

# Matthew 18—28

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## Chapter 18

Lessons for the coming church age

Around the winter of 29 or 30 A.D.

Believers are compared to children

v 1-5—You must become like a child to enter the kingdom of heaven.

v. 3—Unless you become converted and be as a child, you cannot enter the kingdom. The Greek word for “converted” means to turn or turn around. The word is common in the book of Acts for conversion. It assumes that we are born outside of the kingdom of heaven. That went contrary to the Jewish teaching of the day that all Jews were born in the kingdom of heaven as children of Abraham. It’s a statement like He gave to Nicodemus—you must be born again. It is still a big need in communication with religious people today. Jesus says two things—be converted and be like children. One defines the other. All this means how to be great in the kingdom.

v. 4—He explains what He means by using children as an example. Humility is the measure of greatness. Humility is the root of all virtue. The difference between pride (the root of all evil) and humility (the root of all virtue) is, What is the end point? Where does it end? What is its source? Humility says all virtue begins and ends in God. Pride will try to steal some of that value for man, saying there is value in man. I suggest the criteria at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be humility.

v. 5—You should receive one who is humble.

v. 6-9—It is very important for these kingdom-of-heaven children not to stumble. Don’t cause them to stumble and don’t cause yourself to stumble.

v. 6—Causing one of these humble ones to stumble. “Stumble” is *skandalizo*, to cause to fall, to set a trap for, to entice, to cause them to sin [a person must be moving to stumble]. To stumble would be for them to stop believing. It would be better to have a millstone around your neck and be cast into the sea rather than cause one of these to stumble. The question is whether you are doing something to cause someone to sin or whether it’s the truth of God that causes them to stumble. If truth causes them to stumble, that’s their decision.

v. 7—Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks. It’s inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the man through whom the stumbling blocks come. That means that stumbling blocks are in the sovereign plan of God. Is evil in the plan of God? Here you have the sovereignty of God and the free will of man put together in one verse. It’s inevitable that it comes (sovereignty), but woe to the one through whom it comes (free will).

v. 8-9—Solution to the problem—if your hand or your foot offends you, cut it off. If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. The statement Jesus makes is true in itself. It is better to go into heaven with one eye than into hell with two eyes. That’s true. But Christ is not promoting bodily mutilations as a cure for stumbling over sin. As He said, it’s what is in the heart of man that defiles him (Matthew 15:18-19). The point is that sin has drastic consequences and we should take drastic actions to deal with it. The way to deal with it is to drastically, physically, mechanically change things. For example, Alcoholics Anonymous makes a person go to as many as 3 meetings a day to deal with their drinking problem. They force you to change your life. If you can’t do it with a good attitude, do it with a bad attitude.

v. 10-14—God seeks for and restores the ones who have stumbled, like a lost sheep.

v. 10—Do not despise one of these little ones. He illustrates this with children, but His point is about children of heaven. Their angels in heaven continually see the face of God. This may mean that children have guardian angels, but the point here is that He is not talking about children but children of heaven.

v. 11—This verse is not in some of the manuscripts. It is something Christ said. It's included in Luke 19:10, which is not a questionable text. But perhaps Jesus did not say it here.

v. 12—A short version of a story Jesus tells in Luke 15. The man who leaves the 99 sheep to search for the 1 which is lost. The sheep and the child are the same.

v. 14—He comes back to the children. So He is comparing the sheep and the child. Since the children of heaven are like sheep to a shepherd, and because one who goes astray is important to God, it's important that you discipline one another with the process He is about to describe in verses 15-19.

v. 15-20—We should help one another when we stumble.

First go in private, if the brother listens to you, you can settle it in private. If he doesn't listen, take two or three with you. The purpose of this is fact-finding, that every fact may be confirmed. If that doesn't bring about repentance, then tell it to the church (the network of believer friends in his life). If he doesn't listen to them either, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax gatherer, which does not mean you do friendship evangelism with him. This is a believer who is hardened against the truth and is living in sin. The discipline process has two different goals. Up to the last stage (treating him as a Gentile), the whole purpose is restoration. After he refuses to listen to the church, then the goal is no longer restoration but the goal is to keep the leaven out of the lump (1 Corinthians 5). You change completely your objective at this point. Now your goal is you don't want him to influence everyone else. The point is, deal with it. Don't let the sin go on.

Don't use the word "excommunication" because it has institutional meaning. Removal of fellowship is better. Actually, you are the one removing your own fellowship from the person.

v. 18-20—Three statements declaring the free will of the apostles in a rather extreme way.

1 . Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven

2 . Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven

3 . If two of you agree on earth, it will be done in heaven. This describes the authority of the apostles, especially Peter. The only time I know that this was carried out was in Acts 5 in the death of Ananias and Sapphira.

v. 21-35—Always be merciful when a fellow child of the kingdom of God sins against you. In other words, keep on forgiving. How often should I forgive? Peter suggests that seven times would be good. The rabbis taught to forgive 3 times, so perhaps Peter thought he was being generous. But Jesus said to forgive 70 times 7. Jesus is not suggesting you keep a record. He means that forgiveness is continual. He illustrates it with another parable about the kingdom of heaven. This is a story about a man settling accounts. One man asked for forgiveness, and he is moved with compassion and forgives the debt. But that man turns around and is not compassionate with someone who owes him money. So the original master (in verse 33) says the second man should have mercy on the third man, the same way the master had mercy on the second man. The original master is God the Father. The apostles (and we) are in the place of the second man. Others are in the place of the third man.

It's a question of justice vs. mercy. For example, v. 28, pay back what you owe, is justice. In verse 29, have patience and I will repay you is mercy. The point is to not pursue justice with people but pursue mercy. Justice is for God and on earth has only been delegated to government (Romans 13:1-9). Because the man was not merciful, the master handed the second man over to the torturers. The Heavenly Father will do the same thing. If you are not merciful, God will resort to justice instead of mercy in dealing out heavenly rewards.

## ***Applications from Chapter 18***

- 1 . *The kingdom of heaven is compared to children. You must become as a child, in the sense of humility, to enter heaven (v. 1-5).*
- 2 . *Never cause a fellow child of God to stumble by putting one of the world's stumbling blocks before him (v. 6-9).*
- 3 . *Do not despise, be against, or look down on, other children of heaven when they go astray and get into trouble (v. 10-14).*
- 4 . *Instead, help one another get on the path of obedience, as long as they are willing to work on it. When they refuse to repent (an issue of pride), then remove fellowship with them as a final act, in the hope of their future return (v. 15-19).*
- 5 . *When a fellow child of the kingdom of God wrongs you, don't seek justice but forgive continually, as an act of mercy from your heart.*

## Matthew 19

Takes place in the Trans-Jordan or Perea area, across the Jordan River from Jericho  
Crowds followed Him.

The first subject He deals with is divorce and remarriage. The Pharisees ask, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?"

Jesus takes them back to creation and says, *He who made them made them male and female and when they are joined together, the two become one flesh, and no man should separate.* All that answers their question with a "no."

*Why in the law did Moses grant a certificate of divorce?*

Jesus said it was because of the hardness of their heart. In other words, they were already leaving their wives, what did they expect him to do? Referring to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, where Moses does not condone divorce. He gives a situation where **if** a woman is divorced and marries another man and divorces and goes back to the first man, **then** he can't re-marry her.

