

***The Lord Reveals His Glory &  
Teaches His will for our Fellowshiping  
He presents Himself as Messiah to Jerusalem  
The Rulers Reject Him, & He Rejects them***

**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.

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message of Scripture is clothed in varying language in the original, as in translations.

## CHAPTER 17

### 17:1-27 Glimpse of the KINGDOM & the Weakness of Human Faith

#### 17:1-13 The Transfiguration

(Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36. In 16:28 the Lord promised some Disciples would SEE THE SON OF MAN IN HIS KINGDOM- See a foretaste of what the world will see in His future Kingdom Glory, 25:31. Cp 2 Pet 1:16-17; Jn 1:14. Jesus usually looked like an ordinary person, Isa 53:2. It was the glory of His character, and works of compassionate power that led Peter to realise who He was, 16:16. \*\*1

17:1-2 AFTER SIX DAYS- From 16:28 Probably a week - counting the days between the first and last. Luke says about 8 days - counting the days at BOTH ends. \*\*2

JESUS- Jehovah the Saviour. took PETER, JAMES, JOHN- Privileged to have special revelations of His power, Mk 5:37, and suffering, Mt 26:37, so they could provide a threefold testimony as to what had happened. INTO A HIGH MOUNTAIN- Associated with revelations from God, as at Sinai. APART by themselves- Much fellowship with God is individual or small group

He WAS TRANSFIGURED- *Metamorphoo*- To change into another form, Mk 9:2. In becoming human His glory had been veiled, Jn 1:14. Now, a measure of His Glory was allowed to shine out, so they saw that He was indeed Emmanuel, 1:23. The Glory cloud had shown that God was present in the Tabernacle, Ex 40:34

Footnote \*\*1 Peter had confessed his Lord as the Son of God 16:16, and now sees Him in this role. He had protested against His suffering and death, 16:21-22, and now sees and hears Moses and Elijah speak of His *Exodus* Lk 9:31, on the Cross. This will be the fulfilment of what had been written in the OT, and the basis of all God can do for man in the Church, or in the Glory and Judgment of the coming Kingdom.)

Footnote \*\*2 Possible symbolism - 6 days of Creation, Moses' waiting for the Lord to reveal His Glory, Ex 24:16. Day of Atonement 10th, Feast of Tabernacles, symbol of Kingdom Rest, 15th,

Adam's face ceased to shine in glory when he fell, but Messiah would restore that glory to man. We're promised that when our Lord comes we will share His Glory, being manifested as God's sons, Rom 8:19. Cp 2Pet 1:3-4.

17:3-4 THERE APPEARED MOSES- Moses had died and been buried by God, Deu 34:5-6. Jews believed he was later raised and taken to glory - hinted at in Jude 9. Elijah- Had been taken up alive to Glory. \*\*4 TALKING WITH Jesus- Showing the LAW and the PROPHETS witnessed to Jesus, as the ONE who would complete God's work - His Messiah. God revealed Himself to both Moses and Elijah at Sinai. Both were rejected by the people and honored by God with fire and glory, Ex 19:18 34:29-35 40:34-35 Lev 9:24 1 Ki 18:38 2 Ki 1:10-12, 2:11. Jews expected Moses and Elijah would return. Elijah was associated with Messiah in Mal 4:5-6.

THEN PETE R- They'd dozed off and woke confused/afraid, Mk 9:6; Lk 9:32. Our nature is weak, 2:64, and can fall asleep while waiting for God to reveal Himself in His glory, or distress as in Gethsemane. Our natural self is never comfortable in God's presence. Martha's reactions are more common than Mary's ones, Lk 10:38-42. Cp Sarah, Gen 16.

LORD - As in 16:22 Peter starts well, yet again tries to tell Him what should be done. When God begins to show He is working we, like Peter, are often eager to DO something, put up a building, build an organization. Our fallen nature knows that doing so would leave us in control of the situation, and retain our sense of self importance. Using our "Getting busy for God" as an excuse to get out of His presence with a hurried "Thanks." Peter has to learn that leadership in God's church isn't thinking of things to do for God, but of letting Jesus speak and doing what He says. GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE - Expressing their joy at the privilege. Or possibly that it's just as well we're here to be of use, by providing shelters.

Footnote \*\*3 The Saints will shine like the sun in His kingdom, 1:34.3. Already we have the privilege of being Metamorphosed/Transformed, Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18, as we read God's Word expectantly, looking to Jesus, Heb 12:2, and allow His Spirit to transform us, Col 3:10. The beholding/reflecting is ONE word/action. We can't SEE what we aren't willing to BE, and Vice-versa. Our Open faced exposing our whole self and life to the Lord in His Word is essential. To LOOK on Christ crucified is to LIVE, Num 21:6-9; Isa 45:22; Jn 3:14-16. To GAZE upon Him is to be TRANSFORMED. Let's concentrate our attention on our Lord and His Atoning death for

faithful servant of God, Heb 3:1-6. Moses and Elijah were discussing His Exodus with Jesus, Lk 9:31. Peter was eager to make them more comfortable here on earth. Human attempts at doing something good for God are often silly. There was no sense in the Lord staying on the Mount and men coming to fall before His glory.

17:5-6 WHILE HE was still speaking- God interrupts Peter. A BRIGHT CLOUD- Clouds, often linked with fire and/or bright glory, are associated with God revealing Himself, Ex 13:21-22 14:19-20 16:10 19:16-18 24:16-18 33:9, 40:34-38 Num 16:42 Isa 6:1-8, etc. God revealing Himself in clouds symbolises man's inability to see God in the stark reality of His Being, Jn 1:18 1 Tim 6:16 To be revealed in a Cloud is to be partially concealed in a cloud God in mercy accommodates what He reveals of Himself to our limitations, Ex 33:20-22

OVERSHADOWED/enveloped THEM- Enfolding them all in its awe-inspiring brightness, Lk 9:34 A VOICE OUT OF/from THE CLOUD- Ex 24:16 In 3:17 the voice was from Heaven - here Heaven had come down to them. Behold a CLOUD... Behold a VOICE... expresses dramatic excitement THIS IS MY BELOVED SON/whom I love- God's only Son, the authorised full revelation of His Being and Purpose, Jn 1:18 All God's children are "sons" only in HIM, by virtue of Him, Rom 8:9-17. IN WHOM/with Him I AM WELL PLEASED- In 3:17 God stated His pleasure in the form in which Jesus took up His ministry. Now, He does so confirming the truth of Peter's confession, and of the Son's proclamation of His suffering and death, 16:16-21. Ps 27 had declared His Being, Col 1:15-19, and Isa 42:1 His Work in similar words. Christ, standing in Glory between two Giants of the OT, had already predicted the Cross where He will be nailed up on Calvary between two criminals, 27:32-54 \*\*5

HEAR /listen to HIM- He is the One who must be obeyed, Deu 18:15-19. A rebuke to those who like Peter try to tell the Lord what He should do 16:21-23 And a reminder that in Jesus Christ He has made His full and final revelation, Heb 1:1-3. The continuity between OT Moses and Elijah, faithful servants of God, and NT Jesus their Lord, is to be valued, but we must listen to HIM - as they fulfil their function of pointing to Him, and being re-interpreted by Him. When we pay attention to Christ and honour Him, God is honoured, 11:27, etc. We're not to preach human ideas about God and Salvation. We're to preach Christ crucified, and teach what He taught, 28:20 1 Cor 1:17-25

ignorance that leads us to get and teach wrong ideas about God. The Ignorant in 2 Pet 3:16 are in fact Amathes- undisciplined, those unwilling to follow the Lord as disciples.

17:7-11 JESUS.. TOUCHED THEM- In comforting fellowship as in, 8:15; 9:25-29 don't be AFRAID. THEY.. SAW.. JESUS ONLY - Any revelation of Christ/contact with Him is deadly to sinful man, but His purpose is not to condemn us, but to raise us up into fellowship with Himself. The GOOD for which God overrules all our circumstances, is that Christ should fill our gaze and we be transformed, Rom 8:28-30; 2 Cor 3:17-18; Heb 12:1-3. What a comfort it is that The Lamb is all the Glory, in Immanuel's land. The thunders of Sinai and Elijah's Prophetic violence in forcing men back to God, have no place in the Church of which Christ is Head.

Don't TELL - 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 16:20 THE VISION/what you have seen- The Word is used of Moses seeing the burning bush, Acts 7:31. UNTIL.. RISEN AGAIN/raised- As promised in 16:21. The Jews were over-anxious for Christ to come and save them from Rome, but not interested in His coming to save them from sin. Until He had died for our sins and been raised again there was no Gospel, and no future glory. Till then speaking of His glory would make it harder for people to believe He must suffer. Peter declared it in due course as recorded in 2 Pet 1:16-19, but contrasted the temporary revelation on the mountain with the more sure word of prophecy, God's Word, which we can hold in our hand whenever we wish.

WHY do THE SCRIBES/teachers- The official interpreters of the OT. say Elijah MUST FIRST COME?- As in Mal 4:5. Perhaps wondering if Elijah being present on the mountain was linked with this.

Elijah SHALL /must FIRST COME AND RESTORE ALL THINGS- Used in 12:13 for restoring a crippled hand. Israel was as a nation spiritually crippled. Elijah was to restore to a right relationship with each other parents and children, Mal 4:5-6; neighbours, LXX Mal 3:22-23. In the early Church it was understood that this referred to a future public coming of Elijah who would succeed in preparing Israel so at the Lord's return a significant number would as a nation be restored to the kingdom. This fits the promises of Acts 3:17-23; Rom 9-11. See Booklet on Rom 9-11.

salvation. (See notes on 8:18-20) Will refuse to acknowledge, and will mistreat Him also, 16:13-20 They expected Elijah and Messiah would come in power, but they came in suffering. Without the Cross Christ's Coming could bring only Judgment. But having dealt with Sin at His FIRST Coming, He can now righteously return bringing Salvation to the Redeemed, and Judgment to persistent rebels, Rom 10 & 11: 1 Cor 15:20-28 Col 1:13-20 2:13-15 2 Th 1:5-12 Heb 9:26-28 2 Pet 3:1-10 etc. THE DISCIPLES UNDERSTOOD HE was talking about JOHN.

### 17:14-21 Demoniac Laid Set Free/Epileptic Healed

17:14-18 WHEN- Moses came down and found the Golden Calf, Ex 32:7-35 LORD - Or Sir, Mk and Lk have Teacher. HAVE MERCY .. MY SON.. IS LUNATIC / has seizures- Seleniazomai- Moonstruck. \*\*7 The symptoms are like Epilepsy, a sickness of the brain, but in this case the cause was demon possession, 17:18 Mk 9:17. suffering agony.. falls INTO FIRE- It was both painful, and life threatening

O FAITHLESS/unbelieving PERVERSE GENERATION- The weak disciples, and people in general as in 11:16-19, 12:38-45 Cp Moses comment on his generation, Deu 32:20 They both faced the frustration of God's purposes through people being unwilling to believe God, and being perverse - obstinate, twisted, messed up. HOW LONG.. WITH YOU?- Cp Num 14:11. HOW LONG SUFFER/put up with YOU- A reminder of the constant bad of self-humbling frustration the Lord faced, and calls us to, Phil 2:5-8. JESUS REBUKED- Used of rebuking the storm, 8:26 and the disciples, 12:16 demon DEPARTED/came out.. the boy.. CURED/healed- Exorcism, AND Healing of a disease it seems.

17:19-23 WHY.. YOUR UNBELIEF- Apistia. [RT] little faith- Oligopstia [Nes] They had been given authority to deal with such cases, 10:1, but failed to exercise it. We have not been given such authority, but we also are at times unwilling to trust and obey such commands/promises as 6:25-34 Rom 6:14 This grieves the Lord, and robs His people of blessings. Prayerlessness is powerlessness Mk 9:29 Jas 4:2

Footnote \*\*6 Some ask IF the Jewish nation HAD accepted John, and Christ, would they have received the Kingdom then? but, like many questions, this makes no sense. Israel as a nation was

trustful obedience to God's Word links us with the almighty power of the Living God, so we need only enough Faith to ask for what is God's will. Such faith is conscious of its inadequacy, Mk 9:24 Rom 4:5. 2 Cor 12:10 It's not the greatness of our faith that enables God to work, but God's grace that enables us to have faith. Without love faith is pointless 1 Cor 13:2 can SAY .. MOUNTAIN.. IT will - A saying intended to shock. See 21:21; Isa 54:10 Zech 4:6-7. The problem we face may seem mountain-huge. Our Faith may be mustard-seed small. But God has the power TO DO HIS REVEALED WILL if we're willing to co-operate with Him - willing to ask/ trust/ obey. It's not for us to set ourselves to do anything NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE .

THIS KIND.. PRAY ER AND FASTING- [RT] Seems to have been added to later Mss from Mk 9:29 Although Fasting seems additional even there. JESUS SAID.. BETRAY ED- As in 16:21; 17:12 KILL HIM.. THIRD DAY BE RAISED AGAIN/to life.. EXCEEDING SORRY /filled with Grief.

### 17:24:27 Jesus & the Temple Tax

(Should Christian Jews, as God's children, pay to support the Temple? This concerned Matthew's readers as he alone records the Lord's example which says - You're not obliged to, but if not paying offends others, pay. God can provide the means to do so. To this day Faith claims the freedom of sonship. Love moves sons to limit the freedom they exercise so outsiders come to Faith, 1 Cor 9:19-22 Gal 5:13)

17:24:27 TRIBUTE Tax- God commanded each man counted in the census to pay this ONCE, Ex 30:11-16 38:25-26 The Pharisees made it an annual levy - Herod's Temple, its staff and sacrifices were expensive beyond God's intention. The men of Qumran paid it only once in a lifetime. The Sadducees refused to pay. But most Jewish men paid it as a matter of patriotic pride. After AD 70 the Romans diverted it to be paid to the Temple of Jupiter, so this was written before AD 70 It was half of the penny paid labourers for a day's work.

YOUR MASTER PAY ?- Rabbis could be exempted, as were priests. Did Jesus pay? YES/He does. JESUS.. WHAT do you think, SIMON.. DO KINGS.. OF THEIR OWN CHILDREN/sons?- At that time they didn't. PETER answered.. OF STRANGERS/others JESUS said.. CHILDREN FREE /sons exempt- On the basis of normal custom, as God's son He was exempt from paying tax to God/

as in 315 He identified Himself with the Godly in Israel. To avoid making it hard for patriotic Jews to accept Him, He would join them in paying. In love for others we must consider their consciences, 1 Cor 8:8-13 \*\*8

GO.. TAKE UP THE first FISH.. open its MOUTH.. A PIECE OF MONEY /four drachma coin- The Levy for two men. Where Gods servants are serving Him, He provides the means by which they can do so. GIVE FOR my tax and yours- Not US - One is the Son, the other a Disciple.

## CHAPTER 18

### 181-35 Values & Fellowship Among God's People

(How to behave in the Christian community, in which ALL Believers are Little Ones, yet are responsible for the good of all. Pride, with the desire to be prominent, is the great danger as it blocks entry into the Kingdom, is carelessly about hurting others, and its unwillingness to forgive shows that a man has no real part in the Kingdom.)

### 181-14 Greatness & Liteness

(Mk 9:33-37, Lk 9:46-48. The Lord's words are an encouragement and warning to all who serve Him among children, and other little people. In Lk 15:3-7 the Lord as shepherd seeks lost sheep. Here we're to share in His shepherd care for weak Christians who wander off.)

181-4 WHO IS GREATER IN THE KINGDOM- In the Church form, or beyond that Everyone in it is greater than John 11:11. Peter had been given prominence, then rebuked, 16:18-23 James and John had been privileged with him, 17:1-8. They'd just been talking about Kings etc, 17:25-27. The question implies how does one go about becoming great. Rabbis argued whether greatness would be determined by righteousness Ps 11:7, learning in Torah and Mishnah, charitable goodworks, or martyrdom.

JESUS CALLED A LITTLE CHILD- The child, by coming when called, was an example of those who were in the Kingdom because they came when they were called. VERILY I SAY /tell you the truth- An emphatic statement EXCEPT.. CONVERTED/change- Stropho- To turn - from seeking personal greatness Jer 4:5. By being concerned about greatness in the Kingdom the Disciples were heading in the wrong direction, not behaving like citizens of the Kingdom. The world honors those who seek and gain personal greatness God doesn't - it's the Satanic goal.



when I called him. NOT/never ENTER THE KINGDOM- Never be part of God's new world. John called for repentance, confession that they were unfit for the Kingdom. Christ offered New Birth, Jn 1:12-13; 3:1-6; Rom 10:1-13. Whoever HUMBLE HIMSELF.. GREATEST- A self-conscious display of humility, or working at being humble in order to be exalted 1Pet 5:6 is ridiculous. The good child doesn't belittle itself, nor should we.

185-7 RECEIVE/welcomes a LITTLE CHILD- Or the unimportant believers, of 104042 186-14. IN MY NAME - Because of what I mean to you, or on my behalf, on my orders. Welcomes ME - The Lord switches from using the child as a model disciple, to the child as needing to be cared for. To receive the least member of the Kingdom is to receive the King 2531-46 who loves and cares for all His own, Deu 14:29 Mal 3:5. To accept very ordinary Christians, value them, giving ourselves in warm ways to them, Rom 12:16 is a mark of closeness to the Lord, and therefore of importance/usefulness in His Kingdom. We tend to pay attention to greater people, Jas 2:1-13

If anyone OFFEND/causes to stumble ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES- Mikros-Small, unimportant people. (It's been little child- Paidion, in 191-5) Those who become His disciples by accepting their smallness- spiritual inadequacy, and are born again, Cp Lk 17:1-2 who BELIEVE IN ME - Being child-like is essential for entering the Kingdom. Such people are vulnerable. The Lord cares for each one, and we must fellowship with Him in this, 5:3-12 1042 11:25 254045 They must be welcomed, not hindered from growing up in Him through a lack of friendly help or being set a bad example, or having their faith misdirected from Christ by false teaching Cp Being stumbled, 5:2930 11:6; 15:12, 16:23 17:27, 2410 2631-35

WOE - 11:21; 2313-36 to THE WORLD- The tragedy of the world is the existence of things which make men sin. OFFENCES/such things must COME - It's part of the frustration to which this world has been subjected, so people will see their need, CUT OFF CAST/throw away- Not self-mutilation but handing over one's desire and receive gracious salvation, and be manifested as God's sons, Rom 8:18-25 In a rebel world discouragement from faith in Christ is inevitable but inexcusable.

