

Booklet I Chapters 1 - 5

The Birth and Childhood of Jesus *The Commencement of His Ministry* *The Sermon on the Mount*

**Verse Numbers and Brief quotes only are supplied - it's assumed you will be using these comments to supplement your reading of your own Bible. May God Bless you in your studies as He has blessed me in mine. E.
Read**

Explanation of Abbreviations

OT= Old Testament. NT= New Testament. ARAM/Ram is KJV/Niv, [RT]= Received Text. [Nes]= Nestle Text. LXX= Greek Septuagint Old Testament. MT= Masoretic Hebrew Text. Mss= Manuscripts. Cp= Compare with the Scriptures that follow.

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Evangelical view. While not wasting time on arguments about critical questions, writing with an awareness of the problems, he gives material helpful to those who face them.

In addition to these books written by fellow Bible-believing Evangelicals I found helpful two written from different perspectives. The Christbook- Matthew F D Bruner, WORD BOOKS, 1987. Bruner can be so blindly church-traditional as to say on Mt 3:13-17 that at the Christening of a baby of well-intentioned Christian parents God says of it "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased!" This leaves me shocked and bewildered. But often he writes with a freshness, and confidence in God's Word and its relevance to modern life, gained by teaching Filipino evangelical theological students. He says that although we need to understand the background of any book "The most important quality of Scripture is its inbuilt ability to keep revealing God and His Salvation to men in each succeeding age/ every cultural environment." This is true, although we tend to shape our understanding to suit us, rather than allowing Scripture to correct what we believe. Be like Luther, and Calvin. "having established what stands in the text Calvin sets himself to rethink the whole material, wrestle with it until the barriers between the 1st and 16th centuries dissolve and Paul speaks through Calvin." Whatever we may gain from literary or historical studies we must take for granted "that the Bible is a book that God has inspired and uses.. relate the text to the present situation."

Davies & Allison's Matthew, International Critical Commentary, T & T Clark, 1988. Fifty years ago the barren pre-occupation of this series with deadening "criticism" dissected the Scripture, and killed it as effectively as any frog dissected in a biology lab. The Authors confess such efforts turned the Gospels into museum pieces. They say we must pay primary attention to the text as it is, and seek what it has to say to us today. They draw on more than 500 Books, journals, etc, and having waded through 700 pages of Matthew 1-7, often in technical language, Ecc 12:12 rings true! But, after having been tossed about on an ocean of the weird beliefs and doubts of comments made during 1900 years - one has faced, in dependence on the Lord, most of the possible and impossible meanings of what Matthew has written.

God's Word both warns and reassures of the worth-whileness of this. No matter how earnest and learned they are, those who have not been "Born of the Spirit" can't understand the things of God they comment on, 1 Cor 2:6-16. In a busy life, to read and use commentaries written by those who differ from us doctrinally is a waste of time and source of confusion. But there are times when some of us need to look through the eyes of those with alternative understandings of Scripture, to see truths and errors more clearly. Times when it's God's will that we "Spoil the Egyptians," Ex 12:35-36. The gold we gain from them is moulded into shapes that honour their religion and gods. We may make it

presents profound truths in simple language. But Matthew was the most quoted in the 2nd century, always listed first, and valued for showing the Lord's fulfilment of the OT.

A problem today is that Matthew wrote as a Jewish Christian for Jewish Christians, and dealt with their concerns. (Mt 24:20 and/or on the Sabbath to Mk 13:18, etc. His quotes are closer to the Hebrew OT.) He expects readers to be familiar with Jewish words and customs, Raka, Korban, Temple Tax, Phylacteries, Kingdom of Heaven for Kingdom of God, so gives no explanation of them. But having firmly based the Gospel on its Jewish foundation/ the OT promises of God, he directs attention to God's purposes of Grace for the world and ends with the disciples being committed to make disciples world wide. So this most Jewish of Gospels is marked by emphasis on Jewish rejection of their Messiah, and their hostility as recorded in 8:10-12, 21:43-23:29, 27:24-25, etc. That Christ is the fulfilment of God's promises and rejected by His people brings the Gospel to the world, Rom, 11:11.

Written - When? Where? Why? - While there is an ancient suggestion that Matthew was first written in Hebrew, or Aramaic, it came to us only in Greek. **1 The tradition that the writer was Matthew/ Levi, Mk 2:14-15, Lk 5:29 fits the outlook of the writer being Jewish, but writing well in Greek, and he refers to tax collectors & money matters more than other Gospels.

Irenaeus claims it was written when Peter and Paul were still alive, Adv. Haer. iii.1.1. What is said of the destruction of Jerusalem, 22:7; 23:38, etc is written as prophecy - If written after AD 70 it should have fitted it neatly. After AD 70 there's little point in referring to the Temple 5:23-24, 23:16-22, and Temple Tax 17:24-27. (It was paid to Temple of Jupiter later!). As it's clearly written among Jews, for Jews, if written before AD 70 it may have been written in Jerusalem, Acts 8:1. Many Jews lived in Antioch, and it had a large missionary-minded church, Acts 13:1-3, concerned about the place of Gentile Christians, Acts 15. A Matthew-style record of the Life of Christ, His words, work, and commission could have grown there.

Its Nature - More than a third of Matthew's Gospel is recorded by him alone. Although 40% is shared with Mark, and 20% with Luke, much of the overlaps are given in a different setting or organised differently, into topics rather than in time sequence. It's a waste of time to argue whether Matthew made use of Mark's record, or vice-versa etc. The constant preaching by the Apostles would have established ways of selecting, organising and stating the material before these written accounts were assembled. Luke says he made use of all the sources he could find, Lk 1:2-3. The others simply concentrate on presenting Christ to us. Thank you Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, AND Lord Jesus.

times he says "This was to fulfil.." etc, (1:22-23 2:15, 17-18, 23-24:14-16 8:17; 12:17-21; 21:4-5; 27:9-10) he alone makes the association. Often it isn't just an obvious one, but shows a deep conviction that Christ fulfils all that the OT offers

From the first He is revealed to be God with us, 1:23. This truth is reinforced in 2:15; 3:17; 4:3-6; 8:29; 11:25-27; 14:33; 16:16-17; 17:5; 21:37-39; 24:36; 26:53-54; 6:3; 27:40, 43; 55:4; 28:2-4, 19-20. Matthew emphasises that Jesus was the Messiah/Christ, but the Jews expected a conquering Messiah winning for them what THEY wanted. The Lord stressed His Saving identification with fallen mankind by calling Himself Son of Man, 8:20 9:6, and many more times. Some see the true nature and work of the Messiah forming slowly in 11, 16-18; 11:2; 16:13-20. A Messiah who must be crucified was a continuing stumbling block to Jews, 1 Cor 1:23. A Messianic title "Son of David" is used 9x, often in relation to miracle working, 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31. Matthew speaks of His Kingdom/Kingship, 1:1-17; 13:41; 16:28; 19:28; 20:21; 21:4-5; 25:31; 34:28-18. A Kingship established through His ministry as God's Servant-Son, not political, 27:11, 29, 37, 42.

That Israel had failed, was under Judgment and must repent, was made clear by John Baptist and Jesus, 3:1-12; 8:11-12; 11:16-24; 12:38-45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:29-39. The guilt of this centred on the Leaders, 21:28-22:14, whose true nature is seen in 27:24-25.

Jesus not merely proclaims and prepares for the coming into being of the True Israel/people of God - He Himself embodies it, provides for it and it exists only in Him. Only those who repent, 3:2-6; 4:17, are born of the Spirit, 3:11-12, and have their sins forgiven, 1:21; 9:6; 26:28, are His. So as a community of the forgiven, they must forgive each other, 6:14-15; 18:21-35. Their lives must be different from the world around, 5:3-16, so they produce fruit for God, 21:28-22:14 - a matter not of Jewish birth but of a right relationship with Him based on their response to His message, 7:21-27; 8:11-12; 12:41-42; 25:31-46. Matthew says much on Christ fulfilling the PAST. He only hints at the future church, new covenant, Gentiles being welcomed, etc as until they rejected Him the witness was limited to Israel, 10:5-6; 15:24.

Matthew writes his Gospel with the certainty that the NT revelation in Christ fulfils, completes and transforms the OT revelation. This is particularly true of the core of the OT, the Law. Every detail is sacred, any changes must be to fulfil/expand/clarify/complete it, 5:17-48. Christ as the fulfilment of the Law clashes with the Scribes and Pharisees who were obsessed with elaborating it into burdensome restrictions while allowing themselves to escape their obvious obligations, 15:1-9. He emphasises the pre-eminence of LOVE over external show of piety, 5:43-48; 19:19; 22:35-40; 25:31-45, etc.

Bk 1 DISCIPLESHIP

3:1-4:25 John. Jesus begins His work and calls first Disciples.

5:1-7:29 Sermon on the Mount. Endmarker 7:28-29.

Bk 2 APOSTLESHIP

8:1-9:35 Jesus shows His authority over disease, demons, and nature.

9:36-10:45 The 12 Disciples given a share in His work - reinforced by warnings and promises of rewards. Endmarker 11:1.

Bk 3 OPPOSITION & THE KINGDOM

11:2-12:50 Questions and controversies about the person and authority of Jesus - His general Rejection.

13:1-52 Faced with unbelief the Lord uses Parables to teach about the Kingdom of Heaven. Endmarker 13:53.

Bk 4 The REJECTED KING & HIS CHURCH

13:54-17:21 As He and His Kingdom are increasingly rejected the Lord Jesus increasingly reveals His Glory and Power. As His loyal disciples realise who He is He points them forward to the Cross and beyond that to the Church He will build.

17:22-18:35 Teaching on relationships among disciples in the Church/ community of His people. Endmarker 19:1.

Bk 5 THE JUDGMENT

19:2-22:46 His ministry culminates in the Triumphal Entry, and confrontation with the Chief Priests and Elders.

23:1-25:46 Teaching on Future Events and Farewell address. Endmarker 26:1.

26:3-28:20 Death & Resurrection of Jesus and its Outcome.

don't know the source, but the preservation of Genealogies was important among Jews. In contrast to Luke (which may give His physical descent, or Mary's, both being descended from David) Matthew gives the Royal line with right to the throne. That Shealtiel and Zerubbabel appear in both lists isn't surprising as at the time of the Exile a childless widow, being remarried according to Deu 25:5-6, could have a son to inherit from her first husband, and others inherit from her second husband)

1:1 GENERATION/Genealogy- Genesis- An origin, lineage, or birth. Echoes Gen 2:4; 5:1 - This begins the NT record of the New Creation, 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15, and the Second Adam, 1 Cor 15:21-23 Matthew's Gospel begins with the Good News of our Lord's human descent, as the One who would fulfil the promises made to His ancestors. An old inscription claims that the birth of Caesar Augustus was the beginning of the Good News of restoration of a world falling into misery. Matthew records the Good News of the birth of the true God-King

JESUS- Iesous- The Greek form of Joshua/Jehoshua- Jehovah is Salvation/ the Saviour, or the prayer O Lord Save! to which He is the answer, Mt 1:21. The personal name of the Son of God to become human for us, Jn 1:14. This is the name by which He was known as a man, and it sums up all He is as the Son of man, Perfect Man, Representative man. After His ascension writers usually added Christ or Lord to the name Jesus. The name order Jesus Christ may remind us that He was the despised and rejected Jesus who was afterwards glorified, Phil 2:11.

CHRIST- Christos- Anointed. **2 The Greek form of the OT Messiah- Anointed. This is a TITLE rather than a personal name. The Gospel is about JESUS- the Saviour, who is also the CHRIST- the promised Servant of the Lord ANOINTED to fulfil all God's purposes, OT promises, types, shadows, hints- the job he was Anointed to do Everything they speak of He perfectly IS. References to His role as Messiah are in 24; 16:16; 22:42; 26:63 etc.

SON- Huios- Born a child- Teknon and grown up to share the dignity, goals, and purposes of the father. Son OF DAVID- 2 Sam 7:11-16; 1 Chr 17:3-14, especially "his throne shall be established forever." See Isa 9:6-7; 11:10; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Jn 7:42; Act 2:29-36; 13:22-23; Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8; Rev 5:5; 22:16 A key title of Messiah in the time of Christ, especially as the partial and flawed Deliverers - the Maccabees/Hasmoneans - weren't descended from David.

1:2-6 ABRAHAM.. ISAAC .. JACOB- LXX 1 Chr 1:34 Hebrew has Israel. JUDAH AND HIS brothers- Mentioned as Jacob's sons were the founding heads of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob looked ahead to Judah's descendants reigning Gen 49:10 JUDAH.. PHARES & ZARAH OF whose mother was Tamar- God's Grace abounded over human folly and sin. Hezron.. ARAM/Ram.. Amminadab.. Nahshon.. SALMON.. Boaz of Rahab- Not so recorded in OT. How 450 years between entering Canaan and Samuel the prophet Acts 13:20 fit Salmon to David is unexplained. JESSE.. DAVID THE KING - God chose David, 1 Sam 16:12 Ps 78:6-72 Satan/ Saul were determined to destroy him, 1 Sam 19:9-11. His enthronement and promotion of worship, 2 Sam 6:1-19 symbolised the Messiah to come from his descendants, 2 Sam 7:13 Ps 89:19-20 Isa 9:6-7; Lk 1:32

1:6-11 KING DAVID.. SOLOMON- Peaceful- Not a natural product of David's life, 1 Chr 28:3. Chosen of God, 2 Sam 7:12-16 12:25 1 Chr 28:4-6. Heb 1:5 transfers "I will be His Father" to Christ. He started well, yet apostatised. whose mother HAD BEEN Uriah's wife... Rehoboam- Forsook the Law of the Lord, 2 Chr 12:14 Abijah- Recognised God had given the Kingship to Israel, but couldn't reunite the country, 2 Chr 13:5. ASA- Began as a man of Faith, and fell into rebellious unbelief. Jehoshaphat- Began walking in the ways of David, but then linked his family with Ahab. Jehoram.. Uzziah- Began well, but usurped the role of Priest and died a leper, 2 Chr 26:16-21. 1 Chr 3:11-12 gives the full list, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham. This shortened list blends Ahaziah- Azariah, and so neatly fits the pattern of 14 generations. OR omits them as associated with wicked Ahab's family cursed to 3rd generation, Ex 20:5; Num 14:18

Uzziah.. Jotham.. Ahaz.. Hezekiah.. Manasseh.. Amon.. Josiah.. Jehoniah AND HIS brothers. CARRIED AWAY /of the exile- LXX 2 Ki 24:16 1 Chr 5:22 Ezek 12:11. Being forced out of their homeland to live in another country. TO BABYLON- From Jer 22:30 we wouldn't expect Jehoniah/Coniah/Jehoiachin to have descendants. But 2 Kings ends by focussing on him as the hope of the future by listing his favoured status in Babylon, 2 Ki 25:27-30 The Lord Jesus wasn't

UP from Mary from Abraham to David, DOWN in judgment to the Exile, and THROUGH the unrecorded years of their history. In the time of Solomon, Messiah's Kingdom seemed close, but Israel had descended into darkness and for hundreds of years the promises must have seemed unreal. But God continued to work throughout the unknown years to the birth of Jesus.

1:16 JACOB.. JOSEPH- The source of His right to the throne. THE HUSBAND OF MARY, OF WHOM- feminine singular. WAS BORN JESUS WHO IS CALLED CHRIST- The anointed "Son" of David and legally heir to the promised Kingdom, 2 Sam 7:12-13; Isa 9:7.

The Nature of the Selected Ancestors

The Four GENTILE Women- Instead of the Jewish Matriarchs Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah we have Tamar, Gen 38-39 Jewish tradition said a Syrian. Rahab- Canaanite, Josh 21-22; 6:22-25 Heb 11:31; Jas 2:25 Bathsheba- a Hittite wife. Ruth- a Moabite. To Rabbinical Judaism the children of a Jewish Father and Gentile mother weren't even Jews.

PUBLIC SCANDAL- Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba were associated with public scandal. (The provision of Messiah through innocent Mary was vulnerable to scandal.) Although Ruth's personal life was above reproach, as a Moabite she was banned from entering the Congregation of Israel, Deu 23:3-4. Besides it was the "good Jews" Judah and David who were responsible for the sins of Tamar and Bathsheba. King Manasseh had deliberately so corrupted the Nation that Exile was inescapable, 2 Ki 23:26-7. Sin isn't a matter of indifference, but their repentance was accepted, Gen 38:26; 2 Sam 12:13; Ps 51; 2 Ki 21:1-18; 2 Chr 33:18. God not only allowed Tamar etc to be ancestors of the Messiah, He pointed out what we would think disqualified them, while making no mention of the women in virtuous marriage situations. God showed His mercy to sinners and Gentiles by giving them honoured mention, and rebuked self-righteousness.

Implications for the Gospel- In bringing His Son into the world God operated in Sovereign Grace just as He does in the Gospel-offer of Salvation and Sonship to sinners whether Jew or Gentile. In His human descent Jesus, the ever holy One, came through sinners as well as for sinners. Only the mercy of God enabled the OT story to unfold. No-one DESERVES or CAN EARN THE RIGHT to a place in

1:17 FOURTEEN GENERATIONS are listed in each section of the genealogy. It wasn't considered necessary to list every step so long as the line of descent was made clear. So each section has been trimmed down, the pattern of fourteens making checking and memorising simpler. **3 Uzziah WAS the son of Jehoram AND son of David in Jewish speech. We as preachers are also to select and simplify the message of Scripture to make it effective to different audiences. But the reshaping must be true to the text.

Why 14- David's name is 14 in Hebrew- D=4, W= 6 D= 4. Cp Rev 13:17-18 and occupies the 14th slot? Like the moon it waxes for 14 days Abraham to David, wanes 14 days to Exile, waxes 14 days to Christ?

To get 14 generations Exile to Christ we have to count Jechoniah a second time, perhaps as in Babylon, no longer in Jerusalem. Unless like Calvin, 1:61, we say probably the copyists left a name out. That a man as gifted and godly as Calvin could say that is a reminder that arguing over numbers, details, genealogies etc isn't spending time well, 1 Tim 1:3-4. That the Bible is God's Word, and all to be valued as the means He uses to reveal Himself and His will is essential, 2 Tim 3:15-17; Heb 1:16. But when we set out to make an exact science of the Bible to fit our ideas of what it should be - verbal inerrancy of any particular translation, or the form of any unclear statements, we become foolish, and unprofitable.