The Pharisees were trying to see what they could get away with rather than see what God created them as to begin with.

v. 9-10—Jesus' teaching about divorce.

- Luke 16:18—Jesus presents it without any exception clause. Anytime anyone divorces and remarries, it is sin, and the sin is adultery. If you marry someone who is divorced, it is the same sin. The passage condemns remarriage not divorce. There may be some reason for divorce. The problem is that divorce almost always leads to remarriage. Jesus seems to put the two together. Don't make the conclusion that there is no such thing as divorce. Divorce, which leads to remarriage, is a sin. There could be a less-evil reason for divorce (such as if someone's life was in danger). In Malachi 2:16, God says He hates divorce. But it might be a lesser evil, but still be an evil. It might be better than risking your life. The problem is, divorce generally leads to remarriage, which is always sinful. [It's almost impossible to walk away from a wife. If a person is divorced, he ends up, in some way, taking care of two wives.] Neither Moses nor Jesus are denying the reality of divorce. Nor the reality of remarriage. So single celibacy would be a possibility, a non-sinful recourse for a divorced person, but Jesus does not seem to consider that because the reality is, if you were made for single celibacy, you wouldn't have gotten married in the first place. The fact that you got married in the first place shows you are not celibate, so divorce will probably lead to remarriage. There's not one single passage in Scripture that allows remarriage after divorce.

- Mark 10:1-12—Mark seems to agree with Luke, understanding that Christ taught that marriage after divorce was committing adultery. In the case of divorce, non-sinful remarriage is simply impossible. It is not permitted, allowed, or encouraged. There is no exception mentioned. One Scripture clarifies or adds to another Scripture but it never nullifies or changes the clear teaching of another passage.

In Matthew 5:31-32 and 19:9 Jesus includes what has become known as the “exception clause.” Whoever divorces his wife *except for immorality*. “Except for immorality” is only in Matthew, in these two places. We have to conclude that the Matthew, Mark, and Luke passages do not disagree with each other. It’s all inspired Scripture, and Jesus was not disagreeing with Himself. It’s also obvious that the readers of Mark and Luke would not conclude there was an exception to what Christ clearly taught. The Matthew quote may be adding or clarifying information but it does not contradict Mark and Luke. But Mark and Luke clearly taught no exceptions. So if Matthew were introducing an exception, it would not simply be an addition or clarification, it would be a contradiction. If I understand the Ten Commandments to say I should not murder, for example, then I couldn’t understand there was an exception when it was okay to murder. If I understand Mark and Luke to teach no remarriage, then I cannot understand Matthew teaches an exception that it is okay to divorce and remarry.

How are we to understand the Matthew exception clause? Obviously Christ said it and Matthew recorded it for us to read, and Mark and Luke did not. Since all three of these authors were inspired by God to write inerrant Scripture, the statements must be the same. Actually, both the Pharisees (v. 7) and disciples (v. 10), hearing Christ in Matthew 19, concluded a no exception statement. It’s today’s readers, living in an age of massive divorce, who see an exception. Neither Christ’s friends nor enemies saw Him giving an exception.

The conclusion of many today is that Christ is telling us that divorce and remarriage are okay if one of the partners has committed adultery. But notice that this is not what Christ said. He said no divorce and remarriage except for fornication. He said nothing about adultery in the exception clause. The Greek word for “adultery” is *amoikada*. It is for extra-marital sex of married people. You must be married to commit adultery. When a single unmarried person has sex, it is called *pornea*, i.e., fornication. *Pornea* is a word also used for other sexual immorality, but there is a different and very specific word for adultery. So Christ is not talking about adultery. What He is talking about is *pornea* for someone who has not consummated a marriage. Matthew is writing to a primarily Jewish audience. A Jewish marriage included a betrothal period of about 1 year or more (Deuteronomy 22:25-27). In this time the couple was legally married. It took a legal divorce to break a betrothal. Other ancient writings support this view. To those practicing betrothal, marriage could only be rightfully ended by death after it was consummated. But it could be ended by divorce, a legal contract. The best example is given by Matthew in chapter 1. Joseph and Mary were already betrothed when she became pregnant via the Holy Spirit. During this betrothal period, Joseph was called her husband in Matthew 1:19. When he found out she was pregnant, he sought to divorce her, i.e., dissolve the legal contract of betrothal, a righteous thing to do because they had not yet consummated the marriage. The husband could not just accuse her of fornication before marriage, he must prove it (such as there being a pregnancy). When fornication was discovered, a partner would be free to divorce and remarry.

In conclusion, it seems to me that Matthew included the exception clause because he was writing to a Jewish audience with the betrothal arrangement. Mark and Luke did not include it because they were not writing to a Jewish audience.

My summary of the Bible’s position on divorce and remarriage [which is the classic Catholic position—the classic Protestant position is divorce for adultery, based on the exception clause of Matthew]—

- Genesis 2:24—Describes the nature of marriage as a leaving, cleaving, one-flesh relationship. This is God’s idea of marriage. Most people who are asking the question, “Is it okay to ...” are asking how far can they get from God’s ideal without stepping over the line. Instead, let’s ask how close we can get to God’s ideal.
- Malachi 2:14, 16—Describes marriage as a permanent covenant between the spouses and God. That’s why God says He hates divorce. Marriage is a covenant. It’s a vow. When you get divorced, you break a vow you made before God.
- Deuteronomy 24:1-4—Describes the reality of divorce but does not give permission for divorce. Moses is not declaring that divorce is okay. He is simply describing the reality of it.

- Ezra 10:1-17—Divorce prescribed by the government. This is a government termination of an illegal marriage. This is not individuals pursuing divorce, this is Ezra forcing them to divorce their foreign wives. Ezra doesn't say the marriages are not real, he says they are wrong. That's why they were wrong because they were real.
- Luke 16:18—Describes divorce and remarriage as adultery.
- Mark 10:11-12—Describes divorce and remarriage as adultery.
- Matthew 5:31-32 and 19:1-2—Describes divorce and remarriage as adultery but not for a non-consummated marriage which is ended for fornication during the betrothal.
- 1 Corinthians 7:10-11—Describes a separation or divorce where the options are to remain single or be reconciled to your spouse.
- 1 Corinthians 7:26-27—Tells us to remain as we are—single, married, divorced, remarried.
- Philippians 3:13—Press on toward maturity in Christ (whatever your marital status is).

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v. 10—The disciples thought it was better not to be married

v. 11—No, it's good to be married but for one exception, and it's hard to understand—it's true just for these few people, described as eunuchs.

v. 12—There are eunuchs (those born that way, those made that way by other men, those made that way themselves). My observation is—

- There is no such thing as being born that way
- Those made that way by other men is the normal way the word was used and what was done
- There are no examples of becoming one yourself.