Footnote \*\*9 Those who enthuse about the innocence, nonassertiveness, unselfishness, humility, etc of infants must have shut themselves in their study while someone else battled to tame their

WOE TO the MAN - That we all sin/offend Jas 3:2; 1 Jn 17-8, and none is perfect, in no way excuses our sinning. Bad examples, deceit and discouragement are inevitable tests that all must face just as heresies are inevitable, 1 Cor 11:19. They may be used for God, but the Lord in His love warns us against causing them.

188-9 IF HAND - Things you do FOOT - Where you go the direction your life is going. EYE - What you look at, goals you aim at. OFFEND/causes you to sin - See 5:29-30 It is YOUR OWN hand, foot, eye, not other people who must be cut off. To avoid stumbling others we must avoid stumbling ourselves - living below what we know to be God's will, Jas 4:17. Our abilities and their exercise may be good in themselves but must be cut off if as a result someone is stumbled, Rom 14:21; 1 Cor 8:13. So Paul restricted himself for the benefit of others, 1 Cor 10:31-33. In 5:27-30 the Lord's warning protected women. Here it protects little people/children. To hurt oneself by tolerating attractive evil will corrupt/kill our spiritual life. To kill it is to preserve our life and that of others, 16:25.

CUT OFF CAST/throw AWAY - Not self-mutilation, but handing over one's desires and capacities to Christ and the Cross and living wisely, freely and joyfully in the power of His resurrection, Rom 8:1-16; Gal 2:20; Phil 3:4-21. Failure to deal with temptation by handing over the infected/cancerous part to God the Surgeon, risks infecting others. And it leaves us in an unspiritual state, unable to help others, Gal 6:1. BETTER - Kalos - Good and beautiful TO ENTER LIFE - The future Glory when it's revealed. To the world it may seem that our missing out on the violent, drunken and sexually immoral pleasures makes us maimed or crippled. But by rejecting the works of our sinful nature, we're enjoying the fruits of the Spirit, Rom 8:6-13; Gal 5:19-24. RATHER THAN.. FIRE - Better go limping into life than leaping into Hell! Discipleship hurts but it's healthy. \*\*10

1810-14 DESPISE NOT/do not look down on - 6:24; Lk 18:9; Jn 7:49. LITTLE ONES - Mikros - Little people - children, the poor, uneducated, non-achieving. Consider them/their welfare important. IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS ALWAYS see THE FACE OF MY FATHER - Jews believed in Guardian Angels, 1 angel to care for 1 Jew, as in the apocryphal book Tobit. As they thought only the most important angels had access to God, this would confirm that Little ones are important to God. \*\*11

Footnote \*\*10 When we enter into life it won't be in maimed bodies but in bodies of glory like our Lord, Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:1-3. No good desire frustrated out of love for God or man will be lost.

recognised, but they thought he must have been killed and it was his anger - Christ, departed spirit. Cp 1426.

FOR THE SON OF MAN.. LOST- [RT] Many Mss have this, but all have it in Lk 19:10 where it clearly fits as it refers to Zacchaeus being found and rebukes the self-righteous who object to Jesus' concern for the Lost. Here the words break the flow of thought, which is to stir up OUR concern for the straying, so the Older Mss may be right. Still it sets us an example even if it is quoted from Luke.

A MAN.. LEAVE NINETY NINE.. IF HE FINDS it- He's happy with every sheep that doesn't wander off, but there's a special joy in the restoration of one that was lost. The story teaches that the welfare of ONE ordinary Believer, a helpless little one, is a matter of concern to God, and should be so to us. We shouldn't be indifferent to those who wish to go their own way but should have a shepherd care for them, Prov 27:23 Ezek 34: 6. It's NOT THE WILL.. LITTLE ONES SHOULD PERISH/be lost- Be lost from Him. Or the Greek may mean Self-destruct. It's middle voice, often an action one does to oneself. No sin, or its punishment, is the will of the Father, but against His will some choose to perish, 2337-38 or we may waste our lives, 1 Cor 3:10-15

## 1815-35 Maintaining Fellowship in the Church

(Saved sinners still have sinful natures, and so give offence, repent and need to be forgiven. Disciples need to discipline themselves, 188-10, or be disciplined. Those forgiven and born into God's family by Grace need to show grace in forgiving each other to maintain family fellowship. Before tackling these problems the Lord has brought things into focus by speaking of the Glorious Church He is building, 1618 Eph 5:27, and of His concern for the least member, 1812-14.)

## 1815-20 Dealing with Difficult Brothers

(In 521-26, the desire to worship God, and the certainty of punishment, is to move the Offender to put things right. Here, the one least to blame, the offended one, instead of using the offence as an excuse for wandering off, 1812, is, like the shepherd, 1810-14, to seek out the offender and try to win him back into fellowship. The last resort is to involve the whole church, and the Lord assures us of His support and presence in whatever decisions must be made. Finally those who maintain fellowship and pay for the same things are assured of His response. Nothing here supports the idea of a Church hierarchy. It's a local church working as a group of brothers, 1820 238-12.)

small as possible.

AGAINST \*\*13 you- Wrongs or injures you in some way. We're to turn the other cheek, 5:38-42 and not to adopt a critical judgmental attitude, 7:1-15, but that doesn't make offensive behaviour by a brother a matter of indifference. We're to speak the truth in love when wrong has been done, fellowship in the Lord broken, the Spirit grieved, and the united worship and witness put at risk. Religious wars are a sin, but so is indifference to sin. Our concern must be with the restoration of broken fellowship, not a rooting out of weeds, 13:24-30

GO .. FAULT - The Greek word is translated reprove, expose, convict, Lk 3:19, Jn 3:20-21, 8:46 and is used in LXX Deu 19:17. It's used in Jn 1:6-8; Eph 5:11; 1 Tim 5:20; 2 Tim 4:2; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:15; Jude 15; Rev 3:19. When we feel we've been wronged it's natural for us to go to friends for sympathy, and the matter becomes gossip. This fans the flames of division/bitterness and hardens the hearts of both parties against each other. This is a serious sin. Our first concern must be to win him back to forgiveness/friendship/fellowship, not our rights or reputation. Attacking him verbally provokes counter-attack. As to punishment - that's the Lord's concern, Rom 12:17-21.

between the two of you- Help him to see his action was wrong/hurtful by showing him that you have been hurt by it - without humiliating him or exposing his fault to public view. His action was unchristian, out of fellowship with the Lord, and His purposes. He has wandered, and we're to seek his repentance/restoration to His fellowship, 18:10-14. Reproving a brother is an alternative/antidote for anger, AND PROOF OF LOVE - Lev 19:15-18 Cp Prov 3:12, 25:9-10, 27:5-6. IF HE HEAR /listens to you- Responds well, 10:14, you have GAINED/won your BROTHER - Won him back to fellowship. The painful barrier has gone and he's no longer wandering on the path towards spiritual ruin. Cp 1 Cor 9:19-22, 1 Pet 3:1, where the same word is used of the conversion of an outsider.

18:16-17 IF NOT - If he won't admit he acted wrongly and won't restore fellowship. TAKE ONE OR TWO - People both of you like and respect. There's no point in fading him with people eager to support you against him. EVERY WORD /matter ESTABLISHED - Deu 19:15. This assures fair play, and should help keep us from a judgmental, self-righteous spirit, 7:1-5. The accuser may be wrong or the accused may be open to explanation by neutral parties, who show him what the Lord requires of us, etc. It will help both sides face the facts. And if the facts must

or letting the world know of the disgrace to God and His people, 1 Cor 6:1-8. Any disciplinary action must be carried out in as open a way as possible but young Christians may need to be spared details. 16:16-18 showed us the Glorious nature of Christ, and His purposes for His church. These must be borne in mind as we try to clean up the grubby mess we make of ourselves when we forget who HE is, and what WE are in Him. We will do more for the purity, peace and power of the local church by LIFTING UP HIM and His purpose high before the Believers, Jn 11:16; 13:1-17:26 Rom 8 and 12 Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Hebrews, etc than by preaching AGAINST any sins or sinners. The church, conscious of its Lord and its Calling is appealing to him to repent and restore fellowship.

IF HE NEGLECTS /refuses TO HEAR /listen even to THE CHURCH LET HIM BE UNTO THEE /you- You personally. It says nothing about the rest of the church putting him out of the fellowship. \*\*14 A HEATHEN MAN /pagan.. tax collector- He's still your brother, but won't let you be brotherly. You have done all you can for him, so keep away from him and get on in the Lord's ways and work. Don't disgrace the family and God by sulking, gossiping, whining, as if your petty quarrel was the most important thing in the church, or it soon will be!

18:18 VERILY I SAY /tell YOU- In 16:19 it's singular, Peter's responsibility. Here it's plural, all of you, as in Jn 20:23 We see it acted on in Acts 15 by the Apostles and Elders, but in the first place it's the local church dealing with a local church problem.

Whatever you BIND & LOOSE .. IN HEAVEN- See notes on 16:19. The local church, under the leadership God has raised up is responsible to teach, apply, and enforce His commands - by gathering in obedience / submission to the Lord, eager to know and do His will, 1 Cor 5:4. Having obeyed 18:15-17, they are to look to the Lord confident that He will enable them to make right decisions. \*\*15

18:19-20 AGAIN I SAY /tell YOU- Continuing the assurance IF TWO OF YOU AGREE .. DONE - They, and we, may be only a feeble handful of saved sinners,

Footnote \*\*14 Three disciplines are mentioned in the NT: Public rebuke, 1 Tim 5:20, based on God's Word, 2 Tim 3:16. Withdrawing personal supportive fellowship with disorderly believers, 2 Th 3:6-15 Titus 3:10-11. This seems to apply here as there can be no fellowship with the ACTION of one who is defying the Lord and despising his brother, 18:5, 10. Those who share the one loaf at the Lord's Table with those they are refusing to treat as brothers are acting a lie. This must

relationship with him, to bear his triumphant charit.

but the Lord's presence gives both a restraint on our natural attitudes, and a confidence in the importance of our decisions. See other promises about prayer in 7:7-11; 21:22 Lu 11:5-13 Jn 14:12-13 15:7; Jas 1:6-8; 1 Jn 5:14-15 etc. \*\*16

WHERE TWO OR THREE \*\*17 ARE GATHERED/come TOGETHER- The background is that of making a decision about discipline, and praying, but it applies to witness, worship, teaching, etc Acts 4:31; 10:33 14:27, 15:6, 30 1 Cor 5:4; 2 Th 3:6. IN His- Into, MY NAME- Not merely En- In, a static thing, following a Godly routine, but with an active desire towards doing what He has declared His will to be. Gathered as a Christ-centred group under His authority, 28:18-20

THERE AM I IN THE MIDST- Jesus speaks of the future when He will be present as their risen, unseen Lord. He guarantees His being with them, whether asked or not - only He, by His Spirit, could have moved them so to gather. It's not a called-together-to-meet-needs/exercise power thing, but a gathering-into-association-with Him - a heart response. Worship is free from the restrictions of time/space 6:6 Jn 4:20-24 It isn't gathered AGA INST others in being FOR Christ, Mk 9:38-40 Lk 9:49-50 The Lord adds to the Church, Acts 2:47, is personally present in local churches, aware of their situation, with a loving, but sternly realistic message for them, Rev 1-3.

### 18:21-35 Forgiven Servants MUST Forgive

(The huge debt owed to God now forgiven us in Christ, requires us to forgive others for the small ways in which they may offend/hurt us.)

18:21-22 HOW many times. FORGIVE - Having hurt someone, repented and been forgiven, we should never do anything like it again. But we're not ideal people, and where there are deep-seated mental/emotional problems, offending is difficult to avoid. Each time I'm obliged to go to him and urge his repentance, and as soon as he apologises assure him he's forgiven, 18:15-18 Even if we think he isn't really sorry as he has repeated the offence, Love, 1 Cor 13, and heart forgiveness, Eph 4:32 frees us from a bitter, unforgiving spirit.

Footnote \*\*16 That the form of words differs from one promise to another reminds us that there's no formula that ensures God's positive response. No doctrinal or devotional buttons, which if pressed, make God work our will. Unity is the Lord's will for us, a convincing witness to the world, Jn 17:22-23, and essential if we're to have our prayers answered. The Lord is in our midst,

Footnote \*\* 17 Jews required ten adult males to form a minimum Synagogue congregation for worship. The Lord gave His minimum at two or three Believers/Obeys, men, or women.

SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN/seventy seven times- The Greek words may mean 490 times, (supported by early Latin versions) or 77 times. The point is unlimited forgiveness to reflect God's forgiveness Love doesn't keep a record of the times we've been wronged, 1 Cor 13:5. We have no right to limit our forgiving - in accepting forgiveness from the Lord we surrender all rights.

18:23-27 therefore- We can't limit our forgiving because our situation is like that of a servant of A KING.. SETTLE ACCOUNTS- Check how they were handling his funds. This fits the OUTWARD form of the Kingdom, as in 2:13-34 - the uncaring selfish servant isn't a redeemed man, 1 Pet 1:18-19. It's not the Judgment of 2 Cor 5:10 or Rev 20:11-15, but a story to teach that the forgiven must forgive. TEN THOUSAND - Their highest number. TALENTS- Their highest monetary unit. The greatest possible debt, far beyond anyone's ability to pay, as is the debt we've been forgiven. not able TO PAY, HIS LORD/master- The King BE SOLD.. WIFE, CHILDREN- This was normal in the ancient world. \*\*18 The total of all he had would be swallowed up in such a vast debt. Under Jewish Law a man wasn't sold, except for theft, Ex 22:3, but see 2 Ki 4:1; Neh 5:1-13; Isa 50:1; Amos 2:6.

FELL DOWN, WORSHIPPED/on his knees- Threw himself on the ground before him. LORD.. I WILL PAY everything- Unlikely, even if He was Tax collector for a rich province. The annual income of Herod the Great was 900 talents. This man owed 10,000 but every gambler hopes to win NEXT time. THE LORD/Master.. FORGAVE/cancelled THE DEBT - Unlimited forgiveness for an unlimited debt.

18:28-31 BUT that SERVANT.. FOUND.. OWED HIM A HUNDRED PENCE/denarii - A few dollars against billions of dollars he'd just been forgiven! It seems that 1 Talent was worth about 6000 denarii. HE TOOK HIM.. PAY ME!- Those whose life centres on themselves forget benefits, Ps 103:2-3, and so limit their enjoyment of them, Lk 7:47. If we realise the enormity of the debt forgiven us, unlimited forgiveness of those who wrong us becomes inevitable. At best he is a shallow-ground Christian, giving no evidence of new birth/new nature.

SERVANT FELL DOWN.. I WILL PAY - Echoing the violent servant's own words in 18:26 But he refused.. INTO PRISON.. PAY - His action showed he

before the Lord. Those who sow to the flesh in their treatment of their brothers will reap what they sowed, FROM GOD, 2 Cor 5:10 Gal 6:8. We may need to take some action, but the Lord is the Judge.

Footnote \*\*18 In our kindly/ influenced by Christianity world Criminals can be declared bankrupt, and re-appear, perhaps in a foreign land, as millionaires! This didn't happen in the pre-Christian world.

183234I FORGAVE/cancelled ALL THAT DEBT .. Shouldn't you- The King had "forgiven for the asking" with no reservation, just as God in grace forgives us. BUT that automatically laid a moral requirement on the forgiven, to be a forgiving person. Brotherly love isn't the condition of salvation, but salvation by Grace must move the saved one to show grace to others, 1 Jn 4:7-21. (As good works can't contribute to Salvation but are God's purpose for those saved by Grace Eph 2:8-10 and the proof that it has been received, Titus 3:8; Jas 2:14-26)

HIS LORD Master in anger.. TORMENTORS/jailers- Blunt, clear, and emphatic. Torture wasn't allowed under God's Law, but Herod used it. It had been commonly used in the surrounding countries, especially in cases of a disloyal governor, or those suspected of stealing state funds. TILL HE SHOULD PAY - The terms he set for the small debt of his fellow servant are the terms the King applies to him - he has set his own punishment. He is judged by the way he judged, 7:1-2, Cp 1237.

1835 HEAVENLY FATHER.. IF/unless. from your heart- As with loving God, 2237, an empty form of forgiving won't do. Matthew's Gospel proclaims the Grace of God, but warns against despising grace as if it meant God will tolerate evil, 5:7, 25 3848 6:12 14-15 7:1-5; 9:13 See also Rom 3:7-8; 6:1-2 1Pet 1:13-21; Jude 1:4-16 The Lord gives this graphic warning to shock disciples \*\*19 into realizing that an unforgiving spirit isn't to be excused in those saved by His sovereign grace. We're commanded to forgive as forgiven, Lk 6:36 Eph 4:32 Col 3:13. When we fail to forgive Satan gains an advantage, 2 Cor 2:11, and it creates an offence that requires surgery to remove the unforgiving spirit, 186-9.

Footnote \*\*19 You may have heard, as I have, men say this doesn't apply to us, as Believers are saved/justified once-and-for-all by Grace alone - as if we didn't need to forgive others. But God inspired ALL Scripture with a message and examples for us, Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:6; 2 Tim 3:15-16. We're not free to pick and choose our verses, or interpretations, but must listen to what God is saying in each of them, 2 Pet 1:20-21. This warns those who parrot "Once saved always saved," and live in careless defiance of God's revealed will, that like those so confident they were successful servants, 7:21-29, the Lord will disown them. Those given eternal life, and held safe



righteous impartiality of God, before whom they must stand; Rom 2:6, 2 Cor 5:7-10, Phil 2:12-13, Jas 2:13, 1 Pet 1:13-25. Failure to forgive is a sin. Those who refuse to forgive are proclaiming that they have never been God's Children, and aren't being renewed in the image of His Son, Col 3:1-12. If in spite of appearances they ARE His child they can have no fellowship with Him, until by His grace they look to Christ crucified. Then His words touch our hearts, so that we cry "Lord you have in love borne the vast burden of my sin - thank you for reminding me to show mercy when my fellow-sinners wrong me, so that I forgive them.