All Scripture isn't focussed sharply, having one precise meaning only, and especially in the Psalms, Prophets, Parables, and Revelation the way God and His people interact is depicted as a painting, not a photograph. It's Christ depicted in the Scripture that gives life, not mastery of the details harmonised into a rational doctrinal system of Salvation, Jn 5:39-40 2 Tim 3:15. The writers of Scripture were human and limited, but by the Spirit, 2 Pet 1:19-21, their message conveys Christ effectively to the humble listener, Jn 1:13 and equally frustrates, Isa 44:25 the theorising/ systematising of super-orthodox and heretic, fundamentalist and liberal, alike.

Footnote **3 Evidence of trimming- Exile to Christ, about 600 years. Luke lists about 9 more names than Matthew. David to Exile, only 450 years, but we know from 2 Ki 8:14; 2 Chr 21:25, that

born in a, but only by the work of the Holy Spirit could God become man, and today make Jesus alive in a human life.)

1:18 THIS IS HOW THE BIRTH- Genesis- A birth, from Gennaō to lōget [Some Mss have Genesis= Lineage, birth, from Ginomai= to lōcome.] This links the Genealogy with the events that follow telling how the birth of JESUS CHRIST - See 1:1. came about.

HIS MOTHER MARY WAS pledged to be married TO JOSEPH- This was a binding commitment to marry, made by the two families, lasting a year before the Marriage Ceremony was celebrated. It could be broken only by a divorce or the death of the man or woman.

BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER- Before the bridegroom took the Bride to His home and they consummated their marriage. SHE WAS FOUND- It doesn't mean that someone found out this fact, simply that it was a fact to be WITH CHILD- She was going to have a baby. OF/through THE HOLY Spirit- Pneuma- From Pneo= To breathe, or blow. Used for OT Ruach. The simple statements of Holy Scripture with regard to this matter are to be received with reverent awe, not presumptuous questioning or elaboration. The Holy Spirit made this happen. Compare this with the activity of the Spirit in Creation/ initiating of life, Gen 12; Ps 104; Ezek 37:1-14, the formation of the Church, Acts 2, and in our receiving Salvation, Jn 3:5-8; Rom 8:15-18; 1 Cor 12:13; bringing in the Millennium, Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; Joel 2:28 etc.

1:19 THEN Because JOSEPH HER HUSBAND - He was that legally, from the time of the engagement BEING JUST /was a righteous man- Dikaios- One who was careful to do what was RIGHT. God-fearing and obedient to His Law. So Joseph was a man who faithfully fulfilled his duties to God and treated people fairly with compassionate and caring goodness.

NOT WILLING /did not want to- Thelo- A natural inclination, what someone felt like doing TO MAKE HER A PUBLIC EXAMPLE /expose her to public disgrace- Deigmatizo- To set forth as an example, publicly expose as Christ did the principalities, Col 2:15 Used of exposing criminals in LXX Num 25:4, etc. (Some Mss have the stronger form Paradeigmatizo= To put to open shame.) Mary's pregnancy would be taken as proof of adultery, (engagement was counted

before only two witnesses to be legal, although a public statement would be demanded by a Bridegroom eager to justify himself, and repay the bride and her family for the insult. Instead of publicly proclaiming her as an adulteress the families would allow the engagement to lapse. No announcement would be made. Mary would disappear to a relative at a distance - as she did in going to Elizabeth. Gossip would guess what was involved.

1:20 WHILE /after HE THOUGHT ON THESE THINGS/had considered this- Enthymoi- En= in, Thumos= Strong feeling, passion, anger. Gave deep and distressing thought to the matter. A quick-tempered man would act in hurt pride without consideration for Mary. Joseph wanted to act justly, and mercifully. It wasn't something he could decide in a cold calculating spirit. Although nothing like modern courtship was permitted, one is right to assume that he knew enough of her to respect, and in a sense love her. The Annunciation, Lk 1:35 seems to have been not known to Joseph **4

BEHOLD- An attention-getting word, emphasising what follows. THE /an ANGEL - Angelos- Messenger, from Angello= to deliver a message. Angels are created beings whose natural sphere is heaven and the service of God, able to appear in human form as His messengers. OF THE LORD APPEARED to HIM- If we don't rush into impulsive action, drift in indifference, or withdraw behind rigid walls of prejudice, but are willing to wait and seek the Lord's will, God in His grace and wisdom makes it possible for us to know, to will, and do what pleases Him, Jn 7:17; Phil 2:13 IN A DREAM SAYING- Logo- Emphasizing the Logos= message conveyed, rather than the Rhema= form of words that conveyed it. Only an angel's message is relevant, nothing is said of their appearance

Footnote **4 A modern commentator uses this as an illustration of the need for open communication and trust in courtship and marriage - asking why didn't he LISTEN to Mary's explanation, trust her, believe what she said, etc. It would have saved him the distress of stewing over the situation at the mercy of his own imagination. This is certainly true today, but we don't know what opportunities to talk they as an engaged couple had. Or whether Mary was free or felt free to explain the truth of the situation. What is clear is that neither the provision of the Saviour, nor the preaching of His Gospel was without COST to both God and man. In a world of sinners and deceivers, people would be sure to accuse Mary (and perhaps Joseph) of sin, and to ridicule the

TO TAKE INTO THE HOME - its right for you to go ahead and complete the marriage by taking MARY as your WIFE because what IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS OF/from- Ek- Out of. THE HOLY Spirit- Pneuma. **5 It's the Holy Spirit who has caused her pregnancy. She is still a virgin, has kept herself for you Our Lord was born of a woman, truly human, but SINLESS/Holy from conception and in all His life/ living and dying 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22 1 Jn 3:5. The Holy Spirit is the source by which the Lord became truly Human - came in the flesh. Unholy spirits deny this, 1 Jn 4:1-2, keeping Him from direct involvement in humanity and so denying that He now indwells and transforms flesh-and-blood sinful-by-nature people. The Holy Spirit teaches us that for the salvation of sinners He was made like His brothers, Heb 2:17, as well as enabling us to say that He is Lord = God 1 Cor 12:3. He teaches us of Christ, and enables us to witness to Christ, Jn 15:26 16:14 Acts 1:8

1:21 CALL HIS/the NAME - The name he would be known by, and following OT custom it could also indicate what someone was and did, Eg Peter, Mt 16:17-18 Something of this still exists in our modern use of language where one person can be correctly NAMED, Lieutenant Williams, Henry Williams, Henare Wiremu, the Rev Williams, Son, Father, Husband, Brother.. Each give some indication of how they could be expected to behave in relation to those who rightly use that specific NAME. Apart from the word Jesus this follows the words of the LXX of Isa 7:14

JESUS- Salvation of Jehovah, Jehovah the Saviour, etc. 1:1. In Hebrew the elements of a name could be combined in a variety of ways. The Name tells us who He is, and what He does. Only God can save, Ps 3:8; Jonah 2:9. He is nothing less than God, and He does nothing less than Save - not just help us towards salvation, or in saving ourselves. Jesus is human, a Jew named Jehoshuah. He is also God-Saves, God-with-us FOR/because HE will SAVE - Sozo- To save, deliver, protect, preserve, or make whole. Used of physical deliverance, or as here of being saved from spiritual and eternal disaster, into spiritual and eternal blessing Acts 2:47 etc. He saves the Believer now, Rom 5:10 8:1-17, etc, and fully at His coming Rom 5:9; 8:22-25 And will save Israel in the coming Kingdom, Rom 11:26

Footnote **5 Pneuma is Neuter, the Hebrew equivalent Ruach is feminine - no male element involved in contrast to the crude heathen incarnation myths

attention to the ROOT of man's need of salvation, away from political and material expectations as these were not fulfilled in the first coming. From the first God made His priorities clear. All revolutionaries fasten attention on enemies and hating/defeating them. The Gospel says the thing to be hated is sin - our own sin in particular!

1:22 NOW- Not a mark of time, but the reason THIS took place. Ginomai- To Become. So, occurred. This seems to be Matthew's explanation. Nowhere else does an angel appeal to Scripture. THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED (to fulfill). A quotation formula used in the NT only by Matthew, 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9. None of the quotes conform exactly to LXX or MT. WHICH WAS SPOKEN OF THE LORD had said BY/through THE PROPHET - The LORD was the source, the prophet the channel. Prophets received knowledge of God's will under the influence of the Spirit of God, Num 11:17-29 and made it known so their words were God's words. This included what God thought of the present situation, what He would do about it/the options His people faced, and sometimes something of His long-term plans. What prophets said made sense at the time, but they contained in seed form information about what He would later do as His purposes unfolded. Hence NT quotes often have a different emphasis from that of the original statement.

1:23 BEHOLD- Calling attention to something important and urgent. A/the VIRGIN- Parthenos- Specifically a VIRGIN. There is no excuse for translating this as "a Young Woman," although the Hebrew word in Isaiah 7 is less definite. **6 This is no ordinary birth. Immanuel is referred to again in Isa 8:8, 10 and is relevant to Isa 9:6-7.

Footnote **6 KJV, NIV, etc. are correct in translating "Almah" in Isa 7:14 as VIRGIN, as that's clearly the meaning looked back to here, and the word Parthenos was used in LXX, not Paidiske- Young woman. To be a SIGN, an event had to be something that involved God's intervention, not simply a young woman having a baby. But "Almah" is less specifically "Virgin" than the alternative word "Bethulah," so Good News etc. have an excuse for translating it as Young Woman in Isa 7. God seems to have said to King Ahaz/the House of David that a boy would soon be born who could have been rightly called Immanuel as the assurance that God was indeed

202831; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 18/Ps 456; 1 Jn 520 The virgin birth is a powerful and beautiful truth, but that doesn't warrant our saying that it was the ONLY way by which God could have come as our Saviour. It's simply recorded as THE way in which God worked. John and Paul base nothing of their arguments on it. **7 JOSEPH.. TOOK HIS WIFE- Gods sovereign grace doesn't cancel human responsibility, it enables it. As with Joseph, it finds us inactive and makes us obedient.

1:25 AND KNEW HER NOT/But had no union with her- Ginosko- Knowledge gained by experience and fellowship, (used as in Num 31:17; 1 Sam 1:19) is a rather beautiful way of describing sexual union between husband and wife, involving as it should an opening of one's whole being - mental, emotional, spiritual and physical - to each other with the desire to achieve total, joyful, fruitful oneness.

TILL SHE gave birth- The Scripture proclaims that in reverence for Gods intervention in Mary they abstained, and Mary remained a virgin, until after the birth of Jesus, and her purification, Lk 22:1-24. It implies that it was appropriate for a virgin to become mother of the Word become flesh, but in reverence for Gods natural order, and obedient to Gods command to Joseph to take Mary as his wife, they then took up the joys, duties, and responsibilities God provided for husbands and wives. And so produced and reared younger brothers and sisters as part of the home background of Jesus, 12:46-13:55; Mk 6:3; Jn 7:3-5; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 9:5; Gal 1:19. She is shown as a normal Godly wife and Mother. The idea that Mary remained a virgin is linked with the wicked lie that marriage is spiritually defiling, 1 Tim 4:1-5, and with denying that Christ alone is Mediator and Intercessor.

HER FIRSTBORN SON- The firstborn son had special privileges and responsibilities, Deu 21:16-17. "Israel.. my Firstborn," Ex 4:22 meant Israel had a special place in Gods plans and purposes. In Ps 89:27 God is to make David His Firstborn, higher than the Kings of the earth. To David, youngest in the family, God would give a place of superiority, supremacy, and uniqueness - pointing forward to David's Son. Used of Christ it refers to His superiority in position as Eternal Son, and source of all Creation. See notes in Colossian booklet, Col 1:15 AND HE CALLED HIM/gave Him the NAME JESUS.

Gentiles, Lk 21:24, under the terrible 4th Beast, Rome, and rulers appointed by them. They, the Sanhedrim and the Temple Priests, would be used by Satan, the Great Red Dragon, to try to destroy the Saviour and Lord, when the woman, Israel, gave birth to Him, Rev 12:1-5.)

2:1 WHEN/AFTER JESUS WAS BORN - Traditionally December. Some say September. God's Word does nothing to make it possible for a genuine "Holy Day" to be established. IN BETHLEHEM JUDEA - David's City, 1 Sam 16:1-3; 17:12, 20:6, etc, so linked with the Coming of Messiah Jn 7:42 (The other Bethlehem was in Zebulun) during the time OF HEROD - Appointed King by the Roman Senate, 40 BC, reigned to shortly before Passover, 4 BC. **8

BEHOLD - Introducing a new development. WISE MEN/Magi - Magos - Men who studied the stars and tried to work out what was going to happen, Astrologers. Magos is used for those in Dan 2:2, 10. Elsewhere in the NT it's used only of Elymas in Acts 13:6, 8. As God spoke to them through their studies it seems they were making an honest attempt to study the stars and find hints as to what would happen. All are sinners, but all are objects of God's Grace and His Spirit moves them to seek Him. These were outsiders - Gentiles and Astrologers - yet literally followed the light God gave them. God reaches out to men wherever they are - speaks to astrologers through the stars, to fishermen through fish. He uses natural means to arouse longings - convict of needs - to bring them to where the Scripture can direct them and finally to saving contact with Christ. For Israel, who had God's revelation in Scripture, to look to the stars instead of the Creator-Redeemer was sinful folly, Isa 47:13 Ezek 21:21.

CAME FROM THE EAST - The gifts fit Arabia, but would be available in Iraq/Iran. They had only vague knowledge of Judaism so perhaps little contact with Jews who were so plentiful in Iraq that the Talmud was formed there. TO JERUSALEM. The despised Gentiles set out to seek Him with only the witness of the natural world, accept the guidance of Scripture and find it confirmed by Nature, meet and worship Him. The Bible experts stay at home. The enlightened-by-Scripture Herod destroys all hope of personal salvation by using his knowledge to try to destroy the Saviour - the Light coming into the world shines in darkness which can neither understand it, nor smother it, Jn 1:3-5.

a conjunction of planets, signs, star of kingship, Satan, star of Jews, were in conjunction 3 times in 7 BC. A Comet- Halley's Comet, 12-11 BC, or a Super Nova in a quarter they associated with Israel. It says nothing about their being GUIDED by the star as they went. They simply went to Jerusalem where they expected a King of the Jews to be. That God used their astrology to speak to them doesn't endorse it - but shows that He reaches out to everyone right where they are. For us the uncertain stars have been replaced by the sure Word of God, and the light of His saving glory in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 4:5-6.

IN THE EAST - Or, at its Rising - which would link with the rising of Messiah, Num 24:17; Isa 60:1; Mal 4:2

TO WORSHIP HIM- Proskuneo- Pros- Towards, Kune- to Kiss To acknowledge as loved and worshipped. (Other words for worship include bowing to confess Lordship, and giving Praise and thanksgiving.) They wouldn't have come for the birth of an ordinary Prince. Natural men can't grasp spiritual things without the Spirit, 1 Cor 2:14, so presumably God in Grace revealed Himself to them so they "found Him," Rom 10:20. Isa 11:10 says Gentiles would seek Him.

2:3-6 WHEN HEROD.. HEARD .. HE WAS TROUBLED/ disturbed- Tarasso- Very Upset, alarmed, as the disciples were in 1426. This world's Rulers fear the Supernatural, and Satan's puppets quickly get violent to protect their ill-gotten gains. As a Roman-appointed half-Jew he was vulnerable to any alternative with a true claim to Kingship. As Pharaoh sought to kill Moses, so Herod and Christ. It's a normal reaction of self, when faced with the chance of surrender to the Saviour.

ALL JERUSALEM WITH HIM- As is normal in OT/Hebrew, this says that a general disturbance resulted. Herod in a panic - heads would roll! Later all in Jerusalem were responsible for the Lord's Death, Acts 2:14, 22:23. He is merely an unwelcome trouble to The Great religious/political power/symbolically God's city, but welcomed at hamlets Bethlehem and Nazareth - God takes up the despised.

CHIEF PRIESTS- High priest, Officer of Temple guard, and leading priests. SCRIBES/teachers of the Law- Jerusalem's religious and intellectual leaders. WHERE CHRIST was to BE BORN..

BETHLEHEM IN Judah- Micah's Ephrathah- (Fruitful) has been replaced with a reminder that it was in the tribe of Jacob's prophecy, Gen 49:10 and God's promised permanent, perfect Ruler, Isa 9:7. OUT OF you.. A GOVERNOR/ Ruler- Hegeomai- To lead, rule, Mt 2:6, etc. RULE /be the shepherd- Poimaino- To Protect and guide as a Poimne- shepherd does. They gave the correct answer, yet benefited nothing from what they knew. People can know the form of Bible truth and make their living out of it, and yet ignore it, 2229 Acts 13:27. For shepherding Israel see Ezek 34:2-16; Hos 2:23; Mic 5:1-9. David had been Israel's shepherd, 2 Sam 5:2. Jesus the son of David would be so, perfectly. The OT, Matthew, John and Paul, all speak clearly of both the rejection and restoration of all Israel.

2:7-8 HEROD.. DILIGENTLY /the exact TIME- Herod was thorough in his plotting SENT THEM TO BETHLEHEM.. GO.. SEARCH FOR THE YOUNG CHILD- Paidion. Sometimes a very young child infant, (at 40 days he was called that, Lk 2:21, and there his return to Nazareth from Jerusalem may ignore a short stay in Egypt.) but as the Magi had been notified of his birth 2 years previously it suggests that was likely his age. WHEN you HAVE FOUND HIM.. THAT I MAY COME AND WORSHIP HIM- This action fits well with the known cunning of Herod. Wise men coming to worship would be welcomed where a search by soldiers would frighten them away. Herod could then act swiftly and secretly.

2:9 THE STAR.. WENT BEFORE.. STOOD /stopped OVER- A great deal of fuss has been made as to how a Star could move ahead of the men at the right speed to guide them, and then stop over a house. But it isn't speaking SCIENTIFICALLY about stars moving and stopping. It's talking about how things seemed to the men being guided. Stars high in the sky make fine Christmas cards, but when the star was again visible in the night sky, if it was sufficiently near the horizon in the general direction of Bethlehem, as they moved towards Bethlehem as directed, the star would seem to be moving ahead of them as they travelled. As they went up the hill into the town it could easily happen that the star would be seen immediately

him, not that the infant Jesus. Mary appears as His Mother, not in her own right. Joseph is background only. Perhaps they had stayed on in Bethlehem after the birth of Jesus and Lk 2:39 refers to them returning to Nazareth from Egypt. OR perhaps they had been to Nazareth for a while and returned to Bethlehem at this stage. The Magi are forerunners of those from the Nations who will come to worship Him, Ps 72:11; Isa 60:3.