“Born that way” could mean those who do not have sex, that is, who remain celibate (the Apostle Paul, for example). Or those born that way may be those born without a strong sex drive. These are the ones homosexuals convince are homosexuals and are pushed in that direction. Though God had them born as eunuchs, that is, without the drive for sex.

v. 13—Children are brought to Jesus. The disciples didn't like it, but Jesus said to let them come because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. It does not *prove* that all children go to heaven, but He's been talking about childlike faith needed to go to heaven. It is *evidence* for children going to heaven because these children already have childlike humility required to go to heaven.

v. 17—The One who is good (God) defines what is good—keep the commandments. Jesus adds, *Love your neighbor as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18). It may be a summary of not coveting what is your neighbor's. It also summarizes all the commandments regarding men. Jesus left out all the commandments oriented toward God.

v. 20—The young man said he had kept all these commandments.

v. 21—Jesus said then to sell all he had and give it to the poor and come follow Jesus, and he would have treasure in heaven.

v. 22—But the young man had a lot of stuff he was unwilling to get rid of, so he went away grieving.

v.24—It's hard for a rich person to get into heaven. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for that to happen. The eye of the needle is not a gate in Jerusalem. It is simply a needle. The Greek word for “needle” is the common one for a sewing needle. Jesus is not teaching that it is difficult for a rich man to get into heaven, He said it's impossible.

v. 25—The disciples say, *Who can be saved?*

v. 26—With man, it is impossible. But with God, it is possible. See Luke 16:19f. Christ condemns living in luxury. Christ turned the orientation of rewards from earthly earth to heavenly rewards. The Old Testament orientation of rewards was almost completely on earth.

v. 27-28—The disciples have left everything and followed Jesus. Jesus said their reward would be in the regeneration, that is, in the resurrection. Here their assignment would be making disciples in the midst of rejection and persecution, but in the kingdom, they would be judging the twelve tribes of Israel. There will be 12 apostles. Was Paul a replacement for Judas?

v. 29—Everyone who leaves houses, family, for Christ's sake, will have much more in heaven.

v. 30—Many who will be first will be last—same as 20:16. They seem to sandwich v. 1-15 of chapter 20.

### **Applications from Chapter 19:**

- 1 . *Don't pursue divorce. If you're divorced, don't remarry. If you're divorced and remarried, confess it as sin. Constantly, repeatedly, and regularly, begging God for mercy, just like the rest of us do for our multitude of sins in every area (v. 1-10).*
- 2 . *There is such a thing as voluntary celibacy and being born with a less active sex drive. Use it to not get married and to serve God. Don't mistake it for homosexuality (v. 11-12)*
- 3 . *Children below the age of accountability, which is different for everyone, are probably not lost because their pride, which is the root of all evil, has not yet become a spiritual moral realization (v. 13-15).*
- 4 . *Eternal life is impossible to obtain, not just difficult, because we cannot keep God's perfect standard. But what's impossible with man is possible with God through the cross (v. 16-26)*
- 5 . *Eternal rewards are based on leaving everything of worldly value behind (v. 27-30).*

## Chapter 20

v. 1—The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who hires workers at various times of the day. At the end of the day, he calls in the ones he hired last to be paid first, which illustrates verse 30 of chapter 19.

v. 11-12—The ones hired earlier are angry because they were paid the same as the ones who were hired last. But the landowner says they agreed to work for that amount of money. So what is the problem?

v. 15—Isn't it lawful for the landowner to do what he wishes with what he owns? Are they envious because the landowner is generous?

v. 16—The last will be first and the first will be last.

The point—The 12 apostles and the church age believer, who came last to believe, will be rewarded first in the kingdom, after the rapture and before the second coming of Christ. The Old Testament saints, who believed first, will be rewarded last, at the second coming of Christ, but they will all receive the same reward in the sense of being part of the kingdom of heaven. The church age will be rewarded before Israel. Three principles:

- 1 . God is just but not fair, i.e., He measures against His standard not against each other
- 2 . God keeps His promises
- 3 . Don't become envious because of God's generosity, because He has given someone else more talent, money, etc.

See what you have as being from God. Then take up your cross and follow Him. In heaven you will not be judged for what you have but for what you did with what you have. In heaven you will not regret your sufferings—only

your sin.

v. 17-19—Jesus was going to Jerusalem for the last time. He explains what He is going to do to the twelve. He will be handed over to the authorities and put to death. He will be crucified but will also raise up on the third day. Notice the progressive revelation He gives in 12:40, 16:21, 17:9, 17:12, 17:22-23. In the Gospels, Jesus does very little to describe *why* He was going to die on the cross. No doctrines of substitutionary atonement, redemption, etc. This should have a big impact on our interpretation of the Gospels. That is, don't read the plan of salvation into the Gospels. The major point of the Gospels is for Christ to display righteousness, His life as an example. It's through the Apostles that we understand the doctrine of salvation, etc.

v. 20-23—Probably John and James and their mother came to Jesus to ask to sit on His right and left in the kingdom. Jesus first asks James and John a question—*Are you able to drink the cup I am going to drink?* They said they were able. The cup was probably the same suffering that Christ would suffer. Christ said they would suffer like He will. But to sit on the right and left is not Christ's to give. It's for those for whom it has been prepared or foreordained by the Father. Everything happens according to the plan of God—a principle to keep in mind with respect to answered prayer. Their question was similar to prayer—asking something of God. And Jesus answered that it would happen according to God's plan.

v. 24-28—Jesus uses this as an occasion to talk about authority. The Gentiles lord it over each other. But it is not to be that way among believers. Whoever wishes to be great should be a servant. He gives Himself as an example. The Son of Man came to serve and give His life a ransom for many. It is substitution—He gave His life “in the place of “ (“for”) many. Calvinists use this to support limited atonement, the doctrine that Christ only died for the elect not for everyone. Romans 5:15 says many died in Adam and Christ died for those many. Of course, the “many” who died in Adam means “all.” So in Matthew, “many” is not to restrict it but to say it was a large number.

v. 25—Christ said to not set up any authority structure. A corporate structure is set up like a pyramid. The one at the pointed end is the authority. Even if you invert the pyramid (common phrase in Christianity), it is still a pyramid with the pointed end the authority. There is to be no authority in the church except Christ. Men being in authority is a worldly concept not to exist in the body of Christ.

v. 29-34—Cross over to Jericho, a large crowd followed them. Two blind men cried out to Him, for Him to have mercy on them. They addressed Him as “Son of David.” The crowd tried to quiet them, but they kept on. They asked for mercy. That's the right question if you want to get Christ's attention. The same for us. Jesus asked what they wanted Him to do for them. They asked to see. Christ's motivation—moved by compassion.

### ***Applications from chapter 20***

65535 *.God will disperse His gifts to whomever He chooses. It will not be giving to people equally, but it will be giving to people justly, that is, consistent with God's standards and His promises (v. 1-14).*

65536 *.Don't become envious over the generosity of God toward others (v. 15).*

65537 *.Christ had His own suffering, death and resurrection in mind throughout His ministry. We should, too. There's some sense in which we drink of that cup, and we should have that in mind throughout our whole lives. Live your life with your death in mind. Take up your cross and follow Christ—It's sort of a death march (v. 17-23).*

65538 *.In the church, we are to have responsibility as slaves toward others. Never act with authority over others (v. 24-28).*

65539 *.Christ's death was a substitute for all (v. 28).*

65540 *.Respond with compassion to everyone who asks for mercy (v. 29-34).*

## **Chapter 21**

**Sunday** (some say it is on Monday)  
The Triumphal Entry  
Jesus already raised Lazarus (John 11)

v. 1—Jesus came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives. Jesus sent two disciples to a village to get a donkey.

v. 2—We see Christ’s omniscience.

v. 4—A prophecy of the final week from Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9

v. 9—Crowd is saying “Hosanna to Son of David.” *Hosanna* means “save now” from Psalm 118:25-27, but the crowd was asking for salvation from Rome, not for personal spiritual salvation.

v. 10-11—The city becomes aware of His coming

## **Monday**

v. 12—This seems a different entering of the Temple than the one of the Triumphal Entry. Apparently He spent Sunday night in Bethany.

