving! The Pharisees loved to fuss over the technical details. Mercy would have moved them to provide food. It's rather easy for us to earn the condemnation of 7:1-5 by using our Bible knowledge to stop what others are doing.

12:3-4 DAVID WHEN hungry - 1 Sam 21:6. Jesus is appealing to Bible History to show what had been considered acceptable behaviour. David, although innocent, and the God-appointed King, had to flee for his life without being able to provide bread for the journey, so God approved his action. If Jesus had been given His proper place His followers wouldn't have needed to glean as they went. God's Law

used their expertise in the Law to their own advantage. For Christians - worshipping on the Resurrection First day of the week symbolises having rested from self-justifying works, and entered into the finished work of Redemption - living united to the Risen Christ, sharing His rest in all they do, 112830 Rom 6:1-14; 7:1-6; 8:1-30 Gal 2:20 Heb 4:8-16, etc.

THE SHOWBREAD /consecrated bread- Lev 24:5-9. NOT LAWFUL - It was recognised that the Law couldn't always be applied strictly, Num 28:9-10 2 Chr 30:18-20 So, the greater good feeding the hungry, takes precedence over the lesser good ceremonial law. OR David, as God's Anointed, hungry and persecuted, was permitted to break the Law. So they mustn't condemn the companions of Messiah, the Son of David - who was being rejected.

12:5-6 THE PRIESTS IN THE TEMPLE desecrate the day- Bebeloo As Paul was accused of doing Acts 24:6. The Lord appeals to what the Law said. Priests and Levites worked on the Sabbath, killing, preparing and offering animals as sacrifices, Lev 24:8; Num 28:9-10 The holier the day, the harder they must work. ARE BLAMELESS/innocent- God won't judge them as having sinned as they have obeyed a higher law.

BUT I SAY - As in 52Q making a considered statement IN THIS PLACE IS ONE - Literally SOMETHING- The Kingdom, but the Kingdom and the King are inseparable, 12:8. Probably the Neuter is used to stress the superior position Jesus held in the things of God GREATER THAN THE TEMPLE - It was the house of God, but He was Immanuel, God in Human form. He used their criticism to reveal Himself. The priests were free to break the Sabbath in Temple service As Jesus was greater than the Temple - in His service His disciples were free to break the Sabbath - IF they had. The Sabbath was never intended to prevent the service of God, 12:5, deeds of necessity, 12:3-4, or of Mercy, 12:11-12

12:7-8 IF you HAD KNOWN- They would have said they DID know. The Lord is saying - If you really understood and applied it. I WILL /desire MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE - As in 9:13 quoted from Hosea 6:6. God's great purpose was MERCY, and other commands must fit around that. The sacrifices played their part as merciful provisions to teach the truth of God, and provide atonement for sin/ maintain fellowship with God. The Pharisees' criticism showed how far at odds they were with God's priorities. There's a danger of our being so concerned with God's work we fail to show ordinary kindness NOT CONDEMNED GUILTYLESS/innocent- Judged, or declared them guilty, 12:37, Lk 6:37, Jas 5:6.

ON SABBATH?- They ruled action was lawful only if death was the alternative. To accuse Jesus- Legal term. To heal deliberately and say the Law permitted it made a better formal charge.

If any has a SHEEP- Probably meaning only one sheep, so important to the owner. INTO A PIT ON THE SABBATH.. LIFT IT OUT?- Lk 14:5. The Lord appeals to common sense. A reasonable man wouldn't wait until the Sabbath was over. Some Rabbis said put something into the pit for the sheep to climb out on, OR give food and drink until after the Sabbath, but the Talmud ruled that preventing animal suffering allowed the owner to lift it out. Cp Deu 22:4; Prov 12:10 The Pharisees cared more for their property - a sheep, than for a fellow man.

HOW MUCH more valuable. LAWFUL TO DO good ON SABBATH- To show mercy on them. That it's the Sabbath shouldn't stop the showing love to their neighbour, Lk 10:27. Belonging to God should move people to do good to others. Instead the Pharisees were trying to be MORE righteous than others, which left them no concern to help others/help them be righteous. He said.. STRETCH out your HAND - Do what you would do if it was normal - and it became normal, just as sound as THE OTHER.

12:14 THE PHARISEES.. kill Jesus- As in Jn 5:18, 11:53-54 Jesus had given good reasons for healing on the Sabbath, and had then done that "good thing" faced with His reasoned defence of His actions, and unable to produce counter arguments that would carry the people with them, they decided to murder him. Mk 3:6 says the Herodians joined them in this. His Miracles, and His insisting that the Law be interpreted in accordance with God's intention of Mercy, threatened their moral and religious dominance. Christians may find their bitterest enemies are those who differ from them only a little in belief and practice. It's THAT which makes them a real threat - outrageously different people are no threat, and can be ignored cheerfully.

### 12:15-21 Jesus as the Lord's Chosen Servant

(Jesus was the promised Servant-of-the-Lord Messiah, but as predicted He did not confront those who rejected Him. The violent opposition of the Pharisees and the gentleness of the Lord's response will result in the Lord's Triumph and Salvation to the Gentiles.)

fulfil.. Isaiah- Isa 42:1-4, but not exactly the same as the Hebrew or Greek texts. In 8:16-17 it was the nature of His healing work, here it's the Heder's character and methods - meekness and gentleness

BEHOLD/Here is MY SERVANT - Pais- A Son, or Servant, as in 8:6. Jesus is called God's Servant elsewhere only in Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30 though the idea of His fulfilling Isa 42 and 53 is common in the NT.

I HAVE CHOSEN- As in LXX. Hebrew has I uphold/support Him. Cp Acts 4:27, 1 Pet 2:4. Jesus, in what He is being and doing, is God's Chosen Servant-Son, who is bringing full Joy to the Father, fulfilling His purposes. A verdict totally different from that of the Pharisees who see Him as Evil in weakening their interpretation of the Law, and their position as its proud guardians. the One I love- Cp 3:17; 17:5. IN WHOM MY SOUL IS WELL PLEASED/ delight- Soul and person are interchangeable - so I love Him and rejoice over Him, etc I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT on HIM- The Hebrew of Isaiah has I HAVE put my spirit...

SHOW JUDGMENT/proclaim justice- As in Ps 7:8-10, 26:1, etc. Also Salvation Justice - God's verdicts that announce the principles under which God's Salvation will be available. The provision for a life that fulfils the purpose of the Law as expounded in 5:7, Rom 8:2-3. TO THE GENTILE S/nations- That His ministry would reach out to the nations is emphasised as Israel's rejection grows.

12:19-21 NOT STRIVE/quarrel- Erizo may be used in a legal sense - to defend oneself, present one's case. In contrast to Jewish expectation of an aggressive, conquering Messiah, Christ came in suffering mercy. SIN and Satan's enslavement was what He had come to battle with and conquer, and shouting back against the Pharisees would do nothing to liberate them from their sinful beliefs and attitudes. Cp 2 Tim 2:23-26 He states the truth, and leaves them to deal with it, rather than breaks them/quenches them with it.

NOR CRY out- He didn't shout or raise his voice as men do in anger. HEAR HIS VOICE IN THE STREETS- In contrast the hypocrites who delight in street display, 6:5, He won't be out in the streets shouting out - advertising Himself and His program - not campaigning for election as Messiah! He would reach His rightful place not by political rabble-raising but by quietly doing His father's will.



God. The Lord accepted the despised and inadequate, and their consciousness of failure/ sin meant they were willing to accept Him, and so were transformed beyond anything the proud-of-his-righteousness Pharisee would ever know.

TILL HE leads justice to VICTORY - Eis Nikos- Successfully as in LXX Jer 3:5; Amos 1:11; 8:7. Cp Hab 1:4. Isa 42:3 could mean He will faithfully bring forth justice, or bring the truth into righteous triumph. Human compassion moves people to tolerate evil, or give unfair advantage to the disadvantaged. The Lord's compassion always acts in truth and righteousness. He will establish JUSTICE, but without breaking reeds or quenching smouldering wicks. Cp the patient waiting in 2Pet 3:9 for men to come to repentance. As God's servant He will persist in His gentle efforts, respecting man's responsibility to choose, Ps 18:35 until He achieves God's will. We tend to think only of the Salvation we receive, and view Judgment on the unrepentant as an unfortunate side effect. But Calvary is the Lord's total answer to rebellion/sin, and the blessing on the instrument of Mercy is the desirable-to-us aspect of the vast universal triumph of God in Christ crucified, Rom 8:12-39 9:21-26 1 Cor 15:24-26 Col 1:20 not the salvage of a minor part of the wreckage.

IN HIS NAME - He is LORD, 128, the Chosen Servant-Son, 3:17, the quiet Son of Man/ Son of God in His teaching and Miracles of kindness, who triumphs eternally. THE GENTILE STRUST/nations hope- This follows the LXX. The Hebrew of Isa 42:4 has the wastelands - those beyond the borders of Israel, wait (hopefully) for His Law. People from all over the world will hope/ trust/ BE CONFIDENT in Him, and not be disappointed, Isa 11:10 Rom 10:11-12 15:12

### 122237 The Source of the Power of Jesus

(That Jesus exercised miraculous power was obvious. As the Pharisees refused to accept the truth of His exposition of the Law they said His power came from Satan. Jesus showed the idea to be ridiculous, and warned that to call Good Evil/ God Satan in that irresponsible way set anyone on the path that led to their destruction unless repented of.)

122224 They BROUGHT a demon-possessed man.. BLIND AND DUMB/mute- Cp 9:32-34 Mk 3:22-27, Lk 11:14-23 The Greek makes clear the physical inability to see or speak was caused by the demon possession. Yet the Healing/ physical transformation is stressed. Jesus HEALED HIM. ALL AMAZED/astonished- Literally beside themselves - broken out of their self-

Christ. The Holy Spirit was working through Jesus and witnessing in the minds of people. By opposing this the Pharisees were sinning against the Holy Spirit, as is any teaching that discredits Jesus, or distracts people from confident obedient faith in Him.

12.25-28 EVERY KINGDOM DIVIDED.. IS BROUGHT TO DESOLATION/will be ruined- Will become a desert - through the mutual destruction of such a civil war. See Lk 11:17. EVERY CITY OR household- Such division is just as disastrous on the smaller scale where family members and servants work against each other. Jerusalem was like that when under siege by Titus. IF SATAN drives OUT SATAN.. DIVIDED- If what they said was true, a faction in Satan's Kingdom was fighting another faction, so His Kingdom was destroying itself.

IF I BY BEEL ZEBUB.. BY WHOM DO YOUR people?- Attempts at Exorcism were common, Acts 19:13 Some Pharisees claimed to cast out demons, and it sounds as if they did. THEY.. YOUR JUDGES- Regard them as a test case. Similar actions point to similar empowering. What your own followers do proves you're wrong in saying I'm using Satan's power when I set demon-possessed people free, etc. We today must always warn against false teaching, but be cautious of attributing any witness and work to demonic powers if it has blessed some people.

IF - Or since I drive OUT demons BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD - Lk 11:20 Satan can work lying wonders, 24:24 2 Th 2:9-10 Rev 13:13-14. But Jesus is removing EVIL so EVIL can't be the source of His power. Therefore God's Spirit was doing this through the Spirit-filled Messiah Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1-3, THE KINGDOM OF GOD has COME-\*\*13 This proves that God is exercising His rule/establishing His Kingdom, in Jesus as His Servant-Son-King. It's an invisible spiritual Kingdom of spiritual power - God triumphing over Satan - not a military, political and economic Kingdom that triumphs over human enemies. The miracles were visible signs of the presence of that invisible Kingdom. Heb 2:3-4.

12.29-30 HOW.. ENTER STRONG MAN'S HOUSE.. HIS GOODS/possessions- This pictures what Jesus has done by freeing those enslaved by demons. Cp Isa 49:24-26 where God attacks the strongman and frees Israel. The Devil with whom we struggle is a defeated Devil, if we stand with His Conqueror. Jesus brushed him aside in 4:1-11 and persisted in the path to the cross and the triumphant

some items. Jesus having conquered is liberating Satan's slaves, 1 Jn 3:8; Heb 2:14-15

NOT WITH ME.. AGAINST ME- Lk 11:23 The Pharisees may claim to be impartial judges of Christ and His work, but no one can be. Their criticism shows they're standing with Satan against what God is doing in Jesus in fulfillment of His promises. Mk 9:40 gives the positive. Everyone is ripening towards Heaven or Hell, whatever fence-sitting they attempt - Moving towards confession of Christ and fellowship with Him for ever, or are against Him, even if visibly associated with Him as Judas was, and those in 7:15-23 26:29 Satan's Kingdom, mammon, or God and His Kingdom are the options, 6:24 not gather.. scatters- Helping to gather in the harvest, 9:37-38 or driving people away from God/Salvation, as in Lk 11:52

Footnote \*\*13 The possible meanings of has come can be traced through its use in Lk 11:20 Rom 9:31; 2 Cor 10:14; Phil 3:16; 1 Th 2:16; 4:15, where the Coming is also unexpected/unnoticed.

12:31-32 So I tell YOU- The Lord doesn't brawl and brawl, 12:19, but He solemnly warns them. ALL MANNER OF every SIN AND BLASPHEMY BE FORGIVEN- (DP) - God will forgive. That everyone NEEDS forgiveness has been made obvious from 5:2 onwards, and the availability of forgiveness is again stressed here.

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY Spirit will NOT BE FORGIVEN- God will not forgive. To say the Lord's miracles were done by Satan's power was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit who was empowering Him. If this was persisted in, this was unforgivable, as it cut them off from receiving the message of Salvation. The unique feature of the work of the Holy Spirit is that He works invisibly in people, witnessing to the truth in their innermost being. The Pharisees could have honest doubts about what they saw and heard of Jesus but these could be cleared up by honest questions, as they were for Nicodemus, Jn 3:1-16 19:39. And by accepting the truth of the Lord's explanations of why He had acted contrary to their understanding of the Law, 9:1-17, etc. But they deliberately chose to believe such half-truths as "He comes from Nazareth so can't be Messiah," Jn 7:41-52. They refused the obvious witness of miracles, Jn 9:29-34 and wished to murder Lazarus for his having been raised from the dead, Jn 12:10-11. Note their reaction to the resurrection, 28:11-15; Acts 4:5-22 etc. Moral perverseness that

BUT anyone who speaks AGAINST THE HOLY Spirit NOT FORGIVEN- Because He is God's voice in their heart and mind To be brought by the Spirit to the point where God has done all that's possible in witnessing to them (they had only to put out the hand of faith to claim the Saviour and salvation) and to turn back, is unforgivable, 13:14-15; Heb 6:4-8; 1 Jn 5:16 This was the road these Pharisees were on, and the final decision was inevitable unless they heeded the warning. Those who rejected the witness of the Spirit IN THIS WORLD/age, rule themselves out from any possibility of blessing in the age to come- Being forgiven, or refusing to be forgiven now is permanent.