OPENED THEIR TREASURES.. GIFTS- This may foreshadow the day when in the Millennium men from the East will bring such gifts, Isa 60:1-7. But always when people truly meet Jesus they are moved to worship Him, and to open their resources and place them at His disposal. Giving gifts acknowledged He was their king and they His loyal subjects.

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE, MYRRH- From the early church on the Gold has been associated with His incorruptible Kingship, Ps 72:15; Frankincense, with His Deity. (It was used in worshipping God, Ex 30:34-37, Lev 21:2), and Myrrh with His suffering and death. The Hebrew word Mor is associated with bitterness. Myrrh was used as a pain-killer, Mk 15:23 and in embalming, Jn 19:39 but as Myrrh is spoken of as an attractive perfume, Ps 45:8; Prov 7:17; Song 1:3; 3:6; 4:6, 14; 5:1, 5, 13, it's more likely a symbol of Humanity, with its pain and pleasure. All were portable, and valuable, so the sale of them could cover the expenses of their stay in Egypt.

WARNED.. returned.. by another route- A less direct route than through Jerusalem, and perhaps less comfortable. Often obedience isn't the easiest road at the time, but it leads home. Those who worship Christ are directed into a new Way of living/walking. 7:13-14; Mk 10:52; Acts 9:2.

2:13-23 The Escape into Egypt & Return

(A simply-told story of God's care for Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Cp Moses in Egypt - children slaughtered but Moses kept safe - having to flee later and return when safe, Ex 4, etc.)

2:13 ANGEL APPEARED- Present tense in Greek- Appears- Makes the action vivid as if happening as the story is told. TAKE THE YOUNG CHILD AND HIS MOTHER- Matthew makes clear God's concern, and Joseph's responsibility to care for the child, and for Mary. The baby is God-with-us, yet a vulnerable human

2:14-15 HE.. left for EGYPT - A prompt departure to safety. Prompt obedience is always best. God had legions of Angels to protect the baby Jesus, but chose to use frail mortals as in Esther 4:14. God's Word constantly shows us that our Human responsibility is to act within the Sovereignty of God. He has infinite resources to accomplish His will, isn't limited to us, but in grace wishes to involve us, and we must attempt to respond. FULFILL D- Behind the surface reasons for their departure to live in Egypt was an identification with Israel/ Israel's experience spoken about by a prophet. What the prophets spoke made sense to their own generation. But sometimes it also said something of Messiah and the fulfilment of God's purposes. The Holy Spirit decrees the application. We are not free to do so.

OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON- Hos 11:1. That Jesus is God in human form has been implied by calling Him Immanuel. We're now told He's God's Son. As the Assyrians threatened Israel, Hosea had reminded them that God in love had called them out of Egypt. Cp Num 24:8. The Jews associated the experiences of Messiah with the experiences of Israel. Jesus Christ, the New Moses, Deu 18:15-18, was the true Israel. When humanity failed, Israel, through Abraham, had been called to be the means of their Salvation. When Israel failed, God sent His Son to save Israel, and humanity, Isa 53:6. God would keep Him safe in Egypt, and call Him out to return to Israel to deliver God's people, 2:13-14/Ex 2:15, 2:20-21/Ex 4:19-20

2:16 HEROD realised HE WAS MOCKED/outwitted- Empaizo- To play like a child- Pais. Or as in this case treated him as a child, fooled him, weren't going to come and tell him where to find the young King. WAS WROTH/furious- Thumoo- Stirred into hot anger. The disease of self-centredness makes everyone resent the coming of King Jesus and we fight against our best interests in order to stay in control of our lives. Herod demonstrates human nature - If Jesus is King, we must kneel to Him. If Saviour, we must put ourselves in His hands to save us. And we must join Him in His Cross, if we are to live in fellowship with Him as Sons of God. Many would sooner suppress the truth than live, Rom 1:18-20 prefer to believe Satan's lie and damn themselves for ever, 2 Th 2:9-12. Herod was an outwardly religious man who gloriously rebuilt the Temple, but God/ the doing of

2:17-18 FULFILLED. SPOKEN BY /said through THE PROPHET Jeremiah- Jer 31:15 Quoted freely, not exactly following Hebrew or LXX text To Give the sense of the OT verse relative to the NT situation is what was aimed at. Modern Liberals attacking, and Modern Fundamentalists defending, detailed aspects of OT quotes, are equally missing the point. Even in our modern fact-fettered world if we hear someone call another person JUDAS, we don't take it literally. When Jezebel called Jehu Zimri, 2 Ki 9:31, everyone knew she was associating him with the events of 1 Ki 16:15-19. With that in mind we can understand the more complex associations in this statement. The associations are loose, the core is that blessing can come from suffering, so it isn't in vain.

IN RAMA.. RACHEL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN refusing to BE COMFORTED- In about 1700BC near Bethlehem Jacob's loved wife Rachel died giving birth to a baby she called Benoni- "Son of my Sorrow." Jacob changed the name to Benjamin- "Son of my Right Hand," Gen 35:16-20 Rachel's suffering wasn't wasted - Many would come to life through the preaching of Benjamin's descendant Paul, Phil 3:5. The site of her tomb is called Ramah Rachel.

In about 600BC A message from the Lord, recorded in Jer 31, speaks of Rachel standing at Ramah (A town about 30km/20miles north of Bethlehem, on the border between Ephraim and Benjamin, 1 Ki 15:17, two tribes descended from Rachel) weeping as her descendants pass by her into exile. But God urges Rachel to stop weeping the exile is temporary. Her sorrow won't be wasted - she will have the joy of seeing them return and be blessed. See also Jer 24

Now, Rachel, the ancestor associated with the (fruitful) sorrows of motherhood is pictured as sharing the distress of mothers of the Bethlehem district, near her tomb, bereaved by Herod's action. Again the message is - the Sorrow is deep and real, but it isn't the end of the story. The birth of Jesus has brought death to these for whom they rightly weep, but from that birth life and blessing will come to millions, and God will wipe all tears from their eyes, Rev 21:4.

Footnote **10 Josephus, our main secular source, records and invents "history," selectively to suit his own purpose - ensuring a comfortable life for himself by flattering the Roman Conquerors.

2:19-22 HEROD.. AN ANGEL .. TAKE THE YOUNG CHILD- The need to kill the possible successor to Herod was no longer on the Government agenda. Cp Ex 4:19. BUT WHEN HE HEARD THAT ARCHEL AUS- After Herod's death. Archelaus was granted Judea, Samaria, Idumea. He was so cruel and despotic that the Jews and Samaritans combined to send a successful protest to Rome. He was replaced by a Governor in AD 6. HE WAS AFRAID- And presumably asked God for further directions. WARNED.. withdrew to GALILEE .

2:23 Lived IN NAZARETH- Where the angel had appeared to Mary, Lk 1:26 and from which they had travelled to Bethlehem, Lk 24. In his usual brevity Matthew says nothing of their previously living there, or reasons for doing so now. FULFILLED what was said through THE PROPHETS- Plural suggests a general impression rather than a specific text, and no verse corresponds to it. BE CALLED A NAZARENE- Jesus of Bethlehem, or Jerusalem would have sounded well as they were linked with God's promises. Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, Jn 19:19, sounded ridiculous - the title of a despised man from a despised small town (Josephus doesn't list it) in despised Galilee, Jn 1:46 7:41-42 52

The prophets had foretold that the Christ would be despised and rejected, Isa 53:2-3. Not a mighty tree like Nebuchadnezzar, Dan 4 but a Netzer- a lowly Twig, Isa 11:1. Cp 112:9 21:5; Ps 37:11; Isa 57:15 66:1-3. The association of Nazarene with Netzer would be normal in Judaism. Others suggest Nazarene is from Nazir, Num 6; Judges 13:5-7; 16:17 because Jesus lived a holy life, Jn 8:46. But His saying He wouldn't drink wine with them again until the Kingdom, 26:29 doesn't suggest he hadn't drunk it until then.

and then men had to break away from home circumstances to seek him and hear him. His work was to announce the nearness of God's Judgment and Coming. This moved him to call for repentance and to baptise those who professed repentance. Josephus wrote more of him than he did of Jesus. Ant xviii. 116-119

PREACHING - Kerusso- To preach, proclaim as a herald (Kerux). A herald's work is to state his Master's will loudly and clearly - Good news or bad, accept it or rebel, the facts aren't arguable. It's then up to the hearers to do something about it. IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA - Eastern edge of Judea and the lower Jordan valley. A lonely, and largely barren place. Judgment is best preached in a wilderness of barren rocks etc as it pictures an unfruitful spiritual state.

SAYING REPENT - Metanoeo- Meta= after. Noeo- to perceive, (from Nous- Mind, moral sense.) To perceive afterwards, and so change one's first response or decision. Not just to be sorry for wrong actions, but to turn away from them and live a better life. To turn oneself round from self-centred rebellion/ odds to fellowship with God, 1 Th 1:10 or as the Prodigal did, is the first step to Salvation. John challenged Israel's reliance on pedigree, tradition, and past privilege, proclaiming the need for repentance and reality. In Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3 - preaching a baptism of repentance into/for forgiveness of sins. Law can bring repentance but it can't forgive. Both the Law highlighting sin, and John calling for repentance, prepared people to seek Jesus for Salvation, and still do today. He is the forerunner to prepare Israel to meet the Messiah in a helpful confrontation, 3:3, 11-12, 11:10. He is in a sense Elijah, 11:14; 17:11-13; Mal 4:5. Men's verdict on Jesus is determined by their verdict on John, 21:23-27.

FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN **11- Basileia- Sovereignty, royal power, kingdom. Heaven is the home territory of God's Kingdom. The Kingdom is the sphere of His rule. In another sense the sphere in which His rule is acknowledged. The God of Heaven is Creator/King of the world who has the right to be obeyed. Man rebelled, but in Christ God was intervening in this rebel world to provide a way by which all who wished could be restored to His Sovereign Saving authority.

Footnote **11 Only Matthew uses Kingdom of Heaven as in 13:11 where Mark 4:11 uses Kingdom of God. This suggests they are the same thing, but perhaps viewed from a different angle. He also says simply the Kingdom about 8 times, and the Kingdom of God in 6:33, 12:28, 19:24, 21:31. This, as often, seems designed to make it harder for us to formalise truth into self-energised one-and-one-only correct formulae.

reach if people will reach out to it and claim it, become part of it, be born again/ come to the Light, Jn 3:1-21 by responding to God's coming within reach. God was intervening with a clean-up Judgment and bringing blessing. They needed to be shaken awake, commit themselves to abandon all that was ungodly, symbolised by baptism. Because God turns towards man, man can and must turn towards God. Cp 1Ki 18:36-37.

3:3-4 THIS IS HE.. SPOKEN OF BY /through.. ISAIAH- John was the person of Isa 40:3-5, and doing what the Lord had promised. VOICE.. IN THE WILDERNESS/desert- John was in that area, but it's his message that is emphasised. Qumran sect saw themselves as living in the wilderness as a prelude to entering the to-be-established triumphant Kingdom. PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD - Kurios, used to translate Jehovah/Yaweh. MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT - That is the LORD's path, the way by which Jesus-Messiah comes into hearts and lives. John's work is to get people ready for the Lord and His message so He can bless them when He comes. Opening the door for Him, Jn 10:3, Elijah-like, in whose spirit and power he had come Lk 1:17. Making people aware of their need to turn from complacent sin and pride, Mal 4:5, aware that God was intervening in sending His Servant-Messiah.

John's clothes. CAMEL 'S HAIR- Like Elijah, 2Ki 1:8, with a similar message to repent in the face of coming Judgment, and soon to clash with an apostate King and forbidden-partner Queen. John's simple rough clothes, and food the opposite of luxury, 11:8, made it obvious that being right with God was more important than being comfortable, and that as a preacher he was exploiting none, 11:18. Cp Zech 1:3; Acts 20:34; 2 Cor 11:27; 1 Tim 2:9; 1 Pet 3:3. HIS food LOCUSTS- Clean nutritious food Lev 11:22 available in the wilderness, still eaten by desert Arabs etc. HONEY - From wild hives in the limestone caves. A harsh life/he spoke harsh words - both suited his call to repentance, 11:7-10. Jesus the God-man shared in the normal range of living - guest at a wedding in the houses of Rich Pharisees, and Tax Collectors, as well as hunger and homelessness without losing His simplicity and sincerity, 11:16-19. Christ in us can still do that.

zed 1:31. He stood in the JORDAN River - symbol of death, and having placed himself in the place of death urged others to join him there for him to baptise them into association with himself, and the King/Kingdom he represented. Cp 1 Cor 1:13-15

CONFESSING THEIR SINS- Present Participle- Confessing that the purpose and reason for being baptised was that they were sinners, unfit for God's Kingdom, but in response to John's call they were repenting and seeking to be ready for the coming King and Kingdom. The remedy for sin isn't ignoring or excusing it, but admitting it and disowning it. John's message shattered complacency/produced a deep sense of sin and unworthiness. Such a conviction will soon fade unless expressed in a public action, so they were baptised. (Similarly with Believers' baptism, and heart-faith in Christ requiring mouth confession, Rom 10:9-10) Baptism is both a kind of cleansing and a kind of drowning - as if to say "Die Sinful self!" We're free from sin only as we face it and accept Christ-crucified, and the verdict of the Cross on human nature, Gal 1:4; 2:20 Repentance isn't a GOOD work, it's confessing to a BAD work. We disown sin by owning up to it, and forsaking it/turning away from choosing it, Prov 28:3 Ps 32 Acts 19:18-19, Jas 5:16 Qumran's baptism required men to leave normal life and join a spiritual elite community attached to a human leader. John didn't attach men to himself, and sent them back to live the repentant life in their normal surroundings.

3:7 WHEN HE SAW.. PHARISEES - Men who took the Law seriously and were proud of themselves for being separate from Gentiles, and other Jews. Josephus says 6000 were Pharisees. SADDUCEES- A small group of upper class Jews, usually rich because of being Temple priests, who treated God's Word lightly so as to enjoy this world's life. Between them they ruled Jewish life. Normally these Self-Righteous, Fundamentalist, Separatist Pharisees, and Sophisticated Liberal Rationalist Sadducees were enemies, but they joined together in leading Israel to reject Christ and His Message. (In Lk 37-9 John says this to Israel as a whole.) Is there a sense in which Fundamentalists and Liberals today stand together? **12

Footnote **12 We who are sinners saved by Grace rightly fear to condemn others, 7:1; Jn 8:7. But our Lord through John, and in 7:22-23, demands that we face the fact that Priests and Preachers who make their living out of God's provision for the sin of human nature, may be trapped into pride, and reckless actions which ignore the sinfulness of their own nature. In all ages, light

Sadducees Don't imagine my preaching justifies THAT idea of do you really realise your beliefs and lifestyle have earned Gods Judgment, and wish to turn your backs on that lifestyle?

TO FLEE FROM THE coming WRATH - Orge- Anger as a settled attitude of mind frequently with revenge in view. Gods anger isn't offended pride etc but the reaction of Holy Love against those people, attitudes, and actions that defile and destroy His creation - inflict misery on mankind by oppressing, exploiting and corrupting them. This is a vivid warning to those who come to EVALUATE Gods message, or superficially associate themselves with it, and use its language for personal gain. Cp USA Political candidates claiming to be "Born-Again," hoping to gain the votes of Christians. The Pharisees TAUGHT the Law so were especially answerable to it, Jas 3:1. They should have been most convicted of sin because that was the role of the Law, Rom 3:19-20 5:12-14, 20 etc. The Sadducees Priests offering the Law-ordained Sacrifices for sin, should have been very conscious of the reality of sin, of the unworthiness of men to face God, and serve Him.

3:8-9 Produce fruit- Fruit grows naturally out of the nature of a plant or person. It isn't something that can be done by human effort alone. Show by your changed life the reality of the profession made by your baptism. Only a real repentance/ turning to God, and rebirth by the Spirit, will produce fruit as His life flows through us, Jn 15 Cp Mk 1:15 Acts 20:21; Gal 5:6; 1 Th 1:3.

WE HAVE ABRAHAM- Jews generally were sure they would enjoy Gods blessings because they were descended from Abraham, 8:11-12, Jn 8:33-41. GOD IS ABLE /can- Dunamai- To be able, have power. out OF STONES- In Hebrew Eben/ abarim - Stones, is similar to Ben/ barim- children. From Abraham the lifeless rock God raised up Isaac Gen 17:17; 18:10-14; Rom 4:17. Israel was hewed from Abraham, Isa 51:1-2, but God wasn't limited to him. Adam had been made from dust, Gen 2:7.

Footnote **12 (Continued) Pharisaic fundamentalist fussiness- if loveless, or Sadducean socially-relevant, secular unbelief, may boast to be leading Gods work, but are its worst enemies. John was attacking both those who in the name of loyalty to the Truth of God set themselves above sinners, in the hardness of unpopularity, and those who in the name of the priesthood, set themselves above Gods revealed truth in order to be popular and successful in the present world.

the chance to be good again, 7:19; Lk 13:7-9; but the Gospel provision for pardon and holiness increases the sinfulness of sin, as it sins against Love, Isa 10:33-34; Jer 11:19; Ezek 31; Dan 4; Lk 13:6-9; Jn 15:22 EVERY TREE.. NOT.. GOOD FRUIT.. INTO FIRE - Present tense, an urgent warning. The axe and the fire will dispose of the unfruitful. Cp Isa 10:15-19; Jer 11:16; Joel 2:30; Mal 4:1; Jn 15:5-6; Heb 6:8. Matthew records Jesus warning of fire in 5:22; 7:19; 13:40; 42:50; 188, 9; 25:41.

3:11 I BAPTISE WITH- En- In. Only rarely does En means WITH, as WITH the sword, Lk 22:49. Baptism is IN WATER, not sprinkling WITH water. for REPENTANCE- To show you have repented. BUT HE- The Messiah is the Coming One, 11:3; Ps 118:43; Isa 9:1-6; Dan 7:13. AFTER ME- John was the servant forerunner. IS MIGHTIER/more powerful- Ischuros- Powerful and able to use that power effectively, as the STRONG man, 12:29. God is the mighty/Ischuros One, LXX Jer 39:18; Dan 9:4. John's joy was to exalt his Lord, Jn 3:30. Later Jesus exalted John, 11:9-11. Cp 1Pet 5:5-6. NOT WORTHY /fit- Hikanos- Competent, qualified TO carry- The Coming One was so great that even the humble task of carrying the Master's sandals would be a grace-granted privilege to John.