Matthew gives us the events of Monday, but not necessarily in order. Jesus drove out those who were buying and selling. This is the second cleansing of the Temple (first one in John 2:12-16). This is also in Mark 11. The moneychangers were changing foreign money into Hebrew money so the people could buy a lamb for sacrifice, etc. Only Hebrew money was allowed in the Temple area. Jesus calls them “robbers,” so they must have swindled the people.

v. 14—Many people coming to be healed. They couldn’t come into the Temple area, so were probably by the gates.

v. 16—The people were crying “Hosanna” again. The chief priests thought Jesus would correct them. Instead, Jesus calls attention to what they were saying and quotes Psalm 8:2, saying the people were telling the truth.

v. 17—He leaves to go back to Bethany.

v. 18-19—“In the morning,” but not the next morning, but that Monday morning. Jesus had come to a fig tree, found nothing on it, cursed the tree, and it withered. Mark 11:12-24 tells the same event.

## **Tuesday (21:20 to 25:46)**

v. 20—Matthew goes on to the next day, Tuesday (Mark 11:20-23), where Peter sees the withered fig tree and is reminded of the curse and the withering of the previous day.

v. 21-22—Jesus said the disciples could do this also if they had enough faith. Jesus tells them that all things they ask, believing the same truth God believes, you will receive. If you ask for what God is doing, then God will do it. The purpose of prayer is not to get stuff. The purpose of prayer is to follow Christ’s example and to obey God’s command to pray. Prayer is not to get what you want, and if you believe enough you’ll get what you want—that’s idolatry. From the standpoint of man, you get because you ask, but from the standpoint of the sovereignty of God, you get it because it has been ordained (Romans 8:27-28). Always ask if you are looking at it from your responsibility or from God’s sovereignty. A good prayer is for that which is good, not one that gives you what you want. It is important to figure out what is “good.”

v. 23—Jesus entered the Temple. The chief priests came to challenge Jesus’ authority, probably because He chased out the moneychangers the day before.

v. 24—He answered their question with a question—Where did John get his authority?

v. 25-26—If they say “from heaven” then Jesus will ask why they didn’t believe him. And John pointed to Jesus as the Messiah. If they said “from men,” they’d be in trouble because the people believed John was a prophet.

v. 27—So they said they didn’t know. So Jesus said He won’t tell them by what authority He did these things either. Jesus did not go through the authorities to get His authority. Neither did John the Baptist.

## **Three Parables showing the change of the age, a new age is coming**

### **First Parable**

v. 28-32—About John the Baptist. A man (John the Baptist) has two sons. The first son represents the tax gatherers and prostitutes (v. 31) and the second son is the elders and the chief priests. The first son said he wouldn’t go but goes. The second son says he would go but he doesn’t. When the tax gatherers and prostitutes believed, the chief priests, even then, did not believe John.

### **Second Parable**

v. 33-43—The landowner is God the Father. The planting of the vineyard is God’s program of revealing His righteousness to the world through His own people. The vine growers are Israel, whom He rents it (His program) out to. Then He sends slaves (the prophets) to receive the produce. But Israel beats them and kills them (the prophets). He then sends more slaves (prophets), even up to John the Baptist (v. 36 may refer to John the Baptist). Finally He sends His son (v. 37), Christ. But the vine growers say that if they kill the son, they will get the inheritance. So the vine growers kill the son. So Jesus now predicts that they will kill Him, and the motive is that they want to get Israel away from God and Christ and have it for themselves. The spiritual leadership thought they, not God, owned Israel. The idea of God was something they used to maintain control of the nation through religion. [Seems like things haven’t changed much today in the church.] But the owner of the vineyard is going to come. Then Jesus asks them what the vine owner should do. They said, “Throw the vine growers out and rent it to other vine growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.” EXACTLY! So God’s program will be taken away from Israel and given to the church (as Paul said, in Romans, did happen).

The stone that the builders rejected became the cornerstone. The kingdom of God will be taken away from the chief priests, etc. and given to a nation (church age) who will produce fruit for God (Romans 11:17-24).

v. 44—He who falls on this stone (the cornerstone, referring to Himself) will be broken to pieces, that is, they are stumbling. On whomever the stone falls (upon the chief priests, etc.), upon them will God’s judgment fall. They finally understood Jesus was talking about them. But they were afraid of the people, who considered Jesus a prophet.

## **Chapter 22**

### **Third parable**

v. 1-10—A king gave a wedding feast for his son. The king is God. The wedding feast is entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The son is Christ. The slaves are the prophets He sends out to invite the Jews into the kingdom. The Jews are unwilling to come, that is the rejection of Christ.

v. 4—The invitation to the prepared dinner. God said He revealed His Son throughout the Old Testament. Now Jesus is here. It’s time to worship the Messiah.

v. 5—The Jewish leadership pays no attention to Christ, that is, they didn’t worship Him. They wanted what they wanted not what God wanted.

v. 7—The king was enraged. That's God's attitude toward what the chief priests had done.

v. 8—The wedding is ready. But the Jews were unwilling to repent.

v. 10—Go into the world (the Gentiles) and find as many as you can who want to come to the wedding (the kingdom of heaven). The wedding guests are professing Christians.

v. 11—The king comes in and finds someone without wedding clothes. These are unbelievers who are part of the professing church.

v. 13—God throws out the wedding guests without clothes, that is the unbelievers who are professing Christians but not true Christians. "Outer darkness" is unique to Matthew, who mentions it several times (8:12, 22:13, 25:30). Hell is the Lake of Fire. Fire doesn't seem like darkness. Some suggest that hell is not forever, etc. because fire can't be black. We don't know that fire cannot be black. It simply is not black here on earth. Black holes in space are burned-out suns.

v. 14—Apparently that's most of them because many are called but few are chosen.

## **Jesus answers the three major groups who have challenged Him**

### **First Group (v. 15-22)**

v. 15-16—The Pharisees and the Herodians were usually enemies, but here they unite. They say something neither of them believe—*Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth.*

v. 17—Should they pay the poll tax? It was imposed on the Jews by the Romans. But the Jews thought God gave the land of Israel to them, so why should they pay tax to Caesar? If Christ said to pay the tax, they would accuse Him of being disloyal to the Jews. If He said to not pay it, the Herodians would accuse Him to the Romans. They thought they would get Him no matter what He answered.

v. 18—Jesus knew the evil in their hearts and calls them hypocrites, accusing them of testing Him.

v. 19—Jesus told them to show Him a coin (He didn't have one!). They brought Him a coin.

v. 20—Whose inscription and likeness is on the coin?

v. 21—Caesar's. Then it must belong to Caesar, so give it to Caesar. Implied is, whose image is on you? God's (Genesis 1:27). Then you belong to God. So give to God what belongs to God.

v. 22—They are amazed and go away.