Footnote \*\*14 Today people may be provoked by the actions of Christians, or a speaker's presentation of the Gospel, his personal attitude, lack of loving concern, arrogance etc and instinctively blaspheme both the preacher and the God he represents - and feel guilty, repent and be forgiven. But when to the testimony of eyes and ears God adds by His Spirit the witness directly to a man's soul, and he deliberately fobs it off with the excuse that it's a lie, etc that wilful refusal to believe what God says in their heart and mind becomes unforgivable.

12:33-35 EITHER MAKE a TREE GOOD, AND its FRUIT GOOD- Make up your minds. A crop of Olives, etc shows the tree is a good fruit tree, not a wild one, Lk 6:43-45 If what Jesus was doing was GOOD, a blessing to people, that showed He was good acting in fellowship with God (In 7:16-20 it's the falsity of the Prophets that is shown by the fruit.) MAKE a TREE CORRUPT/bad, AND its FRUIT will be CORRUPT/bad- If you make out that the Devil is the source of my actions, then you must call the results - healings, deliverance from demons etc, BAD, and shouldn't have been done - which would alienate those blessed by it. THE TREE IS recognised BY its FRUIT - Evil heart- evil deeds, 15:17-20

O brood OF VIPERS- 3:7. Sons of Serpent Satan, Gen 3:1, seeking to poison men against the truth so they will die in their sins. Cp 2:33-35 Calling the work of the Holy Spirit the work of Satan was fruit that showed the tree of their life was evil. HOW CAN you who are EVIL SPEAK GOOD THINGS- Their slandering of Jesus was the natural result of the Pharisees being in fellowship with Satan. The Lord tries to shock them out of unforgivable sin. OUT OF THE ABUNDANCE/overflow OF THE HEART THE MOUTH SPEAKS- Lk 6:45 What people say is an overflowing through the mouth of what fills their inner being. It reveals what they're really like. 6:21; 15:18 The GOOD MAN OUT OF GOOD stored up. brings GOOD- The things he has chosen to keep, treasure up, having selected

depressed, although it carries risks, Prov 10:19. In this setting the Lord is warning against saying things which produce no GOOD fruit, and more particularly saying things which were empty of truth like the Pharisees' words, 12:24. Words said that aren't the result of honest weighing up of evidence. Malicious words said "for fun," out of prejudice, etc. that hurt people, cloud the truth, distract men from Jesus and Salvation. Baseless rumours and criticisms by Christians do great harm - all the more so if the speaker is a Godly, respected man. See 5:21-26 Jas 3:1-16. We will also be answerable for empty unkept promises, 21:30.

GIVE ACCOUNT.. JUDGMENT - An emphatic statement of WHEN men will face the consequences of what they may say quite carelessly - so think before you attribute the work of God to Satan, 12:24. BY your WORDS. JUSTIFIED/ acquitted, CONDEMNED - What you've said will be accepted as proof of what you were. We're justified by Grace here through Christ crucified but the words we speak need to be a true witness as to whether we're justified or not, Cp Jas 3:1-18.

### 12:38-46 A SIGN Demanded & Refused

(As proof of the source of Jesus' Power. Probably a repeated request as 16:1; Mk 8:11-12 Lk 11:29-32, have different backgrounds. Nineveh turned from sin. Saba's Queen was attracted to a person. The Gospel features both.)

12:38-39 SCRIBES/teachers of the Law- 2:4. PHARISEES- 3:7 said WE want A SIGN FROM you- They're brushing aside all the miracles as inadequate witness. Moses had proved God was with him by crossing the Red Sea etc. Elijah had called down Fire from heaven. The demand for a sign kills Faith - When Abraham's faith failed he demanded a covenant and a sign, Gen 15:8-21. Contrast the blessing offered us, Jn 20:29.

AN EVIL/Wicked AND ADULTEROUS GENERATION - Only people as evil and godless as you would demand a sign beyond what you've already seen. People who don't keep their own marriage vows don't trust God to keep HIS promises. And adultery in OT is used of Israel's heart departure from loyalty to God, Jer 3:20 Hos 3:1, etc. That this generation of Israel preferred worldly ways and possessions, and men's praise, 6:1-24 showed their hearts weren't loyal to God. They're demanding a sign because their lack of faithfulness to/fellowship with God had made them blind to the truth Jesus preached, and the signs He had given.

12.4042 THE SON OF MAN.. HEART OF THE EARTH- The Jewish way of saying buried in the ground That God was involved in the life and work of Jonah was shown by his preservation. The resurrection of Christ Jesus would prove He was God-approved. Only those who already believed in Him saw the Risen Christ, but the Rulers and general public saw the transformed lives of His Disciples and heard their witness/ felt the witness of His Spirit, Acts 2-7. The Resurrection would be God's final sign to Israel. Let's not distract attention away from the wonder of it by exercising our obsessed-by-fact Western minds in foolish arguments as to the exact way this symbolic statement can be used to determine the schedule of the crucifixion and resurrection.

NINEVEH SHALL RISE /stand up- Used of the Lord's resurrection in Mk 8:31, etc, but also conveys the thought of standing up as a witness in court IN JUDGMENT with THIS GENERATION..AND CONDEMN IT- God condemns - not men - but these men will witness that God's verdict is appropriate.

THEY REPENTED AT THE PREACHING OF Jonah- Repent- 3:2; 4:17; 11:20-21. This is the last use of REPENT in Matthew, so in a sense the final challenge which they must face when, Jonah-like, Jesus rises from the dead. A GREATER THAN Jonah- Cp 1:26. A greater person, God the Son, and a greater message, and outcome, an offer of eternal Salvation.

THE QUEEN OF THE SOUTH- Queen of Sheba in South Arabia, 1 Ki 10:1-13 CONDEMN.. CAME FROM ENDS OF EARTH- Not that the earth has ends, or that she came from the farthest from Israel part of the world. Simply their poetic way of saying from a very long distance TO.. THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON- The wise answers He gave to her questions. A GREATER THAN SOLOMON- They had faced the wisdom of God in His Final revelation in Jesus, Heb 1:1, and must answer for their response. He was THE Priest, Prophet, and King - Greater than the Temple, and its Priests (Law) Jonah (Prophets) Solomon (Wisdom literature). Cp 10:15; 11:21-24

12.4345 WHEN THE UNCLEAN /evil SPIRIT IS GONE /comes OUT OF A MAN - No explanation of how this happened. The Israelites who returned from Exile had been freed from the evil spirit of idolatry, but their lives remained empty

the person had tidied up their life and was living comfortably. But was empty - the Stronger One, the Lord Jesus hadn't been welcomed in to guard and rule the house. Our Western world has turned from Christ. Those brought up by Christian parents may live comfortably good lives until they or their children lapse into worse sin than the heathen. Only when the Lord is allowed to fill our lives are we really safe, Eph 5:18 Col 3:16 2Pet 1:1-11.

THE LAST STATE /final condition.. IS WORSE- In spite of temporary improvement That is how it will BE - Unless while they have the chance, they welcome into their life the only rightful and safe Master, Jesus Christ. In a sense Israel freed from Pre-exile idolatry was already under the control of the evil spirits of hypocrisy, self-righteousness, formalism, pride, etc. dominant to the Lord, Lk 16:15. When THAT generation had had 40 years to repent, it was torn apart by Barabbas-type patriots/ false Messiahs, until crushed by the Romans. The final generation of Christ-rejecting Jews will also be lured and betrayed by Anti-Christ, THE False Messiah, Jn 5:43 2 Th 2:3-4; Rev 13:11-18 and suffer the Great tribulation.

### 124650 Jesus, His Mother & Brothers

(It seems from Mk 3:20-21, 31-35, that they'd lost confidence in His acting wisely in fellowship with God, and had come to take charge of Him. He uses the incident to remind us that human relationships/ birth is irrelevant to the Kingdom - doing the will of God alone matters.)

124647 WHILE Jesus was still talking- About the Pharisees. HIS MOTHER AND brothers \*\*15 STOOD outside- the house where He was speaking, 13:1, or on the fringe of the crowd. They're free to come or go, not committed disciples as yet, Jn 7:5, but were by Acts 1:14. Swept clean but not occupied by Christ, in terms of the previous parable. DESIRING TO SPEAK WITH HIM- To get Him quietly away if Mk 3:21 describes their intention. Church Leaders can also feel they have a right to decide what Jesus can say and do in THEIR churches, by ruling out unpopular truths etc. Someone told HIM BEHOLD Your MOTHER- This verse is omitted in some Ms's though they have it in Lk 8:20.

124850 HE replied.. WHO IS MY MOTHER? brothers?- With whom do I have the closest ties? This is most appropriate if they have come with the intention of

SISTER.. MOTHER- The basis of fellowship with the Lord Jesus is Obedient Faith. This is the work of God, Jn 6:28-29 God's will, as revealed in Jesus is to be done joyfully, faithfully, effectively, but that can be done only by us in Jesus/ Jesus in us, as He by the Spirit guides us and gives the power to do it, Rom 8:1-16; Gal 2:20 Phil 2:12-13 This hearing-believing-doing, 7:15-27, goes far beyond agreement with ideas, or mechanical obedience. It involves God reaching down to us in Christ, to fulfil His eternal purposes. Cp 28:10 Jn 20:17; Rom 8:1-30 Heb 2:11-13; 2 Pet 1:3-4. A family relationship with Jesus is shown by those redeemed from the world to join Him in His obedience to the will of the father, Jn 15:8-15.

Footnote \*\*15 Brothers has been interpreted by RC's as cousins, half-brothers, etc. as in Hebrew such could be described as brothers. But John, Luke and Paul, writing to Gentiles, also say brothers, and to Gentiles the word could only mean brothers.

## CHAPTER 13

### 13:1-58 Parables of the Kingdom

(The Kingdom has been spoken of since 3:2, as the sphere of God's Rule in both outward profession, and inward reality. It had been offered as AT HAND/hear in Jesus its Messiah, and rejected by this Generation of Israel, 11:16-24 12:14. The fulfilment of most of the OT promises must wait for the future coming and rule of Christ in Power, Glory and Judgment, as in 19:28 24:25. That will be the outworking of His First Coming and Triumph over Evil in the Cross, Col 1:19-20 2:14-15. The Second Coming is delayed until the full harvest of repentant sinners can be gathered in, 2 Pet 3:9, so He speaks to them in Parables, picturing aspects of how it will be in the Church age, between His FIRST, and SECOND Comings. The OT isn't cancelled, but what will happen involves mysteries - things not obvious in the OT promises. There will be no visible King, capital city, or government structure. The parables begin with the sowing of seed from which God's kingdom grows, and end with the end of the age, and Judgment.)

#### 13:1-9 The Sower Parable.

(Without the life-giving Gospel seed eternal life is impossible. But the Kingdom requires individual response to the message proclaimed, and these responses vary. We have a



HE told them MANY THINGS IN PARABLES- Parable- A placing beside, from Parabolos- To throw alongside. A Parable is a story about visible things which in some ways are parallel to spiritual truths. To those willing to learn it reveals some aspects of the spiritual truth, without giving enemies anything clearly actionable. In LXX it's used for Hebrew Mashal- a proverb, parable, allegory, riddle, etc. Brief parables/ illustrative stories have been given already in 52526 11:16-19, 124345 We shouldn't insist that every aspect of a parable must have a spiritual meaning. It's important that we concentrate on getting the main point of the story, but there are often supporting features which can provide useful extra meaning as long as they don't interfere with the main point, OR clash with other Scriptures. The meaning of a parable may vary somewhat between Gospels, as they are using it in a different setting. Parables need to be understood in terms of the physical and spiritual setting of the time of Christ. They reveal truths to those willing and able to tune in to them that others may be blind to, and part of their value is in making people think seriously about subjects without being able to systematise the elements.

A FARMER WENT out TO SOW seed- As soon as the land was softened by the first showers in Autumn it was ploughed, and the farmer went out to sow wheat or barley seed on his farm by scattering it on the prepared fields. (It might be ploughed again, or harrowed to bury the seed better.) Permanent paths ran through fields. In places only shallow soil covered the bedrock, which might produce a crop in an unusually wet year. A good farmer tried to remove the roots of thorns and perennial weeds, but that wasn't easy with primitive tools. The grainfield might be almost all fertile land, or be largely poor land. A teacher sowing the seed of truth in the minds of pupils was a widely-used illustration, and Christ is the Sower although He uses the hands of His servants. The Seed is the Gospel of God's Word, and it comes to the hearer with something of God's own life in it, and brings life to those who welcome it, Lk 8:11; Act 10:37, 1 Pet 1:23-25 Jas 1:18 His great purpose is the production of a harvest for eternity.

13:4-7 SOME SEEDS FELL along the path- There's no barrenness in the seed, but the soil is conditioned by what people do, not by what God does. Footpath people shrug off the Bible stories with childhood and value only things that produce

Other FELL AMONG THORNS.. CHOKED THEM- Thorn bushes would have been burnt off, and some attempt made to dig out roots, but thorn roots, or thorn seed sprang up along with the wheat plants and being more vigorous might smother the wheat. There was no lack in the soil - the failure to restrain the crop of thorns springing up was the problem.

138-9 OTHER FELL INTO GOOD GROUND- Of course fertiliser, irrigation, weeding, etc all help but the point made is that fruitfulness comes from the seed being received deeply into the soil. Doctrinal and devotional details and organisational techniques are peripheral. Gods Work is done/ His kingdom flourishes, in the Grace and Power of His Spirit, as His Word is received and sown faithfully and obediently.

A HUNDREDFOLD/hundred, sixty, or thirty times as much as sowed- This is the miracle of cropping, the getting back from successful plants so many times more than was sowed. Gods Word gives us a realistic figure, and three levels of fruitfulness in contrast to three levels of barrenness. He who has EARS- As 11:15, 13:43 To have hearing ears is to be fruitful ground a glorious responsibility.

### 1310-17 The Purpose of Parables

(Jesus explains why at this stage He is using Parables in His Teaching. Mk 4:11-12 Lk 8:9-10 10:23-24)

1310-11 THE DISCIPLES asked- It's always good to take our questions to the Lord. They were puzzled that the Lord was no longer speaking so plainly and directly. We too are puzzled when we read Ezekiel etc, and rightly seek wisdom as to its understanding and use. WHY.. PARABLES? BECAUSE IT has been GIVEN to YOU- Fallen human natures can't understand the things of God, 1 Cor 2:14. Understanding is by Gods Grace and gift alone, and it's received by babes, 11:25 16:17, not by those sophisticated-smart enough to brush it aside as the Scribes did, 23:37. There's a sense in which God desires to GIVE to all, and the truth is there for those who SEEK it, 7:7. Those who find it must share it in public proclamation, 10:27, 17:9. The goodness of the good soil wasn't self-generated, or to its credit - it was GIVEN.