## CHAPTER 19

### 19.1-15 Marriage Divorce Celibacy & Children

(Mk 10:1-16. Amid the follies of modern life we need the message of these verses. See also my notes on 5:31-32, 1 Cor 7:1-40)

19.1-6 WHEN JESUS HAD FINISHED saying these things- As in 7:28 this marks the start of a new section. HE left GALILEE .. JORDAN - At the time the Jordan river was the boundary between the province of Perea (like Galilee, under Herod Antipas) and the province of Judea. MULTITUDES/ crowds FOLLOWED HIM. HE HEALED THEM- They were as shallow in their response as in Galilee and He was just as merciful in meeting the needs they brought to Him.

Some PHARISEES CAME to test HIM- Hoping to discredit Him, as in 16:1; 22:18, 35. The word is used of the Devil's tempting in 4:1. IS IT LAWFUL - Under God's Law. FOR A MAN TO PUT AWAY /divorce. EVERY CAUSE /reason- The popular teaching of Rabbi Hillel said Deu 24:1 meant anything that annoyed her husband. That a man could divorce his wife (but not vice-versa) was taken for granted. Rabbi Shammai said rightly that Deu 24:1 - Ervah meant sexual sin. \*\*20

The Creator MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE - One man and one woman, made for each other and commanded to multiply. Human nature enjoys pitting its interpretations and opinions against those of others. The Lord shows that the way to settle arguments is by looking up the Scriptures to see what God has done and said on any subject.

FOR THIS CAUSE /reason- They had asked whether a man was free to do as he pleased about marrying and divorcing. The Lord answered it was God who made man male and female/created the potential for marriage, so we're to do what pleases God in it. A MAN will LEAVE his FATHER AND MOTHER- Whatever circumstances, desires, charm, goodness, sin, etc may be involved at the

Footnote \*\*20 In Lev 18:6-20:21 Ervah- nakedness= sexual exposure or incest. If the husband had been deceived about this he was entitled to opt out of the marriage. Or, if after marriage it was found (as it could be when families had been broken up by war, etc) that the couple were in fact relations their union would be Ervah and so broken up as unlawful. Even brother-sister marriages were approved in Egypt, so when those in such marriages converted to Judaism their marriage may have been broken up. Such cases would be rare - but 19:9 is a rare exception.

God's declared purpose for male and female "man," Gen 1:27, is that an adult man and woman receive each other as a gift from Him in a marriage to be lived thankfully and prayerfully, 1 Cor 7:39 1 Tim 4:1-4. \*\*21 Husband and wife are in His sight a unity, and their happiness and fulfilment lie in their making this God-given potential, a reality in daily living. Committing themselves to learning the art of it. \*\*22

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED- Literally yoked together, permanently. Not just what Nature or Human Love has joined - bedded/housed together - but YOKED together to work together for the purpose of marriage - mutual care, the care of children, stabilising influence in the Church and community, etc. LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER/separate- No one is to do anything that might separate husband and wife. By making seduction, fornication, adultery etc major features of its programs the entertainment industry is actively working to tear marriages apart.

19:7-8 WHY DID MOSES COMMAND.. send HER AWAY - The need to find someone able to write gave time for tempers to cool. Being written made it clear that the woman had no further obligations to the man, and he could never remarry her, Deu 24:1-4. The man couldn't trivialise the marriage commitment by using divorce as a bargaining tool - eg divorce a wife who showed independence and take her back chastened by poverty. Moses didn't command that they MUST divorce any wives, \*\*23 but the fact that he provided a law for divorcing was taken as approval of divorce. Exceptions easily become the rule.

MOSES SUFFERED/permitted- Suggests reluctance God permits/tolerates things which are not His will. \*\*24 Loyal marriage is always His intention and will.

Footnote \*\*21 God's purpose in marriage had also in mind what it symbolised- The Son leaving the Father to win/create for Himself a bride - the Church, Eph 5:25-33. Cp Mal 2:16.

30. That divorce is less than ideal, was shown Lev 18:16; Deu 2:4; Mal 2:16, and remarriage at odds with holiness Lev 21:7; Ezek 44:22.

Footnote \*\*24 Some aspects of the Law revealed Gods will, others His adaptation of that will to enable the measure of obedience possible to sinful hearts and natures. The Law accepted Kingship and legislated for it, Deu 17:17-20, although it was an imperfect thing, chosen by Israel, not God, Judges 8:22-23; 1 Sam 8:4-22. Cp God granting meat, and unfortunate consequences, Num 11:23-34; Ps 106:15.

BECAUSE OF THE HARDNESS OF YOUR HEARTS/were hard- The Heart stood for the whole rational inner being, Deu 10:16; Prov 17:20; Jer 4:4; Ezek 37. Divorce was a concession made because of the rebellious stubbornness of Gods people in refusing to be guided by Gods will and purpose. They failed to love God in reverent obedience, and their neighbour with unselfish care, 22:37-39 (Husband and wife were the closest of neighbours.) A man whose heart and mind was set against his wife, and Gods will for them both, could make life in the home worse than divorce. God hates divorce, but He also hates domestic violence under the cloak (Ruth 3:9) of marriage, Mal 2:16, so divorce could be the lesser of two evils - the less hurtful/disgraceful. Human hearts are still hard. We must each Gods will, insist on aiming at the ideal, and never lose sight of it while doing the realistic best we can as Elders/Pastors. See Appendix.

NOT.. from beginning- Moses permitted divorce, but at best it's only Gods second best. So today any acceptance of divorce and remarriage must be seen to be what it is - a concession to human failure, fostered by a defiant-to-God society.

19:91 tell YOU- An emphatic declaration. Permission to divorce was a concession to sinful hardness of heart. The Lord would be providing for hard hearts to be replaced, Ezek 36:26, so there would no longer be any excuse for not living up to Gods intention - permanent marriage. Anyone divorces. AND remarries commits ADULTERY - If you can't live with a woman you may part, as long as you don't put another woman in her place. Few would see living the rest of their life in a womanless house as an attractive alternative to continuing the marriage. Cp 1 Cor 7:1 - singleness is fine as long as you're happy to live without sex. WHO SO MARRIETH HER.. ADULTERY - [RT] Probably added from 5:32

EXCEPT FOR FORNICATION/marital unfaithfulness Porneia- Forbidden sexual activity. This is given as a rare exception, here only, not as an excuse for divorce in general. An interpretation of what the Lord meant by Porneia which

some the gift of marriage, and some the gift of chastity (Celibacy), 1 Cor 7:1-7. With His gifts God gives the enabling to make good use of them. In Judaism marriage and producing children were not only normal but the Goal, but celibates may include Elijah, Elishah, Jeremiah, Daniel, John Baptist, Paul.

Footnote \*\*25 Wishful thinking has led some to read this as not everyone can accept obedience to 19:9, making it an option to be taken up only by some!

THERE ARE - Different classes of people for whom marriage is better avoided. SOME men (very rarely) are born malformed. SOME had been castrated - as punishment, or because slave eunuchs were valued as Court officials as not having children meant a total commitment to their Ruler, Dan 1, Acts 8:27-39 or as harem officials, Esther 2:3. We may also include those sexually abused in childhood who may find it difficult to be attracted to the opposite sex. Others renounce marriage. KINGDOM- Some freely renounce marriage so they can serve God without its joys/responsibilities/distractions. \*\*26 The Apostle Paul favoured this option, 1 Cor 7:1, 7, 25-28 but only if taken up voluntarily, and by those God had endowed with the ability to do so chastely. Under Law eunuchs were excluded from God's service, Deu 23:1. Later in Isa 56:3-5, God assured them they would enjoy His blessing in serving Him. Remaining celibate AFTER divorce may be included.

LET HIM RECEIVE /ACCEPT IT - Not SEEK it. Abstaining from marriage is for those God calls to such a life. He honours singleness as well as marriage, doesn't regard singles as odd, pitiable, or failures. If this capacity for contented singleness ceases, and the Lord provides a suitable wife/husband they're to take that up.

19:13-15 THEN WERE BROUGHT.. LITTLE CHILDREN - Young enough to be carried by their parents, babies, Lk 18:15 Children are relevant to questions about Marriage - they suffer most in a divorce. It was Jewish custom to bring little children to elders or rabbis (not priests) for a blessing on the evening of Atonement Day, MISHNA SOPHERIM 18:5. This may be the background PUT /PLACE HIS HANDS ON - Expressing affectionate fellowship, and to PRAY FOR THEM - Ask God's blessing on them. Cp Jacob with Joseph's sons, Gen 48:14. Any Christian parent constantly brings their children to Christ in prayer. \*\*27

DISCIPLES REBUKED - Told them not to, 8:26 12:16 16:22 17:18 20:31. They may have felt the Lord was too important and busy to spare the time for this, in spite of 18:1-14. We also may be preoccupied with teaching those old enough to

Footnote \*\*28 By the grace of God and the encouragement of parents, etc quite young children have been moved by the Spirit of God to put their trust in Christ and be saved. But there is in this verse no excuse for going through the motions of making them inheritors of the Kingdom by Christening, or by signing decision cards. In lands where every baby is processed for Salvation by the church the broad way is crowded, the narrow door has to be sought earnestly and the narrow road is trod by few, 7:13-14. Among those who are taught that salvation is only by consciously receiving Christ, and water Baptism is to follow such faith, there's more evidence of lives transformed by Christ.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN belongs to such- See 5:10 The child-like spirit is the spirit of the Kingdom. The consciously helpless are most likely to commit themselves to the Saviour's care. God calls them to serve Him, 5:1-11; 21:31-32 1 Sam 3:1, 8; 1 Ki 3:7; Jer 1:6; Dan 14-21; 1 Cor 1:26-31. We need to teach children while they're receptive. If they want to confess Christ, encourage them to do so, but don't pressure, or work on them emotionally. Children need to get clear in their minds what they want to say, and are doing, in coming to Christ, and our questions may help them to do this. But to process enquirers with questions to which they can say "Yes" tends to pressure them into an empty profession of faith. That Christ said those who come to Him are always welcomed, Jn 6:37 doesn't guarantee Salvation for those who receive the seed on shallow soil, 13:5-7, 2022

## 19:16-20:28 Leadership Ethics - Ambition & Reward

(Peter has asked regarding the Kingdom What's in it for us, 19:27. James and John ask for top positions. The Lord presents two ideas which correct these attitudes among His people - a realisation of God's Grace, 1-16, and a commitment to serve our brothers, 17-34.)

## 19:16-28 Discipleship & Riches

(Mk 10:17-31; Lk 18:18-30. 1 Tim 6:5-10, 17-19; Jas 2:1-10 5:1-6. Divorce is ruining many homes, but so is money as the parents' drive to become rich robs their children of their care and prayers. In much of the world Wealth is the great alternative God, 6:19-24)

19:16 ONE /a man- A ruler, Lk 18:18 GOOD- [RT] Not in earlier Mss but is in Mk 10:17; Lk 18:18 MASTER/Teacher WHAT GOOD THING must I DO- Or what can I do to make myself good enough THAT I MAY HAVE /get ETERNAL LIFE - Life in the blessedness of God's eternal Kingdom. Coming to the Lord to learn how he could be sure of eternal life was fine, but he seems

19.17 WHY CALLEST THOU ME GOOD- [RT] As in Mk and Lk. He was too glib with the word GOOD. Jesus won't accept the title of GOOD without a confession that He is God. This is clearer than ask me about what is good?- [Nes] Why do you expect me to know more about GOODNESS than you have in God's word?

NONE GOOD BUT GOD/only One good- God alone is inherently good. Jesus wasn't denying that He was God. He was rebuking flattery, and challenging him to think whether or not Jesus was God. God is the only source of goodness, Rev 3:17-18. As it must be sought from Him by doing His will, the Lord directs him to the commandments.

IF you want to ENTER INTO LIFE- It's not something he can get, buy, earn, but something he can ENTER - on God's terms, Jn 3:1-16. Only when by Grace you have entered eternal life, do you HAVE it, Jn 3:15; 36:5; 24:6; 40:47; 1 Jn 5:12. KEEP/obey THE COMMANDMENTS- If you want to live with God, obey Him. God is righteous, and must deal with everyone righteously. Conviction of sin and Judgment is generally the result of knowing that and trying to please God through the Law, Rom 2:6-10; 3:20; 7:10; Jas 2:10. Without that the idea of Salvation by believing in Christ makes little sense, and can produce only a nominal commitment to Christ.

19.18-21 WHICH? Do not MURDER- The Lord quotes the Manward command. Thou shalt not covet is replaced by LOVE NEIGHBOUR - Lev 19:18. Mark has Do not defraud- exploit others. Rich often do this, Jas 5:1-6. This command is given last as it was where he was failing. He didn't realise it until the Lord told him to give his wealth to the neighbours who needed it, and trust Jesus to provide for him. If he loved his neighbour as himself, he would be glad to know his giving up luxury had given many poor neighbours an adequate livelihood.

ALL I have KEPT- He is under-sensitive, and over-confident - who could boast he has always loved his neighbour as himself? WHAT do I still LACK - What more do I need to do? Aiming at obedience to rules left him as proudly self-righteous as Paul was, Phil 3:6. But he had no fellowship with God.

IF you want to BE PERFECT- Teleios- Mature, fully developed. As in 5:48 be completely like your Father, as God wants you to be. Freed from serving Mammon

repentance, but only Faith in Christ will bring Salvation, Gal 3:19-29 He must either believe the Lord, or refuse. His refusal showed that mammon was his God

Footnote \*\*29 Money can't be evil or the man would be cursing them by getting rid of his own curse. The command isn't for all - only those with wealth can obey 25:31-46 Lk 16:9.

19.2224 WENT AWAY SORROWFUL /sad- He discovers that He hasn't kept the commandments - he neither loves God with all his heart, nor his neighbour as himself. He was unwilling to pluck out/cut off this Eye/ hand that was keeping him from Life, 18:8-9.

HE HAD GREAT wealth. It is hard for a rich man to ENTER THE KINGDOM- A miracle of God's grace is needed for the conversion of rich or poor, but the rich find it harder to accept it. Covetousness/Greed to keep what one has, as well as to get what others have, is warned against in 6:21-24 13:22 Mk 7:21-22 Lk 12:15; Rom 1:29 Eph 5:3; Col 3:5. A man may have riches without loving them, or love riches without having them, but the more riches one has the more powerful their grip. He didn't own his possessions, they owned him. Today riches have such an appeal that they have twisted men's ideas of morality, and spirituality. Even the Gospel is twisted by many preachers into an offer of health, wealth and success

EASIER FOR A CAMEL - The largest beast in Israel. TO GO THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE - A ridiculous exaggeration, like the plank in the eye, 7:4, or swallowing a camel, 23:24 \*\*30 to shock people into realising that Riches are spiritually dangerous. THAN FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM- Many find this hard to take and rush in to say that riches/ the getting of wealth is God-approved. All of us in the Western world are rich in comparison to most people in the Lord's time, or in the third world today. We must listen to these words as they stand, and let them shock us out of our complacency. That Salvation is impossible as long as he trusts in his riches, Mk 10:24 or for the covetous, 1 Cor 6:10 is a lesser truth.

19.2526 DISCIPLE S.. EXCEEDINGLY AMAZED /greatly astonished- Even after the warnings against riches in 6:19, 24 Our minds prefer to remember the promises that Godliness would be rewarded with riches, Deu 5:3 23:3 28:1-14; Prov 2:24. Standard Jewish thinking was that riches were a sign of God's favour. Today preachers of "Prosperity Gospels" cheerfully ignore 90% of the NT teaching that living in fellowship with Christ crucified is the essential of Christian living WHO

original Aramaic word may have meant either. Other ancient commentators suggested the small gate giving people access when the big city gate was closed was called the Needle's eye. A camel would have to be unloaded and pushed/pulled through on its knees. So, rich people had to be willing to give up their possessions to become disciples. That's true. But the ridiculous impossibility is the point.

It's totally impossible for any man to be saved apart from God's intervention on his behalf. Paul works through this in Rom 1:17-3:20. Salvation by faith isn't an alternative to obeying God, and it isn't an add-on that enables it. God offers salvation to all, and can save even the most improbable, 17:20 Gen 18:14; Job 4:22; Mk 9:23; Lk 1:37.

19:27-28 PETE R.. BEHOLD WE HAVE FORSAKEN ALL /left everything- He still had his home to go back to Mk 1:29 and his boat in Jn 2:13.

WHAT SHALL WE - emphasised. What treasure in heaven, 19:21, will God give us? Like Peter we find it easy to pass lightly over the miracle of God's Grace by which we enter the Kingdom, and think of what reward we'll have. Those of us who avoid the idd of money, may well use that fact to install the idd of pride.

IN THE REGENERATION /renewal - Not our spiritual new birth as in Titus 3:5, but the restoration of National Israel in a visible Kingdom, and perhaps beyond that the totally renewed Heaven-earth, Isa 65:17; 66:22; Mk 10:30; Lk 22:30; Acts 3:21; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21, 5. (Philo used it of the renewal of the earth after the judgment flood; Josephus of the renewal of Israel after a time of hardship.)

WHEN.. THRONE OF HIS GLORY you.. TWELVE THRONES- The Lord ignores Peter's pride and speaks the kind truth. Yes He IS aware of every sacrifice of His disciples and He will reward it, 5:7-12; 6:1-18; 33 JUDGING TWELVE TRIBES- Ruling/being responsible for them as the tribal heads were in the time of Moses. \*\*31 The gathering of the remnant of the 12 tribes in a restored Israel is promised, Isa 65:17-25; 66:14, 19-24; Zech 12:13; Dan 7:9-27; Obad 21. This is taken up in Rom 9:11; Rev 7. Peter sees the need to replace Judas, Acts 1:15-26.

19:29-30 EVERY ONE - In all ages. FORSAKEN/left HOUSES, brothers. OR WIFE - [RT] [Nes] omits. A abandonment of wives would come oddly in a chapter against divorce/separation, but it's in [Nes] Lk 18:29 in a different setting. CHILDREN - The giving up of those born into our marriage, Teknon, but now adult, not the abandoning of little ones - Paidia, 18:3. LANDS/fields - Christians disinherited, or property sold to free them to serve Christ. FOR MY SAK E - See



Footnote \*\*31 Not the church, although they are the gates in Rev 21:12, 14. In Acts the 12 aren't the ruling unit. They join with the elders in Acts 15. Only Peter and John take the lead, with Phillip, Stephen, Barnabas, Paul, James the Lord's brother. A wider sharing in His throne/ judging is seen in 1Cor 6:2 Eph 2:6; Rev 3:21.