### **Second Group (v. 16-33)**

v. 23—The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection of the dead. They were the priests.

v. 24-26—Based on Deuteronomy 25:5, they make up a story about a man dying and his brothers marrying the man's wife, to show how ridiculous is the idea of resurrection.

v. 27—Jesus said they have two problems—They are ignorant (they don't understand the Scriptures) and stupid (they don't understand the power of God).

v. 30—In the resurrection, there is no marriage. We're like the angels, that is, they don't marry. It is not saying we *become* angels, it says we are *like* angels. Marriage is not eternal (like the Mormons teach). It is only

life-long.

v. 31—Regarding the resurrection of the dead (Exodus 3:6) where God says to Moses that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, these people have been dead for quite a while. This shows us Jesus' view of Scripture and the interpretation of it. His case is made on the present tense of the verb "to be," that is, "I am." *I am* (not "I was") *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. Is God the God of the living or of the dead? Their whole point was that God was the God of the living not the dead. Therefore, He is the God of the dead, who are alive in the resurrection.

v. 33—The crowd are again astonished at His teaching.

### **Third Group (v. 34-46)**

v. 34—The Pharisees choose a lawyer to ask Jesus a question which they cannot answer themselves. What is the greatest commandment in the Law? There are 613 laws in the Mosaic Law. They had expanded that to a whole bunch more. When you keep adding laws, soon one will contradict another. What happens when laws come into conflict? What is the greatest law?

v. 37—Jesus does not take any of the Ten Commandments. He says you should love the Lord your God with all your heart (emotions), soul (*psuche*, personality), and mind (intellect or understanding) (taken from Deuteronomy 6:5). It's where you make decisions about yourself.

v. 38—This is the great and foremost (first) commandment. This is the answer to their question.

v. 39—Jesus goes on with the second commandment to love your neighbor as yourself.

v. 40—On these two depend the whole law, but neither are in the Ten Commandments. The whole spiritual life can be lived according to these two commandments. But it is important to know which is first. You will pervert the wisdom of God if you switch them around. Our tendency is to serve people first and then God. How do you define loving your neighbor? You should define it in the context of loving God first. For example, if your neighbor says he has a terrible marriage, your answer to him will depend on which of these two commandments you put first. If you put the second first, you love your neighbor, so you may tell him to get out of the terrible marriage and get a divorce. If you put the first commandment first, you'll tell him God hates divorce, so how can he use this marriage to turn his heart, soul, and mind toward God?

v. 41-42—Then Jesus asks the Pharisees a question. Whose son is the Messiah? They said, The Son of David.

v. 43-45—Then how could David, through the inspiration of the Spirit and telling the truth, say the Messiah is his Lord? How can He be his son and Lord?

v. 46—No one asked Him any more questions.

### **Applications from chapters 21-22**

1 . *The plan of God is carried out precisely as He maneuvers events to precisely fulfill His Word (22:1-11)*

2 . *Although Jesus had no criticism of the synagogues, which were manmade religious institutions, two times He cleansed the Temple of materialism and greed. Remember, you are the Temple today (1 Corinthians 6:19). By the way, Jesus honored the Temple, calling it His Father's House and a House of Prayer. He even called it "My House." So did the apostles. Peter and John went to the Temple to pray after the church began. So did Paul, long after the church age began. Therefore, the idea that the church has replaced the Temple cannot possibly be true because both existed at the same time, and both were honored by the apostles.*

3 . *The Sanhedrin and others in Israel are rejected because they did not come in faith.*

4 . *Authority, almost anyone's, will be determined by with whom they associate, like Christ identifying with*

- John the Baptist. With whom you associate should demonstrate a ministry of righteousness and repentance.*
- 5 . *Give the government what belongs to the government and give yourself to God.*
- 6 . *Understand the resurrection is real and eternal life is real. God is the God of the living.*
- 7 . *The number one commandment is to love God. The number two commandment is to love your neighbor. Do both, but never get the priorities reversed.*

## Chapter 23

v. 1-3—Jesus speaks to the crowd and to the disciples, and He talks about the scribes and the Pharisees. The first thing is that they have seated themselves in the chair of Moses, that is, they are teachers of the Law. Therefore, all that they tell you, you should do, they claim. Elders do have authority to tell you what the Bible says—but not more than the Bible says or something else than the Bible says. They do not have the right to violate what the Scripture says or add to it. In local churches, usually elders are thought to have authority over other matters as well, independent of the Bible (such as—don't smoke, don't drink alcohol, women can teach and lead men, women elders, etc.).

v. 3—Do not do according to their deeds, for two reasons—

v. 4—(1) They say things and don't do them and

v. 5—(2) They do their deeds to be noticed by men.

v. 6-7—A list of things He says about the Pharisees:

1. They do all their deeds to be noticed by men
2. They broaden their phylacteries
3. They lengthen the tassels of their garments
4. They love the place of honor at banquets
5. They love the chief seats in the synagogues
6. They love respectful greetings in the market place
7. They love to be called Rabbi by men

v. 8-10—You have one Father and one leader, Christ, and are all brothers, therefore, do not be called teacher or leader or rabbi—Don't use titles of pride which exalt yourself. Avoid titles.

v. 11—The greatest among you shall be your servant.

v. 12—Whoever exalts himself will be humbled by God in heaven, and whoever is humble will be exalted by God in heaven.

### **Eight Woes of the Pharisees (Dangers of Hypocrisy)**

(Sometimes called "seven" because verse 14 is not in some texts)

1. v. 13—They shut off the kingdom of heaven from people
2. v. 14—They put money over compassion (devouring widow's houses)
3. v. 15—They make converts and disciple them to be like them or worse
4. v. 16-22—Blind guides who put material things over spiritual things.
5. v. 23-24—They exercise minor mechanical things and neglect major spiritual things. Verse 23 is used to support tithing, it is not to be neglected. It does support tithing for Israel, before the cross, before the church age. But it was never given for the church age. We do have instructions for giving in our age in 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 and 2 Corinthians 8—9. Tithing is never given in a positive light for the church. The problem with tithing is the same as Sabbath-keeping. It assumes that 90% is mine, not Gods. Or the other 6 days are mine, not God's.

6. v. 25-26—They are clean outside but dirty inside. They are full of robbery and self-indulgence. Robbery is fulfilling your profit motive at the expense of others. Self-indulgence is living in luxury. First clean the inside so that the outside can be clean.

7. v. 27-28—They appear righteous outwardly, but they are sinful inside. The difference between woe #6 and #7 is that #6 is how they sin against other people and #7 is how they are sinning against God.

8. v. 29-36—They say they wouldn't have killed God's prophets had they lived at that time, but they are killing God's Son. And they will do the same with the apostles.

v. 35—From the first to the last murders in the Bible (Old Testament). 2 Chronicles 24:20-22 records the last murder. This is not the prophet Zechariah, but it is seen as the last because the book of 2 Chronicles was the last book of the Hebrew Bible.

v. 36—All these things will come upon this generation (age of the Jews)

v. 37—One of the few feminine descriptions of God is His love for Jerusalem. God takes on the characteristic of a mother hen who wants to gather her chicks under her wings, but the chicks were unwilling. Notice the emphasis on free will. There are probably things God wanted to do in our lives but we were unwilling. God will do what He plans to do anyway, but His will is not the same as His plan. His will is an opportunity for us to exercise morality and obedience.

v. 38—Because of their unwillingness to be gathered, their house will be left desolate—referring to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

v. 39—From now on they would not see Christ (publicly teaching) until the Second Coming.