If they would - an understanding of truths they contained. Christ Himself is the key to understanding the secrets of God's purposes. Those who ignore Him and demand answers from God to the questions life raises are doomed to get no answers. Those who stop talking to listen to and obey Jesus begin to find the answers as they follow Him, 11:27. To receive the Son is a human action, and yet it's also the work of God, Jn 1:12-13. Behind the praiseworthy/rightful response of faith and obedience lies the purposes and work of God's mercy. Cp 2Pet 1:1-11.

TO THEM.. NOT GIVEN- They hold the husk in their hand but miss the kernel. God has offered them the words of the message, and the sight of the miracles that supported it, but they haven't received it. The halves are inseparable, we're not to ignore God's sovereignty OR man's responsibility to exercise the sovereignty that He has granted to man.

1312-13 FOR- A logical result. This is because. WHOEVER has will be given more- Nothing further can be given to the person who refuses the first instalment of understanding. Jacob can be taught, Esau can't. This is why Parables both hide and reveal the truth, at the same time. This may be a secular proverb about the unfairness of life - the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. You've got to have money in order to buy in bulk cheaply, and so save money, etc.

But Spiritually it's quite fair - as a desire and willingness to know God and His will is the key to knowing Him, Heb 11:6. Seekers find Him, 7:7, Sowers reap. Gal 6:7. Cp the famine of the word in Amos 8:11-12 that followed refusal to value it/obey it. Cp Jn 8:43 9:39. We should be very conscious of the privilege grace has granted - no room for pride, only reverent thankfulness will HAVE MORE/an ABUNDANCE - Be plentifully supplied, overflowing and able to share with others.

whoever does NOT have FROM HIM SHALL BE TAKEN- God gave the good seed - and the trodden path left it lying on the surface. It could gain no benefit from watering, cultivating or weeding, so it was taken away. Many people gain some idea of Spiritual things, show a passing interest in them, but refuse to give them priority, and in later life, when reminded, seem to have no memory of ever having been interested. Only what is received and used is permanently ours. THEREFORE/This is why I speak IN PARABLES- Matthew Henry said

13 14-15 IN THEM IS FULFILLED - They make come true what ISAIAH - Isa 6:9-10 said would happen. See also Mk 13:13; Jn 12:40; Acts 28:26-27; Rom 11:8, and the general thought of hardening is in Mk 6:52 & 17; Rom 11:7, 25; 2 Cor 3:14; Eph 4:18. King Ahaziah/Uzziah had despised the Lord and usurped the Priest's privilege of offering incense, 2 Chr 26:16-21. After Uzziah's death, Isa 6:1, Isaiah was granted the vision of God's Holiness and Glory - the temple contained only the fringe of His garment. Having been cleansed he accepted the challenge to be God's messenger to Israel. These words warned that no matter how well Isaiah/the Lord Jesus carried out their mission, the attitude of the hearers would frustrate God's purposes of Grace BY HEARING/You shall be ever hearing NOT UNDERSTANDING/understanding. AND SEEING - No matter how much these people look or listen they don't get the message. The message is given to them, but they don't take it in.

Footnote \*\*16 Understanding is possible only by the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 2:6-16, and He can't enlighten them, because they blaspheme Him by saying His empowering of Christ is Satanic, 12:24. The Lord's action is a response to deliberate unbelief that misuses plain teaching. Parables may tease their minds and find an opening for the truth, and will delay the final confrontation so the Disciples have time to grow before the climax strikes.

HEART WAXED GROSS/become calloused - Being offered the truth, and not welcoming it, makes men less able to receive it, perhaps cease to be aware of the truth being offered. EARS DULL/hardly hear - They've stopped listening, refuse to listen any longer - Stop confronting us with the God of Israel, Isa 30:10-11. EYES CLOSED - They deliberately close their eyes to the truth, 2 Pet 1:8-9, LEST/otherwise THEY might SEE.. HEAR.. UNDERSTAND - They take precautions against the possibility of taking in the Message, and BE CONVERTED/turn AND I HEAL THEM - Spiritually, being put into a right relationship to God so that His purposes of blessing/Christ-likeness can be fulfilled in them. The cause of their unbelief isn't in the words of Jesus, but in the wickedness of the hearers hardening their hearts. They accepted physical healing, 11:20-24 but were determined not to take in the fact that God is eager to forgive and remove their sin, etc, in case they yielded to His offer/plea to do so.

obvious. That Scribes, Pharisees, citizens of Capernaum etc, refuse to receive the Grace offered is equally obvious. DESIRED/longed TO SEE - Abraham's desire. Jn 8:56 Eph 3:4-5; Heb 11:13 1 Pet 1:10 TO HEAR .. NOT HEARD - So those who have heard should be thankful and sincere as in responding to truth granted/challenged to be deep, responsive soil, uncluttered with weeds.

### 13:18-23 Explanation of Sower Parable

(Mk 4:13-20 Lk 8:11-15. The Parable is explained in terms of the response of typical sorts of people as they hear God's word.)

13:18-19 HEAR / Listen.. WHEN ANY ONE hears THE WORD / message- That Jesus has begun teaching. All four soils are within reach of the Gospel, but those whose hearts aren't set on knowing and doing the will of God will be robbed of it. Cp 10:14; 11:20 12:24 does NOT understand- The reality of what God is offering to them in Christ, doesn't adjust their thinking to it, and act on it - a matter of interest, teachability, responsiveness, obedience not just intelligence

THE WICKED / Evil ONE.. snatches AWAY what WAS SOWN- Snatches away the thoughts generated in their mind, and they dismiss what they've understood Mk 4:15; Lk 8:12 1 Pet 5:8. THIS IS the kind of person and action represented by the SEE D sown along the trampled hard path- It isn't given a chance to spring up into life. The least able to respond are those, like the Scribes and Pharisees, hardened by Scripture - as they've learnt to use it for their own purposes.

13:20-21 The SEE D.. on rocky PLACES IS the man who hears THE WORD AND at once receives it WITH JOY - Spontaneous impressionable people may respond to the Gospel and be swept into spiritual experiences which seem very real, but leave no lasting sense of God, or the importance of His revealed will. It's wonderful to find hearers enthusiastically welcoming the Gospel, but if we have adjusted the Gospel to play down the Cross - Gal 2:20 etc - such a joyful response lightly made is doomed to disappoint.

But has no ROOT IN HIMSELF - His response was only superficial and beneath it remained a rock-hard concentration on self/ self-pleasing, as with Simon of Samaria, Acts 8:13-20 WHEN trouble- The pressures of life, and as a Christian, A dramatic and joyful conversion will be tested and its reality proved to the Glory of God, or not. OR PERSECUTION comes BECAUSE OF THE WORD - He's tested as in 10:16-39 24:9, for belonging to Christ and obeying His Word, and is

as a pampered child of God makes this inevitable. Note the change in the Crowd response as Jesus makes clear to them that He is offering eternal life, not free food handouts, "Jesus for King!" becomes "Too hard," Jn 6:15, 60 But we who are the Lord's people must do all we can to support converts who are under pressure, and to avoid the scandal/discouragement of their finding how little life transforming, obedient faith exists in the Church. If they don't see Christians living in the Joy of Salvation from Hell, conformity to Christ, urgently concerned to see their neighbours saved, we have given them no reason to make a deep response to the Gospel. The more sensational the conversion, the more perilous - pray much.

13.22 The one who RECEIVED the SEED AMONG THORNS- Toughweeds that compete with the Gods work in the life. worries OF THIS WORLD/life- The concerns of daily living which are normal for their age and age-group not in themselves evil but allowed to, will distract the disciple from trusting his Father, and Gods word and will are crowded out. Their double impact, as cares/ threats or pleasures/bribes, are equally distracting/rivals of God in our lives. The cares may even include being over-eager to work for God rather than to sit at His feet, Lk 10:39 If Christians concentrate on current issues in life even their kindly, unselfish social and political activity can choke out the NT TRUTH seed in welfare action just as effectively as natural Greed and selfish concern does.

THE DECEITFULNESS- Apathy- Deceitfulness/pleasure, as in Eph 4:22 Col 2:8; 2 Th 2:10 Heb 3:13 2 Pet 2:13 OF RICHES/wealth- Literally the deceitfulness that IS riches. The deceitful idea that wealth and success bring happiness We face the option, God or Mammon, 6:19-24 Lk 12:16-20 16:13-26 18:23 Riches and deception go together, as riches and possessions always fail to live up to their promise, 1 Tim 6:6-10 To bring Gods Word to bear on the concerns of our society is fine - to come to Gods Word to learn to be a success in Society as it is, pushes Gods Word from its central position, and we've no blessing from it to share with our neighbours. In fact we're pretending God can help us in our worship of Mammon. The only way to be a blessing is by deliberate fellowship with/loyalty to the Lord in His Word.

CHOK E THE WORD/it making it UNFRUITFUL - The good seed is unable to produce the good results that God intended for it, and which would have been

to God for His goodness to us and let it be the all-important factor in our life, in spite of all distractions. Advertised techniques for successful Christian living tend to distract us from this essential, rather than help the real work of God

FRUIT /a crop- Fruitfulness is the natural result of understanding/ Faith commitment. While this parable is rightly used as an exhortation to fruitfulness, Jesus was explaining why there was so little positive response to His message and miracles. It teaches us to sow the Gospel seed hopefully, and faithfully, not giving up when results are disappointing. Proclamation doesn't banish sin, and neither does Profession. Familiarity with the things of God produces contempt unless responded to constantly, Heb 4:7. But we stand with God who has guaranteed a wonderful harvest of Glory, Rom 9:21-24 Gal 6:9. In 7:24-25 obedience builds a permanent house, here it produces abiding fruit, as in Jn 15:7-10

a hundred.. sixty.. thirty.. times what was sown- Cp the different talents, etc, 25:16-17; Lk 19:16-18; 1 Cor 15:10. Faith comes from Hearing the Word of God, and it moves people to heart-belief, mouth-confession Rom 10:9-17, and further spreading of the Word. Receiving Salvation by Grace produces a life of God-honouring self-fulfilling fruitfulness in varying measures due to differences of gift, opportunity, and responsiveness; Rom 12, 1 Cor 12, Eph 4. Take heed how you hear, Mk 4:24 suggests we're responsible for the responsiveness of our hearts, Jer 23:28-30 Jas 1:21.

### 13:24-44 Parables of Tares, Mustard & Yeast

(The Sower parable warned that much response to the Gospel would wilt under persecution, or be choked by competition. The Tares Parable warns that members of the visible church might be Satan's children pretending to be God's children. But in spite of human failure and deceit the Lord will bring in a glorious harvest, and we will share His joy in it.)

13:24-27 ANOTHER PARABLE .. THE KINGDOM IS like- Can be pictured as this situation. A MAN SOWED GOOD SEED IN HIS FIELD- The World, 13:38 and His church while it's in this world. WHILE MEN/everyone was sleeping- It happened unseen. HIS ENEMY .. SOWED TARES/weeds- Zizania- Bearded darnel, a wheat-like plant that has poisonous seed which if ground with the wheat makes the flour poisonous. AMONG THE WHEAT .. WENT away- Unseen. Those who spring up in the church as a result of his work may be unaware of his existence, deny it, etc.

all the good that can be brought out of that evil, Rom 8:28 Do you want us to GATHER/pull THEM UP?- As soon as it becomes obvious that some of the plants are dandel, not wheat, comes the question - should we remove as much as we can?

No.. pulling weeds may ROOT UP WHEAT- Even if we rightly judge that something said or done came from Satan, as in 1623 Peter, and others, are "wheat," and must not be pulled out. And the roots of the plants will be so entangled that pulling out dandel damages the roots of adjoining wheat plants. Our work is to sow God's goodseed - make disciples, baptise, teach, 28:18-20 We're to be loyal to God's Truth and willing to suffer for doing so. We're to limit fellowship with loafers, 2 Th 3:6-12 When moral sin, 1 Cor 5:1-5, or doctrinal error, 2 Tim 2:20 is so obvious in the church, it must be confronted. If repentance is refused, expulsion is needed until repentance permits forgiveness and restoration, but to take up arms against Evil is forbidden. The Devil is delighted at any Christian crusade that takes up earthly weapons against evil, and it has always done more harm than good. As our Lord warns, the evil and the good are never restricted to any side of a quarrel - the products of His Word have their roots entangled with the products of the Devil's Lie. To look for opportunities to condemn is forbidden 71. In all the complex issues of life, judgment must be left to the Lord, Rom 14:1-13

13:30 LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL HARVEST - The plant heads can be clearly distinguished when they're ready for harvesting, and no mistakes will be made. The only way to live to God's Glory in this uncertain world of complex people and complex issues is to serve and rely on the Lord Christ, who guarantees the right reward for all work by all men, Col 3:24 1 Pet 1:17-25 We're not to spend our time heresy hunting, but are to provide the kind of atmosphere in which wheat plants flourish, and weeds find little pleasure! FIRST/collect TARES/weeds. BURN THEM- Rendered harmless permanently. GATHER THE WHEAT INTO MY BARN - As we understand Scripture, the removal of tares FIRST is specific to the putting right of all things before the Lord restores the Kingdom to Israel, 25:31-46 Acts 1:6-8 3:19-23 We're to concentrate on witnessing to Him with our eyes on Him, waiting to be called OUT of the evil world, Heb 12:1-3; 1 Th 4:13-18



THE LEAST/Smallest- It was used in Jewish proverbs as a symbol of smallness. Scientifically there are many smaller seeds. Largest of garden HERBS/plants- This kind of mustard is said to grow to 812 feet high - the biggest annual plant in the garden plot. We mustn't despise SMALL opportunities to witness and do things for the Lord, Zech 4:6-10. The seed of God's Word we sow is little, but ALIVE, and there's no limit to the good it may produce, Isa 55:10-11. \*\*17 The Lord wants us to have confidence in spreading His Gospel.

A TREE .. THE BIRDS OF THE AIR- A large tree in which birds roost symbolised a powerful kingdom which protects dependent states, Ps 80:8-13; Ezek 17:2-3; 31:3-9; Dan 4:10-12, 2022. Some see this as positive - Jesus and His Gospel are very small in the eyes of men but they have produced a sheltering Tree. There's some truth in this, but History shows that for 300 years the Church remained small - as outbreaks of persecution tended to restrict its numbers to those with some real experience of God's Grace. In the rapid growth of the visible church from the time of Constantine onwards it grew into a this-world power and abandoned the Gospel, and NT church order. The birds represented Evil, 134, so the parable pictures vividly the unnatural/ unbiblical expansion of the Professing Church in which every heresy and folly may settle and be at home, Rev 18:2, competing with every truth and Grace.