BUT MANY .. FIRST.. LAST - An encouragement/warning Peter's pride that could measure his action against that of the rich young man and smugly court on a great reward in heaven is told the parable that follows. MANY has a warning note, 7:13, 7:22 The Lord makes clear that every sacrifice made for Him will be amply rewarded, but we mustn't be concerned with how great it will be, or if our work and reward is greater than that of others. Cp reversals in 53-12

## CHAPTER 20

### 201-19 The Generosity of God - Vineyard Parable

(God is like a generous landowner who leaves none without the chance to work, and He rewards generously. But His grace not our idea of our worth, sets the reward. Cp Lk 15:28-32 resentment of elder son at Father's generosity and Jonah 4:1-4. It doesn't picture the Judgment of Rev 20, or the Bema, 2Cor 5:10 - no one complains at either. Certainly all believers receive salvation, but none of them earn it. This story adds to 19:29-30 the truth that His sovereign Grace is generous, and He does as He chooses. And warns that in this life a greedy awareness of God's generosity to others will spoil our joy, and the Lord's pleasure in us. We're to bear this in mind when we begin to resent anything, or be jealous of anyone.)

201-7 FOR The parable is given to explain what the Lord has just been saying THE KINGDOM.. IS LIKE a landowner.. WENT OUT EARLY - Their working day was from sunrise until the stars appeared in the sky. Our Lord goes out of His way to call people to be His workers - accomplish His purposes in this world. In relation to God we are His children, in relation to His work we are workers. TO HIRE men to work - Those hoping for work would gather in the village market place. We're to pray that He will do this, 9:38 but He deals directly with all the men.

THE ELEVENTH HOUR - With only one hour of working time left FOUND OTHERS.. AND SAID.. WHY?- This sounds like rebuke, but they may have come from a neighbouring village despairing of finding work there. A Parable doesn't need to explain - there seem to be no other hirers, and the workers available are just there each time. There are unlimited opportunities to serve this Master, 9.37.

THEY answered NO MAN has HIRED US- In the Western world there's no longer need for older folk to work, and often no opportunity. In spiritual things the Lord in grace is still calling people both to salvation and to service who have wasted most of their lives, if only they realise the emptiness of their idle lives. We may need to help such to see the opportunities.

208-12 When evening came.. pay THEIR wages- Under God's Law they were paid at the end of each day's work in case the money was needed to buy food etc, Lev 19:13; Deu 24:15; Job 72; Mal 3:5; Jas 5:4. BEGINNING with THE LAST - Those who had done the least work, were paid first, as in 1930

The workers. RECEIVED each A PENNY / denarius- A silver coin, the proper wage for a full day's work. They came when He called them, and trusted His promise to treat them fairly. Those who trust His Grace find He treats them with extravagant generosity.

So.. hired FIRST- Who had done a full day's work, expected.. MORE. But RECEIVED A PENNY / denarius- The correct wage which they had agreed to. THEY began to grumble- Unsatisfied with their wages, Lk 314. That we can't imagine any of the Redeemed in Glory so grumbling at their Lord warns us against such grumbling in this life. THESE.. MADE EQUAL to US- From their point of view it was very unfair. More work more pay, is usual. As all we have, work or reward, is a gift of God's Grace it's wrong for us to compare ourselves, work, reward, etc with that of others, as Peter seems to contrast their sacrifice and the rich man's failure in 1927. Grumbling is ruled out for those in whose lives the God of Grace has condescended to work, Phil 2:12-15

2013-16 BUT HE ANSWERED.. FRIEND- The word shows the speaker has a kindly attitude, but is used in the NT only when those spoken to are wrong

tendency to resent God's grace to others, and be jealous of Christians or churches which seem more successful than we are. To do so shows our slave-of-the-Law self-righteousness that appreciates Grace so little when it sees it applied to others. Grace IS UNFAIR by its very nature, because it gives people more than they deserve, Lk 15:25-32 Rom 9:14-33. It's a wicked slander to think/say that God has wronged us, 25:24-30. What we receive from the Lord is a reward in relation to His promises, a gift in relation to our worthlessness

IS IT NOT LAWFUL /Don't I have the right TO DO WHAT I want- As Creator of the universe, God has the right to do what He pleases, according to the purpose He had in creating, Isa 45:9, Jer 18:4-10, Rom 9:21-23. What He has promised to do is the only constraint on His actions. IS THINE EYE EVIL /are you envious- Annoyed, jealous, as in 6:19-23, Prov 23:1-7; 28:22, Mk 7:22. That he had been paid the right wage was satisfactory to him AS LONG AS NO-ONE ELSE GOT A BETTER DEAL. Saul eyed David, 1 Sam 18:9. Like Gehazi, they are envious of those who are wealthy, they grumble about the rewards others have in the Lord's Work if they seem better than their own. God asks uncomfortable questions - as in Gen 38:13, 4:6-9 - calls to acknowledge wrong doing and repent.

BECAUSE I AM GOOD /generous- This is the whole point of the parable. God is GENEROUS in His rewards, and perhaps all the more so with those who do not bargain with Him and demand the wages they set. Those who cast themselves upon His mercy find mercy beyond their dreams. Behind that mercy is compassion - the needs of the workers and their families would be similar, whatever hours the men worked. If it was truly not the fault of the "last" men, the Owner allowed for that. God who knows all things knows what each of us would have done if given the opportunities, and can reward us for a willingness to work, etc. This calls us to abandon competitive attitudes and greed. Those who aim at being first will be disappointed, no matter how obvious it is that they, like these workers, had worked the longest hours. The Last, with no bargaining power, who did what the Lord asked and left it at that, will be surprised at His generosity. Cp Isa 55:8-9.  
\*\*33

We're so bound by self-righteousness that commentators have tried to justify the owner's actions by suggesting the late-comers worked harder, etc. But it wasn't anything in their natures, attitudes, or working that earned their pay - the Lord's generosity alone was responsible.

will ingress/ heart attitude, etc of all, and see the greatness of the Andrew that brings the Peter to Christ, Jn 14:41. FOR MANY BE CALLED, BUT FEW CHOSEN [RT]

Footnote \*\*33 Although this doesn't represent the Judgment seat of Christ, a summary may be relevant. Everyone will receive his praise of God, 1 Cor 4:5; Everyone's work manifested under testing by fire, 1 Cor 3:13. Motives considered - everyone give account of himself to God, Rom 14:10-12 1 Cor 13:1-3, and receive the things done in the body, 2 Cor 5:9-10.

## 2017-28 The Lord, James & John - Greatness in Service

(As in 16:21, 17:22-23, when the Lord speaks of His death, the disciples ignore His words and keep their minds on sharing His Kingdom power and glory. Patiently He teaches them to reject the idea of earthly greatness 18:1-5, and follow His example and take up humble service, 20:26-28. James and John want greatness in terms of being close to Him - but not nailed to crosses on either side of Him. Ambition and godly zeal have their place, Rom 10:19, 11:11-14; Heb 10:24, but seeking praise and greatness is spiritually deadening Jn 5:44, and must be put to death, Gal 2:20. We must not excuse our greed for power, wealth, etc by claiming this applies to the Jews, not Christians, or is for Christians living at the sub-Pentecostal level. They're equally rebuked in the Epistles. The unlimited promises, Mk 11:20-25 Jn 14:13-14, are shown not to cover self-seeking requests.)

2017-19 JESUS.. TOOK THE TWELVE aside- Mk 10:32-34 Lk 18:31-34 He repeats the warning of 16:21; 17:22 but now in the setting of ambition, greatness and reward. He will be made last by the Rulers, and willingly take the lowest place BETRAYED.. CONDEMNED TO DEATH- A formal legal verdict, 26:66 27:1. TO GENTILES- Non-Jews. TO be mocked- Made fun of, humiliated, 27:29-31, 41. SCOURGE/flogged- A public humiliation- Roman citizens were spared this, Acts 27:26 CRUCIFY - He had already said His followers must take up their cross 10:38 16:24 His death would lack the solitary dignity of the death of Moses, Deu 34:1-8, or the glory of Elijah's departure, 2 Ki 2:11-14. It would be agonising, sordid butchery. The total rejection and humiliation is made clear.

THE THIRD DAY HE SHALL RISE/Will be raised AGAIN- And beyond that, He will be proclaimed FIRST, in the Universe, Phil 2:9. He told them where, how, and by whom He would be killed, as well as when He would be raised, 16:21;

Lord's words in 17:20 may have seemed to be reassuring. Perhaps this may have made it seem to James and John a good time to get ahead of Peter. The Lord's eye was on His sufferings and the glory to follow, Heb 12:2-3; 1 Pet 1:11. They had their eye on the glory alone. His rule is rightly assumed, and in a sense the wonderful possibilities assured to believing prayer are taken up 17:20 but misdirected.

202223 JESUS SAID You don't KNOW- They had no idea of the cost of qualifying for, or exercising the position. They wanted a crown/throne without a cross, but suffering comes before Glory, 16:21-28 2 Tim 2:12. When we realise this, Jas 4:3, Rom 8:14-24 is a comfort.

Can you- Dunamai- The enabling strength to DRINK OF THE CUP- Of bitter suffering which He had just referred to, and faced finally in Gethsemane, 26:39-42. What one drinks one takes in, absorbs, is affected by. Cup was used of sufferings endured under the Judgment wrath of God, Job 21:20 Ps 11:6; 75:7-9; Isa 51:17, 22 Jer 25:15, 17, 27-28 49:12 Lam 4:21; Ezek 23:31-32 Hab 2:16 BE BAPTISED- [RT] Mk 10:38-39 The Lord was immersed in His suffering, Ps 69:1-4, as we are by water in baptism, Rom 6:4.

WE can- They were confident, as Peter would be in 26:33-35. They are confident, but they sleep while He faces the drinking of His cup. It's good for young people to be eager to serve their Lord. The Lord cools rashness and balances their enthusiasm, without crushing it. We must also broaden their understanding, but value even their wildest dreams. God's Word teaches us that we CAN'T live the Christian life on our own terms, but CAN and MUST, on the Lord's terms.

You will DRINK from MY CUP- In some measure share His rejection and suffering, but not in the atoning aspects of His suffering and death. James died a martyr's death, Acts 12:2, John lived a martyr's life, on Patmos. All who are the Lord's servants share His crossbearing, Gal 2:20 AND BE BAPTISED- [RT]. BUT TO SIT.. IS NOT for me TO GIVE/grant- The eternal counsels of God had planned all things before the Creation. Jockeying for perks was totally out of place. The Lord took up our humanity, and modelled dependent sonship for us Jn 15:7-10; 17:18-23 Heb 2:10-11; 4:14-16 1 Jn 4:17. in total submission to the prepared plan/will of the father, Jn 8:29 12:50 They needed to be like He was, not like they would have chosen to be if in His position. And so done. These places GIVEN/belong TO THEM/those.. PREPARED by MY FATHER- Not earned, but prepared for someone who would be prepared for it. Cp 2:53-4 Jn 14:2. In

explanation of those faced. THEY THAT ARE GREAT that might officials  
EXERCISE AUTHORITY - Those in positions of power make others feel their  
power.

BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG WITH YOU - That's not the way Leaders  
among My people are to treat others. Because in God's purposes it isn't like that, in  
our thinking and actions it mustn't be allowed to be, Lk 22:6 Leadership in His  
Kingdom is sacrificial and benevolent. Ambition to gain and use power for self -  
to earn praise, reward, respect, and enforce one's will on others - is ruled out by  
the nature of the Kingdom. It's the kind of Kingdom that's entered, received, and  
enjoyed by those who are childlike, 18:1-5; 19:13-15; 23:30 etc.

Whoever wants to become GREAT AMONG YOU - Be thought important, play a  
big part. The desire for greatness may be a taking up of Faith of God's revealed  
will as for Abraham, Gen 12:2, and the Disciples, 4:19. It may be joining Satan in  
his rebellion, Gen 3:5; 11:4; Isa 14:14. BE YOUR MINISTER/servant-  
Diakonos - One who serves or waits on others. A leader must use any power he has  
in serving/helping others, as the rich women ministered to the Lord's needs,  
27:55 Lk 8:3. We're the Lord's Doulos - slave, and to take up the role of Diakonos-  
servant of everyone else - glad to fetch and carry for them. Human nature would  
agree with Plato the ancient Greek who said no one could be happy if he's the  
slave of anyone at all. The Lord disagrees.

20:27-28 Whoever wants to be first - The most important one. BE YOUR  
SERVANT/slave - Doulos - A slave with no rights of his own. He exists solely for  
others. We should all accept this in both the church and the home, Eph 5:21-33  
Phil 2:1-21; Col 3:12-21; 1 Pet 5:1-7. Just AS THE SON OF MAN CAME -  
From His eternal state. He, as He faces Jerusalem, declares Himself as the true  
King who lives and rules solely for the benefit of His subjects. He is the first who  
makes Himself Last - and becomes even more truly first as a result. NOT TO BE  
MINISTERED UNTO/served BUT TO MINISTER/serve - As the suffering-  
servant of the Lord/Messiah, Isa 52:13-53:12 As The Son of Man - Man in the  
Image of God as purposed in Gen 1:26 - the Lord patterned the ideal for all God's  
children, Jn 1:13-17.

29, 1982, 2011. The who was understood as an open him and so on as req 2 Cor. 5:21. Only as we grasp the wonder of the atoning work of Christ are we liberated to work sacrificially for others - otherwise like Moses we am at killing oppressors, Ex 21:1-12 The church can establish social justice only on the terms of the cross The Godward aspect of the atonement is unpopular today - but see it in Isa 53:10 Jn 3:16 2 Cor 5:21. Cp Jn 10:11, 15, 17-18 15:13 1 Tim 2:6; 1 Jn 3:16 Some Jews understood Moses as offering his life in the place of Israel. in Ex 32:30-34

## 20292339 Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as the Messiah

(In 4:23-18:35 Matthew records His words of truth, and works of Compassion and Power in Galilee He now brings His message to the central core of the nation of Israel, and presents Himself to them as Israel's promised Messiah-Saviour-King. The Lord displays His right to make His great demands re marriage, money, and sacrificial service The main issue then, and now, is the Person of Christ)

## 202934 Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

(Mk 10:46-52 Lk 18:35-43. Cp 9:27)

2029AS.. leaving \*\*34 JERICHO.. TWO BLIND MEN- Mark mentions only one blind man named Bartimaeus, but as in 8:28-34 Matthew mentions two people. CRIED OUT/shouted HAV E MERCY ON US O LORD, SON OF DAVID- A patriotic name for Messiah, as expected Deliverer, Isa 29:18 35:5. That a Gentile woman and Blind Men recognised Him as Son of David, 9:27, 15:22 was a reproach on the blindness of Israel which failed to do so. These men may picture the way Blind Israel will receive its sight and recognises her Saviour, after she has been crying to the Lord for Deliverance, Isa 35:5; 42:7; Zech 12:10 Rom 11:25-26 2 Cor 3:16; Rev 1:7. Lord- recognises His person, Have Mercy- His work, Son of David- His Messiahship, 1:1; 9:27, 12:23 15:22 21:9, 15 Jesus doesn't announce Himself by this title, but accepts it.

2031-34 REBUKED/told them to be quiet- 8:26 The crowd wanted to talk to the Lord and hear what He was saying undistracted by their loud shouting This warns us as Christ's followers against pride and selfishness that discourages others from coming to Him, 15:23 19:13 BUT THEY shouted louder- A strengthening

LORD.. OUR EYES.. OPENED/We want our sight- Whatever was causing their blindness their eyes were no more use than when eyes are shut JESUS.. TOUCHED THEIR EYES- Mark and Luke record His saying Your Faith has saved you IMMEDIATELY they received SIGHT AND FOLLOWED HIM- As disciples. The ability to follow is the proof of healing, as beginning to walk in fellowship with the Lord Jesus proves the new birth.

Footnote \*\*34 In Lk 18:35-43 this, or a similar event happened as they were entering the city. OT Jericho was 1 mile from NT Jericho, so it may have happened between them. Or as Jericho was a small town they may have been alerted to who it was as He passed them to enter the city, and may have got ahead to wait for Him as He left.

## CHAPTER 21

### 21:1-11 The Triumphant Entry of the Humble King

(The crowd honors Him as God's Messenger-prophet, 19:11. He makes it clear that He comes in the role of the Servant-of-God King, offering peace Mk 11:1-11; Lk 13:33-35; 19:28-38; Jn 12:12-19)

21:1-3 As they approached JERUSALEM- Matthew hasn't recorded earlier visits given in John's Gospel, but has prepared us to expect opposition, 16:21; 10:1; 20:12-18. CAME TO.. MOUNT OF OLIVES- It's separated from Jerusalem by the Kidron valley. JESUS SENT TWO DISCIPLES.. ASS/donkey TIED, with her COLT.. BRING THEM.. tell him THE LORD- reminds us of His Deity. needs- speaks of His humanity. HE will SEND THEM- Kings claimed the right to commandeer animals, as did Rabbis. He could have been claiming such a right, or as He had arranged an upper room for the Passover meal, Mk 14:12-16. He may have arranged for these donkeys, and given this password. God gave Man dominion over animals Gen 1:26. The Messiah, Son of Man, exercised that by riding an untrained young donkey, Mk 11:2. In self-critical moods I'm glad the Lord needs and uses donkeys!

21:4-5 FULFILLER/D/fulfill.. THE PROPHET - Isa 62:11; Zech 9:9. By fulfilling this prophecy the Lord Jesus deliberately proclaimed Himself to be the Messiah. \*\*Sir Robert Anderson, in The Coming Prince, more than 100 years ago produced figures to show that this coincided with the end of the 69th week of years of Daniel's prophecy. Next, Messiah would be cut off, Dan 9:26. Say to THE



giving the Law at Sinai. The Lord revealed Himself in Majesty, Power, and Fear. Here God on a Donkey is a vivid picture of the Lord's Grace in stooping to our level to be our useful Saviour revealing Himself in meekness, gentleness, amid joyful singing. Christ goes public and proclaims that He IS Christ - this kind of Christ.

on A COLT, THE FOAL OF a donkey- Literally a donkey, the son of a burden-carrying-animal. As usual the Hebrew poetic parallel statements give emphasis. This was an ordinary donkey that Jesus rode. As Matthew knew well the Hebrew parallel statement doesn't necessarily require two animals, but he states clearly that two animals were involved. As the colt hadn't been ridden before, being with its mother would have been reassuring in a crowd, Mk 11:2-7; Lk 19:30-35

21:6-11 THE DISCIPLES.. ASS/donkey.. COLT - Both were decked for riding for this special occasion, even if only the colt was ridden. placed THEIR cloaks on them- As officers put theirs under Jehu, 2 Ki 9:13 Jesus sat- on the cloaks as a saddle. It was normal for people to come to the holy city on foot, yet He chose to ride into Jerusalem. The Leaders were already against Him, 15:1-14. With the support of thousands of Galileans He now throws down a challenge to them.