### ***Applications from Matthew 23***

1. *If your leaders teach you the Scripture, do what they say. If they teach and do what is contrary to Scripture, you must refuse it.*

2. *Do not do anything for the purpose of being honored and seen by people, socially, religiously, financially, or any other way.*

3. *Do not use any titles for yourself that honors or exalts you as being more important than others.*

4. *Be aware of hypocrisy caused by religious institutions because they will do eight things:*

- *They shut off the kingdom of heaven from people by putting their programs over the Word of God.*

- *They tend to put money over compassion.*

- *They tend to convert people to membership in their organization instead of to a personal independent relationship with God.*

- *They tend to put material things over spiritual things.*

- *They tend to emphasize mechanical things like tithing and neglect spiritual things like justice and mercy and faithfulness to God.*

- *They tend to emphasize being clean outwardly but not morally.*

- *They tend to emphasize an appearance of righteousness while neglecting sinfulness.*

- *They tend to be unable to recognize a messenger of God who is not part of their organization.*

## **Chapter 24**

The last lecture in the book. One of the three great sermons of Jesus (the Sermon on the Mount, the Olivet Discourse, and the Upper Room Discourse in John). This chapter has major information on prophecy. It deals with the 7-year Tribulation period, usually divided into two 3 1/2 year periods, followed by the Second Coming of Christ and some of the judgments after the Second Coming. In chapter 25, some of the people are ushered into the kingdom, but the kingdom itself is not described.

v. 1-2—When they came out of the Temple, they moved toward the Mount of Olives, and looked back at the Temple. The stones they were looking at were built by Herod. The Temple from 20 B.C. to 64 A.D. was under construction (and destroyed in 70). Most of the stones were a 3-meter cube (9-foot cube). Some foundations stones were as long as 12 meters (36 feet). Many were gold-plated, which gave a spectacular view when the sun shone

on it. When Titus captured Jerusalem, he built a scaffolding around the Temple and burned it, melting the gold out of it. Most of the stones were broken up and scattered into the valleys around the area, filling them in, making them shallower. Or perhaps they were even carried out to the Mediterranean so the Jews would not be able to rebuild the Temple. In Rome today there are blocks of stone they claim was taken from the Temple (possible but doubtful). Thus Jesus' prophecy that not one stone would remain upon another was perfectly and exactly fulfilled.

v. 3—The disciples asked Him three questions:

- When are these things going to happen?
- What will be the signs of your coming?
- What will be the signs of the end of the age?

It seems that Jesus answers these questions in reverse order: 24:4-8 describe the end of the age, the signs of the Second Coming are in v. 9-31, and when is in v. 32-35.

### **Signs of the End of the Age (v. 4-8)**

These seem to have to do with the church age, the signs that will precede the Tribulation (or possibly after the Rapture at the beginning of the Tribulation).

v. 4—See that no one misleads you.

v. 5—Many will come claiming to be Christ to mislead men.

v. 6—You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but don't let that mislead you and don't be frightened by these things because it is not yet the end.

v. 7—Don't be frightened by nations rising against nations, famines, earthquakes. These are just the beginning of the birth pangs. They are true of all ages to some extent. But they are on the increase in frequency and severity.

[I suggest that the Rapture is between verses 8 and 9.]

### **Signs of Christ's Coming (v. 9-31)**

#### **First the first half of the Tribulation (v. 9-14)**

v. 9—They will deliver "you." Who is "you"? It is not the apostles (who are long dead). It simply means the believers who are alive at the time. They would be people who trusted Christ after the Rapture, at the beginning of the Tribulation. They will be killed and hated by nations. This (v. 9-26) is beginning the period of Revelation 6-18. This is also the 70<sup>th</sup> year of Daniel 9:27f.

v. 10—Many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another.

v. 11—False prophets will mislead many.

v. 12—Lawlessness (payoffs) will cause people's love to grow cold.

v. 13—The one who endures to the end of the Tribulation, will be saved physically to go into the Millennial Kingdom.

v. 14—The Gospel of the Kingdom is preached to the world. This is not in our age. This is during the Tribulation time.

#### **Second half of the Tribulation (v. 15-26)**

v. 15—Then they will see the abomination of desolation (antichrist) spoken of by Daniel standing in the Holy Place (in the Temple). This comes from Daniel 9:27f. This is the mid-point of the Tribulation. Revelation calls it 42 months.

v. 16—If you are in Judea, flee to the mountains

v. 17-20—Flee—must not take time to get your coat, don't get the things from your house—hurry and flee. Fleeing is hindered on the Sabbath, by the winter, by being pregnant, and by nursing babies.

v. 21—This is the Great Tribulation that has not occurred since the beginning of the world and won't ever be again.

v. 22—In order to keep some people alive, the Tribulation will be limited to 7 years, and the Great Tribulation to 3 1/2 years. This is the time when the Antichrist and the False Prophet are ruling the world.

v. 24—The Antichrist and False Prophet will perform many signs and wonders. They will even, if possible, mislead the elect. So it will be a confusing time for believers.

v. 25—Christ has told you in advance, so don't think the Second Coming will be a private or mysterious event in a private room somewhere.

v. 27-31—The Second Coming. It's very clear that the Second Coming follows the Tribulation immediately. It brings it to an end. There are six things Christ tells us about the Second Coming:

1. v. 27-28—It will be a media event. It's not a private event for believers but a public event for the world. Unlike the Rapture which is for believers, the Second Coming is for the world. Everyone will see it. These things are inevitable.
2. v. 29—It happens immediately after the Tribulation.
3. v. 29—The sky will be darkened (from pollution, war, or an act of God). Will not be able to see the moon, sun, and stars.
4. v. 30—The light of His coming will break through that darkness.
5. v. 30—The people of the earth will mourn. They will see it as bad news.
6. v. 31—The angels will gather the elect from all over the whole world.