Footnote \*\*17 I've seen tiny seeds sprouting and trying to grow in tiny cracks in a rock, and then realised with a shock that the great mass of rock itself had already been split in half where one such seed had grown into a tree.

This development is condemned, as to be separated from, Rev 17:1-18:8. The true Kingdom/ Church is depicted as a narrow way entered by few through a narrow gate, 7:14.

13:33-35 KINGDOM.. LIKE LEAVEN/yeast- In religious things Yeast symbolised evil, and was banned from offerings that represented Christ, Ex 12:15; Lev 2:11; Amos 4:4-5; Lk 12:1; 1 Cor 5:8; Gal 5:8-9. This supports the view that here it symbolises the hidden corrupting power of tolerated evil in the Church. But in preparing bread, as in this story, yeast was in constant use by God's people, and was permitted in the firstfruit-offering at Pentecost, Lev 2:31-7 - Perhaps because that offering represented the Church. While evil corrupted the whole visible

About 23Kg. It would make enough bread to feed about 40 people, three meals a day for several days. As with the "Tree" it emphasises the huge effect that results from a small beginning Cp Jas 3:3-5.

THE WHOLE WAS LEAVENED/it worked all through the dough- The hidden working leaves nothing untouched. The Jews expected the Kingdom to come as a God-enforced conquest. Jesus said it would come as the influence of a small input worked its way through a large mass. We as Christians are tempted to feel we're too "small" to attempt to work for God, but if we place ourselves at His service, 5 loaves feed 5000. But it also warns us that if we aim at Church growth using ideas/methods that appeal to sinful human nature, our apparent success (external Mustard TREE growth) will be linked with the inward corruption taking place in the Church. The visible smallness of God's intervention was no barrier to it producing great results - Gideon style. And tolerance of small sins/errors would produce the spiritual disaster of a flourishing false church.

JESUS spoke IN PARABLES.. FULFILLED- All His life was part of the promised pattern. I WILL UTTER THINGS KEPT SECRET /hidden- Ps 78:2 See 13:11. What the Lord was revealing about the Kingdom wasn't obvious to readers of the OT where the main concern was the Kingdom set up when He comes again in Glory and Judgment.

### 133644 The Tares Parable Explained

(We're free to walk and work in fellowship with Christ - assured that He will deal with evil and the consequences of its actions.)

133638 JESUS SENT.. AWAY.. WENT INTO THE HOUSE- Limiting the audience to those privileged and willing to understand God's will and purposes. HIS DISCIPLES.. said DECLARE /explain.. HE SAID.. The One who sowed- Present participle, continues sowing THE GOOD SEED IS THE SON OF MAN - He was sowing His Word directly at the time, and continues to do so through His servants. THE FIELD IS THE WORLD- The parable symbolises things happening in the world in relation to the Kingdom. THE GOOD SEED THE CHILDREN/sons OF THE KINGDOM- Not as in 8:12 the Jews who are

even the godliest will at times act as his agents as Peter did, 1 & 23 But we must never be indifferent to the presence of evil in our own hearts or in our congregation. There's no place for Godless people in the local church, 2 Pet 2:1-22 just as there's no place for Pharisaic efforts to get rid of those who don't meet our self-righteous standards, 7:1-5. See 1330 for note on church discipline. As long as the church is in this world, a pure church is the goal rather than the reality, and it's produced by prayerful obedience and loving teaching of the truth.

133940 THE ENEMY THAT SOWED/who sows IS THE DEVIL - We're warned of the Devil's existence and activity, but to keep our eyes on the Lord. To centre preaching on the Devil and the Occult is to encourage them to become the dominating influence in the minds of hearers. Qumran sect insisted all their members were good all others evil. The Lord warns us that no such simple division is possible. Whether we're God's child or not, all our thoughts/feelings/actions are either in fellowship with God - or the Devil. We're constantly challenged to choose God, not Mammon, etc, as in Col 3, but we never get beyond the need to seek, receive, and live in GRACE.

Footnote \*\* 18 Augustine used this parable in his fight against the Donatists and others who tried to purify the church leadership from those who under pressure from the Emperor had signed the decree of Rimini - a compromise with the Arians - apparently denying the deity of Christ etc. But nothing in this parable excuses the existence of a professing church in which doctrinal error and sexual immorality flourishes. He also falsely argued that it was right for the church, like the ark, to contain clean and unclean animals, Gen 7:2. But unclean-FOR-FOOD-animals weren't evil - God had created them. Christ-denying Bishops etc were.

HARVEST THE END OF THE WORLD/age- An age is a particular stage in history. God's Kingdom is being established in a rebel world/age that opposes Him and it. Cp 2:43; 28:20 1 Th 2:13-16 At its end opens the glorious age when God's will is enforced, His purpose achieved, sons of God manifested, Rom 8:22-25 We're to view all present situations in the light of the time when this age has ripened to its conclusion and God can rightly intervene in judgment. THE REAPERS/harvesters ARE ANGELS- Rev 14:14-20 SO.. IN THE END- Those who have rejected the Saviour, like the weeds, will have matured to their limit - made it obvious what they had chosen to be, and will be dealt with as such.

1341-43 THE SON OF MAN will SEND.. GATHER OUT OF HIS KINGDOM- The sphere where His rule is professed, includes falsely-professed members here.

discouragement to His servants. So, even though we expect to be in Heaven before it comes - it's good to know that the next phase of the Kingdom will be free from stumbling-blocks and the defiant evil of those who live lawless lives.

CAST/throw THEM INTO FIRE.. WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH - That they suffer, and continue their helpless hatred against God, good and the Gospel, is a tragedy. That the fire ensures that no further seed will sprout, and produce more like them, is a joy. THEN THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE AS THE SUN - Dan 12:3 IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER - A joyful reward at the end of the narrow road, Jude 24 LET HIM HEAR - Take this seriously and apply the truth to their life.

### 134452 Treasure, Pearl & Net Parables

(Pearl and Treasure emphasise the JOY for which all else needs to be given up when the once in a lifetime chance comes - in contrast to seed-among-thorns. The Net reinforces the Tares and Grain parable.)

1344 AGAIN.. LIKE TREASURE.. IN A FIELD - When an enemy invaded, treasures not easily carried would be hastily hidden under the floor of the house, or in a field near it. If the family were killed, or carried off as slaves, the treasure might remain hidden for many years. Eg the Qumran copper scroll list of treasures. This was a common situation in Israel, so the Lord quotes it without discussing the rights and wrongs of the situation. Treasures buried for more than a thousand years have been found as men plowed, cleared rocks, thorns etc.

A MAN FOUND - A labourer cultivating the ground for the owner unearthed the treasure, hid it again.. in joy sold ALL HE had and bought THE FIELD - It cost him all he had, but it's the joy of ownership that's emphasised in the Greek. The Lord left us to learn what we can from this parable. As in earlier parables the Lord can be the man, and the field the world, 1338 The Church is the treasure for which the Lord gave up Heaven for Bethlehem, and gave up all else on the cross of Calvary, 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24 etc. To have the right to offer Salvation to all, Jn 3:16 etc He paid the price for the field/bore the sins of the world, Jn 1:29 1 Tim 2:6; 1 Jn 2:2, and did this gladly, triumphantly for the JOY before Him, Heb 12:2. As we look to Him, although to us the Kingdom seems beset by problems and failure, we know that one day we'll share His joy, Jude 24 Or we can see the treasure as the Godly remnant of the Jews, Ex 19:5; Ps 135:4, hidden among

full will cost us the world, Gal 2:20 While we need to encourage hearers to "count the cost" it's as we rejoice in all the treasures we have in Christ, and make them aware of them as Paul did in Col 1:9-2:6, that they are moved to claim this treasure for themselves, as in Heb 12:1-3. Cp Paul's joy in Phil 3:4-21. It's the joy and splendour of their discovery of Christ that makes sacrifices not only inevitable, but a delight Cp 2Cor 6:14-7:1.

134546 LIKE A MERCHANT.. PEARLS- Highly valued, Rev 18:21. FOUND ONE.. SOLD ALL .. BOUGHT IT- "Christ the supremely Rich, for our sake became poor and gave all to buy us from the slave market." Trench. The Church drawn from the sea of the nations, Rev 17:15 That our Lord set such a high value on us assures us of His unfailing continued care, and encourages us to respond joyfully and wholeheartedly, Rom 8:12, 1 Pet 1; 2 Pet 1:1-11, etc. That Christ and Salvation offered in the Gospel is so uniquely valuable that our claiming Him as our own matters above all else, is also true. But earnest seekers like Cornelius are rare. GENERALLY it's those not seeking who find Christ, Rom 9:30-10:12, because in fact they're lost sheep He finds, Lk 15

134750 LIKE A NET - The fishermen are trying to catch edible fish, but using a net gathers in all kinds of fish, useful or not. WHEN FULL pulled on SHORE.. GATHERED/collected THE GOOD fish- The fish edible under Jewish Law, excluding eds etc, Lev 11:9-12 threw THE BAD AWAY . There's a sense in which the Gospel Net is in constant use, gathering into the visible Church-Kingdom all sorts of people. But there is only one Judgment Day, that will part forever the true members of God's people from those who for various reasons, good or bad, chose to associate themselves with them. As with the Tares, the sorting is done by Angels, not by saved-by-grace sinners judging other sinners

THE END OF THE WORLD/age- When God steps in in judgment and establishes His Kingdom. THE ANGELS.. separate.. CAST/throw INTO.. FIRE.. WAILING/weeping AND GNASING OF TEETH- Reject fish aren't usually burned but this echoes the burning of tares, 134043 As a general principle the Lord's servants "fishing for men" are often unaware of the quality of their catch. The Judgment net, wielded by Angels at the end of this age will sort them out. As we understand Scripture, before this, the Church will have been called home by the Lord Himself, not separated from the unredeemed wicked by angels. The

INSTRUC TE D about THE KINGDOM- As the Lord had just been instructing them in the parables. We need to be willing to submit to our Lord's instruction as great damage is done by wilful teachers - those Peter calls UNDISCIPLED- ignorant because they refuse to submit their thinking to Gods, 2 Cor 10:5; 2 Pet 3:16 We come to understand our Lord's words by submitting ourselves to them in obedient faith. This obliges us to share them with others. LIKE A HOUSEHOLDER/owner of a house- The head of the household as in 10:25 13:27, 20:11; 21:33 24:43 Who brings OUT OF HIS TREASURE /storeroom- Meets the needs of the household by drawing on the treasures of truth and love he has gained from Gods Word. The Lord Himself is THE householder as He is THE Shepherd but we're to play our part in Him/ under His hand Gods Word is a treasure-store of food and all needed equipment, 2 Tim 3:16-17. We need to train the next generation, 2 Tim 2:2, to understand it and apply it appropriately to all aspects of the life of Gods people.

NEW- Sermon on the mount, and NT. OLD- The Law of Moses and the OT. Both are essential parts of Gods revelation, and the fulfilment of His saving purposes. New before Old? Yes, it's only as the heart turns to the Lord that the Spirit is able to lift the veil from the heart of any scribe so that he can see the old correctly, 2 Cor 3:16 CP Lk 24:25-27, Jn 5:39-40 We're to look to the Lord for understanding and He has promised the Spirit's help in this, Jn 16:12-15; 1 Cor 2:6-16; 2 Tim 2:15 While Gods Word is a Spirit-given whole, 2 Pet 1:19-21, God-breathed with all the truth we need, 2 Tim 3:16 no man knows it all. Jude had something to add to what Paul gave us.

In a different sense of New and Old, the Christian scribe, faced with the needs of the household, turns to the storehouse of Gods Word and brings from it well-known truths to apply to well-known situations. But faced with unfamiliar situations he will, directed by the Spirit of God, Jn 14:16 find new resources to meet them of which he was previously unaware. In a sense it's only as needs arise that we're able to be given from Gods storehouse the Scripture and its understanding that meets the need. So each generation is to devote itself to preserving and passing on the OLD which it has been taught by Godly men, 2 Tim 2:2, and to earnestly seek from the Lord the NEW that's needed to correct

tense so probably spent some time teaching IN SYNA GOG UE.. ASTONISHED/amazed.. Where did THIS MAN get THIS WISDOM- They were impressed, but also resentful - His family are nobodies, we refuse to accept that He has any right to be somebody! Cp Job 12:13 Isa 11:2 Jn 7:15 AND MIGHTY WORKS/miraculous powers? .. THE CARPENTERS SON?- The Carpenter, Mk 6:3. This man is a carpenter/son of a carpenter, not a trained Rabbi son of a Rabbi/Scribe, etc. HIS MOTHER MARY?.. BROTHERS.. SISTERS.. where did THIS MAN get THESE THINGS?- They refused to admit the obvious answer - from God

1357-58 THEY WERE OFFENDED/took offence- 1 Pet 2:8. Turned their backs on Him, refused to believe He was any different from the rest of the family. What they said of His humanity was true, but only the lesser part of His Nature and Messiahship. They sinned in insisting what THEY knew was grounds for rejecting what God could have taught them. Today proud sinners use what they've learned from studying the Bible as ancient literature, the variations between Bible Ms between the four Gospels, or between different churches, etc, and boldly assert "It can't be the Word of God" And with that attitude, 1358 it can't speak to them from God. It's the Glory of God to stoop and use imperfect servants - copyists and translators, preachers - mere earthen vessels, 2 Cor 4:7; 12:10. Knowing the Lord's family background made faith hard for them. Learning the human origins and history of the Scriptures makes faith hard for theology students. That God uses parents to train our conscience, and Governments to rule us, Rom 13, etc is no excuse for ignoring Him/His purposes.