HE - He Himself, by His personal action will BAPTISE YOU WITH- En- IN, as IN water, IN the wilderness 3:1, IN the Jordan River, 3:6; Mk 1:4-8. THE HOLY Spirit- As He Himself will save His people from their sins, 1:21. Those who receive Him/believe in Him, are born again/born of the Spirit, into God's family, Jn 1:12; 3:1-16. And by- En- IN one Spirit all baptised INTO- Eis one body.. drink INTO- Eis one Spirit, 1 Cor 12:13. When God has done this all-important, invisible work it's right for the Church to visibly baptise the child of God in water, and receive them into the fellowship of the visible church. A Jewish boy had to be born before he was circumcised. Under the Gospel we must be spiritually born again before we're physically baptised.

Footnote **13 We're not to think we'll be all right because we have the right heritage. Even a Gospel-induced sense of eternal security and visibly successful usefulness in God's service has its dangers. Unless it's bearing the fruit of Christ-likeness and careful obedience to the Lord it's an empty fake, 7:15-27. John shocked INSIDERS by demanding repentance. We shock by preaching to Church Members the Gospel of Jn 1:12; 3:3-16; Rom 3:21-26; 10:1-13. The Gospel strips us of confidence in ourselves and anything we may have become, apart from God's Grace in Christ,

3:12 Winnowing fork IN HIS HAND - A rough wooden fork used to throw the threshed material into the air so that the wind blew the straw to the side, until only the grain, being heavier, was left ready for storage. So the Lord as Judge would sift and preserve the true Israel/ true members of the Kingdom, and expose the empty chaff and straw for judgment destruction, Ps 1:4; Mal 4:1-6. Cp Peter Lk 22:31-32

PURGE/clear- All that isn't grain - isn't what His farming was designed to produce HIS WHEAT INTO THE barn- To treasure it, keep it safe, rejoice in it. Burning UP THE CHAFF - That those who refuse to receive Him, and be baptised by the Spirit, 1 Cor 12:13 are baptised in fire makes sense. That God's intervention in Judgment will separate everyone into two classes is made clear in 7:13-27; 13:24-30; 36:43; 47:50; 21:33-44; 22:1-14; 24:36-51; 25:1-46; Rom 9:22-23; 1 Th 4:13-5:11; Rev 14:14-20 etc. Whatever terms are used the Bible constantly affirms that what people choose to be and do has eternal consequences.

3:13-17 The Baptism of Jesus

3:13-14 THEN- When John had spoken of Him. JESUS came TO JOHN TO BE BAPTISED - Matthew concentrates on just the two of them, but this was a public event, Jesus coming with those who professed repentance and a desire to be a prepared people of God, Lk 3:21. JOHN tried to deter HIM - Literally was preventing him. I NEED TO BE BAPTISED by you - How can you ask me to baptise you. On the face of it John was right. It would give a false impression of their relative importance, and suggest that Jesus had sins to repent of. John had proclaimed Him as the Baptist, not the Baptised, so was wanting to prevent this happening but his Master over-ruled his objections.

3:15 JESUS ANSWERING SAID/replied - Lit. having answered Jesus said is an odd Hebrew way of saying that what He said answered the objection and evaluated the situation correctly. Let it be so - Jesus accepts the point made by John but gives His reason for overruling it. As with us, the Lord asks him to do as he's told even though He can't at present understand why. It is proper for us to do this - Prepo - To be eminent, appropriate, it will be a pleasure to be known by. This first

disowned their sins, rather than standing with the sinful self-righteous in condemning other sinners, Lk 7:28-30 John had come in the way of righteousness, 21:32 Jesus took up the challenge and proclaimed that He would fulfil all righteousness. So His baptism was both an identification with repentant sinners, and a symbol of His fulfilling all the righteousness God required. Cp Jer 23:5-6; 33:15-16

3:16 JESUS.. WENT UP OUT OF THE WATER- So He had been down in it, heaven OPENED- To acknowledge the existence of a perfect man on earth. The Heavens being opened to reveal God and His intervention is seen in Isa 64:1; Ezek 1:1; Jn 1:51; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 19:11. The Heavens are opened over Christ, so they are open to our prayers, and its blessings are all open to us in Him.

HE SAW THE SPIRIT OF GOD- A personal assurance to Him, and to John also, Jn 1:33-34 It seems a commissioning for His work, but unclear to the public as in Jn 12:28-30 - His Messiah-ship wasn't publicly stated. DESCENDING LIKE A DOVE - As a Dove comes down to land (Perhaps associated with Noah's dove bringing hope of new life after the Flood/Judgment symbolised by baptism, 1 Pet 3:20-21.) A bird was a fitting symbol of the coming of the Spirit from Heaven. Only the Dove has positive OT associations on HIM- He had been conceived of the Holy Spirit, and like John lived in the Spirit's power from birth, Lk 1:15 He is now anointed by the Holy Spirit with power for His work, Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; Lk 4:18; Acts 10:38 It marked Him as harmless as a Dove as He went among wolves, 10:16 Cp the commissioning by the Spirit's coming upon Gideon, Judges 6:34; Samson, Judges 15:14; Saul 1 Sam 10:6, 10; Ezekiel, Ezek 22 (This may be pictured in the Meal offering MINGLED with oil, internal oil, permanent possession of the Spirit and yet ANOINTED with oil, Lev 21, 4-5, anointed for Service)

3:17 A VOICE FROM HEAVEN- God declares His thoughts, gives Heaven's verdict. Cp Ex 19:9; Ezek 1:28-29; Amos 4:13 THIS IS- A general announcement Mk 1:11 has You are - addressing Jesus directly. This isn't a contradiction "My Beloved Son" would convey both these messages. Cp 17:5; Mk 9:7; Lk 9:35 MY SON- Huios- Son is used of an adult child who shares with the parent common characteristics, and goals. (EVIL - Mt 23:31; Jn 8:44; Acts 13:10)

Whom I love, IN/with WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED- This, while true of all the life of Jesus, confirmed that His being baptised, and the work for which He was being endowed, were totally pleasing to the Father. Only twice in the synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke) does God speak directly to us 3:17; 17:5 and He does so to assure us how much we have in Jesus.

CHAPTER FOUR

4:1-11 Jesus is Tested - re His Ministry?

(TESTING, not Tempting. (In the 36 NT uses of Peirazo it clearly means temptation to Evil only in 1Cor 7:35 Jas 1:13-14) No doubt Satan saw his control over man threatened, 12:24-29 13:18-30 16:21-23 and tried to get Jesus to do wrong, but God set up the occasion. It was primarily a testing of how He would go about His Messianic Mission. Before the Lord's public service commenced He had qualified by being 30 years of age, Num 4:3; Lk 3:23. Baptism showed His commitment to righteousness, the Dove His anointing to special service and the Voice, the Father's commendation. He needed to be tempted in all points as we are, without sin, and God has given us the record. In Matthew each temptation rises to a higher level - Desert, Temple pinnacle, High Mountain. Luke varies the order. That God breathed life into His Word, and it's all useful, 2Tim 3:15-17, doesn't mean there's only ONE right way to state anything in it.

Three Tests - sets of 3 are common in Matthew - perhaps suggesting thoroughness Israel's baptism in the Red Sea was followed by Testing. The first, that of humble, obedient relying on God's provision, was Israel's lesson in the wilderness, Deu 8:1-5. And the Lord quoted in answer to Satan's suggestions, Deu 6:13, 16:8:3. The first Test is a PHYSICAL self-needs related one, the second a SPIRITUAL God's-Word related test, and the third a SERVICE METHOD world-related test. It's not sinful to be Tempted. It's sin to yield. The Lord resisted by using what God taught Israel under testing. Cp 1Cor 10)

sons, 1 Ki 18:12, 2 Ki 2:16, Ezek 31:4, Acts 8:39-40, Rom 8:14, Gal 5:18 desert-
As Israel was after being baptised unto Moses in the Red Sea, 1 Cor 10:2. God put
His "son, Israel" to the test in the wilderness in the days of Moses. He now puts
His "Son, Jesus" to the test, Heb 2:17-18. **15 There he would be undistracted
and away from human interference/ help. The Devil attacks the lonely and
isolated, so we should keep coming together for mutual encouragement, Heb
10:25

TO BE TESTED - Peirazo - To test, tempt, prove. Contrast Garden of Eden where
innocent Adam had every reason to trust God and His provision. In the desert
Jesus the Holy One, had every reason to doubt it. Testing gives people the chance
to show/find out what they really are. Exposure to Temptation is part of humanity
from Adam onwards. Being truly human our Lord was Tempted/ Tested/ faced with
alternatives to God's will, and using the resources that are available to any Godly
man, demonstrated His sinlessness. To me it seems impudent speculation for us to
argue whether He COULD yield to temptation - so much depends on what we
mean by "could," and our answers tend to insult God, or undermine the reality of
the Test, or both. Scripture states the facts emphatically. 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22, 1
Jn 3:5, and we can be content to let God's Word rule our thinking. God can't be
tempted by Evil, and is not the source of any evil option man faces, Jas 1:13-15.
His rebel steward Satan is responsible for any tempting to do evil, but God accepts
responsibility for creating a world in which His purposes allow and use the evil
done by rebels, 132430, 3643, Isa 45:5-8. Later Satan used the Scribes and
Pharisees, 16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35 and Jesus answers them from Scripture.

OF BY THE DEVIL - Diablos - Accuser, slanderer. He slanders God to men, as he
did to Eve, Gen 3:1-5. He also encourages men to slander God. Scripture teaches
that behind the visible evil in this world is the Evil One that stirs up the thoughts
and desires that lead us to do evil. We need to remember this but our great concern
is to count ourselves dead to our own sinful desires, Rom 6:1-8:17. Noah was
responsible for turning God-given Grapes into man-disgracing wine, Gen 9:20-21.
Abraham's over-active imagination and failure to trust God disgraced him, Gen
12:11-13, Solomon let sexual desire lure him into the situation where apostasy was
inevitable, 1 Ki 11. In his testing of Jesus Satan acts as he does towards all, but his
appearing personally is unusual. He is behind the scenes in Job 1-2; Ps 109:6;
Zech 3:1-10, 1 Ki 22:19. Christ on the Cross took away Satan's power, Col 2:9-15,

like Moses, Deu 18:15-18 did so as He launched out into God's Gospel work. The 40 years of Israel's hunger, Deu 8:2-3, are perhaps more relevant. (40 Days are associated with hardship, testing or punishment - Rainfall in the Flood Gen 7:12, Ezek 46; Jonah 34.) HE WAS hungry. THE TEMPTER - Peirazo - Tempter, Splitter - working to split men from God, His will, and each other. CAME - Proserchomai - Often used of coming before a King, or God as in LXX Lev 9:5; Num 18:4; Jer 7:16; Heb 10:1; 1 Pet 2:4. The Devil approached Jesus respectfully.

IF Probably in the sense of SINCE you are THE SON OF GOD - Although the title was used in Ps 2:7, the Jews rarely used it of Messiah. Satan hints that the Son of God has no need to be hungry - He had the right to act on His own initiative. But to do so would have been to step outside His appointed role of Servant-Son who, for us, lived as we need to live, in total dependence on God, and His will.

COMMAND THESE STONES - Plural. This stone, Lk 4:3. Matthew uses plurals in 8:26 13:11; and 26:15 silver is plural. Mark uses the singular. These are independent witnesses, and the many includes the single one, but again we have a reminder that there is more than one form of God-breathed words in which the Scripture truth can be stated.

to become BREAD - God had provided Manna/ bread in the wilderness - why shouldn't the Son of God provide bread for Himself? Hunger and Eating are natural, not sinful, but the responsibility to do the will of God overrides them. (The Lord provided bread miraculously for others, 14:13-21, but refused to be a food-providing King Jn 6:15, 26-27.) The enemy attacks at the point of weakness, playing on our worries, ambitions, pride, or self-despair. Starvation-induced weakness and disorientation reduce human rationality and will-power. By means of doubt the Tempter would move Jesus to use God, and so gain reassurance. Hungry Israel murmured against God, Ex 16:2-4, the Lord Jesus didn't. The Devil tried to break His trust in the Father, 6:24-34 and take action on His own to satisfy His cravings, Ps 78:17-19. Instead He takes up the sword of the Spirit, Eph 6:17.

4:4 Jesus. IT IS WRITTEN - In the Bible. God's Word is permanent, authoritative, to be relied on and obeyed. MAN - Anthropos - A human being NOT LIVE BY / ON BREAD ALONE - Jesus in His conscious Messiah-ship took His stand with the people of God as a man of God's Word. If Isaac died under the knife at God's

is the concrete form in which the Logos/Message of God has been given us. The Sword of the Spirit is the Rhema/WORD of God, Eph 6:17. NOT the ideas which His Word generates in us! The Scriptures God brings to mind at our time of need/ to meet our spiritual hungers. THAT comes from THE MOUTH OF GOD- God spoke the life-Giving Word to the fathers.. fully and finally in His Son, Heb 1:1, and continues to do so through the Scriptures. God makes full provision so man may fully live. If we're not feeding on the Word of God we're not living. Satan prompts our human nature to claim privileges from God "by Faith" like spoiled children. A true son delights to do the Father's will, lives by His Word, and doesn't claim special treatment. Food won't keep a man alive unless God says he's to live. Lack of food will not cut short the life of any who God wills to live. Read Deu 8:1-10 and you will see how apt the Lord's quote is. He is the obedient Son that Israel failed to be. My meat is to do the will.. Jn 4:34 Cp Jn 6:35

4:5-8 TEST 2

(SELF-DIRECTED use of GOD'S PROMISES or be content to TRUST & OBEY in unspectacular ways.)

4:5-6 THE DEVIL took HIM- Whether this happened in a vision, Gen 28:10-17, or physically, as Acts 8:39-40 isn't made clear, Cp Ezek 8:1-3; 11:24 2 Cor 12:2. The effect was the same - a real test to THE HOLY CITY - Jerusalem, the city set apart by God as the gathering place of His people, and where they rejected Him. See 27:53 Lk 4:9. Rev 11:2, 8; 21:2, 10 22:19. A PINNACLE /highest point OF THE TEMPLE - This Temptation is full of Holy things - City, Temple, Promises of God's Word. If Satan can't take us through fleshly desires, he may do so by making us super-spiritual, eager for leaps of Faith!

IF.. throw yourself down FOR IT IS WRITTEN.. command- Entole- An authoritative commandment ANGEL S.. lift you UP.. not strike your foot- You won't even stub your toe. LXX Ps 91:11-12 Jesus lived by every word from God's mouth, so Satan said - demonstrate that you do- step out in Faith on this one. The protection was guaranteed to Him as Messiah. He WAS (and we are, Heb 1:14)

4:7 JESUS SAID.. IT IS WRITTE N- When faced with a false use of Scripture He doesn't disown or discredit it He counters with a Scripture which corrects any false meaning which was attributed to the first Scripture, 2 Pet 1:20 This places on us the responsibility to search the Scriptures, Acts 17:11. NOT TEMPT /test Ekpeirazo- To test thoroughly, or tempt THE LORD - Deu 6:16 The command was given because Israel Tested the Lord by demanding He provide water as proof that He was among them, Ex 17:2-7. Cp Ps 95:7-9, 1 Cor 10:9, Heb 3:7-4:13 God has warned us not to try to force Him to prove Himself, His presence or promises. To do so isn't Faith, though the Devil tries hard to convince us that it is. Wanting spectacular signs demonstrates guilty unbelief, 12:38-42, 16:1-12 We're not to dictate to God, and demand that He do what He promised, by our setting up a test.

4:8-11 TEST 3

(Bless the World by RULING IT, or by DYING FOR IT Show His LOVE for the world by using Satan's tactics, or Gods Jn 3:16 ones)

4:8-9 HIGH MOUNTAIN- The Spirit led Jesus DOWN to Baptism. Satan took Him UP as high as possible. Our Lord has shown we shouldn't put self first, shouldn't force Gods hand, but what price should we pay to save the world from its suffering? The Lord had come to save the world, but the Cross was a high price for those who would be saved, as well as for the Saviour. It still is - why not bend the rules to gain a good end. The world is far more likely to respond to a visibly successful preacher of a world-adjusted Gospel that offers them what they naturally want - Health, happiness success in this life, and does so in an easy-to-take entertaining way. Perhaps backed by the claiming of spectacular miraculous promises that offer to turn the stones of their life into bread. After the Cross Jesus stood on a mountain and announced that all power/authority was now His 28:18, and offered His servants an unspectacular program, based on obedient fellowship with Him such as Paul summed up in Gal 2:20

ALL THE KINGDOMS- Abraham and Moses viewed the promised land, Gen 13:14-15; Deu 34:1-4, but no natural mountain, or viewing could show this GLORY /splendour- Doxa- Visible glory. All that could be seen as glorious and desirable about them. All that their Rulers gloried in. A salesman's view!

could rule the world as promised, Dan 7:14, but as Satan's gift, under his Lordship, instead of gaining all power via the Cross, Mt 28:18; Phil 2:6-11; Col 2:13-15; Cp Rev 1:32. He still offers avoidance of the suffering which fellowship with Christ involves, 1 Cor 4:8-16

4:10-11 JESUS said.. away from me, SATAN - A sharp command, as in 1623 re avoiding suffering and death. IT IS WRITTE N.. WORSHIP THE LORD - Deu 6:13 Imperative tense- You must Worship the Lord your God serve Him only- Latreuo- To Serve in religious ways, worship. From Latris a paid servant. While working for wages can be selfish, (though Hireling in Jn 10 is Misthotos.) it also means working BY CHOICE, in a REWARDING work. In one sense the Lord accepts only voluntary service, Rom 8:15 But we, having been adopted as sons, volunteer thankfully and freely as bondservants/slaves knowing the price He paid to set us free to serve Him, 1 Cor 6:20 1 Pet 1:19

The Lord's love for the world, and for each of us, is part of God's Love, and the purposes of that Love. Doing evil that good may come isn't possible, Rom 3:8. To say that the way of love is always the will of God is true, only if that love, and that way IS the will of God. Adulterous lust, lying words of comfort, dishonest success and unjust acts of compassion are demonic - not of God. Whatever good they claim to aim at, and temporarily achieve, they ultimately destroy and damn. Not bread alone. Don't try to manipulate God. Serve God alone - may sound hard, but His will liberates us into fellowship with/ likeness to God. Jesus was the sinners' friend but the enemy of their sin. He was eager to meet human needs, but never a humanist. **18

THE DEVIL left- As commanded, but returned with other temptations, Lk 4:13- pity Thyself, 16:22 save Thyself, 27:40 show Thyself, Jn 7:4. ANGEL S CAME - The Angelic help, not demanded outside the Father's will, is now granted in God's good time. MINISTERED/attended- Took care of Him, gave Him what He needed, as to Elijah, 1 Ki 19:5-8. He had put first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things were added, 6:33 Cp Ps 78:25

Footnote **18 If we ignore that Jesus refused these Temptations and did so by loyalty to God's Word, it's easy for us to misread and misapply Scripture so as to produce FALSE Gospels, Gal 1:6-9. The "Gospel" of Good works, covenant-keeping Law-obedience, as in Galatians. Or the modern

J4:12-16 WHEN JESUS HEARD JOHN.. in PRISON- As Herod/ Herodias had resented being told the truth, 14:3-4. HE returned to GALILEE - To take up an itinerant preaching and healing ministry. LEAVING NAZARETH- Where He had apparently earned His living as a carpenter, Mk 5:1-4; Lk 4:16-31. Cp 9:1; 17:24-25 IN CAPERNAUM.. Zebulon.. Naphthali- Their tribal land was the core of Galilee Jews remained there when the Nation of Israel was destroyed/exiled by the Assyrians, and some came to Jerusalem to worship, 2 Chr 30:1-20 Contact with Jerusalem was renewed after it was rebuilt, but they lived among Gentiles, and were despised by Jerusalem Jews as ignorant of God and the Law. They were patriotic Jews, eager to be liberated from Rome, Acts 5:37. But Messiah wasn't expected from Galilee, Jn 7:49-52 That Messiah should manifest Himself there was justified by Matthew's quote.