SPREAD THEIR GARMENTS/clothes- Symbolising that they placed themselves under him. Covering the dusty road with cloaks and leafy branches was an Eastern way of honouring an important guest - as we may lay red carpet for royalty. shouted HOSANNA - Save now! Ps 118:25-26 Originally a prayer to God, but had become shout of joyful praise to Him. (Ps 113-118 were sung at the great Feasts - Passover, etc.) They were proclaiming that Jesus was sent by God as King Mk 11:10 Lk 19:38 Jn 12:13 Before the rejection and Cross the people acclaim Him, but will do so fully when He returns in glory, Ps 118:26-29 BLESSED IS HE - God Bless the One who comes in the Lord's Name, to accomplish His purposes. HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST - In the presence of God

WHEN Jesus entered JERUSALEM.. CITY WAS stirred- The word is used of the earthquake, 27:51. A crowded Eastern city can produce a storm/ earthquake of people easily! WHO?.. JESUS THE PROPHET - The joyful enthusiasm of the Galilean crowd fell short of realising who He was, unless they meant the one Moses promised, Deu 18:15-18 Jn 6:14 NAZARETH.. GALILEE - Their pride in Jesus was natural, but would not impress Jerusalem, 2:23 Jn 1:45-46 7:52

taught, Lk 19:47. CAST/drove OUT ALL .. buying/ selling- He is a merciful, modest King, 20:21:9, but a righteous Judge. He expelled the exploiters, and the exploited. We need to be wary of commercialised religion - money making schemes for supporting the Lord's work. Cp Isa 1:11-13 \*\*35

Footnote \*\*35 The Law expected men to bring animals from home to Jerusalem as sacrifices. People coming long distances couldn't, so, as with the tithe, Deu 14:22-29, Passover lambs could be bought in Jerusalem. As the priests had to certify an animal was fit for sacrifice they were free to set high prices for inferior animals. Worshipping God had become a big business monopoly. Josephus and others said that priestly families were wealthy, greedy, corrupt and violent. The name of Ananias, Lk 3:2 was linked with booths outside Jerusalem for the sale of animals for sacrifices. These booths seemed to have been moved into the Temple court about AD 30. The Gentiles being crowded out, despised. Cp Canaanite/Merchant, Zech 14:21.

MONEY CHANGERS- There was no Jewish money. The Priests ruled that only coins issued by Tyre and Sidon could be given to God in the Temple - as if God wouldn't accept whatever His people used in daily life. The money changers charged perhaps 20% for changing donations into "Holy Money." The Temple collection boxes were constantly emptied and the coins used again and again. DOVES- The sacrifice offered by poor people, Lk 22:4 The Lord Jesus had come suddenly to His Temple, but his purifying presence was unwelcome, Mal 3:1-5.

21:13 IT IS WRITTEN MY HOUSE - Where God had entered visibly to dwell among His people, 1 Ki 8:10-11. He had the right to clean up His Father's house. BE CALLED - Will earn the name of, be known as, a HOUSE OF PRAYER - Mk 11:17. The Temple was built to encourage people to come to the Lord in prayer/praise/worship, 1 Ki 8; Isa 56:7; 60:7; Lk 23:7, 18-19; Acts 3:1. Temple incense symbolised prayer, Ps 141:2; Rev 5:8. Prayer - fellowship with God - needs to be central in all we do.

A DEN OF THIEVES/robbers- The profits of Temple trading were made at the expense of worshippers. But Robbers' dens are places from which robbers go out to rob, and return to share out their loot, so it may refer to the fact that these priests used the Temple for their own profit, but worse still they were living sinful lives outside the Temple while worshipping there boasting they were saved/safe as God's people. This hypocrisy made their destruction certain, Jer 7:1-15 \*\*36

the way into Jerusalem with the noisy, light-heartedness typical of children when enjoying themselves. Still it honoured God a great deal more than the noise of marketing that the priests had permitted.

Footnote \*\*36 Even in caring professions, human nature easily comes to think of everything in terms of whether they make life easier, and richer for the Doctors, Nurses, Teachers, etc. No matter how idealistic any Christian Movement starts out to be we tend to settle down to use it for OUR purposes, and become indifferent to the fact that our selfish, cold-heartedness prevents Gods Gospel being effective in saving sinners/transforming saints. People see our life-style as being approved by our God, and won't listen to the Gospel. We must take care how we behave in the house of God, 1Tim 3:15, for it and we are holy, 1 Cor 3:17, and not allow our lives to be polluted with Greed. Even a simple Assembly may suffer from trafficking in praise, power and personal importance

BABES/children- Nepios- Too young for rational speech, SUCKLINGS/ infants-nursing babies. PERFECTED/ordained- Or trained, brought to perfection. PRAISE - LXX Ps 8:1-2. The Hebrew has Strength. Not a training of their efforts into faultless poetry/music/spiritual worship. The Lord points them to a Scripture that says the happy, irrational noises made by toddlers enjoying their playing, or babies jiggling in their mother's arms can be a joy to the all-wise God of Glory. This is also true spiritually. Recent converts may not express worship in technically correct doctrine, or artistically beautiful words and music. But if their enthusiastic, unmusical, unintellectual noisy praise comes from a heart of love and thankfulness it's perfectly acceptable to God. So we must not despise it.

## 21:18-22 Jesus Curses a Fig Tree

(The fuller account covering two days is in Mk 11:12-13, 24, 24. The Fig tree pictures Israel, Hos 9:10, Lk 13:6-9, coming under Gods curse for bearing no fruit for Him. See Mic 7:1.)

21:18-19 HE was hungry- Truly human. A FIG TREE \*\*37 by the road- Under the Law travellers were allowed to help themselves to fruit that grew by the road, 12:1. HE FOUND.. LEAVES- The main crop came later, Mk 11:13. But if there were no early figs, Isa 28:4, which start before the leaves, and no little figs developing at the base of the leaves, there would be no crop that season.

LET NO FRUIT GROW/never bear fruit- Having failed at this time it won't be given another chance, Lk 13:6-9. Cp Gen 3:22, 24, Jer 8:13, Hos 9:16, Mic 7:1.

next day that the withering was obvious to the disciples, Mk 11:20 They showed no interest in the symbolism, but were interested in the exercise of such power. IF you HAVE FAITH- Really believe/respond in obedient faith to God and His promises. DOUBT- Hesitate, waver- as in Mk 11:23 Acts 10:20 Rom 4:20 14:23 Jas 1:6, Jude 22 Doubt in Scripture isn't merely uncertainty, but from Gen 3 onwards doubt is a sinful reluctance to believe God Loves us, that His will is best for us, and that He will keep His promises.

Footnote \*\*37 Fig, Olive, and Vine are all used as symbols of Israel's potential fruitfulness for God, Judges 9:8-13 Ps 80:8, Isa 5:1-7. In 24:32 Rom 11:11-26 Rev 11:3-4. The vine symbolises God in relation to us as believers, Jn 15:1-10. Israel will be restored to being fruitful to God in the Millennium, Isa 27:6, Rom 11:11-12, 25:7.

The smallness of our faith in laying hold of God won't stop Him doing His will, 17:20 Here it's a single-minded desire and commitment to seeing God's will done.  
\*\*38

SAY to MOUNTAIN.. INTO THE SEA ..DONE - A volcanic eruption such as that of Krakatoa can make this happen literally, but prayer isn't to aim at such a disaster. He may have been quoting a proverb about doing an impossible thing, as in 17:20 Zech 4:7. No one goes around talking to mountains, but disciples go around talking about mountain-sized problems - things that exalt themselves against God, Isa 2:12-17; 2 Cor 10:5. Instead they should talk to God about them, confident that He can solve the problems, rectify the wrongs, establish the good

ALL you ASK - The prayer and asking is dealing with God. God can and will give you what you ask, 7:7-11. Faith isn't something a man has, but a practical relationship of trust that the one praying has in God, 8:10 9:2, 22 29 15:28 17:20 If only the Disciples will learn to rely on God in prayer, their great future needs will be met.

## 21:23-24 Hostile Encounters with Jewish Leaders

(The Lord's actions challenged the rulers to recognise Him as Messiah. They challenge His authority, and try to trap Him into saying something that will put Him at odds with the Roman authorities, or the patriotic Jewish crowds. He brushes them aside and confronts them with the reality that they're defying God and His purposes of blessing for Israel. Parables illustrate this, and that God will form a new people. As ever the Lord respects

Gentiles, MK 11:27-28 BY WHAT AUTHORITY? - What right have you to do as you are doing? Cp 96. The Law had the authority of God and Moses.

Footnote \*\*38 What men may call FAITH - Norman Vincent Peale's teaching about how to make use of God, Kenneth Hagin's "How to Write Your Own Ticket with God," etc is godless wishful thinking. God loves and cares for us, and we as His children should constantly put ourselves into His hands for His blessing, but the exact nature of what is best for us eternally may be unclear. We must join our Lord in saying IF.. but Thy will be done, 2639. I can't pray with confidence that I will always enjoy perfect health but I can pray with confidence that whatever my health I may live to please Him. Prayer isn't asking God to enable US to do things, but that HE will do things, and, if He wills, we play a part in them. Paul accepted, and rejoiced that continuing suffering was God's good will for him, 2 Cor 12:7-9. We can be confident as we pray for repentance from pride, selfishness, moral evil or false doctrine. We can pray in confident faith that the Cross will save and bless people, Jn 15:7-8; 2 Cor 1:3-7.

WHO GAVE THIS AUTHORITY? - The Lord had acted confidently and dramatically, as of right. THEY claimed the right to decide what should be done in the nation, and in the Temple. They were angry that He acted without their approval when they were God's ruling agents in Israel! 21:43 They had already claimed that He was empowered by the Devil, 12:24 Authority to serve God/speak in His Name, comes from heaven, Jn 3:27. The Lord gives gifts for service to men, Eph 4:8. It's for us to be obedient to His call, 28:18-20 Acts 20:24 26:19 Gal 1:1; 1 Tim 1:12 2 Tim 1:12

21:24 27 I WILL ASK YOU - I is emphasised. In their culture counter-questions were used to clarify the situation WHICH OF YOU answer I WILL TELL YOU - Jesus is claiming the right to have His question answered, so that He will be able to give them an adequate and helpful answer.

John's baptism, where did IT come from? - John had demanded that men repent, be baptised in readiness for the Kingdom, and had pointed Christ out as The Coming One, Lamb of God, etc. They had investigated him, Jn 1:19-34 If they acknowledged John as the God-sent fore-runner, they must accept Jesus as the authorised Messiah. The authority of John, and the authority of Jesus went together - the source of one was logically the source of the other. HEAVEN? - Did GOD send Him, was he speaking GOD's message - or merely his own human ideas. We have the answer in Jn 16.

Passover made a real danger. That the crowd were more honest, and right in their response to John and Jesus, is clear in 4:24-25; 7:28-29; 9:8, 33-34; 12:15, 23; 14:13-14; 34:36; 15:29; 32:21:8-11.

WE CANNOT TELL /don't know- Publicly forfeiting any moral authority, by claiming ignorance to guard their own interest. NEITHER will I TELL YOU- John's witness had been within the bounds of orthodox tradition. They confessed they were incompetent to judge the matter. When they refused to acknowledge John as being sent by God, they ruled out the possibility of accepting Jesus as God-sent. So instead of stating the truth to them He gave them a parable which should make them come up with the correct answer for themselves.

## 21:28-22:14 The Rulers' Rejection of Jesus - 3 Parables

(Their rejection of John Baptist, of the Son of God, and of the promised Kingdom)

### 21:28-32 The Parable of the Two Sons

(Jesus makes them face the question - who are really God's people? Those who openly disobey God, repent, are forgiven and begin to do His will - or those who never do His will although they make a show of doing so. The failure of official Israel under its leaders is set out in 3:7-10; 8:11-12; 12:38-42; 13:10-17; 15:1-9; 16:5-12. This had been highlighted by the cleansing of the Temple and symbolised in the judgment on the fig tree. Those who thought they were in the Kingdom are shown to be tares, 13:24-30. Cp 23:4; Rom 2:17-25. Those clearly outside the Kingdom respond to Grace and are welcomed in. In Matthew we see that saving Faith is obedient - goes out to work, produces fruit for the Master, and wears the wedding garment He has provided.)

21:28-30 WHAT do you THINK?- A story to help them understand the situation they were in. A MAN HAD TWO SONS.. TO THE FIRST \*\*39 SAID.. SON Teknon- My Child. My Boy.. An affectionate request. WORK TODAY - God takes the initiative. Salvation comes from God alone. I WILL NOT - A blunt, disrespectful refusal. BUT.. REPENTED - Metamelomai - To regret, a change of heart, used in 2:13-2; 27:3; 2 Cor 7:8; Heb 7:21. So, it means he regretted his attitude and went and did what his father wanted. (The usual word for repentance - Metanoia - is a rational change of mind.) The Tax-collectors etc had openly thrown off obedience to God's Law, but some repented, Lk 18:10-14; 19:2-9. And later,

It's not enough to know and agree to the Father's will. We need to deny self - its preferences and protests - take up the cross and do His will. An enthusiastic reception of the Gospel doesn't always make one a true and fruitful Believer, 135-6, 2021.

21:31 Which.. DID THE WILL OF THE /what his FATHER wanted?- Both were sons, and Israel included both those who had defied God, yet repented and responded to God's Grace and those who spoke beautifully to God, and ignored Grace THE FIRST - The Chief Priests and Elders gave the right answer - REAL obedience is better than PROFESSED obedience

Footnote \*\*39[RT]. [Nes] puts this on second. Mss vary to an unusual degree But [RT] is correct if it was the refusal of the first that meant the request was given to the second. Some Mss give the polite but disobedient son preference, as to their mind upon refusal of a parental request was unforgivable.

JESUS.. VERILY I SAY /tell YOU- A solemn announcement. PUBLICANS /tax collectors- Who collected taxes for the Romans, the oppressors of God's people. AND HARLOTS /prostitutes- The sexually immoral. Both of these had obviously disqualified themselves from God's Kingdom. GO INTO are entering THE KINGDOM- Enjoy the blessings of living under God's rule. See Lk 7:36-50 Lk 15:1-2; Acts 20:21; Rom 14:17. BEFORE /ahead of YOU- Present tense- They are going into the Kingdom already, and you are not as you're refusing. Your saying YES, I GO is pointless unless you repent, and receive Messiah the King of God's promised Kingdom. As long as they maintained their present attitude their refusal to respond with obedient Faith to John and Jesus ruled them out - as refusal to repent, and believe in the Saviour still does.

21:32 FOR - Explains what He has just said. JOHN CAME - To you people of Israel. IN /to show you THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS- John LIVED OT righteousness- Love for God, and concern for the welfare of men, Prov 8:20 John had put God first in an extreme form and challenged them to repent and put God first in ordinary life as soldiers, tax-collectors, Lk 3:10-14. He came to make paths straight, 3:3, by demanding Righteous living and proclaiming that God was going to provide away of Righteous living / the Spirit - which He did in Christ, 2 Pet 1:4.

You did not believe him- Their ignorance was a pretence They had refused to believe. BUT THE PUBLICANS /tax collectors.. BELIEVED- And showed they

consequences. It is the truth remained hidden to most hearers, 13:10-17. Now the time of open confrontation had come, and He made the truth obvious to them. The adequate provision, the disgraceful abuse of Grace by those to whom it's shown, and the Lord's patience in trying to bring sinners to repentance is clear. The centrality of the Son in His Coming, and the transfer of the Kingdom from the Jews to the Church sums up Matthew's Gospel.)

21:33A HOUSE HOLDER/landowner PLANTED A VINEYARD - God planted the vineyard, Ex 15:17; Deu 32:12-14; Neh 9:23-25 Ps 80:8-16 Ezek 16:9-14. \*\*40 HEDGED/put a wall round it- LXX Isa 5:1-2, the Hebrew says He dug it up. Walls kept out foxes and wild bears, Song 2:15; Ps 80:13 The Lord walled Israel off from the nations, Num 23:9, and defended it, Ps 125:2; Isa 26:1; 27:3; Zech 2:5.

Footnote \*\*40 Israel as a vine, etc Deu 32:32 Ps 80:8-16 Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21; Ezek 15:1-6; 19:10 Hos 10:1.