Footnote \*\*18 Any value in these booklets derives from the fact that as a youth the Lord laid Mt 13:52 on my heart

A PROPHET .. WITHOUT HONOUR. HIS OWN- His own people are last to acknowledge God's messenger. Jeremiah was opposed by people from his hometown, Jer 1:1; 11:21. NOT MANY MIGHTY WORKS/miracles.. lack of faith- Mk 6:5. Only those few who believed He could heal, came and were healed. A belittling of Christ and the Gospel becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. In churches where Jesus is believed to be alive and able to transform lives, He is alive and transforms lives. Those who insist He was a mere goodman need not expect to find evidence that He is God

HEROD HAD arrested JOHN.. PUT HIM IN PRISON because of HERODIAS  
\*\*19 HIS BROTHER PHILIP'S WIFE- She had left him to live with Herod  
The rejection of Jesus at Nazareth pointed to His rejection by the nation. The  
murder of John pointed to Jesus also being murdered. JOHN HAD SAID/ been  
saying- Imperfect tense - had repeatedly said. IT IS NOT LAWFUL - To have his  
brother's wife while the brother was alive was adultery, forbidden by God. As  
Elijah had rebuked Ahab and Jezebel for their Bad worship, 1 Ki 18:18-23  
John had rebuked Herod and Herodias. That the father of his divorced first wife,  
King Aretas, defeated him in battle was viewed as God's punishment for killing  
John

Herod wanted to kill John- Herod's confused attitude towards John's made clear in  
Mk 6:20 But was afraid- As most people believed John was a PROPHET ,  
killing him might provoke rebellion. Josephus says Herod killed him because he  
was afraid John's popularity might be used to promote rebellion - the two ideas are  
compatible.

14:6-12 On HEROD'S BIRTHDAY THE DAUGHTER OF HERODIAS  
DANCED.. PLEASED HEROD- For a princess to display her dancing skills  
before the guests at her step-father's birthday celebration would be thought  
shameful. But the lives of Herod's family were often a scandal. That it was unusual  
goes with the flamboyant offer of any reward. HE PROMISED.. TO GIVE HER  
whatever she asked. SHE, Prompted by HER MOTHER- Mk 6:24 GIVE ME  
the head of John- Herod is allowed no time to sober up, or bargain about what he  
will do, his promise is to be met NOW.

Footnote \*\*19 Josephus calls her first husband Herod, but he may well have been Herod Philip - the  
Herodian family was a very complicated tangle.

THE KING WAS SORRY /distressed- The action was against his better judgment,  
but he had committed himself publicly, so failure would have seemed worse.  
because of the oath.. had JOHN beheaded IN PRISON.. HIS HEAD.. GIVEN  
TO THE girl- She was probably about 18-20 TO HER MOTHER. HIS  
DISCIPLE STOOK THE BODY AND BURIED IT. AND.. TOLD JESUS.

14:13-21 Jesus feeds 5000 Men



SAW A GREAT MULTITUDE / large crowd - Obviously the boat had travelled very slowly - became? He had COMPASSION - 9:36 AND HE HEALED THEIR SICK - Arrhastos - The word emphasises their weakness, powerlessness that resulted from sickness - pitiable helplessness - which is true of the hopelessly sinful as well as the hopelessly sick.

14:15-19 DISCIPLES.. THIS IS A DESERT / remote PLACE - Uninhabited, so foodless THE TIME - for teaching IS PAST / it's getting late - Evening meal time. BUY THEMSELVES food - The Disciples didn't share their Lord's tender compassion, and sound rather impatient as they suggest the sensible thing to do is to send them away to fend for themselves in getting to the nearest villages to get a meal. JESUS SAID / replied.. you - Emphasized. GIVE THEM TO EAT - There's no need for them to go away - for most of the year sleeping outside would be no problem, once they had a meal. By involving the disciples in the miracle He made it clearer to them, and unforgettable. WE HAVE.. FIVE LOAVES - These eaten with dried fish would be a simple meal for two people. They forgot to add "and we have you Lord." We tend to leave the Lord out of our calculations. HE SAID BRING THEM TO ME - The Lord's people are to put into His hands what they have. God Almighty, All-sufficient fellowships with His people by using what they have, 1 Ki 17:12-16

HE COMMANDED / directed.. SIT DOWN - The Lord made orderly arrangements for the people to be comfortable and be fed conveniently. Taking THE FIVE LOAVES AND TWO fish. LOOKING TO HEAVEN HE BLESSED / gave thanks - Eulogeo - Gave thanks to God for them, and asked God to bless them to the hungry people. (Eucharisteo in Jn 6:11.) The Father of a Jewish family blesses God for the food rather than blessing the food. Take / bless / break / give are used in all six accounts of miraculous feeding, the Emmaus meal, and in all four accounts of the last Supper, including 1 Cor 11:23-24. It was a daily Jewish ritual, but also established as a symbolic Christian ritual. broke the loaves GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES.. gave TO THE MULTITUDE / people - We're responsible to pass Spiritual food on 2 Tim 2:2 Cp Ps 78:17-20

14:20-21 ALL WERE FILLED / satisfied - They had all they wished to eat - for the day. Those who feed on the Living Bread are satisfied for ever, Jn 6:35 the disciples TOOK UP - Airo - To take up, or to carry. OF THE FRAGMENTS /

(Mk 6:45-52 Jn 6:16-21. Only Matthew mentions Peter walking briefly on the water. The Lord had just shown He could provide for their needs. Now He shows them He can protect and empower them as well.)

14:2223 STRAIGHTWAY Immediately JESUS.. DISCIPLES.. GO.. The crowd had been taught, fed, and any sick healed, so they wanted to make Him king. Jn 6:14-15 The disciples may have liked the idea of political leadership, and so were sent away promptly. HE SENT THE MULTITUDE AWAY /dismissed the crowd- Making it clear that He would not be involved in political rebellion

HE WENT UP A MOUNTAIN TO PRAY .. THE EVENING- The darkness of late evening, in contrast to the late afternoon 6:14:15 His Galilean ministry was ending and He must be ready for Jerusalem and the final confrontation with the Rulers. His prayerful dependence on the Father moved His disciples to want to be like Him, Lk 11:1. To be as He wants us to be, Jn 15:7-12, "Lord, teach US to pray" needs to be our desire also, as only selfish prayers are natural to us.

14:2427 TOSSED/buffed by WAVES.. THE WIND CONTRARY /against it- The disciples were rowing hard - battling against the stormy wind and waves. Obeying the Lord doesn't mean everything will be easy for us, but as we obey Him He often uses our distress to reveal Himself afresh. The sea can symbolise chaos or the restless nations in their opposition to God, His will, and His people. God alone can rescue from the sea Ex 14:10-27, Ps 107:23-32 Jon 1:1-16 FOURTH WATCH- between 3 and 6am. JESUS WENT to THEM.. THE DISCIPLES SAW HIM WALKING ON THE- surface of the SEA/lake. WERE terrified SAYING A SPIRIT/ghost- The only thing they could think of as able to be crossing the water. THEY CRIED OUT in FEAR. JESUS said BE OF GOOD CHEER/ Take courage! IT IS I- Ego Eimi- I am. Beyond the meaning "I am Jesus your Lord" is the hint that He is GOD. In the LXX Ego Eimi is used of God saying "I AM" in Gen 1:1; 22:24 Ex 3:14, etc and Jesus used it in 2:23 Mk 14:62 Jn 4:26 6:35 8:12, 24, 28, 58, 107, 11; 14:6; 15:1; 18:5. Many experiences of life are distressing, but when we hear the Lord speak to us in them He comforts/strengthens us. God's Word GIVES courage as well as commands it, as we respond in faith. Jesus, as Immanuel - God with us, 1:22- feeds, walks on the storm, saves

LORD SAVE ME - Cp Ps 18:15-16; 107:23-31. He begins as "Good Soil" fruitfully responding to the seed of the Lord's commanding word, but then, as with the thorns, pressure from the visible world distracts him. IMMEDIATELY JESUS.. CAUGHT HIM- Reached out His hand and held him safe. The presence and compassion of Jesus is our security, not our giftedness or faith. SAID LITTLE FAITH- How little you trust me. DOUBT - Hesitate, be divided in mind, torn between the reality of Jesus and His enabling command, and the reality of the wind-whipped waves. WHEN.. WIND CEASED/died down. THEY.. WORSHIPPED HIM- Fell at His feet and worshipped, but with some uncertainty, Mk 6:51-52 Cp 28:17. SAYING.. THE SON OF GOD- An instinctive response to the glimpse of His power. Peter's confession in 16:16 is a considered statement

## 14:34-36 Jesus Heals the Sick at Gennesaret

14:34-36 GENNESARET - A fertile plain and town south of Capernaum. Mk 6:53-56 WHEN THE MEN.. recognised Jesus THEY SENT OUT.. BROUGHT ALL DISEASED/sick- Often Matthew says ALL.. reminding us of the Lord's unlimited compassion and unlimited power. ONLY just TOUCH THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT /the edge of His cloak- Usually Jesus reached out and touched those who were sick, but, perhaps because of the delay this caused, the sick asked permission to touch His clothes believing this was sufficient to guarantee healing. This shows a high degree of Faith/confidence in the Lord and His ability to KNOW what was needed and PROVIDE the healing needed. Cp 9:21. Jesus puts Himself at the service of crowds of ordinary people, allowing them to determine how the healing would be received. Cp Acts 19:12

AS MANY /all who TOUCHED WERE MADE PERFECTLY WHOLE /healed- Temporarily, it seems, there were no sick people in the area Cp The Coming day when there will be no sick in Messiah's Kingdom, Isa 33:24

## CHAPTER 15

### 15:1-20 Confrontation with Pharisees about Uncleanness

(Mk 7:1-23. Pharisees charge Jesus with allowing His disciples to ignore their interpretation of the cleanliness laws. He replies that their laws are NOT God's laws - in fact at times contradict them. The Lord uses their question to teach that the laws about unclean food

share in Greek learning and culture, the Chasidim= Pious, opposed them. The former became the Sadducees, the latter, the Pharisees. The Pharisee scribes became more and more concerned with correctness in petty details, making obedience to the law formal, mechanical, almost a game of one-upmanship, with little concern for fellowship with God, or love for others, Mt 23:23

JERUSALEM- The centre of Biblical studies and teaching as long as the Temple stood. The boy Jesus discussed with them there, Lk 24:6. Paul was educated there, Acts 22:3. It seems to have been an official group looking for ways to discredit/destroy Jesus, 12:14. As recorded in 4:12-19:1 most of the Lord's ministry was in Galilee, but as an obedient Jew He attended the feasts in Jerusalem, Ex 23:14-17; 34:23. In John's Gospel we read of confrontations there with Scribes and Pharisees, Jn 2:13; 4:45; 5:1; 6:4; 7:1-10; 10:22-23; 11:55; 12:1.

15.2 WHY.. DISCIPLES- A Rabbi was responsible for the actions of his disciples, as well as for their beliefs. TRANSGRESS/Break- Parabaino- To go aside, (para= to the side/aside) to step over the boundaries set by the Law. Pharisees used their knowledge of God's Law to boost their pride by finding fault with others and weren't interested in the sufferers healed, or the Lord's demonstrating His Messiahship.

TRADITION OF THE ELDERS- The LAW as given to Moses and recorded in the BIBLE is a statement of principles, with enough illustrations to help men live in fellowship with God - if they looked to Him and asked His help. But it wasn't a system of rules to settle every question without turning to God for help. Generation by generation, from perhaps the time of Ezra, decisions were made and recorded by Scribes. Instead of looking to God and His Law the scribes used these human decisions to control the lives of people, and as a basis for self-righteousness. The effect was to move people further from God and His Word, and give power to professionals, who were equally skilled at finding ways to do what they wanted to do as they were to make rules that were a burden to the poor. \*\*20 Measuring himself against the standard set by tradition, Paul had considered himself BLAMELESS, Phil 3:6. Only to realise later that while doing so he was in God's sight the chief of sinners, 1 Tim 1:15. The position was much like the RC CHURCH which for years said that it was not safe to read the Bible, only the

given to priests in the Temple, Ex 30:18-21; Lev 22:1-9, and applied them to everyone. The Sadducees restricted the rules to priests in the temple. The Qumran folk seem to have required a bath before each meal - or (more probably) each special community meal. Jn 2:6 mentions barrels of water kept in the house for cleansing, but Matthew writing for Jews sees no need to explain what was involved. We can give only a GENERAL idea as different Rabbis gave different rules. \*\*21

15:3-4 HE ANSWERED AND SAID/replied- Apokrinomai- To answer a question, or speak relevant to a matter that's been raised. WHY DO YOU TRANSGRESS/Break THE COMMANDMENT/commands OF GOD BY/for the sake of YOUR TRADITION- His counter-question goes to the heart of the matter- the clash between Religious Tradition and the revealed will of God- the LAW.

Footnote \*\*20 If we follow strict rules made up by Godly men in the past, instead of depending on God for guidance from His Word it cuts us off from fellowship with Godly men from different traditions. We're to be followers of CHRIST, not of Luther, Wesley, J.N. Darby or George Muller, or of Christian Pharisees who ruled that radio mustn't be used to send out the Gospel, (or radio telephones used) as being broadcast through the air marked it as of the Devil, Eph 2:2. A Godly woman said to me "I can't join the Scripture Union Bible-reading plan as Unions are part of the build up to Anti-Christ's power."

Footnote \*\*21 The body was washed by walking into the Miqvah/Bath down one side of the steps and up the other so your now clean feet didn't touch an unclean footprint, as that would make you unclean again - some steps have a dividing ridge. In a dry country it was impossible to have clean water each time so they ruled that the bath water was kept clean by adding at least one drop of fresh water for each new person. For hand-washing they ruled that water must be poured on the hands to run off at the elbows, then poured on the wrists to run off at the finger tips, and finally hands up to run off at elbows. To put your hands into water, even a lake like Galilee, defiled it and the washed hands stayed "unclean." This seems to be the official reaction to news of the feeding of the 5000. All the scribes and Pharisees could say was "This can't be of God as they didn't wash their hands correctly before eating!" As if the Lord should have left them hungry, unless He provided sufficient jugs of water for them all to follow their "correct ritual." The natural "Religious, Superstitious" mind of the Rabbis saw the laws about washing- if done correctly- as a magical safeguard against the Devil entering the body along with "Unclean" food.

They claimed to have built up their traditions in order to put a fence round God's Law so that it wouldn't be broken. In fact by directing men's attention to petty rule-keeping they made God seem a petty-minded maker of rules that burdened life, instead of a God of Mercy who wanted people to be happy in fellowship with

Light, 2 Cor 11:1-15, offers. Fallen human nature welcomes this, as instead of requiring people to deal with God, it sets out things they can do in their own strength, to make them feel righteous, and superior to others. Everything introduced as an AID to Christian Faith, Devotion, and Service - Creeds, rituals, forms, ceremonies, holy buildings, priests, penances and pilgrimages all move God and His word farther off, and give power and authority to professionals. \*\*22

FOR GOD COMMANDED, HONOUR FATHER AND MOTHER- Ex 20:12, 21:17; Lev 20:9; Deu 5:16. Treat them in a way that shows we value them, and provide practical ways for their well-being when they're in need, 1 Tim 5:3. God's Commandments are simple, appealing to the heart, mind and conscience, without defining details. God wants each of us to face the challenge, is THIS honouring? To make detailed rulings directs attention away from love for God and man towards human reasoning, argument, loopholes, self-righteousness.

anyone who curses- Kakologeo- To speak evil of, or to. OT Qalal- Curse, belittle, ridicule, treat lightly, Mk 7:10; Acts 19:9. So here refuses requests for help. FATHER OR MOTHER.. DIE THE /must be put to DEATH- Their continuing to live in the community would encourage others to act as they had.