To fulfil.. Isaiah- Isa 9:1-2, A rather free translation, making the location clear. LAND OF Zebulon.. Naphthali- It was between THE SEA and the Sea of Galilee BEYOND/along the JORDAN - From Israel the Gentile Decapolis was beyond Jordan. But Galilee was beyond Jordan as viewed by the invaders in Isaiah's time. Or NIV may be right GALILEE OF THE GENTILES- As Jews there lived as a minority among Gentiles, conformity to the OT Law was relaxed. The Lord's witness there came to the attention of non-Jews, 15:21-28 Galilee, defeated and occupied by Gentiles, and despised by Judeans, was a good recruiting ground for preachers needed to proclaim the Gospel to Gentiles. That Jesus was from Galilee had been a stumbling block to His hearers, Jn 1:46 7:41-42 5:2 Matthew looking back sees it as a fulfilment of a promise.

PEOPLE .. SIT/living IN DARKNESS- Spiritual and moral darkness Walk, in Isaiah is SIT, here - too sluggish to help themselves, too darkened to see how they could? have seen.. LIGHT- The Light of Truth that clarifies everything The Light of Life and Salvation to the nations. The Disciples will reflect Him and be the Light of the World, 5:14 See 2:2; Isa 42:6; 51:4; 60:3; Jn 1:9, 8:12, 12:35-46 SHADOW OF DEATH- To live apart from God is spiritual death, Eph 2:1-3. LIGHT.. dawned- Originally this springs from the devastation caused by the Assyrian invasion, 2 Ki 15:29 1 Chr 5:26 It promised a future Deliverer, Son of David Isa 9:1-7. Matthew knew that blessing was Jesus.

things Abraham longed to see rejoiced in 1:16-17; Lk 10:23-24 Jn 8:56 Israel's crucifixion of her Messiah meant that He must remain in Heaven until He returns to put everything right in Judgment and Blessing Acts 3:21. Meanwhile those in the Kingdom on earth suffer persecution.

The Kingdom and the Church have features in common. The general call to Repent is followed by the Lord's personal sovereign call that makes it possible, and puts men under obligation to respond. Men's repenting doesn't create the Kingdom/Church, it comes near to us, in Christ. All are commanded to repent, Acts 17:31 but when we choose to do so, it's because God has granted us repentance and life, Acts 11:18.

4:18-22 Jesus Calls Four Fishermen to Serve Him

(As His helpers He called ordinary people who knew their need and were willing to be taught and blessed, Lk 5:8; 1 Cor 1:26-25. He begins with the core Disciples, 17:1; 26:37. Like Elisha they are busy at their work when called, 1Ki 19:19-21. A disciple chose the Rabbi he'd follow, but Jesus chose His disciples, Mk 1:16-20 Jn 15:16.)

4:18-20 JESUS.. WALKING beside GALILEE - A small lake, 21 x 13 Km / 13 x 7 miles, with a prosperous fishing industry. SAW SIMON - A common Greek name. Simeon in Hebrew, Lk 22:5. Greek names were common in Galilee of the Gentiles. PETE R - Petros - a detached piece of rock, a stone. Kephias in Hebrew, Jn 1:42 Mk 3:16; 1 Cor 9:5; Gal 2:9, etc. He became the leader of the 12, and Apostle to the Jews, Gal 2:8. The name Peter comes 162x in NT, Paul, 161x. Apostle John 36x. ANDREW HIS BROTHER CASTING A NET - Probably a circular net ringed with weights, thrown out over the water, dragged down rapidly by the weights and closed with a draw string. THEY WERE fishermen.

HE /Jesus- So central to the story that Greek has merely "He." said Come FOLLOW ME - Come behind me as pupils of a Rabbi did. Present tense, so continual following. Such disciples were with the Rabbi all the time, seeing his whole lifestyle as well as hearing what he said, and sharing his work. A command rather than an invitation. Follow me, share my work and destiny. 3:11; 4:8:19, 22 9:9,

remembered, startling remark. They would learn to use the Gospel net for this

At once LEFT NETS- They'd already met Jesus, Lk 5:3; Jn 1:35-42 had time to think things over, and responded promptly. Having been partners, Lk 5:10 they could readily work together in spiritual work, and leave the family business in the hands of relatives and servants, Mk 1:20 for an indefinite period AND FOLLOWED HIM- His call is personal, to Himself, to be with Him - what could be a better future!

4:21-22 SAW.. JAMES.. JOHN.. MENDING/preparing- Kathartizo- To make fit, mend They were going over their large NETS readying them for the next night's fishing. HE/Jesus CALLED- Kaleo. In LXX this has almost the meaning of Eklego- Elected, eg Isa 43:1; 45:3; 48:15; 51:2 This seems to be the meaning here. Cp Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15 IMMEDIATELY THEY LEFT THE boat- Mk 1:20 as He called them immediately. We need to assume that God has His reasons for variations, and uncertainties may free us for a wider understanding gained from different points of view, and help us concentrate on the essential emphasis common to all accounts. Cp the calls in Jer 1:1-10; Acts 9:1-19, 22:3-21; 26:9-23 AND FATHER, FOLLOWED HIM. Mk 10:28-30

4:23-25 Jesus Teaches, Preaches, and Heals

(A short summary of the scope of the Lord's Ministry. This is an introductory background to the Sermon on the Mount.)

4:23 JESUS WENT ABOUT - In contrast to John He went out to meet people, and added healing etc to His demand to repent - demonstrated the Kingdom as well as proclaimed its nearness ALL throughout GALILEE - Emphatic in the Greek- ALL of Galilee covered, in fulfillment of Isa 9:1-2, attracting to the "Light" people from the areas around

TEACHING - Teaching conveys truth, ideas, understandings of discipleship, 28:19-20 IN SYNAGOGUES - Buildings in which Jewish congregations met to pray, praise and worship God, and hear the Scriptures read and taught. Cp Lk 4:16-21. While Jesus taught wherever He was, He made use also of the recognised worship places. PREACHING - Kerusso - Heralding. Preaching uses the truth taught by Teaching, to urge the hearers to a changed life, etc. THE GOSPEL /good news

physical, mental and spiritual needs met. ALL DISEASE/sickness Malakia-Weaknesses. The two present the whole picture of ill health. LXX Deu 7:15 mentions both in the promise that the Lord would free His people from them IF they responded to His Grace and Commands with loving obedience, Deu 7:6-14. So it was appropriate that both words should be used of His demonstrating the presence of the King/Kingdom by Healing 9:35

4:24-25 ALL SYRIA - The area north of Galilee centred on Damascus. BROUGHT ALL .. DISEASES.. TORMENTS/severe pain- Basanos- Used of testing metals. The pain of illness that tests us. demon-possessed- Daimonizo- To act under the control of a demon. In NT Demons move people to worship idols, 1 Cor 10:20-21, introduce error, 1 Tim 4:1, impersonate the departed in spiritism. LUNATIC/having seizures- Seleniazomai. the paralysed AND HE HEALED THEM. FOLLOWED- Associated with HIM and His disciples. MULTITUDES/crowds- His miracle-working drew great crowds, 8:1, 18:11-17; 15:30-17:14; 19:2, who responded openly and appreciatively as to a potential Messiah, 9:8; 12:23-15:31; 21:9. He had compassion on them, 9:33-36; 14:14; 15:1-10; 32:231-39 but clashed with the Scribes and Pharisees. Finally these leaders persuaded the crowd to reject Him, 26:47; 55:27-29; 24 They're not seen just as a background to events, but as assembled individuals with potential to receive or reject Him and His Gospel. FROM GALILEE .. DECAPOLIS- Gentile cities, including Damascus. JERUSALEM.. JUDEA.. across JORDAN - Apart from Samaria the people were drawn from the whole area of OT Israel.

(Matthew has briefly covered the unfolding of God's eternal purposes from Abraham to the commencement of the Lord's Ministry and the call of His first Disciples. After having them with Him as He preached and healed, Jesus instructs the Disciples in the ways of His Kingdom. He does this against the background of the OT Law, and contrasts His Kingdom and its values with traditional Judaism. It's not a set of rules to be enforced. It deals with ways in which God's children can live best in fellowship with Him and grow to be like Him, 5:48. Living in fellowship with Jesus will bring persecution, 5:11. He upgrades the Law to His higher standards, 5:17-48. Their eternal destiny is determined by their relationship with Him, 7:21-23, and response to His teaching, 7:24-27. About half is paralleled in Luke, but scattered in different places. Lk 6:20-49 is a shorter summary of it also beginning with Beatitudes, and ending with building on Rock.

The Beatitudes aren't expressing the graceless truth "God helps them that help themselves" but the truth of the Talent and Pound parables. He's not saying "Do this and I'll reward you with that." All God's blessings are given in Grace - because of what HE is, not what we are and have earned. These words were spoken to Jews living under the OT. While Heaven, and the Millennial Kingdom to come are involved in the REWARDS, the SUFFERING is limited to the life of His Disciples while He was on earth, and to the Church of which they were to be, after Acts 2, the commencement. Yes, this IS for us, 1 Cor 10:11; 2 Tim 3:16. It's part of the ALL THINGS the Lord commanded us to teach, Mt 28:20. But as we read it we're to apply its lessons in terms of the Gospel, Romans 7-8; 1 Cor 1:17-31; 2 Cor 5:1-21; Eph 2:1-12, etc. Paul sums up our life in Gal 2:20. (Cp 1 Pet 1:13-23; 2:9-17; 2 Pet 1:1-11; 1 Jn 1:1-9.) THE LIFE I LIVE IN THE BODY - mind, feelings, personality. I LIVE BY FAITH IN THE SON OF GOD. I Believe what He says in His Word. I ask Him to make it happen, and trust Him to keep His promises, and slowly but surely find that what He says works. We become less self-reliant, self-assertive, quarrelsome or despairing. Our natural self still objects, and tries to get off the Cross. But the more we become like Jesus by letting HIM have more and more say in our lives the happier we become - life's a bit like Heaven, sometimes. We find that by Grace the experience of 2 Cor 3:16-4:6 leads on to that of 4:16-18, and with growing sincerity we can say, Even so COME LORD JESUS. Amen!

5:1-11 True Happiness- What to be thankful for

(The Jewish concept of blessedness was long life, health, material prosperity, as promised in Deu 5:32-33, etc. Our fallen human natures naturally see as Blessed and happy the self-sufficient, confident, people, who fight for their rights and get them, yet are flexible enough to be popular. It's easy to envy them and think God isn't fair because THEY seem to have so much we've missed out on. But the LORD who sees and knows everything says NO to all this. He shocked His hearers/shocks us by concentrating on what men ARE not

Perhaps suggesting a New Mt Sinai/ a revelation further developing the Law. Certainly it freed the crowd from distraction. The crowd-drawing leading miracles stopped. The effort needed to follow Jesus uphill would soon reduce the crowd to those interested enough to sit down to a serious teaching session. His sitting on the hill above them, or in a boat, 13:2, would enable more to hear Him clearly. As often, the Lord left uncertain the exact location - He discouraged the creation of earthly "Holy Places" to which we might make pilgrimages. Instead the Throne of Grace is ours, Heb 4:16

HE sat down- A Jewish Rabbi sat down to teach his disciples, so this is a formal teaching session. Cp Job 1:2-3; 15:29; 23:2; 24:3-4; 26:5-7; Ezek 8:1; Lk 4:20-27; 5:3; Acts 16:13. Sitting implies authority, honour and dignity - kings sat on thrones to administer justice and officially proclaim their will, as one day Jesus will, 19:28. HIS DISCIPLES - Mathetes - A learner, disciple, follower. One who has put himself under the discipline and teaching of his Master, and shares his life, work and destiny. CAME - Gathered round Him to listen. He is no longer attending to the needs and demands of the crowd, and speaks to His disciples, the inner circle of the following crowd, 4:25. But the rest are welcome to listen, 7:28. As Jesus/Emmanuel, the God-man-Saviour sits among men and opens His mind to their minds. Our Lord taught OPENLY, Jn 18:20 and all were welcome to respond. The church, also, is a called-out-by-the-Gospel company of those who hear and respond.

5:2-3 HE.. began to teach- The deliberate, solemn opening shows what follows is important. Cp Job 31:2; Dan 3:25; Acts 8:35; 10:34. SAYING BLESSED - Makarios - Blessed, fortunate, happy, to be congratulated. Associated with Makros - Long. In a world where many died young LONG LIVE THE KING! (NIV 1 Sam 10:24) was a significant BLESSING. The Greeks used Makarios of the happy state of the "Gods" and of those having praiseworthy children, virtue, piety, wisdom, and fame. LXX uses it to translate Asher - How happy and blessed are certain classes of people, as in 1Ki 10:8; Ps 1:1; 32:1-2; 33:12; 34:8; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4-5; 128:8; 137:7; 146:5; Prov 31:3; 8:32; 34:14; 21:16; 20:207; 28:14; 29:18; Ecc 10:17; Isa 30:18; 32:20; 56:2; Dan 12:12.

matters. As in the story of Lk 16:19-26 material poverty is more likely to develop humble trust in/ fellowship with God than is a life of wealth and luxury. (In our age the poor are urged to organise and fight for their rights, and the rich to learn how to maximise their advantages.) The rich have little sense of need for God, Lk 12:16-21, while the poor, feeling their helplessness, are more likely to turn to God for help, Ps 125; 22:24; 70:5; 86:1; Lk 1:46-53 Christ came to give help to such, Lk 4:18 As the 10 Commandments build on the 1st, so the other Beatitudes build on this one. The rest of the chapter should make people conscious of how poor we are spiritually, how desperately in need of God's mercy and help, so that crying "God be merciful to me THE Sinner," they cast themselves on GOD's mercy, and thankfully receive Salvation as a GIFT. And stay close to their Saviour and Lord throughout life BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY NEED HIM. They are the ones who are blessed now and happy forever.

FOR THEIRS IS- Already assured. The King may be rejected but they are in His Kingdom and care. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN- They enjoy the good things that come to people who live under God's rule. It's God's Kingdom, and will remain so, but those who, out of the miseries of this world, cried to Him will be welcomed into the Kingdom. They live under God's order, enjoy the blessings of obedient fellowship with Him and His people. Now and forever. The powerful, wealthy, self-sufficient, self-confident, and self-righteous whose prayer runs "I thank thee God that I'm a lot better than other people" miss out.

5:4 BLESS ED.. who MOURN - Penitence- To mourn visibly. (Lament, inward grief.) Penitence is used in LXX for mourning the dead, and for Israel mourning for past sins and present consequences, Ps 137:1; Lam 1:2-4. God offered them hope, Isa 61:3. Our Lord wept over Jerusalem, Lk 19:41. Paul wept as he worked, Acts 20:19, 31; 2 Cor 2:4; Phil 3:17-18 The blessed are those who rejoice in the Lord, but hate, despise, disown, AND mourn sin as Ps 32:5-11 show. Jesus blesses such mourning - not self-centred moping over our own real or imagined inadequacies. Cp Paul, 2 Cor 12:7-10 It's in times of sorrow and trouble we really seek the Lord in our desperate need, and He becomes real to us. GOD FILLS THE EMPTINESS HIS PEOPLE FEEL. Coming to know the Lord better in times of distress will enrich our fellowship with Him Eternally.

5:5 BLE SSED ARE THE MEEK - Praus- Used only in 1129 21:5; 1 Pet 3:4. Not simply submissive, easily imposed on, but the non-aggressive, humble, gentle, those who do not rely on and use their own power. It's the opposite of Self-seeking, Self-assertive demanding of rights. The Lord was meek, 11:29 1215-21; 21:5. Unlike the Kings in Dan 7:7; 8:11, this King was meek and lowly in heart, and those who would prosper in His Kingdom need to be so. The Lord's people are marked by their willingness to submit to His keeping power, content to be powerless. Not weak - Moses was the MEEKEST man on earth and no weakling could have done his job. After the Golden Calf when God suggested getting rid of insufferable Israel, and starting again with him and his Family, Moses said NO, put the blame and punishment on me.

THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH - Kleronomeo- To receive by lot. Kleros- a lot. Nemomai- to possess. Then to obtain as a birthright as a son, not bought or earned, to possess. The Devil offered Jesus the Kingdoms of this world - if He would take them on the Devil's terms. The Lord refused, and in meekness went to the Cross, and the earth is His by inherent right, Ps 24:1-2, and by Triumphant Redemption, Mt 28:18 Col 2:15; Rev 5:1-14. Ps 37 contrasts the attitudes of the MEEK and the WICKED. Cp 25:21-23 Deu 41. This verse is based on Ps 37:11 - each Israelite inherited his share in Canaan, and in a sense Israel will inherit the earth, Isa 60:21-22 61:7, by God's gracious gift. The meek are nobodies, but they will inherit that which they had no hope of obtaining by force. He calls us to join Him in rejection, death, and His resurrection triumph.