A WINEPRESS.. BUILT A WATCHTOWER- So that a guard could watch against thieves when the grapes were ripe. Everything needed was provided, as the Lord had done for Israel, Ex 15:1, onward; Ps 80:8-11; Isa 5:1-2 God did this all in Love for them, and He had total right to His part in the shared blessings. The Love God has shown to us, also commits us to honour Him with obedience, 28:18-20 Jn 14:15; 15:7-15; Rom 12:1-10 Gal 2:20

LET IT RENTED the vineyard to some farmers- Who had the use of the vineyard on condition they paid the owner a share of the crop each year, Song 8:12 In the OT it was the vineyard that failed and was judged, Ps 80:12, 16; Isa 5:4; Jer 2:21-22; Ezek 15:6; 19:10-14. Here the Lord focuses on the Tenants, as He is fading the Head Tenants, 21:23 WENT INTO A FAR COUNTRY /on a journey- The vineyard would supply him with good wine if he lived in a land where grapes couldn't be grown. His absence gives the Tenants a free hand. When the Lord had settled Israel in the land He withdrew from constant intervention, Deu 34:10-12. This gave them freedom of action - a chance to become responsible servant-sons, or as they chose, drift into apostasy. The Lord still wants us to be sons, not slaves or robots, Rom 8:1-30 Gal 3:21-29 5:1-26

21:34-39 WHEN THE TIME.. SENT SERVANTS.. collect fruit- As in 23:30-35 Isa 6:8; Jer 7:21-25 Acts 7:52 Heb 1:1. The Tenants - Israel under its leaders.



on behalf of His Father, and He is FINAL. God has nothing more to offer those who reject Him except terrible judgment, Heb 1:1-3; 10:26-31. THEY WILL REVERENCE/respect MY SON- Heb 1:29. They might suspect servants could have been impostors. The son was clearly genuine. THIS IS THE HEIR.. KILL HIM- They recognised him. Their action was totally inexcusable. The failure of the Rulers to acknowledge Jesus was a deliberate action, not ignorance Jn 11:47-53

LET US SEIZE ON/take HIS INHERITANCE - They may have assumed the Father was dead, but the law in Galilee seems to have allowed tenants to claim land when rent hadn't been paid for some years. As greedy materialists they were blind to any possible punishment - the absent Landowner was unred to them. (Note the only lapse from blind greed and hatred in Acts 5:33-40) That God was invisible left the religious leaders free to ignore Him and His purposes, and use their position and Temple for their own purposes, Jn 11:48 Carnal Christians/False Prophet leaders also deny the Lord, and convert His church to their own selfish purposes, Acts 20:30 1 Cor 3:3; 11:21; 2 Pet 2:3 Jn 9:10 As Joseph was rejected, yet came to glory, Gen 37:20-49 22:26 so Jesus suffered without the camp, brought forth fruit and is exalted in Glory, Isa 53:11; Jn 12:24 Heb 12:1-2; 13:12 THEY.. SLE W/ killed HIM- As the Lord spoke to them, that was what they were planning to do

21:40-41 WHEN.. WHAT WILL HE DO- How will he treat them? HE WILL MISERABLY DESTROY/a wretched end- They will get what they deserve. The siege and destruction of Jerusalem was a miserable way to die. As with David, 2 Sam 12:1-7, the rights of the matter were obvious to them, and they pronounce their own condemnation. They had been warned that destruction must follow persistent rebellion, Isa 1:1-31, etc

LET OUT/rent- Following the death of the Son OTHER.. give HIM THE FRUITS/his share of the crop- He would ensure that the new tenants were such as would honour the (new covenant) terms of their contract. Cp 1 Sam 15:28 Dan 2:44 In the Millennium this will be true of National Israel raised up from the Believing remnant among them, Ps 72:1-19, Isa 27:6. But as Peter pointed out it applies to the Church as a holy nation, 1 Pet 2:9. We as the new people of God must not feel proud and superior, as Paul made clear, Rom 11:20-22

would be rejected by the Leaders of Israel, and that God honored Him by using their rebel apostasy to accomplish His eternal purposes, Acts 2:22-24 etc. Cp Isa 52:2-10 Phil 2:9.

21:43 THEREFORE.. THE KINGDOM.. TAKEN away FROM YOU- Israel had been God's Kingdom, with all the promises and privileges of His care. The centre of His work in the world - His witness to the nations, Ex 19:5-6. The Chief priests and Rulers acted as head tenants in charge of His tenants Israel, and responsible to act on His terms for their tenancy, the Law. In killing their Messiah they would forfeit every privilege involved in this, and this would be made clear in AD 70. The presence of God among His OT people set them apart for Himself. Under the Gospel Believers are set apart to Him by His indwelling Col 1:27.

GIVEN TO A NATION/people- God will give the privilege of being His people to a different group the Church, as in Rom 11, Not a race or land, but a spiritual nation made up of Believers/ born again children of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit under the new covenant. We see this change happening in Acts. BRINGING FORTH THE FRUITS/who will produce its fruit- As in Jn 15:7-10 Rom 15:9-11, etc. The new principle of belonging has been set out in 38:12 7:15-23 8:11-12 12:39 4:2 21:28 31, etc. \*\*41

21:44 46 He who falls ON THIS STONE will BE BROKEN- He came humbly and they despised Him, Isa 8:14; Lk 23:4 but those who try to kick Him out of the way will injure only themselves. The Lord Jesus is invulnerably all-important in God's purposes, and their relationship with Him is all-important for anyone. Because 21:44 is missing from some ancient MSS some have suggested it has been added from Lk 20:18. But the form of the wording is different from Luke, and as the last word of 43 is similar to the last word of 44 it would have been easy for a scribe to omit 44. Isa 8:14-15; Dan 23:4-5 44:4-5 Rom 9:3-23 contain similar ideas. See Rom 9:3-23 1 Pet 2:8. In Isa 28:16-17 the stone is the sure foundation, in Ps 118:22 the topmost stone. To us He is precious, as both, 1 Pet 2:4-10

people might take His side against them, agreeing with His verdict on their leadership. The Chief Priests were unpopular as Roman puppets, and for their greed and luxurious living

Footnote \*\*41 Rom 11:17-22 mentions the apostasy of the church, from which true Christians will be called home, 1 Th 4:13-18, and Israel having welcomed the rejected Messiah on His return, 2339 Zech 12:10-14:21; Rom 11:25-27, will bring forth fruit for God. After the warnings of punishment for Israel's wickedness there's a grand promise in Lev 26:44-45.

## CHAPTER 22

### 221-14 The Wedding Feast for a King's Son

(This completes the Lord's answer to those who challenged His authority, 2123. Jews thought of Messiah's coming Kingdom as like a long, joyful Wedding Feast. Cp Rev 19:7-9. The Priests, Scribes and Pharisees expected to be in that Kingdom. Certainly they had the invitation, the OT, but they had put their own interests before the Lord's interests, at times killed His servants, 2128-43, were plotting to kill the Messiah, and would be destroyed.) \*\*42

221-2 JESUS- Earlier He withdrew from opposition, Jn 8:59 10:39 Now He continued the confrontation and challenged them with another teaching parable. THE KINGDOM.. LIKE A KING.. A MARRIAGE /wedding banquet FOR HIS SON- The King is God, who draws people to Him, Jn 6:44 for them to share with His Son a banquet - the joy of Salvation, 8:11; 25:1-13 The background is the Jewish OT, in which the blessings God was preparing and offering to Israel are set out in such terms, Ex 24:11; Prov 9:1-6; Isa 25:6; 61:10 62:5; 65:13 Hos 2:19, Cp 9:15; Jn 3:29 Eph 5:25-28

223-4 SENT SERVANTS TO CALL .. TO WEDDING- According to custom the first invitation didn't give a date. The OT had invited them to come to Messiah's

important occasions might be given a polite reminder, Esth 5:8; 6:14. ALL / everything READY, COME - Suggests the completion of the provision for Salvation in Christ crucified, risen, ascended. This King is GOD, so in Grace He gives those who killed His Son another chance - pleads with the rebels to come. This Second offer began at Pentecost and was specifically to Jews only throughout at least Acts 8.

225-7 THEY paid no attention - Used only in 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Pet 1:12; Heb 23; 8:9. We too may have ignored the Gospel invitation. Cp response to Hezekiah's invitation 2 Chr 30:10-12. WENT.. TO FARM/field.. MERCHANDISE/ business. Went on doing what they wanted to do enjoying their possessions. Perhaps they thought they could come when they had done all they wanted?

Footnote \*\*42 Preachers use a good story more than once. In Lk 14:15-24, early in the Lord's ministry, he spoke this parable simply as a warning not to ignore God's invitation.

THE rest maltreated THEM SPITE FULL Y - Acts 5:40-45, 19, 17:5; 21:30-32. SLEW/killed THEM - Those who didn't ignore the invitation insulted and beat up the servants for telling them what they didn't want to know. As the Lord was treated, so would His servants be, 10:16-39; Jn 15:18-27; 1 Cor 4:11-13. Israel's response to Jesus/ the Gospel was mixed, 10:16-25; Acts 5:17-41; 7:54-8:3. Even ignoring the invitation expressed their rebellion.

THE KING.. DESTROYED THOSE MURDERERS - Cp Lk 23:28-31. The city of the Great King had become THEIR CITY - the city of the murderers of Christ the Son of God, 23:34-35; 38; Lk 13:33-34; Acts 7:39; 12:2-3. The Roman armies were the Lord's armies in AD 70 as the Assyrian army had been in Isa 10:5-15. The Lord knew the destruction of the Temple would follow their rejection, 23:37-38; 24:2. Cp Isa 5:24-25; Isa 13:5; Jer 25:9; Ezek 16:41; Hab 1:5-11. Once again the city would be destroyed, Israel exiled and return, Acts 1:6-7; Rom 11:1-32.

228-10 THE WEDDING banquet IS READY, BUT those invited WERE NOT WORTHY / did not deserve to come - For worthy, see 10:10; 11, 13, 37, 38. Their behaviour showed they didn't deserve the invitation. As in Acts 13:45-46 those who felt superior to the invitation were unworthy of it. Pride distorts our view and

2211-14 THE KING CAME IN- Custom required him to welcome them and ensure everything was enjoyable for them. HE SAW/noticed A MAN - Only one man is challenged and ejected, so that each of us should ask ourselves Lord, is it I? 2622 not wearing A WEDDING GARMENT /clothes- Clean white clothes were worn for feasts. To come in dirty clothes insulted the host. Nothing in 2210 says guests didn't have time to go home and clean up. Early Commentators such as Augustine suggest the Host provided garments for all the guests. This fits in the spiritual message of the Parable. The Lord provides the garment needed by sinners, the righteousness of Christ received by faith, Gen 32:1; Isa 61:10; Zech 3:4; Lk 15:22; Rom 3:22-24; 10:3-10; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21. Kings and rich men had stores of fine garments, 2 Ki 10:22; Jas 5:2. Horace wrote that Lucullus had 500 robes in stock. Robes were given as a mark of favour, Gen 37:3; 45:22; Judges 14:12; 1 Sam 18:4; 2 Ki 5:5; Esth 6:8; Dan 5:7; Zech 3:3-5; Lk 15:22. In Moslem times, probably preserving an ancient custom, not to wear the gift of a Caliph was such an insult that men were killed for it. \*\*43

FRIEND HOW?- How is it that you've insulted me by not bothering to dress appropriately. HE/the man WAS SPEECHLESS- Cp Rom 3:19. THE KING told the SERVANTS/attendants- Diakonos The servants attending the guests. The evangelisers/inviters, 22:3-10 are Doulos- blood bought slave-servants. It's angels, not saved sinners who carry out God's judgmental acts, 13:41 TAKE HIM AWAY .. DARKNESS- 8:12 WEEPING - Regret at best opportunity, perhaps, but selfish sorrow, as GNASHING OF TEETH - Continued anger against God

MANY ARE CALLED/invited, BUT FEW CHOSEN- A warning against taking the Gospel invitation lightly. Many receive God's invitation to salvation and life but not all enjoy it. It IS God's choosing, yet as the parable shows, while nothing anyone did could qualify them for the Feast, many disqualified themselves by what they did. It's human chosen actions which mark the chosen ones. The Gospel invites all, but many are unwilling to come on the Lord's terms, and remain on the broad way. Only the few find/enter/walk the narrow way to life and joy. 7:13-14. Salvation involves both God's choosing and our choosing. Cp The many chosen/called out of Egypt, choosing not to enter promised land, 1 Cor 10:1-10; Jude 5.

obvious trap. The Pharisees hated to pay tax to Rome as it reminded them that God's people were under the rule of the Gentiles. And yet hated Jesus so much they joined WITH HERODIANS- Who supported the allied-to-Rome Herod family, who would report anything Jesus said against Rome. A Messiah who accepted the right of Heathen Romans to tax God's people was unthinkable to a Jew. To say NO could be reported as treason

MASTER/Teacher WE KNOW.. TRUTH- As hypocrites they speak the truth which they were refusing to obey. He wasn't swayed by the desire to flatter and please important people, or afraid to offend them when loyalty to God's Word required it. Cp John's warning Herod of his sin in taking Herodias. They are pushing Jesus to ignore the claims of Caesar, and speak as if he didn't matter.

Footnote \*\*43 In Rev 19:8 the BRIDE'S wedding garment being righteous/being things Christians had done has made some see the wedding garment as righteous living here also. Certainly it warns that outwardly going along with Christian company and doctrine isn't enough. Reality will be tested, 7:13-27, 1 Cor 3:11-15, etc, but only those made righteous in Christ through His atoning death can put on Christ in daily life fellowship with Christ crucified and risen, 2 Cor 5:10 Gal 3:27, Eph 4:24 Col 3:1-17. Saving Faith is demonstrated in Godly living.

TELL US- A request for an official statement of His policy on this issue. IS IT LAWFUL/right TO GIVE TRIBUTE/pay taxes TO CAESAR - Is it morally right/does God's Law approve of our paying the tax which shows we're under Caesar's rule.

22:18-22 JESUS SAID.. HYPOCRITES?- You aren't wanting to know God's will so you can do it. Jesus kept His eye on God and His feet escaped the net, Ps 25:15 SHOW ME - As a good teacher He involved them in the learning process A PENNY /denarius- The coin they had to pay as tax. That they had such a coin in their possession showed the hypocrisy of their question. The Essenes are said to have refused to use such coins. WHOSE IMAGE /portrait- Whose picture and name is stamped on it? The current denarius was of Tiberias, and the inscription named him as God, and High Priest. The other side of the coin had a woman seated, representing PEACE - under Rome/enforced by Rome.

CAESAR'S- It belongs to Caesar, stamped with his picture and name. RENDER THEREFORE /give to- Present tense, timeless truth. CAESAR - To give back to

UNTO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE HIS- Man is stamped with the image of God, Gen 1:26-27, issued by Him and we owe our value to Him. God has the right to collect what belongs to Him, 21:41; Rom 12:1-21; 1 Pet 2:17. But the essential point is our obligation to God and to the State. Their failure to obey God had brought them under the yoke of Rome. Instead of being trapped into disowning God to Caesar He shows their dual citizenship/responsibility. The only unlimited obligation is to the Creator, and Redeemer, but responsibility to the State lies within that, even when the State violently opposes God and the Gospel, as Rome did later under its rulers. The Lord's words both confirm and limit the authority of the State.

THEY MARVELLED- were amazed- Instead of being trapped, the Lord had once more challenged them by reminding them of their responsibilities to God, as well as to Caesar. The Lord Jesus didn't advocate rebellion against the State, even though the State was about to execute Him.

### 222333 Resurrection Ridiculed & Defended

(Rationalist materialists don't believe people rise from the dead, and so try to make the idea seem ridiculous.)

222330 THE SADDUCEES.. SAY NO RESURRECTION- Acts 23:6-10 Being in a position to grab more than their share in this life, left the wealthy High Priestly families happy to believe there was no resurrection and judgment coming. Like some people today they made a good living out of the Bible but ignored anything that made demands which were inconvenient. \*\*44

MASTER/Teacher.. MOSES.. RAISE UP SEED/children for him- If they had children the first was counted as the dead man's child so his family line, and property, would be preserved, Deu 25:5-6 Cp Ruth 4:10 It was also provision for a childless widow. SEVEN BROTHERS- An imaginary tale intended to make a point. THE FIRST.. MARRIED.. died.. since he had no children.. THE WOMAN DIED. IN/AT THE RESURRECTION WHOSE WIFE SHALL SHE BE - Who will she live with as wife?

power of God who only preserves soul and spirit, it raises bodies, and raises them up into a totally different kind of world. \*\*45

RESURRECTION.. NEITHER MARRY .. GIVEN IN MARRIAGE - There will be no need for procreation in Heaven or that exclusive relationship which is appropriate to it. (And the only one in which true openness and oneness is possible in this world.) BUT ARE /will be like THE ANGELS- Not become angels, but like angels will enjoy life without sexuality and marriage, and be in heaven. At death we're liberated into better, and eternal bodies and lives, 1 Cor 15:20-57, Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:1-3.

Footnote \*\*44 In favour of the resurrection the Pharisees used Deu 32:39 Those God kills, He makes alive, those He wounds, He heals. Job 19:25-27, Ps 73:23 Isa 25:8, 26:19, Ezek 37:1-14; Dan 12:1-2.

Footnote \*\*45 Reverent study of the Scriptures gives contact with the living God, and an awareness of His interest in, and the relevance of His word to, every aspect of life. And this powerfully affects our beliefs and lifestyle, as Scriptures are the record of His power interacting with the affairs of this world. The Pharisees, like some today, claimed to know more than God had revealed, making at times crude projections of present life into a new world. The Sadducees doubted everything. These opposites feed each other. The Lord trimmed speculation, and showed the folly of unbelief.

2231-33 BUT.. RESURRECTION.. NOT READ.. SPOKEN BY GOD to you- Jesus appeals to Ex 3:6 The Sadducees accepted the Pentateuch as being what Moses said from God, 22:24 Not I WAS the God, I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM- They are still in existence awaiting the resurrection. God is still Abraham's God. Abraham was with Him/in relation to Him, alive, and therefore the resurrection of Abraham's body makes sense. Cp Lk 23:42-43 NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD - A corpse doesn't have a God. He can be the God only of those who worship Him as God. These are LIVING people, so Abraham etc were still alive when God spoke to Moses.

## 2234 THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

(Mk 12:28-34. Cp Lk 10:25-28, where earlier the answer is given by a scribe and the Lord defines who is our neighbour. Here it relates to what a man IS rather than to what He DOES.) \*\*46

2234 THE PHARISEES.. A LAWYER /expert in the law ASKED /tested HIM- As in 16:1; 19:3; 22:15-18 They were still hoping to discredit Him in front of the



in love to Him with every aspect of our being WITH ALL HEART - Emotions, SOUL - Will, MIND - Intellect. (Mark adds Strength - Physical.) In Hebrew there was no sharp distinction between these, but the words are heaped up to remind us we should love God with the whole of our being. In all we think, feel, choose or do - ultimate, total loyalty. No one has ever cared more for the welfare of people than Jesus did, but His humanism was always centred in God. Only when God is surrendered to/allowed to be first in our lives is it possible for us to view and treat each other as we should. Gospel proclamation should precede and lead to social responsibility.

SECOND.. LOVE - Jn 3:16 1 Cor 13:1-7. NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF - LXX Lev 19:18 Our first duty is to God, to be what He purposes and wills for us. This automatically involves our standing with Him in His concern for others. These keep each other true.

Footnote \*\*46 The behaviour condemned in the Commandments is still sinful, Rom 13:8-10 Gal 5:14 Jas 2:8, but Love God, and Neighbour as external commands can only condemn us. Under the NEW Covenant, 2 Cor 3:18 Heb 8:10 obedience to external Law has been replaced by the new nature implanted and empowered by The Holy Spirit by the new birth, Jn 1:12 3:1-7. He enables us to want and do God's will, Phil 2:12-13, and so to live in fellowship with God as His children/sons, at a level above what the Law demands, Rom 8:2-16.