15:5-6 BUT you- emphatic, in contrast to what GOD says. SAY if a man says. IT IS A GIFT /devoted to God- Korban, the technical word for such gifts is used in Mk 7:11. whatever help you might otherwise have received from me- What I would have been expected to give to you.

Footnote \*\*22 Charles Kingsley's comment on the Anglo-Catholic movement in 19th century England was that they were rushing to interpose all the paraphernalia of organised religion between sinners who needed the Saviour, and the Saviour who was seeking them!

A man could vow to give something to God, and use this as a pious excuse of "putting God first," for failing to help his parents. \*\*23 \*\*24 A vow to give anything to God was irreversible, Lev 27:1-8; Num 30:2.

MADE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD OF NONE EFFECT Nullify BY /for the sake of YOUR TRADITION- To add to what God says substitutes OUR law for God's Law, and denies the adequacy of His word in the form He has given it.

outward talk. HEART/hearts- Innermost thoughts, feelings, will, decisions are FAR FROM ME - May the Lord have mercy on us in this, because it is natural to us all.

Footnote \*\*23A's payment of a vow could be postponed until death, a shrewd son could piously vow his business capital to the Temple, and so preserve it intact against any claim from parents, until he had become so rich that paying the vowed amount still left him wealthy. A whole tractate of the Mishnah deals with vows. That a Qorban/Korban vow could be used as a legal fiction to prevent relatives from obtaining property features in Nedarim 5:6. A later ruling, Nedarim, 91 says that the needs of Parents could over-rule such vowing of property to God. As the Mishnah wasn't written until 200AD perhaps the Lord's rebuke helped them modify the offending traditional ruling. Vows aren't encouraged by Christ, who asks that our lives be guided by love for God and man.

Footnote \*\*24A Although in all ages some in the RC Church have devoted themselves to the welfare of the poor a lasting impression made on visitors to Italy, etc is that of a magnificent church building surrounded by poverty stricken people as a result of the claim "God/ the Church must come first." The same subtle hypocrisy exists among us Protestants. In 1980 a man told me sadly "My Pastor says I'm spending too much money and time on caring for my young daughter, the church needs that time and money so I must send her to her mother." The mother was drunken and immoral. 1 Tim 5:8, helped him resist that demand. A leading USA Fundamentalist used to proclaim that as the Government was in taxes stealing money and giving it to the poor, a Christian should cheat on paying taxes. Rom 13:6-7 condemned him - but also condemned me for speaking disrespectfully of Government officials. False piety tempts us all. A financial adviser said he had set up in business to help the Bible Society etc to make the best use of funds, and then bled overseas leaving investors bankrupted. Can a businessman excuse shady deals because God's work will share in the profits? Can a student skimp his study, or the worker his work, because "witnessing," or "Bible Study" is more important? Parents aren't impressed by young folk who can't help round the house because their "time with God" comes first. Wives aren't impressed when a husband is too busy preparing his sermon on Christian Love in the Home, to help put the children to bed. I've seen a newly converted woman wreck her life by, against advice, spending her spare time with Christian friends because the company of her unsaved husband "discouraged her faith." If we haven't caught ourselves playing some such games we may be blind

IN VAIN- To no purpose, pointlessly. THEY WORSHIP ME - As long as we view the worship of God (or witnessing) in terms of tradition, the correct following of rules, our efforts are a waste of time. TEACHING rules taught by MEN- They twist God's Law to fit human ideas so that in fact MEN decide what is to be done. Today in churches committed to being relevant to people's needs and desires the

answered the Pharisees by stating that God's Word, not tradition, must direct us. He then asked the crowd to judge/ understand the issue, as He explains what is defiling/ makes men unfit for fellowship with God. HEAR / Listen- Cp 139, 18, 23, 43, 51; Deu 29; Isa 6:9. Listen carefully so you can UNDERSTAND - We understand when our thoughts correspond with the reality of what we're thinking about. The Lord makes clear what prevents a man from having a right relationship/ fellowship with God. He is life-giving guiding Truth, Jn 14:6. The OT Law regulating behaviour has limited value, Rom 7:1-8:4, but as to food laws etc believers are free to do what they believe the Lord wants them to do but not force it on others, Rom 14:2-13, 1 Cor 8. We're to learn the spiritual lessons the Law taught, and to walk with the Lord in them as set out in Hebrews, fixing our eyes on Jesus, Heb 12:2.

NOT what goes INTO.. makes him unclean- Koinon. To make common, available for general use - unclean in contrast with holy things, fit to be associated with God. Cp Acts 10:14, 28, 11:8; Rev 21:27. Under Law, to be ritually unclean made one unfit to approach God in worship, etc. This doesn't say the Law was pointless, but that the physical ritual uncleanness was symbolic, a constant reminder that God's people must be clean from the defilement of sin. As the Lord in fulfilling the Law was providing for spiritual purity/sanctification by putting His Law in men's hearts, the need for food laws etc would cease, Heb 10:1-18. Cp Num 14:21; Zech 14:21. \*\*25

Footnote 25\*\* This undercut the whole system of external purification etc but was sufficiently cryptic to avoid instant objections, or the demand for instant abolition of the old. In the Law, and the prophecies, God gave seed truths which developed to their full over time. As in 52:1-48, Jesus goes beyond the surface at; to expose the hidden sin problem which He had come to solve. There's nothing unclean in food (or marriage) when it's sanctified by prayer/ thanksgiving, 1 Tim 4:4-5. Pharisees said a Gentile's shadow passing over food made it unclean. God said through Paul though meat might have been offered to idols, buy it and eat it 1 Cor 10:25. The Pharisees were already plotting to kill Jesus, and yet to the last, were fussy about ritual defilement, Jn 18:28. The purpose of the Law was to test Israel's willingness to obey God, and walk with Him in obedient fellowship - at the level of spiritual infancy, Ex 16:4, etc. The Law fulfilled in Christ would now be replaced by Christ. See the Lord's lesson to Peter, Acts 10:11-16.

BUT what comes OUT OF THE / His MOUTH - What we say, 12:33-37. We may say actions are important, words aren't. But words bless or curse in all our shared living - marriage, at work, church. Few sins are committed without being preceded



wasn't carrying as the Lord's Word but as a good man's word. In their claim that obedience to their developed rules was essential for godliness. Their great need was to Repent, but that insulted their pride, 3:7-12. We should try not to offend, but the Lord reassures us that it's impossible to do the will of God without offending His enemies - our concern must be to do the will of God. It's better to upset the strong who take offence out of obstinate pride, than to allow them to stumble the weak, 186.

EVERY PLANT MY FATHER has NOT PLANTED - Israel had been planted by God, Isa 60:21; 61:3, etc. But the Pharisees were offended because their Traditions hadn't been planted by God/ taught by His Word, Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21. Only what the Lord plants can please Him, Gen 29. The rest are Tares 13:24-30 Cp 31:0, 23:2-3, 23 SHALL BE ROOTED UP/pulled up by the roots - It's impossible to be a good gardener without offending the weeds, but our concern must be with the welfare of the plants, not the eradication of the weeds, 13:30. It doesn't authorize us to spend time rooting up whatever we judge not to be of the Lord's planting - it will be rooted out = God will root it out. The lesson is that we're to preach the truth of God from the Word of God, and if DOING THAT lovingly (anything not TRUTH, and not spoken in LOVE is useless folly) upsets hearers, that's not our concern.

LET LEAVE THEM ALONE - 2 Ki 23:18; Mk 14:6; Lk 13:8; Acts 5:38 Cp Deu 25:9, 19. Let them go their own way, our concern is to preach the truth. It's impossible to cleanse the world from error and sin, and crusades that try to do so may do more harm than good. Christians must walk with their Lord alongside Pharisees, Atheists, Mammon worshippers, etc. It's heart-separation as God's sons and daughters that determines and limits shared commitments, 2 Cor 6:14-7:1. Criticism by Pharisees matter little. They're out of touch with God, so are BLIND LEADERS/guides OF THE BLIND.. FALL .. - They're self-appointed leaders of God's people who don't know God or His will. Cp Rom 2:19. Falling into a pit is a symbol of misfortune in Ps 7:15; Prov 26:27, Isa 24:18; Jer 48:44 but may refer to Sheol - the Pit, Num 16:30-33; Job 17:10.

15:18-20 THINGS.. OUT OF MOUTH COME FROM THE HEART - The inner being its desires, impulses, hungers. DEFILE /make unclean- The fruit shows what the tree is, 7:16-18 The words a person speaks show the thoughts and feelings of his true self, and make him unclean by expressing the sin of his heart. Cp Mt 6:21; 11:29 Mk 7:20

OUT OF HEART - It's DOING what we feel like doing that defiles us, but the fact of the thought/feeling occurring demonstrates we're sinful at our heart's core. Allowing the thought/feeling to be expressed is an additional sin of our will. EVIL THOUGHTS- Dialogisms- Reasonings, arguments within the mind. Mental plotting. Evil desires lurk unseen in the inner man before they become public in their varied forms of sin, 5:21-48 Mk 7:21. The Lord quotes not only the letter of the Law, but does so by first pointing out the innate sinfulness of human nature that's the source and cause of all sin. What a blessing we have in the Gospel - it's expounded in glorious detail in Rom 8

MURDERS, ADULTERIES, FORNICATIONS/sexual immorality THEFTS, FALSE WITNESS/testimony, BLASPHEMIES/slander- Probably slandering men because it follows False Witness. Other lists of defiling things, Rom 1:18-3:2; 1 Cor 5:11; 6:9-10 Gal 5:19-21; 2 Tim 3:2-5; 2 Pet 2:1-22 DEFILE /make unclean.

TO EAT/eating WITH unwashed HANDS does not- Mk 7:2 The Lord values the OT Law, and yet welcomes those outside the Law who have Faith apart from the Law. This fits with the ruling in Rom 14, that left a Jew free to honor the Lord by keeping the food laws, and a Gentile free to honor the Lord by ignoring them. The summing up in Mk 7:39 PURGING ALL MEATS/declared all foods clean, seems to be a considered verdict by Mark, stating what had become clear as the years passed, and is the Holy Spirit's comment on the situation.

temptation to Pre-Exile Israel. In NT it was probably used of the people of Tyre, Sidon etc who, like the OT Canaanites, worshipped Baal.

HAVE MERCY .. SON OF DAVID- A Messianic title, 1223 DAUGHTER Suffering- The worldly-wise criticise Christian Missions, saying people are happy in their own religion. Many Christless people, like this woman, know that's not true. Her daughter's affliction and her loving concern stopped her being content with what she was. Affliction is often a doorway to life and blessing. Two things prepare the way for the Gospel - LOVE, and SORROW. She came because she had HEARD of Him, Mk 7:25- Faith comes by hearing Rom 10:17; Gal 3:2

15 2324 NOT A WORD - The Lord's silence seems unkind, but as the story unfolds we see it's the means by which she is drawn into a deeper confession, on an honest basis - and blessing HIS DISCIPLES urged- Present participle, kept asking HIM- Expressing their frustration SEND HER AWAY - We know how the disciples felt. People can be an nuisance to us too, but maybe the Lord sent them to us for His purposes. Perhaps to be blessed, perhaps to test us so we can grow in Christ-likeness. The right response is to teach God's Word/Minister Christ to them lovingly. Whether it scares them off, or saves them is in the Lord's hands. \*\*26 They may have meant give her what she wants, as in 18:27, 27:15 so she leaves us alone. In Lk 22:9 the same word means dismissal with wish granted. The Lord looked at people with compassion. The Disciples, as human as we ourselves are, saw their nuisance value, 14:15-21; 19:13-15. It seems to me that at times when the Lord begins to answer our prayers, those for whom we have prayed and worked suddenly become a burden that seems beyond our bearing.

HE SAID I AM/WAS SENT.. THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL - The Jews were God's chosen people, yet out of touch with God. Jesus had been sent to be their Shepherd as promised in the OT. Jews had a claim on Him as Son of David, but as a Canaanite she had no direct claim on Him. The Lord may have been reminding her of this. The Disciples were sent to Israel, 10:6, but His commission in 28:18-20 supersedes this.

Footnote \*\*26 Years ago I was pestered by abusive/obscene phone calls. I responded by quoting Gospel texts until he gave up ringing. Maybe I should have prayed more for his conversion.

TRUTH/Y es LORD - She acknowledges she has no right to claim help from the promised "Son of David," but may know many in Israel are like spoiled children refusing to be fed, as in 135458 She says in effect, "That's true of course, I'm a pet dog not a child, but pet DOGS EAT CRUMBS. Couldn't you give me some "table scraps of mercy" the children won't eat"

JESUS SAID WOMAN GREAT.. FAITH- Pistis- Firm persuasion based on conviction of the truth of what one has heard. The disciples would have turned her away, but she wouldn't go Today Faith that refuses to be turned away by what the church IS and SAY S is blessed of the Lord. He may keep us waiting for answers to our prayers, but He honours those who persist in trusting and praying - as long as they allow themselves to be guided by what He is saying Your request is granted- To Faith the Lord says YOU R will be done. She rightly sensed the heart of the Lord, she came drawn by the Holy Spirit into blessing HER DAUGHTER WAS MADE WHOLE /healed- HEAL D- not demon cast out- was the Mother's diagnosis not correct?

## 152939Healing & Feeding aMultitude

(Mk 7:31 says that after healing the Canaanite Girl they went to the Sea of Galilee in the midst of Decapolis - populated largely by Gentiles. This seems to have happened there. If so it may show that the blessings refused by Israel would be received by the Gentiles.)

152931 JESUS.. CAME/went along THE SEA OF GALILEE .. UP A MOUNTAIN/on a mountainside- This had the advantage of thinning out the merely curious passers-by. Coming to the Lord is always uphill work, because HE takes a higher position, and our natures prefer to drift lower! SAT DOWN- Usually indicates teaching, but healing ministry is described.