5:6 BLE SSED.. HUNGER.. THIRST - Lk 6:21 says simply hunger/thirst - as the poor do. Matthew gives the spiritual aspect. AFTER/for RIGHTEOUSNESS - Dikaiosune. Righteousness, justification. To be and do what is right and good in the sight of God and our fellow men, 5:10, 20; 6:1, 33. God's righteousness is consistent with His Holiness, Wisdom and Love. Behaviour acceptable to God/compatible with His character is RIGHTEOUS. The only way we can get Righteousness is to receive it as a Gift by Faith, 2 Cor 5:21, but it inevitably changes our life towards RIGHTEOUS living. Cp Ps 42:1-2; Isa 55:1-2. Such hungering and thirsting is natural to none of us, but is a Spirit-empowered appetite.

purposes - is in contrast to the Pharisee-style FILLING righteous/ appearing to be Successful Christians living the victorious life of triumphant serving, Mt 7:23

THEY will BE FILLED - Chortazo - To fill with Chortos - Grass as an animal eats until satisfied with no thought of saving some for the future. God will satisfy them completely, Delight Himself in the Lord and He will.. Ps 37:3-7. The thought of being vindicated is an OT meaning of righteousness, but the ultimate satisfaction is of a fellowship with God unclouded by sin/ disobedience/ rebellion. Cp Ps 37:19, 132:15 God will satisfy those who feed empty and unsatisfied apart from Him - apart from fellowship with Him in righteousness. It doesn't say how this will happen - Its purpose is to shake men free from natural religious ideas like "You can be good enough to please God if you work hard enough. And if God is pleased with you you'll be rich, strong and healthy." These beatitudes have their roots in God and His goodness, but require us to actively accept moral responsibility to work with God obediently.

5:7 BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL - Eleemon - Actively merciful. Those who, from what they have, meet the needs of others as God does, Eph 2:4. So, mercy is shown in fellowship with God. Follow the idea of Mercy through 5:43-48 6:12, 14-15; 9:13, 27-31; 12:7; 15:21-28 17:14-18 18:21-35 20:29-34 23:23 25:41-46 In LXX Eleos translates Chesed - often mercy shown within a relationship - 9:13, 12:7 quote Hos 6:6 where Chesed involves covenant loyalty, but in 5:43-48 it's to be shown to enemies as well. Loving-kindness to all is appropriate to God's children, 5:46-48 The poor in Spirit need and find God's mercy, and respond by being merciful to others in their need. Those who have been grasped by the outstretched hand of Mercy, are equipped to reach out their hand in mercy to others, 2 Cor 1:3-5.

will be shown MERCY - In God's order we reap what we sow, Gal 6:7-10 Being merciful is not a condition for receiving God's mercy, but when God in Grace saves and blesses us mercy/forgiveness to others is a required consequence, 6:14-15. There can be no fellowship with God apart from this, and in fact no evidence that we DID meet the God of Grace in a saving way and have been transformed into His children. See Ps 18:25-26 in contrast to Job 22:9-10 Prov 21:13 As God is merciful you must be merciful was a Rabbinic saying, but Pharisees taught God had mercy only on those who had heaped up sufficient legalistic acts of fussiness

thoughts, 5:27-32 No duplicity, hiding inward evil behind outwardly-correct actions, 6:1-18 Ps 24:3-4 talks about the clean hands and hearts of those who are welcome to God's presence Purity of heart is contrasted with ritual purity, 23:25-26

The Lord doesn't declare Blessings on Bible study, Prayer, Giving, Good deeds. It's the centre of our BEING in relation to God that is the central concern, without it no goods of value, 1 Cor 13:1-3; Rev 21:8. The Pharisees worked hard at purifying their outward lives, Mt 23:26 but with all their sense of superior self-righteousness they remained lost, 5:20 Only when Christ's righteousness became ours, 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24 did it become possible for us to be HEART-CLEAN, by being BORN AGAIN, by the Spirit of God, in response to the Gospel of God's Grace God grants a new, undivided heart, Ezek 11:19-20 so we can purify our hearts by Faith, Acts 15:9, that works by Love, Gal 5:6, be led by the Spirit, Rom 8:1-16 filled by Him and emptied of self, Eph 5:18-21, in fellowship with Christ Crucified, Gal 2:20 Then we can listen to God's word and change our ideas accordingly, Phil 4:8-9.

THEY will SEE GOD- Cp being admitted to "See the King" That privilege is referred to in 18:10 Ex 24:11; Jer 31:31-34 1 Cor 13:12 Heb 12:14; 1 Jn 3:2 Rev 22:4. God (In the full Glory of His Being) couldn't be seen, Ex 36; 19:21; 33:20 23 Jn 1:18; 1 Tim 6:15-16, yet seeing Him is a blessed goal, Ps 17:15; Job 19:26-27. The Son alone knows the Father, Jn 1:14, and those to whom the Son reveals Him, 11:27-29 We shall be like Him when we see Him as He is 1 Jn 3:1-3, but even in this life we're drawn into an ever closer fellowship, and increasingly see Him the invisible One, Heb 11:27.

5:9 BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS- Peace between men and God, 1 Cor 5:17-20 and those who help people to be friends rather than enemies, especially in the church/body of Christ, where it's a disgrace for Spiritual leaders to fight, Jn 17:15-23 Rom 16:17-20 Heb 12:14; Jas 3:13-4:12 Self-centred people live in continual strife. Those with the attitudes already listed are freed from the slavery of self-will and so can fellowship with God in His peacemaking, Ps 34:14; Eph 2:14-18 There can be no peace to the wicked, but the Lord has brought us peace with God through His Cross, Col 1:20 We're to follow the things that make for

God and love for man flourish together, or not at all. Peacemaking for Christians is defined by the life and death of Jesus, and it's the most effective way to transform the world around us.

THEY will BE CALLED - Jewish way of saying God will do it, without naming God. To be called means to become, Gen 2:12; Isa 56:7; Jn 1:12. Sons OF GOD - Huios - Children who have grown up sufficiently like their parent to enjoy fellowship in aims and work. The Spirit makes us God's Teknon - Children by believing/receiving, Jn 1:12, 3:5-16. But SONS, by spiritual adoption, Eph 1:5, and our obedient fellowship with the Spirit as He leads, Rom 8:14-15; Gal 3:26-27, 4:5-6.

5:10 BLESSED.. PERSECUTED - Present participle - being persecuted. because of RIGHTEOUSNESS - Dikaiosune. See 1 Pet 3:14. Being good acting in obedient fellowship with God, leads to the world rejecting us, and at times they show their hostility towards God by hitting at us. Cp 23:34-35 The Lord was cast out, Jn 8:59 and so was the man blessed by Him, Jn 9:34-35 and that's an honor! Heb 13:11-13. It's human to get into trouble, Job 5:7. God's blessing is on those who get into trouble only because of their Godly life, Dan 6:5; Jn 15:20; 2 Tim 2:12, 3:12. Our Lord was all the things called Blessed above and was persecuted for that kind of righteousness. When we accept His righteousness and offer it to others in the Gospel, as Paul did, it doesn't make us popular, but it wins some to Him. THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN - As 5:3, rounding off the unit that sums up the heart attitudes of true disciples - God's Goal for them which they've taken upon as their personal goal - the direction in which the transformation of their life is sought and found.

5:11-16 What being a Disciple Means - Personally

5:11 BLESSED.. people insult YOU - Oneidizo. A strong term of verbal abuse and ridicule. From general statements of what states are blessed, the Lord applies it specifically - puts YOU disciples, and ME your Teacher-Lord into the Beatitudes. A reminder that being His disciples would make them a target for other men. Those said to be Happy aren't those who defend the Faith victoriously and humiliate those who attack it, but those who are defamed and apparently defeated - outclassed in debate, 1Q17; Isa 51:7; Jn 9:22, 16:22.

PERSECUTE .. SAY .. EVIL - Poneros - Active evil that makes life heavy and painful. From Ponos - Heavy Labour. From being the butt of religious jokes to fadng

Must beware of the deceitful tendency of our hearts to claim to be doing so when the opposition was provoked by our expressing our fallen nature in the way we witness Cp Prov 21:2 Jer 17:9-10 1 Pet 4:15-16. Note - when Paul laments that all in Asia had turned away from him, he doesn't say they've turned away from the Lord, to whom their primary loyalty belonged, 2Tim 1:15.

"Take Christ as your Saviour and all will be well.." is true, in that our Past has been dealt with (Sins forgiven/Guilt removed) and Future provided for, Heb 10:14. But THAT commits us to make good use of each day in fellowship with Him, at constant cost to self, Rom 8:1-15; Gal 6:7-10; 1 Jn 1:5-9; 3:1-3. Read in the light of those Gospel statements the Sermon on the Mount presents a timeless guide to the way things work under God's Rule. Eternal blessedness begins now (or never) in fellowship with Christ Crucified. Suffering on its own is a dead end! But to assume that the marks of God's election/our present possession of Salvation is visible health, wealth, happiness and success is a parody of what the Lord taught, and contrary to the witness of His servants Peter, Paul, James, John, etc. The sufferings of His disciples are what He warned them to expect, 21:33-46 Prov 29:27, Acts 7:51-53 Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 1:5-7; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 1:11; 4:12-14; 5:1.

5:12 REJOICE AND BE EXCEEDING GLAD - Agalliao - Excited exuberant joy, to jump with joy! Used of spiritual joy and delight, 2:10 Present tense - rejoice now in the face of persecution. Used in LXX Psalms, and Isa 12:6; 25:9; 29:19; 35:1-2; 41:16; 49:13; 61:10; 65:14; 19. & NT Lk 1:47; 10:21; Jn 8:56 Act 2:26 16:34 Rev 19:7. The combined effect of the two words is that these people should be fully happy. For Joy in suffering see Acts 5:41; Rom 5:3-5; Phil 4:10-13; Jas 1:2, 12; 5:10-11; 1 Pet 1:6; 4:13-14.

GREAT IS YOUR REWARD - Misthos - Wages, reward earned. Salvation is never said to be earned by human effort. It's a GIFT OF GRACE FREELY GIVEN, and all the rewards Salvation brings are equally freely given. But in Love the Lord assures us of delightful rewards. There's nothing arbitrary or unrighteous about this. When at cost to ourselves we choose to have fellowship with Him in His will and work now, the result will be more shared fellowship with Him and His Joy/Glory, beyond anything we could deserve, 25:14-23 Lk 19:16-17, IN HEAVEN - Going into Heaven isn't the reward. Fellowship with God in Heaven is. Whatever

5:13-16 Disciples are to be SALT & LIGHT

(You ARE these things by God's Sovereign Grace and in His purposes, so you must choose to live that way. The gospel says "Become in daily living what you ARE in Christ - Disciples, Saints, God's Children.")

5:13 You- Emphatic. YOU and none else. As in 11-12, so it's a development from the Beatitudes. **21 ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH- Mk 9:50 Lk 14:34-35 **22 In Mark they're commanded to have salt in themselves, here they're told that they ARE the salt. What salt is for food you are/are to be for the world. Salt gives flavour to food Job 6:6; Col 4:6, protects from corruption, Lev 2:13; Ezek 4:3-24 Disciples who bring the Word and will of Jesus into daily living, preserve, purify, and convict those around them, and so make the world purer and more palatable. Neither salt nor Christians exist for themselves. John's disciples joined him in the wilderness only briefly and were given instructions as how to live back in the world, Lk 3:13-14. The Lord sent out the disciples to witness to the Kingdom, 10:1-16

IF THE SALT loses its saltiness Moraino. From Moros- Dull, sluggish, foolish, so to be foolish, useless Rom 1:22 1 Cor 1:20 The Rabbis and pagan philosophers used salt as an image of Wisdom, Col 4:6. The Lord Jesus isn't teaching Chemistry - saying salt can become unsalty. He's quoting and applying a teaching proverb. As salt must be in the food to do its work, Christians have to be positively involved in the lives of others, but this is useless unless they keep their distinctive, and in some ways unattractive-to-natural-taste, quality. God's Grace-given Spirit indwelling us gives us our saltiness, but if we lapse into self-indulgence by adjusting to the world, or into self-righteousness by adjusting to the religious world, we lose our grace-given quality, Mk 9:50 Gal 3:3. We'll be salt that no longer does what salt does! How can it be made salty again- By returning to Jesus, but here it quotes a proverb that means It won't happen. GOOD FOR NOTHING.. trampled by MEN- as valueless

5:14-16 You ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD- Kosmos- The sun is the light of the Kosmos- ordered World of nature/ Creation, Rom 1:20 etc. They and we

Israel, are the salt and light of the WORLD. To tell this group of nobodies they have this universal role is a shock, but see how 28:18-20 ends.

Footnote **22 Salt of the Earth, not Kosmos- World society, so it may refer to clay from the shores of the Dead Sea with Potash salts in it, used for fertiliser. Left in a heap it would be leached by rain. See Lk 14:35.

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world, Isa 42:6; 49:6; Jn 8:12, and He shares this with His disciples, Acts 13:47, but only those who choose to walk in that light benefit from it, Jn 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36; 46. As the moon holds and reflects the hidden sun to our earth, so we're to shine for Him by proclaiming His Gospel, 4:16; Jn 17:18; 2 Cor 3:18-4:6; Phil 2:12-15; 1 Jn 3:2. If we will be serious Christians - salt, Jesus will see to our effective witness - light.

A CITY ON A HILL - Jerusalem was to be a Light for God, Isa 2:2-4; 60:1-22; Mic 4:1-3; 7:7-9. The nations of the world will walk in the light of the new Jerusalem, Rev 21:9-11, 23-24. Meanwhile the Light shines in darkness and the darkness can neither understand it, or suppress it, Jn 1:5. CANNOT BE hidden - God has placed it in a high and privileged position - which is more of an embarrassment to us than a joy, perhaps, but we soon lose the good and joy of the grace granted to us if we seek to sink out of sight to the level of the gods around us.

NEITHER.. LIGHT A lamp - Luchnos - A small lamp to be held in the hand or put on a lamp stand. Candle gives the wrong symbolism as a candle feeds on itself. PUT IT UNDER A BOWL - The light would be hidden and the lamp good. A secret disciple is no more use than a non-salty one. The Bushel may represent the material concerns of this life - and the bed, Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16, represent the laziness and self-indulgence which dim/hide the witness of worldly Christians, who become unfruitful, 13:22.

put on its stand.. LIGHT to everyone - We shouldn't hide from people the reason for what we say and do as disciples in obedience to/fellowship with our Teacher-Lord, even though we risk persecution for it, 1 Pet 3:12-16. God has lit us, but we're responsible to choose to let that light shine out usefully - though it annoys those who the light of the Gospel shows up, Jn 3:17-20. Some suggest we should, as disciples, aim to occupy the highest possible positions in this world, so as to have the widest influence for our light. Possibly. But to neglect the study of God's Word, and the fellowship and service of His people for years while one gains high

6:1-16 but to manifest our Christ-likeness in our attitudes in all we do to say, 1 Pet 2:12

GLORIFY /praise- Make people say good things about God and honour Him, as the Lord Jesus glorified God in all He was, said, and did. We're called to do the same by what we SAY about Him, and by the fruit displayed in our lives as a result of our knowing Him, Jn 15:8; 1 Cor 6:20 Cp 6:1-18; 2:35; Lk 1:68; Phil 2:11; 1 Pet 2:12 YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN- In the OT He was known as Father of Israel, but in Christ He is revealed as the Father of each true disciple, and source of his call and discipleship, Jn 6:44 Cp Josh 29:11; 1 Cor 14:24-25

5:17-48 The Law & the New Righteousness

5:17-20 Teaching about The LAW

(We naturally say of someone who is healthy, wealthy, and successful that God has blessed them. In the Beatitudes the Lord cleared up men's misunderstandings about the kind of life God blesses and - the life men will thank Him for eternally. It was natural for men to see obedience to God's Law as a way of earning God's blessings, and to see the strictest Pharisees as those who pleased God best. The Lord now makes clear that this proud self-righteousness is a fatal misunderstanding and a dead end. God's Law must be taken seriously, indeed, and He Himself had come to fulfil it, and the whole OT, but He shows why He doesn't conform to the Traditional interpretation of the Law. He also lays a sound foundation for the defence of the Gospel against any imposition of law-keeping on the future church, Acts 6:11-14; 15:1-35)

5:17 Do not think I have COME TO DESTROY /Abolish- Kataluo- To loosen down, destroy, OR to unyoke animals. To cancel the Law or say it can be ignored. His legalistic critics accused Him of this, 15:1-2, etc. Cp Acts 18:13; 21:28; Rom 3:20-31. THE LAW- Nomos- Law. From Nemo- To divide out, distribute, so law thought out, prescribed, and written down. Here, as usually in the NT, THE LAW, given at Sinai through Moses and the books recording its revelation of God's will. We must not imagine any aspect of the Law can be ignored. Progressive Christians may ignore the Bible in their hurry to change the world. God's way is to change the world by having us proclaim His Gospel from the Bible. THE PROPHET S- With the Law = the OT, 7:12; Jn 1:45; Acts 24:14; 28:23; Rom 3:21. These were the sole authorised witnesses until John Baptist took up that responsibility, 11:13

commanded, furnished all the sacrifices pointed to, and made it possible for us to live, uncondemned by the Law, in fellowship with God, Rom 8:1-18 (We can also expect a future fulfilment in Messiah's kingdom.) Christ is now the centre of attention, but that fulfilment of the Law confirms its truth/ uses it rightly 1 Tim 1:6-9. Cp 5:21-48 9:14-17; 12:1-14; 15:1-20 19:3-9. It remains God's word, 15:4; 23:23 For Christ as fulfilling the Law see Appendix.

5:18 VERILY I SAY /tell you the truth- Amen Lego- A solemn expression used by the Lord Jesus to introduce an important statement. No other teacher is known to have used it. In OT only audiences said Amen, Deu 27:15; Neh 8:6; Ps 106:48 TILL HEAVEN.. EARTH PASS/disappear ONE JOT OR TITTLE /not the least stroke of a pen- Iota, Keraia. These are WRITTEN - It's the written Torah/ Law, not the Rabbis' oral tradition disappear FROM THE LAW- As long as this kind of earth and life lasts, OT Law decreeing in physical terms right and wrong behaviour has some relevance. Though even its central statements would be modified by being incorporated into later developments - the Gospel and the Coming Kingdom.

ALL /everything FULFILLED/accomplished- God does nothing pointlessly. The purposes for which the OT was written were eternal ones. The outcomes He saw before He Created the World will be achieved. This doesn't mean the OT, or any part of it, remains binding as a thing separate from Christ now it has been fulfilled in Him. The Law, down to its tiniest detail, is to be preserved and respected for what it reveals of God and His will, although the masses of tradition built on it by Scribes and Pharisees would be swept away - Eg Interpreting Ex 23:19 to mean one mustn't have milk in one's tea within 8 hours of a meal where meat may be eaten, and having separate sets of kitchen utensils for milk and meat! This doesn't defend the position of the legal-literalists, 12:1:8; 28:18-20 but the Law isn't an ancient cemetery. It remains part of the living word of God.