The totality of our being and capacity being committed to Him, is an abstract thing, but it commits us to sharing His love, in practical ways, with those He has placed within our reach, Gal 6:10 Jas 2:5; 1 Jn 3:18 4:21. \*\*47

ON THESE.. HANG ALL THE LAW AND PROPHETS - All requirements God has decreed in the whole OT are based on and summed up in these two, Ex 20:6; Deu 30:16 20 Ps 145:20 Amos 5:15. If we loved God totally we might need no other commandment, but as it is we do need the other specific indications of His will as a check on how we're doing. Where there are no specific rulings for/against something LOVE applied to any specific situation provides the Key. We must always bear in mind that our Blessed Lord expects us to concentrate on our love for one another, rather than on details which may divide us, Jn 15:12-17.

## 22:41-46 Messiah is David's Son & Lord

(The Lord closes the questioning with a question which forces them to face a Scripture that requires Messiah to be more than human. He was the root from which David sprang, as well as the offspring of David, Rev 22:16 Rom 1:3-4. They refused to face this.)

in Ps 110 David says his son is his superior. That in Greek the same word is used for Lord in both cases hints that David's descendant is also God ON/at MY RIGHT HAND - Ruling with me/sharing my glory, as in Heb 1:3, 13:8; 10:12, 12:2. MAKE.. ENEMIES FOOTSTOOL /put under your feet- Meaning until all your enemies are defeated. This proclaims the deity of Christ and the God-guaranteed certainty of His triumph. (Traditionally conquerors might put their feet on the head of the conquered. 1 Cor 15:25)

224546 IF DAVID calls HIM LORD, HOW can HE be HIS SON?- No father at that time would call his son his Lord. Messiah can't just be a descendant of David, taking up David's work of uniting and liberating Israel. He must be Superior to/come from a source higher than David. \*\*48

Footnote \*\*47 It's easy to be like Karl Marx who claimed to love the working class but was impatient with individual workers! A silly modern idea is that being selfish, and making sure we get what we want, is the first step towards loving our neighbour! But when we love God, we love ourselves in the sense of being happy to be what He has made us, and committed to what He is making us, and have a similar attitude towards those around us

Footnote \*\*48 Matthew has referred to Jesus as David's son, 11:9; 23:29; 23:31; 23:35, but also as God's Son, 21:5; 3:17; 4:3, 6; 14:33; 16:16; 26:63; 27:43, 54. This dual nature of Messiah is implicit from the first in 2 Sam 7:12-14; 1 Chr 17:11-14.

NO MAN WAS ABLE TO ANSWER /reply- The Pharisees give up hope of trapping Jesus with questions, and concentrate on killing Him. He has done all He can to shed light into the darkness of their hearts and minds. Their refusal to answer/accept the evidence of Scripture leads naturally to His condemnation of them in the chapter that follows.

## CHAPTER 23

### 23:1-39 Woes on Scribes & Pharisees - Lament over Jerusalem

(Mk 12:38-40; Lk 11:39-52) spoken much earlier. We're so used to reading of the patient compassion of Jesus that these words shock. The Religious leaders had opposed, ridiculed and slandered Him, 12:24, etc. been trying to trap Him, and would soon murder Him. But there is no personal resentment in His harsh words. That the truth is spoken in sorrowful love is seen in 23:37-39. The damnable thing which earned His condemnation is given in 23:13. God had given His Word that men might know Him and be blessed. They had used their knowledge of that Word to keep His people from coming into the blessings Christ had been offering, Jn 9:22; 12:42. We're not to make similar attacks on

Gal 1:6-9. We must judge ourselves, and exercise some discipline on our own Christian fellowships, 7:6, 15:23 16:18-19, 18:15-20 1 Cor 5)

231-4 SCRIBES/teachers of the law- Most were PHARISEES- Acts 23:9, who opposed Jesus, 5:20 15:1; Lk 5:30 6:7; 11:44 Jn 8:3. Most were beyond the reach of truth, 2 Th 29-12, but disciples and the crowd needed to be warned. SIT IN MOSES' SEAT- A prominent stone seat has been found in ancient synagogues, perhaps for the President, which may have been called Moses' Seat. But the point is they claimed to be Moses' disciples, Jn 9:28 teaching the Law with his authority. Moses was authorised by God and spoke in fellowship with Him, but they were self-authorised. If they'd really believed Moses they'd have believed Jesus, Jn 5:45-47. As a teacher it's easy to become a hypocrite, more interested in telling others what to do than in doing it. As hearers the Lord wants us to honour Bible Teachers as the Jews at Berea did, Acts 17:11 - not criticise everything, or believe everything

Footnote \*\*49 As Commentators point out, sweeping condemnations were normal at the time when any group of Jews (or Greek Philosophers) described a rival group- Eg in Dead Sea scrolls. At the Reformation, Reformers and Romanists also gave harsh and sweeping verdicts on each other, and there was truth on both sides. Every Christian group is guilty of Un-Christian behaviour that calls for condemnation from the Lord. See Rev 2 and 3. It doesn't mean EVERY Scribe or Pharisee was a hypocrite, or EVERYTHING they taught was wicked folly. Every Jewish group shared in common GOOD things that set them far above the average Gentile.

you must obey- Respect for God's Law required respect for teachers of the Law (as we must respect Rulers who exercise rule for God, Rom 13) but Jesus warns against their errors and inconsistencies. Cp 12:1-14; 15:1-20 16:6-12 19:3-9, etc. That they taught the Law added to their guilt if they didn't obey it, Jas 3:1. If unbelieving church leaders quote the Bible we respect what they say, because it's God's Word, but we don't join them in any unbelief or unbiblical actions.

NOT AFTER THEIR WORKS don't do what they do- They teach you to do what the Law says, but don't themselves do it. Cp 2:12 8:32 Rom 2:21-29 1 Tim 4:12, Jas 1:22-26 Hypocrisy is natural to us all. It's right to attack hypocrisy in others only if like Jesus we're free from it, or if by His Grace we're attacking every form of it in ourselves and our own group 7:3-5; 1 Tim 4:16 Some Rabbis boasted that teaching God's Law freed them from any need to practise it. \*\*50

HEAVY BURDENS/bads. ON MEN'S SHOULDERS- They interpret and apply the Law in ways that make obeying it a very heavy load for other people, 11:29

235-7 ALL Everything done for MEN to see 6:1-6. Literally to make theatre! Put on a show. We become hypocrites when we're too interested in what People think of us. \*\*51 PHYLACTERIES- The boxes containing Ex 13:1-6, 9, 16; Deu 6:4-9, 11:13-21, worn on the forehead and left arm to symbolise the wearer's commitment to obeying God's Law. ENLARGE BORDERS/make tassels long- Worn to remind them that they belonged to God, Num 15:37-41; Deu 22:12. As an obedient Jew, Jesus wore these, 9:20 14:36. These men wore big ones so people would be sure to notice, and think they were especially devoted to God. We shouldn't make an outward show of our Faith, but humbly obey the Lord wherever we are.

LOVE UPPERMOST ROOMS/place of honour- At the host's right hand - privileged to be near him, and honored with the best food and drink. THE CHIEF/most important SEATS IN SYNAGOGUES- On the stage of the synagogue where everyone could see them. The congregation sat on the floor. See Jas 2:1-4.

Footnote \*\*50 One Rabbi decreed "He who teaches but doesn't do the Law is as high above him who obeys the law but doesn't teach as heaven is above earth - because he who does the law does good to only his own soul. He who teaches the Law does good to the many souls of his hearers!"

Footnote \*\*51 Johanan Ben Zakai a great Pharisee 60 years later said it was sufficient for us to fear God as much as we fear man, as when one has done wrong, one instinctively says "If only no man has seen me."

Love to be greeted.. RABBI - My great one - used as a title of honour for Jewish leaders who studied/taught God's Law. By centring people's attention on themselves they used religion to gain worship for themselves, taking people's minds away from God.

238 You are not to be CALLED RABBI.. one MASTER, CHRIST - Religious leaders like to be called special names and given special honour, but Christians mustn't do that. Only one Person has the right to dictate to us, and he looked up to as being in a different class. There are differences of GIFT and differences in loving dedication to the exercise of gifts, and due respect must be shown to Leaders, preachers etc, 1 Cor 16:15-16; 1 Th 5:12-13; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:17. But Leaders aren't to be given titles or treated as if they are superior people. Any hierarchy of Clergy over the Laity is condemned. Abilities and responsibilities are

corrected by Him, through each other, can we truly honour Him. Teachers are to stand alongside their brothers in Christ following the Lord and obeying Him.

239 CALL NO MAN /do not call anyone FATHER- We're to honour human fathers, Eph 6:2 But ~~to~~ call a religious leader Father-Abbot-Padre-Patriarch-Pope is to put him in the place of God. We must not bow up to and obey ANYONE in Spiritual things as if we owed our lives to them, and they were the ones to answer all our questions, and tell us what ~~to~~ do. Of course parents have to tell children what ~~to~~ do and children must please them and obey them. And up to a point it's true of anyone helping new Christians. But all the time they must be learning to step back and point growing children to the Heavenly Father, urge them to love Him, and deal with HIM for themselves. \*\*53

Footnote \*\*52 For those outside such systems to denounce them arrogantly is likely to be a sign of jealousy, not superiority. A hierarchy of Wealth, Learning, Popularity etc is also unbiblical. In the early church a slave might be an Elder, while his owner was an ordinary member.

Footnote \*\*53 Although this command has been ignored through most of church history, those now known as "early church Fathers" used the title Father for God alone. A commentary on Matthew by J P Meier, 1980, officially approved by the RC church warns "the Catholic Church must reflect on whether these inspired words call it ~~to~~ forsake the ecclesiastical titles which have proliferated in its midst." Even in my youth I saw two frail nurses struggling along with heavy suitcases, alongside a big man with his hands in his pockets with everyone bowing to him and calling him "Father." All the Catholics in the district were to be obedient children doing just what he said. The Pope in Rome is "Papa" to all the millions of Catholics in the world. In Moscow a "Patriarch" is Father to Russian Orthodox Christians, etc. It would be better if those who looked to them as FATHER and tried to be their obedient children, were free to look to the one and only Heavenly Father Himself.

ONE.. FATHER.. IN HEAVEN- He has begotten us by the word of His truth, Jas 1:18 By bringing the Gospel to the Corinthians Paul had the privilege of being their spiritual father, 1 Cor 4:15, so had a special right ~~to~~ love, serve, and instruct them. But he didn't claim the religious title of Father, or lord it over them, 2 Cor 1:24

2310-12 NEITHER /Nor be CALLED MASTERS/teachers- Guides. ONE IS.. the CHRIST - God alone is our Father. The only One entitled to interpret His will for us, is the Lord Jesus Christ. What leaders are called encourages or discourages their lording it over their brothers, 1 Pet 5:3. They're to teach what the Lord says,

treat you as important, God will humble you humbles HIMSELF.. EXALTED- Accepts a low position, defers to others, keeps a humble attitude. See 184; Job 22:9 Prov 29:23 Isa 10:33 Ezek 21:26 Lk 1:52 2 Cor 11:7; Jas 4:6; 1 Pet 5:5. This isn't a new idea, but Jesus relates it securely to the certain and righteous judgment of God

Three things mark a Christian. What we ARE - God's children. What we BELIEVE - what our Teacher/Rabbi teaches. What we DO - as directed by our Master.

## 2313-28 The Religious Leaders Condemned for Hypocrisy

(Mk 12:38-40 Lk 11:43, 46-20:45-47. Cp Deu 28:15-19, Isa 58-23 Hab 26-19. As leaders of religious life they're condemned for the disaster produced by their rejection of their promised Messiah. And for interpreting God's Law so as to block Israel from the possibility of knowing God and being blessed. Their hypocrisy is the outward conformity to the details of God's law that produces self-righteousness and shuts God out in order to maintain its good opinion of self - as does modern humanistic Christianity. To help people break free from obedience to them the Lord points out some of the follies found in their teaching. Such foolish ideas can still be found in the ancient Rabbinic writings, along with the wise and God-honouring statements recorded there.) \*\*54

Footnote \*\*54 There are deliberately dishonest leaders in all religions, political parties etc, but some like Paul Acts 26:9 thought they were serving God, Jn 16:2. That in the name of God they were fighting against God Acts 5:39, meant they were being hypocrites without realising it. This happened because, as in modern cults and sects, the leaders' pride and zeal in defending their own interpretations of Scripture moved them to twist the meaning, 2 Pet 3:16, of Scriptures that would have corrected their errors. We must seek grace to SUBMIT to Scripture as we read it.

2313 WOE - Alas! Expresses pain, anger and sorrow at the wicked folly and the judgment it earned. SCRIBES/teachers of the Law.. PHARISEES- Having begun to speak to the crowd ABOUT them the Lord turns and speak TO them. HYPOCRITES- The word originally meant an actor on the stage. Here it means an actor in religious things. One who puts on a show of outward holiness and love for God, but wasn't at all like that at heart. Cp Zech 11:17.

SHUT THE KINGDOM AGAINST MEN/in men's faces- While pretending to help men know God in Scripture they used it to block them out from His presence. They did so by mis-directing the interest and energy of their followers towards treating God's revelation of Himself and His will in the Law as a matter of carrying heavy

instead of entering they used that privileged position to block the entrance from those interested in going in. To this day, men who are paid to be Leaders of Christian churches may be tolerant of every other religion, and yet violently oppose the Gospel, and its preachers. (The apocryphal Gospel of Thomas says like the dog sleeping in the manger they neither eat nor let the oxen eat.)

2314-15[RT] This is missing from the oldest Mss and in some Mss it's placed before verse 23. It may have been brought in from the parallel passages, Mk 12:40 Lk 20:47. As it's in those places it certainly is God's Word. WOE.. DEVOUR WIDOW'S HOUSES.. LONG PRAYERS- At the Reformation this would have been applied to the RC Priests who urged widows to spend much money in having "masses" said for their dead husband which were supposed to shorten his time in "purgatory." Jews had no such custom, so the Lord is simply saying these men made a great show honouring God by spending time visibly praying, 6:5. But in their business life they took advantage of the vulnerable (for whom God cared, Deu 24:19, etc) to increase their profits, Mal 3:5. They took from widows their property by foreclosing on mortgages etc, yet made a great show of loving God. Today it's not unusual for cults to persuade members to sign their property over to them.

WOE.. TO MAKE ONE PROSELYTE (win a single convert)- As they refused to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord, their zealous missionary activity hardened their converts against Christ, and locked them out from God's Kingdom. See Acts 13:44-52 14:1-6, 19, 17:5-9, 13, etc. Zeal in spreading error is as damnable as the comfortable laziness of those blessed by, and entrusted with, the Gospel. Even a shallow presentation of the Gospel can inoculate people against the real thing.

CHILD/son- One characterised by being like/having their life derived from a parent, Jn 8:39-47. While claiming to work for God they were recruiting agents for HELL! Converts were made the devil's slaves, by the conviction that outward conformity to the law established self-righteousness with no need for the Gospel, Rom 10:1-4. The Lord has commanded US to go into the whole world, and make disciples for Him, 28:18-20 Acts 1:8. But the Pharisees made disciples to their own distortion of God's Word. \*\*55

2316-22 BLIND GUIDES- A solemn considered judgment. See 15:14; 23:37-39 Rom 2:19. SWEAR BY THE TEMPLE means NOTHING- They ruled that

FOOLS- Moros- Moron BLIND- Men are condemned for calling their brothers fods, 5:22 To doso is to judge them, usurping the place of the Judge, 7:1-5; Lk 6:37; Rom 14:4; 1 Cor 4:3-5. Christ is the Rightful JUDGE who knows all - and as crucified, risen Son of Man has the right to give the final judgment, Jn 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31. He gives His verdict as a challenge to repent, and as a warning to those tempted to imitate those He is condemning. GREATER? THE GOLD, OR THE TEMPLE - Obviously the Temple is greater as gold is simply gold, apart from the Temple. And no change in the form of words can free one from the need to keep promises, 5:33-37. There's no place for "small print escape clauses" in Christian dealings. \*\*56

Swears BY THE ALTAR.. GREATER- The altar symbolised fellowship with God. Things became holy when put on it, Ex 29:37. Swears BY THE TEMPLE Swears by the One who dwells in it- Ps 135:21. In one sense the Temple was a mere den of thieves. In another sense it was where God dwelt. Men's attitude/what they came to the Temple for, made the difference BY HEAVEN.. THE THRONE - The place where God sits and rules from.

Footnote \*\*55 The same is true today with people like Jehovah's Witnesses. They believe alie - that Jesus came to the earth in 1914, set up His Kingdom, and cancelled the Gospel of Jn 3:16 etc. And that winning converts will help them and their converts qualify for the "kingdom." As a result all their sincerity and zeal can achieve is to turn people from Salvation, and secure them for hell.

Footnote \*\*56 There are no magical forms of prayer, actions, etc that will bind the Lord to give us what we ask - healing, etc. Accurate knowing of the details of/strong faith in Charismatic teaching, Covenant teaching, Dispensational teaching, Sacramental teaching, etc is NOT saving knowledge of God, and tends to turn men's minds from it.

23:23 PAY TITHE /give a tenth OF.. CUMMIN- Israelites were commanded to give God a tenth of their grain, wine, and olive oil. It was paid to the Levites, who in turn passed on a tenth of that to the Priests, Lev 27:30; Deu 12:17; 14:22-29; 26:12. There was no command to pay a tenth of the herbs. Levites had enough land to grow their own vegetables and herbs. Mint and dill grew wild. But OMITTED/ neglected- Aphemi- To send away, forget about THE WEIGHTIER/more important MATTERS OF THE LAW- They paid attention to trivial extensions of the Law, because as PHYSICAL things it was easy to do them and be seen to do them. But it was folly to major on such things and ignore



FAITH/faithfulness- The right relationship between God and men. Mic 6:8, Walk humbly with God = Faith/faithfulness To obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Sam 15:22 To love one's neighbour is more important than all sacrifices, Mk 12:33 Conservative Churches tend to be weak on Mercy/social justice Liberal churches are strong on it, but tend to despise Faith in/faithfulness to God and His revealed will. Faith in God and His revealed will enables Faithfulness which is seen in love for God that's echoed in love for the neighbours He gives us.

ought to have - Follow the small fussy extensions of the Law if you think you should, as in Rom 14:22-23 But NOT LEAVE UNDONE /neglecting- what God values most. Put first what He puts first. A mark of false religion and sectarian Christianity is the inability to distinguish between important truths, and the lesser ones which are good only when they are fitted in round the central concerns of God

23:24-26 BLIND GUIDES.. STRAIN AT/out- The KJV translators wrote OUT. In the first edition the printer put AT, a mistake no one has bothered to correct. A GNAT - Rabbis said "He that kills a flea on the Sabbath is as guilty as if he killed a camel." So strict Pharisees strained what they drank through a cloth to make sure they didn't swallow even a tiny unclean insect, Lev 11:20-23, 41.