This is nothing like the Rapture. A comparison of the Rapture and the Second Coming:

<b>The Rapture</b>
The direction is up
It's good news
It focuses on believers
It's for comfort
It's at the end of the church age
Believers meet Christ in the clouds

No signs precede the Rapture

It's in the twinkling of an eye



## **When will these things happen (v. 32-35)**

v. 32-34—The parable of the fig tree

v. 35—Purpose of prophecy—not to predict the future but to confirm the Word of God, to show that God’s Word is true.

v. 36-39—Like the days of Noah in two respects—people will be living in luxury with a focus on their appetites, especially food and sex. Before 1960, appetites were seen as things to be controlled. Since 1960 appetites are now seen as things to serve. You don’t know the day or hour, so be on the alert.

v. 40-41—The one in the field and the one in the mill who are taken are taken in judgment. The ones left are believers left to go into the Millennial Kingdom (see the Noah’s ark verses). It does not refer to the Rapture.

v. 43-45—The one He will put in charge is the one who is faithful and sensible and doing what the master wants done

v. 46-47—God will put that one in charge of all His possessions.

v. 50—The others will be cut in pieces and cast where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

## **Applications from Chapter 24**

1. *The reason God reveals prophecy is to confirm that His Word will not pass away (v. 35).*
2. *We should be ready and on the alert. In our case, we should be on the alert for the Rapture, but also those during the Tribulation waiting for the Second Coming should be on the alert.*
3. *We will be on the alert when we are faithful, sensible, and doing our calling.*
4. *On the one hand, the Second Coming of Christ is unannounced, no one knows the day or the hour. On the other hand, it’s preceded by signs, as with the fig tree and the days of Noah. There are two great signs today—(1) the tendency toward global government and global religion, greatly accelerated since the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, and (2) the widespread availability of immorality, via the internet, videos, movies, television, homosexuality, divorce, and abortion.*

# Chapter 25

## **Parable of the Ten Virgins [Jews] (v. 1-13)**

v. 1—The kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom.

v. 5—The bridegroom delays coming. We’ve had a 2,000 year delay. As a result, believers get drowsy and begin to sleep. There’s a shout that the bridegroom is coming.

v. 7-9—The wise virgins have oil, and the foolish have none. When the foolish go to buy some oil, they come back too late. The others are already in the house.

v. 11—“Later” the other virgins came.

v. 13—The point is—Be on the alert. It sounds like there will be people at the Second Coming who want to come to Christ and go into the kingdom, but it will be too late.

## **Parable of the Talents [Jews] (v. 14-30)**

v. 14-15—A man gives his slaves different amounts of talents and then goes on a journey.

v. 21—The man with five talents, gave the master five more talents. The master said, *Well done. You’ve been faithful in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things.*

v. 23—The man with two talents did the same.

v. 24-25—The man with one talent buried it and just gave it back because he was afraid.

v. 26—The master said the man was lazy and wicked.

v. 28—The master took it away from him and gave it to the man with ten.

v. 29—The point—Everyone who has shall be given more, and everyone who does not have, even what he has shall be taken away. The point is not who has been given much but what they did with what they were given. The one who does not have is the one who has not reproduced. The parable is about reproduction. In 24:45-46, Jesus blesses the faithful and sensible servant. The parable of the virgins emphasizes being sensible. This parable of the talents emphasizes being faithful. Fruitfulness is the evidence of faithfulness. Faithfulness is defined by reproduction, as it is in the parable of the soils in Matthew 13. The amount of reproduction is not measured. The amount depends on what is given to the slave in the first place. v. 21 is identical to v. 23. What matters is the fact of reproduction. Remember, in v. 15 they were each given according to their own ability. The one who does not reproduce seems to be an unbeliever because in v. 30 he is thrown into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. There is no evidence of salvation when there is no reproduction in their faith. This is not about money. The talents here are the gifts you've been given—your health, talents, family, ministry, etc.

### **Parable of the Judging of the Gentiles (v. 31-46)**

It's the judgment of the Gentiles between the 1290 days and the 1335 days of Daniel 12:12.

v. 31—Christ will sit on a throne and judge the nations.

v. 32—All the nations (Gentiles) will be gathered before Him, and He separates the sheep (righteous believers) from the goats (unrighteous unbelievers).

v. 34—Their destination was ordained from the foundation of the world.

v. 35—But their judgment was based on their free will acts. They gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, etc. who were persecuted by the antichrist during the tribulation.

v. 37—The righteous are surprised by this. When did they do that?

v. 40—When they did it to the least of the brothers of Christ (the 144,000 and other believers), they did it to Him. Judgment is based totally on works. No faith (salvation) is mentioned here.

v. 41-46—The goats on the left are cursed (judged) because they did not do these things. They go into eternal punishment.

All judgment is based on works. Salvation is based on faith at all times. This passage is not about salvation. It is about the judgment for their works

### **Applications from Chapter 25**

1. *Whether it's about death or the rapture, be alert and sensible, waiting for the coming of Christ. Be sensible in that you don't burn out or give up before He returns.*

a. **Discipline** is the key to longevity—*life-long or long-term involvement in some project.*

b. **Rest** is the key to **work**.

c. **Desire** is the secret to long-term **service**.

2. *Be reproductive in your ministry. For example, routine religious activity, studying without teaching, believing without making disciples, is unacceptable to God and may indicate a lack of belief. They are like the guy who hid his talent in the sand.*

3. *Compassion for servants of God, especially the least of them when they are suffering, brings heavenly rewards. Ignoring them brings loss of rewards.*

## Chapter 26

### **v. 1-2—From God's perspective.**

v. 1—When Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount, He said the Passover was coming, and He would be handed over for crucifixion.

v. 2—Two days are Wednesday and Thursday.

## **Wednesday**

### **v. 3-5—From the killer's perspective**

v. 3—The chief priests and elders have a meeting in the court of the high priest Caiaphas.

v. 4—They make a plan to kill Jesus.

v. 5—But not during the festival so there won't be a riot among the people.

### **v. 6-13—From a worshipper's perspective**

v. 6—Meanwhile, on the same Wednesday, there is a scene in Bethany where Jesus is. Jesus is in the home of Simon the leper. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were probably also there.

v. 7—The woman is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

Unlike the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea, Mary seized the opportunity. What she did had no practical value for people. Also, notice it was done **to** Christ not **for** Christ. In other words, it was an act of worship and gratitude and sacrifice. So my giving should be humbly, as to Christ, with the hope of participating with Christ in what He is doing, not something done for Christ in addition to what He is doing. Jesus said she did it to prepare Him for His burial. So she did it to Him not for Him. She took part in what He was doing.

v. 13—She will always be remembered for this.

### **v. 14-16—From a betrayer's perspective**

v. 14—Judas goes to the chief priests and makes an offer to betray Christ.

v. 15—The price will be 30 pieces of silver.

## **Thursday**

v. 17—Where should they have the Passover?

v. 18—Luke 22:8 says it's Peter and John who prepare the Passover

v. 20—In the evening, they gather for the Passover.

v. 21-24—He reveals, indirectly, that Judas is the betrayer. Probably not directly so the disciples won't stop Judas.

### **Order of events:**

1. Eating of the Passover
2. Washing of the disciples' feet in John 13:1-20
3. Identification of Judas as the betrayer (Matthew 26:20-25). John 13:30, Judas leaves.
4. The Lord's Supper
5. The Upper Room Discourse (John 14-16)
6. The High Priestly Prayer of John 17

7. Go to the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-56)

[See Dave's paper on Communion]

For the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox, communion is a continuation of the Passover. So it must be administered in the "house of God" by a priest. The brethren say the first communion was before the Passover, based on statements from John 13:1—"Before the feast of the Passover." But the Synoptic Gospels seem to see it as on the Passover.

I think Jesus celebrated Passover and introduced Communion.

Apparently there were two days the Passover was celebrated. The northern Galileans celebrated Passover from sunrise to sunrise. The southern Judeans celebrated it from sundown to sundown. Because Passover is at 3:00 in the afternoon, it was therefore at 3:00 on two different days.