5:19 Anyone who breaks- Luo. Loosens, says it needn't be obeyed. To marginalise it by failing to study it, to rationalise etc so as to evade obedience, Deu 4:2. The Lord insists on honest exposition as in 16:19, 18:18 - the expositions and decisions we give on earth must agree with Heaven's/ God's ones, 1 Pet 4:11. Christians must not treat the OT with disrespect. The Lord doesn't Kataluo the

the way we live, an explaining of the reasons for our lifestyle, 1 Pet 3:15 Cp 2820 Acts 1:1-8; Jas 1:22 Rev 1:3. This isn't a legalistic conformity to details, 5:2048 15:1-20 Mk 7:15-19. Paul had been good at that and threw it away to be in Christ, Phil 3:4-9. We're to live by the principles of God's revealed will and so walk in fellowship with Him.

Footnote **23 Rabbi Shammah placed DOING above studying/ teaching the Law, Hillel reversed this.

CALLED GREAT - It's by Grace alone that God's people are in Glory, Eph 2:1-10. But there are degrees of Glory for God's servants, 1 Cor 15:41-42. The use we have chosen to make of what God has given in Grace will decide the degree in which we will enjoy fellowship with Him, to His glory, 5:12 10:41-42 20:23 25:15-28 Mk 10:40 Lk 12:47, 19:13-25 Rev 3:12, 21:20, 20:6. The OT having been given due honour, the focus turns now to the Lord and His work and teaching.

5:201 SAY - Emphatic. EXCEPT / unless YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS - Dikaiosune. Your RIGHTEOUSNESS in God's sight / in relationship to Him, surpasses - Perisseuo - To overflow, be in excess in quantity, or excel in quality. If you don't fulfil His will more perfectly than THE SCRIBES / teachers of the Law - The professional experts in the Law, AND PHARISEES - Those who were the strictest and most enthusiastic in advocating obedience to the Law. Most scribes were Pharisees, Lk 5:30 some Sadducees. See 12:38 15:1; 23:2, 13-15. They built up detailed rules / laws that were intended to keep people at a safe distance from any possibility of breaking them. These made God's Law a heavy burden rather than a help, 23:4, 23. Their fussiness insisted on a strainer to keep their lips from being defiled by touching the dead body of a goat if one was drowned in their wine, yet would (figuratively) swallow a whole unclean camel, 23:24. Eg they wouldn't enter Pilate's judgment hall on Passover morning - and yet condemned Jesus their Messiah to death, Jn 18:28. God in His Grace has granted to us a perfect righteousness that of Christ, 2 Cor 5:21. And by His indwelling Spirit enables us to live it out far beyond anything possible under the Law, Rom 8:1-18 Cp Gal 3:24, 27.

This verse is echoed in our Lord's words to Nicodemus in Jn 3:3 will certainly not ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN - The Scribes and Pharisees imagined they were using the Law to establish their own righteousness, and a high place in

2:9, 12-13; 3:9, 12-14. The Righteousness of the Law is to be fulfilled in us, Rom 8:3-5; 13:8-10 not merely FOR us. Matthew emphasises obedience to the written Word, Paul obedience to the indwelling Spirit, Rom 8:2, 9-17, who gave us that Word, 2 Pet 1:20 and interprets it for us, Jn 14:26 1 Jn 2:20-21. We're saved by Grace alone with a view to the good works God has prepared for us to do Eph 2:8-10. This obedient Faith is contrasted with the unbelief that prevented Israel from entering God's rest, Heb 3:4. Obedience to rules can never meet God's requirements. Blessing is granted by God, in His mercy, to those described in the Beatitudes.

5:21-48 The New Righteousness

(Jesus begins to explain what He had been talking about in 17:20 and how it works out in practice. The Lord contrasts formal obedience to commandments with avoiding the attitude behind the forbidden actions. He is concerned about our relationships with people. His disciples must be unusual people in usual situations - living above the risk of Law-breaking as God's children, as expounded by Paul in Rom 8.)

5:21-26 MURDER - its relationship with Anger.

5:21 YOU HAVE HEARD - Rabbis used "I hear.. but I say.." to correct supposed misunderstandings of the Law. THAT IT WAS SAID - Passive, but meaning The Lord gave your ancestors the commandment. Cp Rom 9:12 Gal 3:16 BY THEM/to the people - Said TO Israel at Sinai, Ex 20:1. KJV is misleading here. Do not KILL /murder - Phoreuo Ex 20:13; Deu 5:17. The Hebrew and Greek words mean to murder - Criminal killing, not judicial killing sanctioned by the community, or accidental killing.

will BE IN DANGER OF /subject to - Enochos - Liable to action at Law, guilty, so must answer for it to the court, Gen 9:6; Ex 21:12-14; Num 35:16-34 JUDGMENT - Krisis - The process of investigation to be followed by an appropriate sentence - Krima. Not a quote, but summarising the content of Ex 21:12; Lev 24:17; Num 35:12; Deu 17:8-13. Murder required the death penalty - Judicial killing for criminal killing.

4:3-8; 1 Jn 3:12 Cp Prov 6:34 14:17, 29 15:1; 16:14; 19:19, 27:4; Eph 4:26 3:1; 6:4; Col 3:8; 1 Tim 2:8; Jas 1:19-20

WITH HIS BROTHER- If we're happy to operate at the level of the Scribes and Pharisees, 5:20 with "Who is my neighbour?" Lk 10:29 we'll try to justify our angry attitude by saying "That man ISN'T my brother!" Or play hide-and-seek with possible meanings - brother disciple? brother Jew? brother Christian? brother man? or say it doesn't condemn being angry with a woman. But we must love our brother in Christ, Jn 13:35 and our neighbour, the man within reach, Rom 13:10

WITHOUT A CAUSE- [RT] [KJV] This seems to have been added later by scribes wishing to soften the shocking statement. Any angry man can easily justify himself by finding a "cause" for his anger, and this defeats the Lord's purpose in condemning anger.

IN DANGER OF SUBJECT TO JUDGMENT - Enoch's Crisis. Not Judgment by human authorities as only GOD can judge attitudes? But human authorities as they act on God's behalf, should take attitude into account as far as it may be seen, Rom 13. Or as this is in parable form simply states that Anger is something serious enough to deserve court action. The inner emotion of anger is condemned as the heart is the source of sinful words and actions that corrupt man, 15:18

anyone who says. RACA - Empty-headed food, if derived from Aramaic Reqa - similar to Neh 5:13; Jas 2:20 Calls his mind in question. Untranslated as familiar to readers. Lamsa's NT translated from the Aramaic says Raca means "I spit on you," as Raca represents the sound of clearing one's throat before spitting. Either is despising him. COUNCIL/Sanhedrin- Sanhedrin. The supreme body of the Jewish Nation. The council of the elders, scribes, and priests. Under Roman Law regulating the Jewish aspects of the life of Jews, as in 10:17.

FOOL - Moros. Moron in modern English but in OT, FOOL was associated with Godlessness. In the LXX Moros is used to translate Nabal in Deu 32:6; Isa 32:6; Jer 5:21. So perhaps "You are a Godless food!" Others associate it with Heb Moreh- rebel, or say it means morally contemptible. The Lord used Moros- Food of the Scribes and Pharisees who nullified Scripture by their traditions, 23:17, 19, and of the man who built on the sand, 7:26 Paul used it justifiably, 1 Cor 1:25 27, 3:18 4:10 2 Tim 2:23 Titus 3:9. Casual or malicious name-calling pollutes the atmosphere in which personalities develop, and cripples them. But, as often, Jesus

5:23-24 THEREFORE - Because what the Lord Jesus has just said is true. IF THOU/you- Singular, an individual responsibility. offering at THE ALTAR.. remember- Coming into the presence of God sharpens our consciences, and memories, or it's not real. Cp 1 Cor 11:28 The Spirit may well bring to our mind our unforgiving-so-unforgiven anger so we can deal with it, and continue to walk with the Lord and each other in the light, 1 Jn 1:5-9. has something AGAINST you- Is angry because of something (our fault or not, trivial or major) you did. The anger may be sinful, but the one who caused it must do what he can to put things right. God has been offended by our sin, but it's God who seeks reconciliation, and who is the only One who can provide it, 2 Cor 5:19. Cp Mt 6:12, 14-16; Mk 11:25 We're to be of the same mind in the Lord, Phil 4:2. God won't accept our offering/worship until we seek to make it easier for the offended one to forgive us. Rabbis argued that a higher duty was to be completed before a lower duty. God comes first - complete your worship first. God puts our duty to our neighbour first as the test of the reality of our love for Him and worship, 1 Jn 4:20. When we recognise His Lordship we may be directed to put something right with others.

Truly Christian Social concern arose as a side-effect of Concern that God and the Gospel come first in men's lives. When it becomes an end in itself it loses its power to change society. Instead of liberating the sinner it comforts him in his sin and its consequences instead. Only God-centred, God-transformed lives can transform society - anything less can give only pain-killing ointments for the cancers of society and its victims, Jer 6:14, (6:10-19.) Our Lord's hard words are to drive us not to despair, but to corrective action.

LEAVE.. ALTAR - Your sacrifice couldn't be accepted by God as you have ignored your responsibility to love your neighbour. External piety is no substitute for internal Godliness - the heart-and-mind fellowship with God in His purposes of blessing for all men. Cp Isa 57:1-15. FIRST BE RECONCILED - Apologise, put things right, do what's needed to become friends again. It's the responsibility of the God-worshipper who represents his God to the one offended.

while on the way- Before the court hearing starts. DELIVER you TO THE JUDGE.. OFFICER.. PRISON- The process builds its own momentum. I tell you- Emphatic. You.. have paid the last FAR THING- Until the penalty is paid in full. Gods judgment, unless forestalled by repentance and a willingness to seek reconciliation, knows no half measures, 1 Pet 1:17-25 We must all stand before the Lord's Judgment seat. We will then face all the matters we failed to face on earth, and receive them and their evil consequences, as well as a full return for the good we have done in fellowship with the Lord - the shared joy, Jude 24

5:27-30 Teaching about the sin of Adultery.

(Violence and Sex have always been News and Entertainment. Early Christian Leaders warned against the Theatre. Today Christians need to exercise strict control over their use of entertainment to avoid using their eyes on corrupting material. Having dealt with the commandment that protects life Jesus takes up the commandment that protects marriage, and with it the creation and nurturing of new lives. Bhuddism and Hinduism teach that higher spirituality demands abandoning marriage. God honors, commends and blesses marriage, Gen 1:28 2:18-25, and blesses us through it, even in far from ideal marriages - see 1:1-16.)

5:27 You HAVE HEARD .. ADULTERY - Moicheus- Have sexual relations with a woman who is married to another man. Since man rebelled, sin has corrupted all Gods good gifts, including that of sexuality. To the original command, as co-images of God, to be fruitful, Gen 1:26-28 the provision of Eve, and the announcement of the terms of their union, Gen 2:23-25 God has added restraints which are needed to protect the sanctity of marriage, its joys and good outcomes. Gods purposes were re-echoed in Mal 2:13-16; Mt 19:4-6. These need to be accepted as absolute, and the options open to us are within those bounds, and in the Lord, 1 Cor 7:39 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 Tim 4:1-5. In sexual matters, as in others, we will certainly reap what we sow, Gal 6:7-8. The corruption of Gods gift is constantly used for financial gain in advertisements and entertainment, along with the deification of sexual gratification/personal preferences and rights, at a sad cost to all concerned, especially children. Our bodies are Gods Temples in which we are to glorify Him, 1 Cor 6:19-20

desire takes God's Creation gift and uses it outside His purposes. While it may profess to honor their beauty it despises the person, and uses them without providing for them the security of sole attention in a permanent relationship in which offspring can be reared for happy and good living.

COMMITTED ADULTERY.. IN HIS HEART - His attitude is a sin already, even if circumstances prevent him achieving that wish. Some psychologists and expositors claim Jesus is demanding the impossible - that sexual desires are uncontrollable. But in all ages those who put themselves into God's hands, asking His help to do His will, have been enabled to live in chaste singleness or faithful marriage. And they look back on their lives with thankfulness, joy, and minimal regrets.

5:29-30 The EYE pictures the means by which the world around presents itself and its possibilities to us. The HAND symbolises all the possible actions we could make in response to what is presented to our eyes, imagination, etc. Mk 9:27. IF your RIGHT EYE - Symbolising what our senses take in, causes you to sin - Skandalizo - To entrap, trip up, entice to sin. The eye should be used to avoid our tripping over something physically. But if it's used to feed a desire to commit adultery, or other sin, it will stir us into the trap of sin. We must yield their use to God for the fulfilment of His purposes, Rom 6:11-14, not use our eyes to watch as entertainment that which can cause evil and adulterous thoughts in our hearts, 15:19.

PLUCK /gouge IT OUT - As in 5:22 the Lord uses exaggeration to gain attention, drive home the point, which is to make a drastic sacrifice, give up something very dear, to avoid temptation. throw it away - Put it out of reach permanently. Take immediate, drastic action to free yourselves from situations which drive you to sin/enslave you/cripple you for good and God's service. Amputation for cancer, not band-aids, Jer 6:14-15. Continuing will destroy us, and others, and gradual breaks are neither kind nor do they work. **24

IF your RIGHT - the more important hand, for most people, Gen 48:14; Ps 137:5, HAND - What one does (Eye - Input, Hand - Output) causes you to sin. CUT IT OFF.. throw it away. IT IS better to lose part.. NOT your WHOLE BODY to

stop them burning tests in our hair and bring our nose on. FOR IT IS BETTER TO
lose part of your body.. than your WHOLE BODY - whole self INTO HELL .

Footnote **24 Long ago a friend was given a trial in a very desirable job in trading. He gave it up and returned to his old job, saying "I was too good at it and enjoyed it too much so there was too much risk that the love of making money would enslave me." The Law required the adulterer to be stoned to death. The Lord requires Gods children to put to death all natural inclinations contrary to His will - which in fact would enslave and destroy those who yield to them, Rom 6:1-23 & 1-20, Col 3:5. The Lord calls us to amputate not the body, but the passions that would misuse it. Of course our mind, heart, will, are concerned with any use or abuse of any aspect of our being. It's pointless for the hand to slap the legs for taking the body into forbidden territory!

5:31-32 Teaching about Divorce

(Lustful looking is adultery/ divorce at the heart level, which leads to physical adultery/ divorce is the sequence condemned here. God willing I'll deal with divorce more fully at 19:3-11, where the setting is the harm done to children. See also the notes on 1 Cor 7 in Booklet 2 of First Corinthians.)

5:31-32 IT HAS BEEN SAID- Deu 24:1-4. he must GIVE HER A certificate of divorce- In Eastern society a man could divorce verbally. Under Gods law a written divorce was required. As writing was uncommon this gave the man time to cool off, and make it a considered decision - and the woman had proof that she was free of the marriage and no longer under the authority of/ obligation to the man.

BUT I tell YOU- Giving a revised verdict on the subject: anyone who divorces. except FOR FORNICATION/marital unfaithfulness Porneia. The word covers any forbidden sexual activity. It may mean adultery here, but if so we'd expect the specific word Moichao as it is elsewhere in the passage. As this exception is made here, and not in Mark, Luke, or 1 Corinthians 7, it's likely to be something less common- the breaking up of an unlawful marriage to a close relative, or, as Porne is Harlot, it could mean the wife has become a public disgrace- a prostitute. But see notes on 19:3-11.

become an adulteress As in Gods intention she married the one man for life, and her husband has compelled her to leave, the divorcing husband bears the guilt of her

our truthfulness)

5:3336 You HAV E HEARD .. SAID BY /to.. long ago Takes up another thing they knew that God said to His people long ago. Oaths regarding events of the past, and vows concerning future actions were permitted and even commanded in OT, but this was because men were untruthful, and warnings against false oaths and unfulfilled vows were needed. Do not break your oath- The verse summarises Num 30:2-3; Deu 1:9; 23:21-22 Cp Ps 50:14; Ecc 5:3-4. keep the oaths- Horkos- An Oath. Linked with Herkos= A Fence An oath was intended to fence a man in to telling the truth, or fence falsehood out from his statement. Keep any promise solemnised by associating God's Name with your words. To fail to do so was to take the Lord's Name in vain. Ex 20:7.

BUT I tell YOU Do not SWEAR - When you say something is true, don't support your statement with an oath. The Rabbis had a detailed list of forms of words which they said made oaths binding, and forms that need not be kept, 23:16-22 That the Lord's ban didn't refer to oaths in court or about serious matters is suggested by the Lord's response on oath, 26:6-36:4 and Paul, 2 Cor 1:23 Gal 1:20 1 Th 5:27. Even God used an oath to reassure men, Heb 6:13-19. Cp Lk 1:73 Acts 2:30 Rom 1:9, Phil 1:8; Rev 10:6. Oaths are still sworn in courts etc but are irrelevant for unbelievers - and Christians may prefer to make a "Solemn Affirmation" instead.

HEAVEN.. GOD'S THRONE- Isa 66:1. Heaven is where God exercises His authority - as Kings sit on their throne in their Judgment hall. Some Rabbis said oaths sworn by God's throne weren't binding, whereas those using God's name were. The value of Heaven, earth, or Jerusalem lie not in themselves but in their association with their Creator and Sustainer. FOOTSTOOL - As a King rested his feet when sitting on a high throne. 1 Chr 28:2; Isa 66:1. BY - Eis- into, towards JERUSALEM- It's suggested that Rabbis said vows by Jerusalem weren't binding unless made when facing towards Jerusalem. CITY OF THE GREAT KING-GOD. Ps 48:2-3. Do not SWEAR BY your HEAD - We can't preserve ONE hair on it.

statements and failure to keep promises are evil in themselves, and their ultimate source is the Evil One. There's something Satanic in any speaking that goes beyond simplicity and truth - fallen men need pressure to encourage truth-speaking. In 2Cor 1:15-24 Paul explains why he didn't keep a promise.

5:3848 Legal Rights - Love for Enemies

(Proportionate retribution appeals to our sense of fair play, and is used in 71-2; 1032, etc. Jesus condemns personal retaliation and commands self-restraint.)