Footnote \*\*57 As Believers we and all we have are God's bloodbought property, but it's left to us as stewards to decide how much of what the Lord has given us should be returned to Him each week, 1 Cor 16:2. By making much of tithing we can be tempted to pride because of our faithfulness, or despair because it's impossible. God assures us that He's able to prosper generous givers, but this mustn't be twisted into a technique to make God give us riches.

Footnote \*\*58 Other ancient Law-codes - Hammurabi's Code, Roman Law, etc favoured the rich and powerful. Wealth and privileged position still enables some to escape justice

BUT SWALLOW A CAMEL - An unclean animal so big the statement is clearly figurative. One camel they swallowed was their murdering Christ their Messiah. At the same time they wouldn't put their feet on "unclean" Gentile pavement, as they considered that doing so would make them unclean and so unable to eat their Passover, Jn 18:28 They would pay Judas to betray Jesus, and yet not take the money back into temple funds, 27:6.

used their wealth in EXCESS/self indulgence- Reckless pleasure seeking with a hint of sexual sin. Jesus said that while they were not shamelessly displaying these sins as others did, their heart desires and hidden actions were the same, Rom 2:2-3. The wealth they prized so religiously had been acquired by dishonest business dealings.

BLIND PHARISEE , CLEANSE FIRST.. inside the CUP- A clean outside is useless if what's in the cup is foul. So Pharisees needed to repent of their sin, be forgiven and cleansed, and only then could they honour God in public by following the outward forms of Law. Hezekiah started by cleansing the inner temple, and ended the clean up process at the Temple's outer court, 2 Chr 29:16-17.

23:27-28 Whitewashed tombs- Many people came to Jerusalem to worship. Contact with dead bodies, or even a tomb, made Jews "unclean." So before the Passover all graves were whitewashed so people could avoid becoming unclean by accidentally touching them. Cp Ezek 13:10-16; 22:28 APPEAR /bck BEAUTIFUL outside.. FULL OF DEAD MEN'S BONES- It was because they contained death and corruption the tombs were made to look so beautifully clean! Cp Ps 5:9.

APPEAR RIGHTEOUS.. FULL OF INIQUITY /wickedness- They were careful to display the outward form of obedience to God's Law. But their heart was in violent rebellion against God and the spirit of the Law. And they rejected Christ, the only One who could cleanse their inner life, Jn 1:31-11; 1 Jn 1:5-9. \*\*59

Footnote \*\*59 Even today there are men such as Dr Ruckman who profess devotion to maintaining the pure Word of God, in KJV only, who make no attempt to obey its command to speak the truth in love. Their writings are a welter of truth, half-truth and deliberate lies, spoken in violent, abusive language.

## 23:29-39 Jesus as JUDGE Gives His Verdict & as Rejected Saviour Weeps for Jerusalem

(Lk 13:34-35. Israel is central to God's purpose of blessing mankind. Israel's Leaders had in the past shown hostility to God's servants. Now as they face God in the person of Jesus

Parallel expressions - Tombs were Graves, Prophets were Righteous Men. You build fine tombs for faithful men of God IF.. THE BLOOD OF THE PROPHETS- Their care for the tombs of the prophets asserted that they admired them, agreed with them and were carrying on their good work. But the only prophets they liked were dead ones. Their fathers had the same idea Men are happy to bask in the glory of being linked with those who are safely distant and dead. Men today who would have resented Paul, Luther, Bunyan, or Wesley, pressing God's claims on their lives find it easy to say they admire them.

WITNESSES/testify against YOURSELVES- Their response to John Baptist, Jesus and His disciples was carrying on the traditional rejection and persecution of the OT prophets. The wording suggests their building the tombs is witnessing - perhaps by making a show of glorifying the Man while ignoring his Message, Jn 5:39-47. FILL UP- Finish the work your fathers began. They had persecuted God's representatives, their descendants would murder His Son, 21:33-39 1 Th 2:14-16 Cp Ironic commands to do evil, Isa 8:9-10, Jer 7:21; Amos 4:4-5. God delayed Judgment on the Amorites until they were ripe for it, Gen 15:16 He was doing the same with Israel in their rejection of His servants. Cp Amos 1:1-2:16 He had declared their sinful opposition to God and says they will prove the truth of His verdict by killing Him. SERPENTS/snakes. VIPERS- Echoing John's words, 3:7. Embodied Love must speak the truth and give blunt warnings when danger is imminent HOW CAN /will you ESCAPE.. HELL - God must inevitably condemn those who behave as you are behaving, etc.

233436 WHEREFORE BEHOLD/Therefore- Take particular notice of what I am about to say. I- (Jesus speaks as God, the only sender of prophets, Jer 7:25-34 25-4-6.) SEND/am sending YOU- Present tense, an ongoing action from Moses, Ex 31:10-15 to Elijah, on to Peter, Stephen, and Paul, Acts 13:2; 1 Cor 12:9-10 Eph 4:11. PROPHETS- With freshly inspired knowledge. WISE MEN- With stored knowledge. SCRIBES/teachers- With the ability to study and pass on knowledge. These gifts/roles overlap.

SOME you will KILL - like Stephen, CRUCIFY - As they did the Saviour. SCOURGE/flog IN YOUR SYNAGOGUES- Deu 25:2; 2 Cor 11:24 PERSECUTE - 1 Th 2:15-16 We need to be far more distressed by Christian persecution of Jews down through the centuries than by the Jewish persecution of Christian Jews, nearly 2000 years ago.

FROM THE BLOOD OF RIGHTEOUS ABEL - The first to be killed for his loyalty to God, Heb 11:4; 1 Jn 3:12 TO Zechariah.. SLEW/murdered BETWEEN TEMPLE AND ALTAR - The Altar of sacrifice in the courtyard in front of the temple. This is recorded in 2Chr 24:17-22, the last book in the Hebrew OT. Zechariah the High priest denounced the apostasy of King Joash, and was stoned to death on the King's orders. In both cases the demand for vengeance was specific.

SON OF Berechiah- This is the name of the prophet who wrote the OT book of Zechariah, Zech 1:1, but the Bible says nothing of him being murdered. The two Zechariahs were often confused in Jewish writings, so an ancient scribe may have added this by mistake. Zechariah the murdered priest was the son of Jehoiada, but Berechiah= Blessed of the Lord, may have been an alternative name for Jehoiada, who was the Lord's Blessing to Joash/ the House of David, 2Ki 11.

VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU/ I tell you the truth- A solemn assurance ALL .. UPON THIS GENERATION- Cp 11:16-19, 12:38-45 17:17; 24:34 The punishment of all these persecutions, mockeries and killings of God's messengers and obedient servants, came to a head in the murder of Messiah, the Prince of Peace So, the crowning punishment of all these shameful, God-defying actions came upon that generation of Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem, AD 70 If we're tempted to question the justice of this action let us remember in awe, shame, and wondering love that on ONE Jew alone of that generation fell the sin, and God's Judgment on that sin, of the whole world of human sinners, Jn 1:29 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24 The synoptic Gospels witness to that atoning death in 2028 26:26-28 27:51; Mk 10:45 14:24 Lk 22:19-20 23:34 45 Christ stands and speaks as Jeremiah did in Jer 7:25-29 Matthew writes of Jesus promising destruction of Jerusalem, with no hint of it having happened so it's likely that he wrote before AD 70

23:37-38 JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM- A bitter lament over the city. Repetition gives emphasis, 7:21-22 Gen 22:11; Lk 10:41; Acts 9:4. Jerusalem, the centre of religious and political Israel, represents the nation as a whole including the dispersed Jews. You kill PROPHETS- Cp 21:35 1 Ki 18:4; 19:10, 2 Chr 24:20

you were NOT willing- Their will defied His will, and in the end they had to be allowed to go their own way, stay in the independence that leads to death that Adam chose and God permitted. YOU is now plural, The Lord desired to gather them as a unit, but individually they had resisted Him. For Israel's refusal of God's protection, see Isa 30:15; Jer 7:13; 25:26; 11:7-8; 25:3-4; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14-15; 44:4-5.

BEHOLD/LOCK- Pay attention to this important announcement! YOUR HOUSE - The place where you live, Jerusalem, and the Temple now abandoned by God, and left to them as they refused to acknowledge God the Son when He came, 24:1-2; Ezek 4:48; Mal 3:1-3. IS LEFT UNTO/TO YOU DESOLATE - Eremos- [RT] perhaps supplied from Jer 22:5. Cp Ps 79:1; Isa 64:10-11. Desolate, forsaken, deserted by God. When His Son died on the Cross at their hands, the Temple Veil was ripped apart from top to bottom, 27:51, and the Holy of Holies was shown to contain nothing but dust. In AD 70 the Romans destroyed the Temple and replaced it with a heathen one. In 2323 the Jews/Pharisees had neglected/abandoned Justice, Mercy and Faith. Here God will abandon the Temple - same word. Cp Ezek 10:18-19; 11:22-23. The Temple symbolises God's relationship with His people. When they reject that relationship, there is no point to His presence in the Temple, 1 Ki 9:6-9. Because they rejected Christ the Temple was destroyed, and Israel pushed to the margins of history while Christians spread the knowledge of God. Ezek 9:11. Cp warnings in 1 Sam 2:31; 1 Ki 9:6-9; 2 Chr 36:19; Isa 64:10-11; Jer 7:12-14; 12:7; 22:5; 26:6; Lam 2:8, etc.

2339 FOR I SAY - Plainly, strongly, you will NOT SEE ME again- 26:29; 64 Jn 16:16. The appearances after the resurrection were to Believers only. After 40 days He ascended to Heaven where He remains until He returns to restore all things, Acts 3:21. The Lord's further teaching is given to Disciples only, 24:25. Jn 13:18. He will come from the Heavenly Temple to bless them when they welcome Him on His return and SAY BLESSED IS HE who comes IN THE NAME OF THE LORD - A shout of JOY, welcoming, not a Judge, but the Liberator bringing in Joy and Glory for Israel. The Galilean pilgrims had used these words at His Triumphal entry, 21:9; Mk 11:9; Lk 19:38 but Jerusalem rejected Him. This reaches out beyond God's abandonment of the Temple and the destruction of Jerusalem, and offers hope for Israel. The Lord confirms the promises of National

Jews as JEWS, distinct from Gentiles, will greet the returning Christ, there is no point to the Lord's quote from Ps 118 That Psalm clearly promises national Salvation to Jews, as Jews. Then Ps 305; Isa 625, etc will be fulfilled. Those commentators who deny a future blessing for national Israel have no explanation for the Lord promising it in these verses.

## Appendix Marriage, Divorce, etc

In 199 Porneia may simply translate Ervah, See \*\*20 But as it comes from Porne- Harlot, it is likely to mean that if the wife shamelessly becomes a harlot/prostitute she is beyond forgiveness and reconciliation. (OR the husband is an equally persistent womaniser.) This would parallel Israel's marital unfaithfulness to God/ spiritual adultery with idols is grounds for divorce in Jer 3; Ezek 23. Some have called Israel's sin "adultery" and say adultery is the grounds in 199 - but in both Jer 3 and Ezek 23, Israel's sin is that of a harlot/prostitute - persistent, public unfaithfulness, and even then in Jeremiah there is a call to return to the Lord. The Lord doesn't say "Except for Moichao- Adultery." But Porneia- sexual sin, could perhaps include adultery - (The Mishnah demanded divorce for discovered pre-marital infidelity, or adultery - YEBAMOTH 28, SOTAH 5:1.) The Law in fact demanded death by stoning as the punishment for, adultery, but the Lord didn't uphold this, Jn 8:1-11, any more than he carried into church life the ban in Deu 3:22. Divorce was an alternative only if God's Law about stoning wasn't going to be obeyed - banned by the Roman Law, Jn 18:31. (Joseph thought of separating, not stoning, 11:9-20)

God's Attitude- Because God loves people He hates divorce for what it does to them, but God loves divorced people. 19:7-8 suggests that God doesn't permit divorce and remarriage because some people are innocent. If He permits it, He does so because we're hard-hearted sinners, as in the time of Moses. \*\*60 The hardness then was their lack of Love for God and Neighbour. For Christians today it is the lack of the fruit of the Spirit, and failure to live by Eph 5:21-33. God in His love has decreed that eternal self-fulfillment is in the fulfilling of His eternal purpose for us, Rom 8:29, via the cross Gal 2:20. In a failing marriage or divorce the worldling, in relation to their self-god, suffers frustration, hurt pride, resentment, betrayal, humiliation. The child of God, being human, shares these sufferings, but GOD suffers with us what He HATES, the frustration, disgrace and betrayal of His loving purposes for us and our children. When such a situation is forced on a Believer, they can bear it with Him.

Human Attitude (a) Those less than happy in their marriages, especially if they have their eye on a new partner, are eager to interpret the Scripture to suit what they want. They say

divorce, and if divorce you must not remarry) out of compassion for individuals will tempt others into foolish marriages, or into walking out of marriages that could have been preserved and made worthwhile by sustained effort. The Pharisee in us, while finding excuse for ourselves/our loved ones, would lay on others heavy burdens, 234. But if we automatically refuse fellowship to those who have married after divorce because they have defied Lk 16:18, what about those who have cheated on taxes or made disrespectful remarks about the Government in defiance of Rom 13:5-7? We must not have fellowship with the covetous, greedy, successful businessman as he is an iddler, Eph 5:3; Col 3:5. We must not fellowship with any of those listed in 1 Cor 5:11. Those listed in 1 Cor 6:9-11, will not receive God's Kingdom, but God can and does make righteous and cleanse such sinners. See 21:31-32 Lk 7:37-47, Jn 4:18-29 8:3-11.

Hold on to God's Standards - Hold out a helping hand- is the Biblical answer. As Teachers we must teach the truth as we find it in God's Word. We MUST teach God's high standards and condemn the sins He condemns, and yet show the forgiveness He shows to the repentant. As Elders and Shepherds, we must act with due respect to the Righteousness of God, and show due consideration for the effect on others in the flock if we receive them. Lack of commitment to God's view of marriage must always be condemned. A self-righteous shunning of divorced or remarried persons is sin, but so is a casual attitude towards divorce and remarriage. We must have a heart of compassion for those who have sinned and come short of the Glory of God's will in marriage, as we help them to find an honest way forward. Sexual sins have a special seriousness because they involve our bodies and beings, 1 Cor 6:18. This makes it especially important that a way forward be opened for those who have turned from their sin. We dare not call those cleansed by God unfit for our fellowship, Acts 10:15. The son of God loved them, and

Footnote \*\*60. I point this out because when problems arise in a marriage (as they can be expected to do, human nature being what it is) instead of praying and working towards solving them both partners (supported by their families) may be tempted into "proving" they are "innocent" and free to divorce and remarry, while blackening their partner. This is totally unchristian, totally destructive of the marriage, and denies our responsibility to forgive any sin, and rebuild the marriage if that is at all possible. Verbal attacks by a quick-witted, sharp-tongued wife never justify physical violence by the husband. That one's partner has defied God's commands in Jn 15:12-13 1 Cor 7:3-5; Phil 2:1-4, doesn't justify adultery. But, in both cases they are a factor in it. I thank God that in His mercy He granted me as a wife, a dear sister in the Lord who, as well as being easy to love, in what she did and said set herself to the wisdom of BUILDING her house, Prov 14:1. Marriage is a high and holy privilege and potential blessing, that is worth working at, but Eph 5:21-33 makes sense only against the background of Gal 5:13-26.

Give Himself for them, to set them free from the sinful ways of this world, not to tolerate indifference to them. This process of finding a way forward demands time, and the

less than the best justifies breaking up and trying again. But this is a recipe for marital disaster as total commitment is required to make even the most promising marriage work, and happiness and fulfilment are the fruit of mutual consideration and sacrifice.

Constant popularisation and pressure for uncommitted and bizarre sexual freedom in the world at large further complicates the matter. As a result Christians tend to interpret the exception in 199 with a great deal of ingenuity in order to justify their own desire for divorce and remarriage. But our Lord's words give no encouragement to the idea of divorcing and remarrying. The goal of the command is to make our marriage secure by strengthening our sense of responsibility to make it work well. NOT to haggle over arguable details of interpretation as to possible let-outs!

We must do all we can to encourage marriages to flourish, the reconciliation of parted partners, and refraining from divorce or remarriage while there is any hope of repentance, 1 Cor 7:10. To the secular world no-fault divorce makes sense BUT it becomes no-responsibility divorce in human thinking, and that's a disaster. The tragedy is that fallen human nature fastens on the least permission, and ignores the ideal. Hard-heartedness of the husband or wife may insist on divorce and refuse forgiveness for sin repented of, and the chance to rebuild the damaged marriage. The Lord's teaching, 1821-35, is that His Disciples FORGIVE any/all trespasses against them OR ELSE! Christian husbands/wives should confess to each other their own contribution to problems in marriage. And as sinners saved by the Grace of God be willing even to accept a repentant adulterer/adulteress and commit themselves again to the building of a God-honouring, mutually blessing life together.

The Gospel offers no happiness for those whose eyes of sexual desire look beyond their spouse, and reach out for a new one, 5:27-30, 2Pet 2:14. Or those who marry lightly, uncommitted for life, who weigh their present marriage against the prospects of life with alternative partners, and choose to leave their partner in the hope of doing better next time. All around us people are playing that game, and it destroys them and the next generation before they're old enough to choose. The whole weight of Scripture treats Divorce as a surgical operation, to be avoided if possible, but cancer may require surgery, and one party may force divorce through against the wishes of the other, 1 Cor 7:10-15. Or Criminal abuse may make the home-life so destructive to the Christian partner and children that they must separate.

The weight of Scripture is against remarriage after divorce, 199, Mk 10 Lk 16 1 Cor 7:10-11. It can be defended only by saying that when the one exception allows divorce, it also must allow re-marriage, 199, and remarriage may be needed to avoid sexual sin. The basis of any God-blessed second marriage is the forgiveness of sins, But one can't divorce with any right to expect to be truly repentant and forgiven, or marry an unsaved partner.



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

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