GREAT MULTITUDES/crowds CAME- If this was in the Decapolis, Mk 7:31, many may have come as a result of the testimony of the Demoniacs, 8:2834 Mk 5:1-20 HAVING WITH THEM/bringing LAME, BLIND, DUMB/mute, MAIMED/crippled.. CAST THEM DOWN- Perhaps suggesting the dumsiness of carriers exhausted by the time they got there, or their abandonment of other efforts to gain help for the person A "Lord it's over to you we can do nothing for them," attitude. AT HIS FEET AND HE HEAL D THEM.

compassion is stirred about them so that He is uncomfortable about the situation until He takes appropriate action. As we become more Christ-like we become more compassionate, and, in fellowship with HIM, are able to cope with the stress involved in this. WITH ME THREE DAYS HAVE NOTHING TO EAT - All the food they had brought had been used up. The Lord involves the Disciples as He is training them to share His concern for people, and His willingness to help them. I WILL NOT SEND THEM AWAY FASTING/hungry.

HIS DISCIPLES.. Where could WE? - If we face great needs the Lord may make us feel uncomfortable that we're doing nothing to help. Like the Disciples our natural response is "It's not a problem I can solve. How on earth can I, in my weakness do anything about it?" Their failure to call Him Lord shows their root problem - they're forgetting WHO He is. We too need to say "LORD I can't see anything I can do about this, but if You want me to do something You'll need to make it possible." Some ask why they should ask - after all the crowd was smaller, and the supplies a little larger than last time. They were human, and helpless and the Lord didn't always intervene with miracles. But they should have asked Him to meet the need, and so should we - always.

15:34-37 HOW MANY LOAVES - When we're faced with a need, the Lord still asks us to look at what we have/what we can do with a view to His using it, as well as looking at what is possible to Him alone. They don't call Him LORD - the One they obey, and the One who is able to do what they can't. HE told THE MULTITUDE TO SIT DOWN - To settle comfortably. TOOK LOAVES.. GAVE THANKS - The simpler the meal the more sincere the thanks. It's not easy to be devout over a banquet. He broke.. GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES - The Lord could have supplied each person instantly and directly with the energy to walk home. He chose to use normal food and to involve the Disciples in the distribution. He chose that each eater should help himself from what was offered, chew and digest the food. While as LORD He can use miracles, He generally worked/works using means available in His created order. ALL.. FILLED/satisfied.. disciples picked UP BROKEN pieces - See 14:20 SEVEN BASKETS FULL - Spuris - Large basket - Paul was let down in one in Acts 9:25 FOUR THOUSAND MEN.. HE/Jesus SENT.. AWAY - As a good Jewish host, with a blessing CAME/went to.. MAGDALA/ Magadan - Magadan is an

161 PHARISEE S.: SADDUCEE S- Usually enemies, 15:1 note, Acts 23:6-10 but united in opposition to Jesus. Cp 37. TEMPTING /tested- Wanting to trap Him into a situation where the crowds would turn against Him. A SIGN FROM HEAVEN- From God Some action which only God could do to prove He was representing God - Fire from heaven in Elijah's case, 1 Ki 18:36-38 Their response to the raising of Lazarus shows their insincerity, Jn 11:45-57, 12:9-11, 37. To the last they claimed they would believe Jesus if He came down from the Cross 27:42 Tempted not to do evil, but to do something spectacular. People still demand spectacular "proofs." Today people may be tempted to make spectacular statements that history and current events PROVE the Lord must come in the immediate future. Or to claim spectacular sign gifts. God isn't honoured by showmanship. We're commanded to preach the realities of our Lord, His Crucifixion, Resurrection and resultant Gospel, not spectacular things. Jesus refused spectacular self-authentication, but continued to give signs of compassionate use of power. Miracles don't create faith. Seeing isn't believing, but believing leads to seeing what God can do 17:20 21:21-22

162-4 EVENING.. FAIR WEATHER.. SKY RED- From a brightly coloured sunset (indicating a clear, dry atmosphere) you predict the next day will be without rain. MORNING.. FOUL WEATHER/stormy TODAY .. RED LOWERING/overcast- Heavy red-tinged clouds indicates a wet/stormy day. (Some missomit these, perhaps because the weather signs don't fit rainless Egypt) HYPOCRITES.. DISCERN/interpret.. SKY- Because Nature works in fellowship with God/by His Laws the signs are trustworthy. The same is true of Scripture and the life-witness of Christ BUT NOT.. SIGNS OF THE TIMES?- You work out what weather will happen, but you ignore the miracles etc that show Jesus is the Messiah. In view of what He had done, to demand a sign was like demanding that God write across the sky "The WEATHER WILL BE FINE, (or WET.)

A WICKED, ADULTEROUS GENERATION- See 12:39 Evil and unfaithful to God, Ezek 16 and so blind to the signs of His love to them in Christ OR, unfaithfulness to their own marriage vows makes them expect that God won't keep HIS promises to them. For both reasons they insolently demand God meet THEIR whim, and give SIGNS/a miraculous sign to convince them. Cp Israel's doubts and demands under Moses, Ex 14:10-14; 16:2-3; 17:1-7, etc. The same attitude

165-7 FORGOTTE N/forgot- To buy more bread - had 1 loaf left from earlier, Mk 8:14 JESUS SAID TAKE HEED, BEWARE OF/be careful and guard against THE LEAVEN/yeast- Singular- they shared it. OF PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES- \*\*27 They had just shown they were unwilling to believe and act on the evidence God chose to give, and demanded a sensational proof. The "yeast" of pride and unbelief that worked in their minds that produced their ideas and attitudes must be resisted by God's people. The Disciples may have wished the Lord had given a convincing sign. Living by Faith in the invisible, 2 Cor 4:13-5:10 can become a burden. At times we may wish the Lord would show we're right and humiliate our opposition by a spectacular action.

THEY REASONED/discussed.. BECAUSE.. BREAD - Yeast is used in making bread, and, conscious of their failure to bring bread, they imagined the Lord was "having a dig at them." When we're weighed down by our failures we tend to imagine the Lord is punishing us, unable in our thinking to see beyond ourselves, and self-set horizons.

168-12 JESUS.. SAID.. LITTLE FAITH- Their worrying which blinded them to what He had been meaning, was the result of failure to trust Him to over-rule/provide in spite of, any of their failures. He had assured them of their Father's care, 6:25-34 and demonstrated it twice in the spectacular miracles to which He now refers. So far the LESS bread they had, the more people the Lord had fed with it - 7 loaves fed 4000, 5 loaves fed 5000, so their 1 loaf, Mk 8:14, might well feed 7000. Why should they worry as they were obeying the Lord?

HOW.. NOT UNDERSTAND - They should have learned from their fellowship-service with the Lord that He was able to make good use of all situations He allowed to happen. And that what He said to them was to teach them spiritual truth, not to tease or humiliate them for their failures - eg to bring bread. NOT CONCERNING/about BREAD - They said they had understood the parable of the Leaven/yeast, 13:33-51, so it should have been obvious that giving a foothold for sinful ideas or attitudes would risk their being totally corrupted.

confirmed this, 3:17. The record of His ministry since 4:17 has led his readers to see the growing realisation of His truth, 4:24-25 7:28-29 9:8, 25-27, 31, 33-34 13:54 15:31. Now privately, with the disciples, Jesus brings them to a realisation that He is indeed the Christ. What follows in the rest of the Gospel is the unfolding of the NATURE of His Ministry as Messiah, in His FIRST Coming to Israel, without denying that He will keep the rest of His promises when He comes in Power and Glory. Matthew also selects material that shows how it all relates to the future Church.)

16:13-14 JESUS CAME.. OF CAESAREA PHILIPPI- On the slopes of Mt Hermon, north of Galilee, in Herod Philip's land. It was a largely Gentile area - in the town itself there were temples to Canaanite Baal, Greek Pan, and Roman Caesar. A reminder that the confession was made and linked with the future Church called out from Jew and Gentile to the person of Christ the Son of the Living God. The Galilean ministry was finishing - Jerusalem, the Cross and the Glory were about to unfold. HE ASKED WHO DO MEN/people SAY I THE SON OF MAN - As the name had no ready-made content it was useful for an unfolding meaning. See 8:20 AM/is - Directing their attention to the question would help to develop their understanding. JOHN- 14:2 ELIAS/Elijah.. JEREMIAS/Jeremiah.. ONE OF THE PROPHETS- People recognised that Jesus spoke, confidently, direct messages from God. Miracles could confirm this, but most prophets didn't work miracles.

Footnote \*\*28 Pharisees professed deep loyalty to God and His Law, making a great outward show of putting God first in their lives by fussy obedience to detailed RULES for religious behaviour. The fence of traditional interpretations they placed around the Law kept them and others from knowing God, Lk 11:52-53. Paul had been governed by the leaven of the Pharisees Acts 26:5; Phil 3:5. It totally distorted the law - and the proud self-righteousness this produced blinded them so that professed loyalty to God was moving them towards murdering His Son.

Footnote \*\*29 The Sadducees were the wealthy Priests, etc who claimed loyalty to the Law as understood rationally - as a set of rules that were good for society whether there was a God or not, and even though, as they taught, there was no life after death! We today are faced with the yeast of Super Religiosity - "we alone have the truth and honour God" ideas, AND by Sadducee rationalists who reject everything in the Bible that doesn't conform to worldly wisdom, and expediency. And teach that Christianity is valuable only for its contribution to life-in-this-world humanist goals. On the surface the teaching of these two groups were opposed, yet the effect of their teachings was equally rejection of Christ, and His teaching, in favour of enjoyment of life in



SIMON PETE R SAID THOU/Y ou- Emphatic. You alone. are THE CHRIST - The Anointed One, the anointed-by-God promised Saviour/Deliverer. Messiah in OT. See 1:1; 1:17, etc. Matthew has written of Jesus as the Christ in 11, 16, 17, 18, 11:2. The disciples had called Him Christ, under the stress of 14:33 Peter now expresses their final conviction in a formal, considered statement THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD- God has life in Himself and is the source of all life, and Jesus shares this, Jn 5:26 He wasn't merely a servant of God, He was the servant-SON of God His pre-Bethlehem sonship is seen in Mk 1:26; Jn 1:1-18 3:16 Heb 1:1-2, 8.

16:17 JESUS.. BLESSED- As 5:3-12 happy, realise you're privileged. SIMON BAR JONA /son of Jonah- Johanan-John, as in Jn 1:42. Other disciples may have shared his insight, but typically Peter expressed and clarified it for them. They shared his responsibilities, 18:18 and, in addressing Peter, the Lord was also addressing them - and later servants of His in due course. Matthew stresses the idea of Peter's leadership/pioneering role, 10:2; 14:28-29 15:15; 17:24-27, 18:21.

FLESH AND BLOOD- A Jewish term for man, in his mortality and frailness NOT REVEALED IT - Realisation of this truth didn't come from man/human nature. BUT MY FATHER IN HEAVEN- God who sends His Son, also sends faith in His Son. Both are God's gift, welcomed by man Jn 1:13. Peter hadn't come to this understanding without use of his senses, and intelligence, but they were not the source - God's desire to reveal Himself and His purposes was the source. It's only by the Spirit that God and the things of God can be known, 5:16; 11:27; 13:11; 1 Cor 2:6-16; 2 Pet 1:19-21.

16:18 I SAY /tell you- I and you emphasised, making a strong statement revealing God's purposes involving Peter and his declaration. Peter has declared who Jesus is, Jesus declares who Peter, as representative Apostle, is. THOU ART /you are- He had the name already, Mk 3:16; Jn 1:42. PETE R - Petros - Rock, large stone, building material. A new name - neither Petros or the Aramaic Cephas are known as contemporary names. Abram was given a New name - Abraham - Father of a Multitude of those blessed through Him, Gen 17:5; Rom 4:17; Gal 3:6-14. By his BELIEVING GOD, he became the rock from which Israel was hewn, Isa 51:1-2. Simon by CONFESSING CHRIST, became Peter-Rock, not for his stable rock-like character, but because of his role as a foundation stone, along with the other

living water, 1 Cor 10:4. The Rock on which men can believe/build safely, 7:24-25 Lk 6:47-48 Rom 9:33 as Peter says, Acts 4:10-12 1 Pet 2:4-8. Not on Peter as a person - he will soon be Satan's mouthpiece instead of God's mouthpiece will deny his Lord, etc. On Peter only in the sense of his being Christ-centred, Christ-confessing. That Jesus is the Christ, and God, is the foundation truth on which the Church is built, 1 Cor 3:11, and confession of Him builds us on that rock, Rom 10:9-10 Eph 2:20 As Peter himself wrote, we are built on Jesus Christ, the Living Stone, 1 Pet 2:4-5. Those who trust and obey the Lord Jesus are built on the sure foundation, Mt 7:24-25 Lk 6:48 In Acts 2:22-40 Peter doesn't say "Come, build on me," but "God has made Jesus LORD and Christ. repent and be baptised.. in the name of Jesus for forgiveness of sins.. and receive the Holy Spirit."

That "On this rock" means that Jesus will build His church "on the faith of Peter's confession" was taught by early Church leaders such as Augustine, Origen, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Ambrose, etc. In 700 The Venerable Bede, in England, was still insisting "The Rock is CHRIST, not Peter." So the Church is built not on Peter and his successors, but on Peter confessing Christ - and in their measure all preachers/witnesses representing and confessing Christ, Acts 1:8; Eph 5:27.

I WILL BUILD- Future, so it didn't already exist. \*\*30 Israel, called out of Egypt was an Ekklesia, Acts 7:38 but wasn't the church that Christ would build by calling out Jews and Gentiles to Himself, Eph 2:11-3:13 MY CHURCH- Ekklesia- A group of people CALLED out by somebody, for some purpose. It's used in Acts 19:23-41 of the assembly/ assembled crowd called out by Demetrius to riot against the Christians. THIS Ekklesia is a company of people called out from the world, by the Lord Jesus, to be His own - His CHURCH. Lord Jesus People, Christ's ones/ Christians. Some of us use the word ASSEMBLY to clear away the fog of 1700 years of confusion caused by the misuse of the word CHURCH to mean a building organisation, etc. My Church, 1 Cor 12:12-13 Eph 4:1-6. Ekklesia was used in the LXX of Deu 4:10 232, for Qahal- the Congregation of the Lord's OT people, so the Disciples would understand that a new community of God's people would be built, and it would specifically belong to Christ. They would not only be purified by repentance as John had proclaimed, but also divided from the old people of God by Belief in/ commitment to Christ now rejected by Israel, 10:34-42 Jn 1:12

Ps 9:13; 107:18 which were thought of as closing behind people allowing no return to life. God's people will die, but persecution and death will not be able to wipe out the Church on earth. Hades won't be able to shut Jesus in, so the church built on Him will be secure and exist beyond the grave where it will reach its fulfillment, 1 Cor 15:51-54; 2 Cor 4:16-5:8; 1 Th 4:15-18; Rev 21:22 etc. Gates are personified, Ps 247, 9; Isa 3:26; Jer 14:2, and the rulers of a city "sat in the gates," controlling access, settling legal matters, and planning policy. Gen 19:1, 9; Ruth 4:1-2; Prov 31:23 So the Lord's words may show that His Church would be under constant attack from the Enemy - threats as a Roaring lion, 1 Pet 5:8; cunning schemes to corrupt, 2 Cor 11:1-15. But as He has triumphed in the Cross, Col 2:15, His Church can rely on Him to triumph as it obeys Him.