5:3839 You HAVE HEARD .. EYE FOR EYE - Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deu 19:21. As with the commands against murder/adultery Jesus quotes OT Law because it was GOOD. This one checked wild revenge, Gen 4:23 and taught fair justice **25. But men twisted it to justify revenge - "I'm entitled to full payback." By NT times financial penalties, Ex 21:19, 22:36 were normal. God demands that earthly rulers administer justice righteously for Him, Rom 13:1-10. If we're part of that system we must do so. Being willing to forego personal rights goes with taking a firm stand in defence of principles, the public good or to protect others, Acts 16:37, 22:25, 25:8-12.

BUT I tell YOU Do not RESIST EVIL - As in 5:37. An evil person or thing. They ARE Evil in their intent and action maybe, but if we stick up for ourself and demand our right to pay them back we become evil - like them. Even to take action in a law court against them is the opposite of making peace quickly with our adversary, 5:25-26. See Lk 21:14-16; Acts 13:8; Rom 13:2; Gal 2:11; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9. Godless morality is based on personal pride which demands revenge. The Lord warns us against the spirit which demands its rights and won't rest until it scores off those who it sees as injuring us. We're to overcome evil with good and leave vengeance to God, Rom 12:14-21; 1 Th 5:15; 1 Pet 1:17. Cp Lev 19:18; Deu 32:35; Prov 20:22, 24:29; Isa 50:6; Lam 3:30. Jesus the suffering Messiah Isa 50:4-9, is at odds with the actions of the Messianic zealots.

him. Refrain from retaliation as Jesus did 1 Pet 2:21-23 not that we should look for another blow. An exaggerated statement to emphasise a principle - that anger, hate, desire for vengeance, and pride have no place in the life of a disciple. We're to take up His cross of non-assertive humility, 12:18-21. Love bears and endures all, 1 Cor 13:7. Some ancient wise men would agree with this - Pericles was said to have ordered his servant to light a torch and see a man home who'd spent the day shouting insults at him! The Lord doesn't say it's wrong for the Government to exact vengeance - they do so as God's representatives, Rom 13:1-14, and God will do so, perfectly, in perfect righteousness at the last Judgment, 25:31-46

Footnote **25 The Law of Hamurabai, 18th century BC, used this principle, but there, in his law, lower class people had no rights against upper classes.

5:40-43 IF.. SUE.. TAKE COAT/Tunic- Chiton Inner coat LET HIM HAVE your CLOAK - Himation- Outer coat **26 The court orders the inner garment to be handed over as payment for debt, but by God's Law the more valuable outer garment can't be taken as it served also as blanket, Ex 22:25-27, Deu 24:10-13, 17. The principle the Lord is stating is that we should be willing to give up more than the Law requires so as to settle the debt as fully as possible. Cp 1 Cor 6:1-9 on avoidance of lawsuits. The Lord calls His disciples to follow Him in this - He allowed Himself to be slapped, clothes taken, nailed to the cross

COMPEL /forces you- Aggareuo- A technical term used for forcing anyone to do civil or military service in 2:7-12 If a Roman officer commands you to act as baggage porter for one mile - especially resented by patriots. But personal pride/resentment is not likeness to Christ, who gave up all His rights for the good of others, and calls us to do so as then our actions harmonise with the Gospel. GO WITH HIM two miles- The point is to do more than you can be compelled to do. The first mile renders to Caesar the things that are Caesars, the second yields to God a witness to His Grace Mk 12:17.

GIVE TO the one who asks- Our dependants have first claim on our property, 1 Tim 5:8. Then, we're to be unselfish, giving according to what the Lord has given to us,

(As Paul moves from Rom 1 to Rom 12, so Matthew in this chapter moves from our poverty and need to which God can grant happy outcomes, to the perfection/ wholeness of fellowship with Him/ likeness to Him.)

5:43 YOU HAVE HEARD .. LOVE - Agapao As God loved the world. Be concerned for their welfare, care for, treat with affection (As such love is a product of Christ and His teaching, many languages have no adequate equivalent) NEIGHBOUR - Your friends, your own people, fellow-Jews, Lev 19:18 That was a start. All the Law was a step towards/ foundation for Love for God, and fellowship with Him in His love for man - the higher demands of Christ/Christ-likeness. The Lord quotes this more fully in 19:19, 22:36-40. Cp Rom 13:9-10 Gal 5:14 Jas 2:8.

Footnote **26 Lk 6:29 reverses the order as a robber grabs his outer cloak, first. Disciples give the other cheek, cloak, and mile - as the Generous Father does to prodigal and piteous sons alike.

HATE .. ENEMY - Not a Bible command. Cp Ex 23:4-5; Prov 25:21-22. Loyalty to God required destruction of those who would snare Israel into idolatry, Deu 7:1-6; 20:16; Ps 139:21-22. But individual aliens were to be welcomed and treated well, Lev 19:34 Deu 10:19. The Lord provocatively stated what the people's natural attitude was, although they would be reluctant to admit it (In the NT hate has often the meaning of not being, lovingless, give lower priority and preference to, 6:24 10:37, Lk 14:26 Rom 9:13 Cp Gen 29:3 Deu 21:15-17; Prov 13:24)

The more proud the Pharisees were of their position the more obviously they despised/ hated those of lesser devotion. In the ancient world, and sometimes today, strong loyalty to friends and causes, and fierce hatred to their enemies, is considered praiseworthy/ heroic. In Qumran writings love of the sons of light (their group) is paired with hatred of the sons of darkness (outsiders.) We're called to separate from the uncleanness of the world to belong wholly to God as His holy sons and daughters, 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; Eph 5:11. This Christ-centred exclusivism is to be matched with a sacrificial love for all, including our enemies and persecutors who oppose God's will in our lives. A Crusade moved by hatred/ zeal against the enemies of God is not for Christians.

5:44 LOVE YOUR ENEMIES - Those who make our life difficult. Treat them as you treat your own people. Act lovingly towards them - actions not feelings dominate

PRAY FOR- Jesus from the Cross prayed for His enemies, Lk 23:34. As prayer involves God, much of what it accomplishes remains unknown to us. But, by bringing us into fellowship with God it brings us closer to Him, taking away the hurt and bitterness - and so frees us to see positive things to do about the situation. Something like affectionate caring also, because the love God has for him isn't an aloof, clinical desire for his betterment. We're not to love the enemy's deeds, wish or help his success in them, but God's love in us, Rom 5:5, helps us to desire the transforming good that God desires for him - repentance and turning to God, which will frustrate his sinful desires. This is a miracle - but God is good at miracles. The person who is close enough to me to be my enemy is also my God-given neighbour.

(I don't know that Nelson Mandela is a Christian, but the attitude towards the Government of South Africa he developed in prison has accomplished what seemed to be impossible - the dismantling of the system of Apartheid, and the beginning of building communal goodwill.)

5:45 THAT.. BE CHILDREN/sons- Huios. See 5:9. YOUR FATHER- Living as adult children in the image of the Father and functioning in fellowship with Him, and His Son, Lk 6:35, Rom 8:14, 2 Cor 6:18, etc. To be sons is to reflect the character and likeness of God, which is illustrated in these verses. The child inherits something of its father's character. The growing-up-son takes care to act after the pattern shown by the Father, reflecting His attitudes, principles and actions. We are to be and behave what God has MADE US - sons, Eph 2:10, not behave in this way in order to BECOME sons. This is GRACE, not LAW. Cp 5:9, Lev 19:2, Deu 10:1, 23, Eph 5:1-10, 1 Pet 1:1-23, 1 Jn 4:1-11.

SUN RISE ON EVIL.. GOOD- God provides sunshine and rain for good people and bad people alike = People who love Him/ co-operate with Him, and those who hate and defy Him. He is GOOD, so the way He treats them is determined by what HE IS. He acts according to HIS character, not according to what they are/ the way they act. Those He has adopted as SONS show their sonship by acting according to their Father's character. Those born of God express their new heredity, Jn 1:12-

enriches life. It pleases God to see people living in a loving atmosphere. It's His will for them, anything less would be sinful. WHAT REWARD - If your love for people is only a response to/ reflection of their love to you, you make no effort to put love into the pot of your relationships, you are doing nothing rewardable. There's nothing specifically Christian about it. No transformation into Christ-likeness that God intends for us, Rom 8:29

EVEN THE tax collectors- The people despised for working for the Roman oppressors - enriching themselves by extorting taxes from their fellow-Jews. They were mutually supportive, and needed to be, as they were religious-and-social outcasts! Cp Mafia are said to be faithful husbands and loyal friends to their fellow gangsters - it's dangerous not to be! It's no credit to Christians and their God if they show caring loyalty only within their clique.

IF YOU greet- A greeting showed friendliness, friendly interest. The Jewish greeting Shalom- Peace to you, amounted to May God bless you and make your life full and happy in fellowship with Him. YOUR brothers- Your own circle. WHAT.. MORE THAN OTHERS- You're just doing what everyone does, showing friendliness to their own sort of people. Being friendly to your church-group is good and necessary, but quite natural, a rewarding act of self-interest. EVEN PUBLICANS [RT] /pagans [Nes] do- Non-Jews - the nations of the world who didn't know and obey God See Ps 9:17; Mk 14:41; Gal 2:15

5:48 You Plural, the disciples as a group is emphatic. YOU must be satisfied with nothing less than the perfect wholeness of being/ behaving like your Father. PERFECT - Teleios- Having reached its end- Telos. So complete, perfect, fully grown, mature, the desired end product of a child's growth. Not flawless, but the maturity of Christ-likeness, as led by the Holy Spirit, Rom 8:15-18 It's spiritually mature, completeness, wholeness, Phil 3:15 A life totally integrated into the will of God. People whose behaviour is determined by what THEY are, not by what OTHER PEOPLE ARE, and what those other people do to them. God is totally devoted to man's welfare. We must not stop ourselves from joining Him in this. This idea is present in Deu 18:13; Lev 11:44-45 19:2; 20:26 Cp the perfect in 1Cor 2:6; 14:20 Col 1:28 Jas 1:4-5; 1 Jn 11:5-9.

Law, and of the fulfillments appropriate to the presence of Jesus the Messiah. When there is a new revelation, twin errors become options - to try to contain the new within the old as Pharisaic Christianity tried to, Acts 15:5. OR to ignore the past, and so remove the foundations from underneath the new, Rom 3:8; Jude 4. The Lord hasn't been setting out enforceable rules to be imposed on society, or a blueprint to be followed mechanically. He has set out deeds designed to develop an attitude, and which show His disciples the direction in which they will be going all their lives. Christ-likeness is the limit! It's a reminder of how us sons of God are to live to demonstrate our sonship - and honour Father in heaven.

APPENDIX The Law & its Fulfilment in Christ

(This subject is dealt with more fully in a separate booklet "The Law, the Lord, and Us" which will be gladly supplied free on request)

God's eternal, unchanging purpose for man is that we should be like Him, and have fellowship with Him, Gen 1:26-27, Rom 8:29 Adam and Eve briefly started along that road and then listened to the enemy and chose to take the deceitful and death-bringing short-cut to God-likeness Satan offered, Gen 3:5. God promised that through the suffering of the seed of the woman, deliverance would come, Gen 3:15. Meanwhile, as a consequence of man's sin, he could approach God only through sacrifices. Gen 4:4; Lev 17:11.

The story of Noah demonstrated that Salvation could be experienced only through Faith that obeyed God. The story of Abraham added to this, that through obedient Faith, fellowship with God could be enjoyed, Jas 2:23. And to Abraham the promise of a Deliverer was renewed, Gen 12:1-3; 22:17-18.

The Law given at Sinai, in association with Moses, gathered up these threads into a system that set out what was required of man for him to live in fellowship with God, Ex 19:20 etc. It also revealed that the Deliverer would be a Law-giving Prophet like Moses, whose verdicts would be binding and final, Deu 18:15 (To

men aware of their sin, their need of deliverance from it, and so prepared them to welcome and trust the Deliverer when He came, Rom 5:20 Gal 3:23-4:7.

It required them to love God totally, and to love their neighbour. Stated in another way, they must be totally committed to God and His will, and as an expression of this to be committed to fellowship with God in His loving purpose for others, 223-740 Deu 6:4-5; 11:8-25 The Law sketched out the way men should live in order to please God, and enjoy life, Gal 3:12 His life placed over the Law, left nothing of it not covered with a better and fuller expression of the will of God. The Lord Jesus didn't NEED the Law, 1 Tim 1:9. He lived far above it - fulfilling the Law in that ALL His thoughts/ feelings/ attitudes were in fellowship with God the Father, Jn 8:29 His sinless life, 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22-3; 1 Jn 3:5, showed that the Moral demands of God's Law were reasonable, and could be met by a flesh-and-blood man, so that it was the wilful sinfulness of human nature that was to blame for the Law not justifying anyone, Rom 8:3.

The Law of Moses tried to regulate Physical actions. Christ Replaced it with His But I say.. about the state of hearts and minds, and finishes the chapter by telling us that nothing short of being like God in attitude and behaviour is acceptable, 5:43-48 Then everything we do will be a Living Sacrifice, Rom 12:1, done to the glory of God, 1 Cor 10:31. We should never cease to thank and praise God that not only did Christ EMBODY God's will for man, His identification with us, Heb 2:10-18, enables Him to write His Law within, Jer 31:31-34 Heb 8:10-12, all who receive Him, Jn 1:12.

The 10 Commandments could only condemn us - under the Gospel the Holy Spirit transforms us. Explore this in Jn 3:1-16; Rom 3:20-28 8:1-39 1 Cor 12:13 2 Cor 3:7-18 5:17; Gal 3:13-14, 21-29 4:4-7, 21-28 5:22-25 Phil 2:12-16 2 Tim 1:7; Heb 10:14-16 2 Pet 1:1-12 1 Jn 1:5-9, 2:2-10 4:10-21; Jude 24-25 Christ's indwelling on hearts assures us of Heaven, Col 1:27, and moves us to prepare for Heaven, Eph 3:13-21; Col 3:15-17; 1 Jn 3:1-3.

Christ and the Ceremonial Commandments

Commandments 1-4 concerned the behaviour of God's people in relation to Him. At least two thirds of the Law was an expansion of this, making provision for the

Holiness and Glory, Ex 25:2-9. Christ the Eternal Word fulfilled this need when He came down and Tabernacled (the literal translation) among us, Jn 1:14, and displayed the Glory of God in the Temple of His body, Jn 2:19-21. In all who receive Him, He now lives so that in turn our bodies have become Temples in which God resides, 1 Cor 6:19, and we are required/enabled to manifest God's Glory to those around us by the way we live, so that they come to us to enquire of God.

Sinners can't come into the Holy presence of God, so, under the Law, God provided a PRIEST who would pray for them and offer the needed sacrifices on their behalf. The Lord Jesus Christ has fulfilled/fulfills this for us, Heb 2:10-3:6; 4:12-16; 5:1-10; 7:27. Christ our High Priest bears our names on His Shoulders and Heart, Ex 28:1-21. The crucifixion Marks on His hands assure us He will never forget us, Isa 49:15-16; Jn 20:19-20. By His enabling we in turn have become Priests to God, make acceptable offerings, and intercede on behalf of others, Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15-16; 1 Tim 2:1-4; 1 Jn 5:16.

When we're "in Love" with someone, they fill our thoughts, etc, and if we loved God with all our heart, mind, and soul, 22:37, our life would be given to fellowshiping with Him. No mere man can achieve this, except, perhaps, momentarily. The Burnt Offering, Lev 1:1-17; Num 28:1-8, a whole animal given to God transformed into smoke that ascended heavenwards, took their place- and their offering of it confessed both their obligation and their failure to fulfil that obligation. CHRIST in His life perfectly fulfilled what was pictured in the Burnt offering. A holy human life lived in the image and likeness of God, Gen 1:26-27, in total dependent, obedient fellowship with the Father in Heaven, Mt 4:4; Jn 1:18; 5:17-20; 30; 36; 6:44-45; 8:16-18; 29; 10:37-38; 12:49-50; 14:9-10; 31; 15:9-10; 16:32 and totally pleasing to Him, Mt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; 9:7; Lk 3:22; Jn 12:28.

And, having done the will of God, Lk 22:42; Jn 18:11; Heb 10:7-10 He handed over that sinless holy life to the Father, in total surrender, Lk 23:46; 1 Pet 2:22-24. As a result, all of us who by Faith have laid our hands on Him/confessed Him, and claimed Him and His sacrifice, Rom 10:8-11 are sanctified/made holy/set apart and made acceptable to God, Heb 10:7-10. And our obedient, Spirit-empowered living in fellowship with Christ our Burnt Offering moves us along.

When we have, like the OT offerer, "laid our hands on" Christ the Sinless One who was made sin for us, we're made the righteousness of God in Him. He is also our Redemption Passover Lamb, 1 Cor 5: 7.

All that was pictured on the Day of Atonement, Lev 16 1-34 He fulfilled in glorious spiritual reality, Rom 3:25 Heb 10 1-11. He is the Priest, the Atoning Sacrifice, the Mercy Seat/Hilasmos (used in LXX Lev 259, 1 Jn 22: 4:10 See also Rom 3:25) and the Scapegoat.

He the LIGHT of the World, Jn 8:12 is the Lamp stand by whose light we serve God, Ex 25:31-40 Num 8:1-4, we in return are to reflect that light to others, 5:14. Christ is the Bread of Life for us, both the Heavenly Manna Ex 16 and the bread fresh from the presence of God, on which His priests feed, Ex 25:23-30 Lev 24:5-9, Num 4:7. He is the LAVEN/Basin of cleansing water that fits us to enter God's presence safely, Ex 30:17-21; Jn 13:1-10 etc. Cp Acts 10:15; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 5:26-27; 1 Jn 19.

Israel under Law rested physically on the Sabbath, an echo of God's Creation rest, Ex 20:8-11. By the work of the New Creation, finished on the Cross Jn 19:30 Heb 10:8-14, He became Christ the Sabbath Rest of all of us who cease from our own attempts at Law-Keeping and rest in Him, Heb 4:7-11. All the needs and solutions pictured in the unending round of temporary animal sacrifices have been perfectly and permanently fulfilled in Christ crucified, Heb 10:1-18. We should make full use of His wonderful work of our Great Priest by constantly spending time in fellowship with God, valuing and obeying His Word, and gathering to encourage each other in worship and witness, Heb 10:25.

Even at the human level, if you love someone you don't have to keep referring to a set of written instructions, a list of things to do or not do in order to please them. When you're in Love the art of pleasing them is written in your heart and mind. Living as a Christian isn't a drudgery of trying to keep a heavy load of Do's and Don'ts! As the Lord Jesus said in Jn 15:7-13 if we remain in Him and we treasure His words we enjoy living fellowship with Him by doing what pleases Him, living

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

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