16:19-20 I WILL GIVE THEE /you THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM- On earth, as in 133-52 Having the keys is to have stewardship responsibilities, controlling the access to treasured stores, Isa 22:22 God holds men accountable for their stewardship, 24:45-51. The Scribes and Pharisees, as wicked stewards, 16:5-12, 23:13; Lk 11:52 had forfeited their stewardship which would be given to Peter and the Apostles, as in Isa 22:15-22 Access to the Kingdom of Heaven is in the hands of the Holy Spirit, Jn 3:1-16, but the Disciples (and in a measure all Christians) have their part to play as in 28:18-20 Acts 1:8. \*\*31 As the story unfolds in Acts we see that the keys were the preaching of the Gospel. While those formed into the Church when the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost may have all had some part in the witness, it was Peter who took the lead in proclaiming the Gospel. In response to the Gospel he preached the Lord added 3000 to His church, and continued to add more. Acts 2. Although others proclaimed the Gospel, as there is only ONE Church, the same man Peter was associated with the door into it being opened to the first half-Jewish Samaritans, Acts 8:4-17, and the first non-Jewish Gentiles, Acts 10. The only way Peter or any Christian could save anyone is by living and preaching Christ, 1 Cor 7:16; 9:22.

WHATSOEVER THOU SHALT /whatever you- Singular- You, Peter. In 18:18 the same words are said to You- plural- those of you who exercise leadership/discipline in the local church. BIND - LOOSE ON EARTH- Bind and Loose were technical terms used by Jewish scribes to mean to forbid, or permit. To make binding decisions about what Scripture means, and how it is to be applied to lives.

man's sin forgiven 2 Cor 2:10 In Acts 15 Peter stated His God-confirmed experience - but it was James who gave the collective verdict, binding the minimum laws on Gentiles, and loosing them from the rest

SHALL /will BE BOUND - LOOSED IN HEAVEN- It's obvious that the decisions made on earth (by God-ordained Leadership, Acts 20:28) and in Heaven (by the Lord as Head of His Church, Eph 1:22 Col 1:18, 2:19, directing the functioning of His body) must be in agreement. But where is the decision made that binds the other? Is it saying that whatever decisions Peter, etc, make as the Lord's agents are automatically endorsed by God as eternally binding? Or that Peter, etc, must be careful that decisions made here on earth conform to the Lord's will revealed in His Word. If decisions made by Peter, etc, right or wrong were enforced by Heaven - that would mean that, in vulgar terms, the tail wagged the dog Heaven did NOT endorse Peter's verdict in 1622 or his action in Gal 2. Heaven's decisions are totally just, 1 Pet 1:13-21, and they must determine what Gods redeemed people do. We on earth can make binding decisions that conform to the will of God - thanks to the Lord in our midst guiding us, 18:12-20 \*\*32

Proclaiming this link between heaven and earth is an encouragement, and warning. It reminds us that when, like Peter, we proclaim the Gospel in human weakness, God is proclaiming His Gospel, in His power. His Spirit can make it effective, 10:12-33 40 Lk 10:16 Jn 13:20 As we struggle to maintain fellowship by discipline, 18:18 etc we do so in the presence of the Lord, and backed by His Spirit and power. We dare not treat the verdicts of Elders lightly - they ARE Gods unalterable eternal verdicts if based on His will revealed in Scripture and correctly interpreted and applied, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Whenever Gods servants do and speak His will, the stamp of God is on those actions and words.

TELL NO MAN /not to tell anyone HE WAS JESUS THE CHRIST - There was no point in proclaiming what could only be misunderstood and lead to a confrontation with the nation's leaders, and the Romans.

Footnote \*\*32 The KJV gives us no help, but the Literal Translation, 1898, of Robert Young (of Young's Concordance), and Marshall's Interlinear Greek-English 1958 say whatever is bound on earth shall be having been bound (Future perfect tense) in the heavens. (The Newberry Bible indicates this also.) This is awkward in English, so most translations avoid it, but similar wording

associated with this )

16 21 BEGAN JESUS- [RT] Jesus Christ [Nes]. TO SHOW/explain.. HE MUST- Dei- Something that's absolutely essential/ the will of God, 2654 Lk 24:25-27. GO to JERUSALEM.. SUFFER MANY THINGS- To Jews Messiah and Suffering were contradictory, but as Isa 53 shows, His sufferings precede the Glory of His Second Coming as in Isa 55 onwards. That suffering is normal for the Godly was seen in the lives of David, Elijah, etc, as the Lord said in 51-12, 1Q3439 etc. Yet the Jews then, and many Christians today, prefer not to believe this.

OF ELDERS, CHIEF PRIESTS, SCRIBES/teachers of the Law- The Sanhedrin 24; His Own, who rejected Him, Jn 11:10-11. Their opposition has been noted in 9:32-34 12:1-8, 14. BE KILLED- As foretold in, Ps 22 Isa 52:5-3 Hos 6:2; Zech 13:7-9. See 1Q38 124Q Jn 21:9-22 Jn 3:14; 8:28 12:32-34 The Lord's willingness to take up the role of suffering servant is seen in 12:15-21, and to die to save His people, 1:21; 9:15. There could be no church built until Israel disqualified itself from receiving the promises made to it, and unless Christ died for our sins, and sin was put away. BE RAISED AGAIN- 124Q Ps 16:10-11; 118:17-18 22 Isa 52:13-15; 53:10-12

16 22-23 PETE R TOOK HIM aside- a Protective action, Ps 18:16-19, 27:10 Acts 18:26 BEGAN TO REBUKE HIM- Peter, perhaps conscious of his new importance and responsibilities, speaks as we might to a friend who is being too hard on himself. From Gen 3:1-3 onward Satanic trickery urges that we disbelieve even God's clearest teachings of His Righteous Judgment. God's Love gives us believing in His crucified-risen Son as an alternative to perishing, Jn 3:16 Satan assures people that God's Love rules out Hell for anyone. God gives us the requirement for a Godly life in Rom 8, summed up in Gal 2:20 Satan assures Christians through "Full Gospel" preachers, and "Success and abundant life" seminars, that high self-esteem, self-fulfillment, health, happiness and riches are to be claimed by faith as of right.

BE IT FAR /Never LORD - Hileos- Mercy to you Hileos is linked with Hilasmos, Hilasterion- mercy seat, propitiation, Rom 3:25 1 Jn 2:2. The Lord would be merciful to us sinners - be the propitiation for our sins, but for that to be so there

Disciples cannot be masters - serving, obeying, not attempting to learn or win.  
Our attempts to go ahead/ go beyond what the Lord says in His word are dangerous and disloyal.

SAVOUREST NOT have in mind THE THINGS OF GOD- You're not on God's side in this - haven't let His mind rule yours. BUT THOSE the things OF MEN- The way you're thinking is natural to man, not as in 16:16-17. Cp contrast in Rom 8:5; Phil 3:18-20 Col 3:2. God's concerns are that we be like Himself, righteous, sacrificially-loving. Human concerns are Satan-induced, world-oriented, flesh-pleasing. Human love even in Christians can seek to deprive the Christian loved one of the privilege of suffering in fellowship with their Lord. Peter/ the Apostles/ Christian preachers today were/are authorised to teach all the Lord taught, 28:20. Satan ever wants to subtract unpopular items, and add popular ones so that sufficient human/ humanistic ideas are mixed in with the Gospel that what's preached is no longer Christ and Him crucified, and so saves no one, 1 Cor 1:17-24:22.

16:24-25 THEN SAID JESUS- In association with His announced future. IF ANY MAN WILL would COME AFTER ME - I'm going to Jerusalem, rejection and death. If any of you want to come with me... Literally then, figuratively for us now. They were already disciples, but still enemies of the Cross of Christ, Phil 3:18-19. LET HIM he must DENY HIMSELF - Same word as in Peter's denial 26:34. Refuse to acknowledge any obligation to self, Rom 8:12. Give up his right to himself/ pleasing himself. Say NO to his natural inclinations. Men may call giving up some ambition, right, indulgence etc in the interests of others/ our becoming more self-righteous, self-denial. But what the Lord means is denial of SELF/ self-centred thinking and activity - to look to Jesus, be Christ-centred, be transformed into His likeness, 2 Cor 3:15-18. Throwing away all that hinders this, like Paul, Phil 3:4-21. Bring every thought into captivity to Christ, 2 Cor 10:5.

TAKE UP HIS CROSS- Accept the unpleasant consequences of loyalty to Jesus as God grants/ allows them, and move towards gladly choosing them along with the Lord. It's not for US to decide what our cross will be. Jesus didn't seek suffering, and neither should we. AND FOLLOW ME - 10:38. We're called BY and TO Christ personally, not to take up an ethical program or practical helpful-to-others life-style. Deny, Take up, are Aorist tense- make a decision with a permanent

Christ, fellowship with Him in His plans, attitudes, work, people - or please myself, and stay unchanged. LOSE IT - Apdumi - To Destroy, lose, waste. Our natural inclinations are self-destructive folly, Rom 1:18-32 \*\*33 The ignorant throw off morality and the claims of God by grunting "I gotta be me!" No one by pleasing themselves can develop their adult potential let alone their Image-of-God potential. Even for Christians, everything done out of fellowship with Christ is wasted, 1 Cor 3:10-16 Cp Lot & Abraham, Gen 13:11-13 Whoever loses HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE - Considers his own life to be unimportant in order to be my loyal disciple. SHALL FIND IT - Will find and experience true life.

WHAT.. PROFITED/good.. IF GAIN/gains THE WHOLE WORLD.. LOSE/forfeits HIS OWN SOUL - Loses himself, perishes, by not accepting God's gift of His Son and Salvation, Jn 3:16 No matter how much one gains in this life by refusing to follow Christ it means losing one's soul/ life and all we've gained. \*\*34 The only way to preserve life is to give up having our ego as the centre of our universe, and let God achieve His purpose of making us into the image of His Son, Rom 8:29

WHAT.. GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL - Life must be preserved in order to enjoy anything - nothing can be worth having at the cost of life. Those who gain in this life for the loss of the next life are fools.

16:27-28 THE SON OF MAN.. COME IN GLORY.. REWARD EVERY MAN /each person- On the basis of other Scriptures we see different fulfillments - rewards for Christians, 2 Cor 5:9-10 entry into the millennial Kingdom, 25:31-46 and at its end the final Judgment of all rebels, Rev 20 But at least the Disciples would realise that obedient fellowship with Him in His work will accomplish His purposes in this life, and those achieved purposes will be to His glory and ours forever, 5:3-12 25:14-30 Ps 62:12 Prov 24:12 Mk 8:38 Lk 12:34-37, 19:11-27, Rom 8:17-25 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 22:3 22:12

Footnote \*\*33A learned scientist lamented that while for every other creature instinctive behaviour is beneficial for itself and its species - Man alone destroys himself and damages his species by doing what he feels like, and as an atheist he blamed this on a fatal flaw in man's evolution.

live that His coming will be a mutual joy. Matthew includes this statement although already 30 years or more had passed. The truth of Christ's coming, and rewards, and our need to be ready, is urgent - and always will be until He comes.

I SAY Tell you.. SOME STANDING HERE.. NOT TASTE DEATH- The Jewish way of saying will not die, Jn 8:52 Heb 2:9. TILL Before THEY SEE THE SON OF MAN COMING IN HIS KINGDOM- See the Son of Man in the glory of His Coming Kingdom. They might have thought He meant that without dying they would share with Him in permanent Kingdom Glory, as in 1:28-30 But the Lord hasn't come in Glory yet, and the Disciples have long been dead. Peter came to understand the Lord was referring to the Mt of Transfiguration experience, 17:1-8, as he wrote in 2Pet 1:16-18 John may have included this when he wrote, Jn 1:14. If this doesn't seem like a fulfillment to our modern minds - remember that it was quite natural for them to say Moses SAW the promised land, Deu 32:7, Ananias SAW the Lord's Salvation, Lk 22:7-32 and in some sense the Lord Jesus could say "Abraham SAW my day and was glad, Jn 8:56

## Appendix The Lord's Triumph in the Church

In our experience church life may seem humdrum, and unsatisfying. To remedy this crippling short-sightedness God speaks to us all through what Paul wrote in Eph 3, especially 3:10. It may well have seemed to Angels and Demons that through the fall Satan had made a fool of God, with man's help, by frustrating His purposes expressed in Gen 1:26-27. But as in 1:18-25 Lk 21:32 Jn 1:1-18, God the Son stepped into Creation, becoming man, and, as the Lamb of God, took away the sin of the world, bore our sin, was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God - and built us into His Church.



THE CHURCH as HIS BRIDE -to-be- Responding to His LOVE by becoming as beautiful to Him, as He in His love sees her/has provided for her to become, for a perfect shared life, Eph 5:25-32. Resisting false teaching, 2Cor 11:2. Getting her Dress ready for her wedding, Rev 19:8, 21:2, 9:27, relaying her Lord's invitation to sinners, Rev 22:7.

As we all do THAT, exercising whatever gifts He's given to each of us, we'll come to be united in all essential truth, mature and Christ-like (having outgrown childish fickleness) and Speaking the truth in Love, GROW UP into Him in all things. and, every part of His Body works together the body-Church grows, in love, Eph 4:11-16. May we all encourage one another to play our part in this by laying hold on the all-sufficient grace and word of God. E. Read 30.9.99.

(Correction or Criticism with a view to improvement is appreciated.)

#### Other booklets

Listening to the Lord:- 1 & 2 Kings; Habakkuk, Ruth, Haggai; Romans; 1 & 2 Corinthians; Colossians; 1 & 2 Thessalonians; 2 Peter & Jude; Revelation .

Looking to the Word:- Abortion Protests/Lessons from Sodom; Guidance, The Believer & Evil. The Law, the Lord & Us; Pre-Reformation Church History; A N Groves & the Brethren Movement (Reformation towards NT Church Practice) Gods Word in English - KJV etc.

Copies of all these are available free from the writer:

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Much of this material is available on "the Web" - <http://www.vision-nz.co.nz/lbc/>.  
FAX Messages sent to New Zealand 03 379 9990 will be passed onto me.

Please feel free to use any material from any of these booklets in any way to the glory of God.