During the meal, He emphasizes His body by the bread and His blood by the cup. "This is ..." has been taken by both the Catholics and Lutherans that Christ's body and blood are actually physically in the communion. Transubstantiation says the bread and wine are converted into the actual physical body and blood of Christ. Luther said it was "present and alongside of" (consubstantiation).

I think Jesus meant the same as when He said, "I am the vine," "I am the Good Shepherd," etc.

v. 28—His blood will be poured out for the forgiveness of sins. First time a clear statement for the purpose of His shedding His blood.

v. 30—They sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. Singing is a regular part of believers coming together in the early church also.

v. 31—Jesus said that all the disciples will fall away. Why? It was predicted. Unlike Judas, God never made them pay the consequences for it, at least on earth. Why are they not punished for their falling away? God doesn't tell us. God is good and God is just. God is completely consistent and completely unpredictable.

v. 32—Jesus told them to meet Him in Galilee.

v. 33—Peter said he wouldn't betray Jesus, even if everyone else will. This is a statement of his free will, his determination. Free will is real. Predestination is real. If you put them together, predestination will win. Peter's sin was part of the plan of God.

v. 36—A glimpse into the heart of Christ. He is grieved because of His upcoming crucifixion.

v. 37—Peter, James, and John are separated from the others.

v. 38—Jesus' soul is deeply grieved to the point of death. Here we see a picture of intimacy with God. Jesus is grieved to the point of death and He prays about it. An example of a perfect prayer, where the basic request of the prayer is unanswered. God the Father was silent. He gave no relief to Christ's suffering or an answer to His prayer. Jesus' disciples could not even stay awake. Peter would soon betray Him three times. They would all fall away. He prayed three times for God to remove it from Him, but God did not. His earthly circumstances were completely dark. He died in the darkness of faith alone. We want to say that that is unique to Christ because of the cross. But Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow Me." A disciple is not above his teacher. If they hated Christ, they will hate you. Of the 12 apostles, there were 3 primary apostles, Peter, James, and John. Later on, Paul is added in Acts 9. What happened to them? James was killed by Herod, the first apostle to be martyred. Peter was crucified, according to tradition. Paul was beheaded by Caesar. And John was exiled to Patmos to die by exposure and starvation. Before his death, Paul said all had left him except for a few. He prayed for the removal of a thorn in the flesh. His answer was, "My grace is sufficient for you." He died alone, suffering. The apostles died in the darkness of faith alone.

Jesus wept, prayed, grieved, suffered, and God was completely silent. My guess is, so will you and I. As soon as Jesus gave up His spirit, things were quite different. Then He returned in the power of the resurrection.

v. 47-50—Judas came and betrayed Him.

v. 51—John 18:10 says Peter was the one who cut the ear off the slave of the high priest. Was probably aiming for his head and missed.

v. 56—All this is happening to fulfill Scripture.

v. 57—He's led away to Caiaphas the high priest. Peter is following at a distance.

### **The Order of Events of the Two Trials**

#### **The Religious Trial**

1. The hearing before Annas in John 18:12-14, 19-23
2. The Trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:57-68), illegal because it's before dawn
3. A legal religious trial after dawn (Matthew 27:1-2)

#### **The Civil Trial**

1. The appearance before Pilate (Matthew 27:2, 11-14)
2. The appearance before Herod (Luke 23:6-12)
3. The trial before Pilate (Matthew 27:15-26)

v. 69-75—Peter denies Jesus 3 times. Two servant girls. First one in v. 69 and another one in v. 71. There's a bystander in v. 73. The bystander said he could tell who Peter was by Peter's Galilean accent. Peter began to curse and swear and say he did not know the man (Jesus).

### **Applications from Chapter 26**

1. *We should always give to the poor. Whenever there is an opportunity, as a priority give to whatever God is specifically doing.*
2. *We not commanded to keep the Passover in the church age, instead we are commanded to remember His death with a communion meal until He comes again.*
3. *As we mature, God will conform us to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). And that includes His suffering and His grief. Everybody dies differently, but for most, it's a suffering situation, both for believers and for unbelievers. For believers, it's an opportunity to cling to the darkness of faith and His Word alone.*
4. *Never say "never" to your sin nature. You're capable of denying Christ at any time.*

## **Chapter 27**

### **Friday Morning**

v. 2—They bring Jesus to Pilate at the praetorium in Antonio's Fortress (northwest corner of Temple mount).

v. 3-5—Observations:

1. Judas felt remorse
2. He returned the 30 pieces of silver
3. I have sinned by betraying innocent blood
4. He threw the silver into the Temple sanctuary
5. He went out and hung himself

v. 26:24—Jesus' statement was that it would have been better if Judas had not been born. Therefore, Judas was not a believer. He never confessed his sin to God and his sin against God. It's repentance to God that brings about redemption. There's a difference between being sorry, feeling remorse, and being depressed and

repentance. Repentance is always to God and seeing ourselves as having sinned against God.

v. 6—The chief priests would not put the money into the Temple treasury because it was blood money. Even though they were the one who gave him the money to shed blood in the first place.

v. 9—What was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled. It was in Zechariah 11, but in Jesus' day the books of the prophets were headed by Jeremiah. Similarly in Luke 24:44, the Psalms are called the Writings because Psalms was the first book of that group.

v. 11—In the trial before Pilate, Pilate asks, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus says, "It is as you say." He only testified as to who He was. He didn't defend against the charges. That's a perfect defense if you believe God is the judge.

v. 14—Jesus didn't answer any charges.

The trial before Herod is between verses 14-15.

v. 15-18—Pilate knew the Jews handed Jesus over because they were evil not because Jesus was guilty, and his wife wanted Pilate to release Jesus. So Pilate suggested releasing Barabbas, thinking they would release Jesus instead because Barabbas was such a bad criminal. But the chief priests persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas. The majority of the people will follow the religious leaders, the pastors, not the truth.

v. 24—Pilate saw there was a riot starting. So he washed his hands of the matter and said he was innocent. The people were willing to take the blood on themselves and their children. The reality is, he refused to do the right thing because he was afraid of the crowd. You cannot wash your hands of a moral situation if there is something you can do about it. It is immoral to refuse to decide. For example, if a fellow Christian you know personally is having an affair or is cheating or is beating his children, etc., and you do nothing, washing your hands of the matter because you are afraid of the crowd, then you are telling your children and your grandchildren and your disciples that whatever sin that brother is committing is okay.

v. 27—The crucifixion. Jesus has already been beaten. Now they put a scarlet robe and crown of thorns on Him. They spit at Him. They beat Him on the thorns on His head.

v. 31—They mocked Him. Then put His own clothes on Him and led Him away to be crucified.

## **The Crucifixion**

A slow painful death, the Romans adopted from the Phoenicians. The victim usually died after 2 or 3 days. The death was from thirst, exposure, and finally asphyxiation (they stopped breathing). When hanging from the arms, it extends the chest so one cannot breathe. So they push themselves up by the nailed feet. When they could not stand the pain in the feet, they'd let down. And back and forth. Sometimes the soldiers would break the legs so this process could not continue and therefore speed up the death. Apparently it was a cross-shape because there was a sign nailed above Jesus' head (v. 37).

v. 32—A man from Cyrene (in North Africa) named Simon carried the cross for Jesus because Jesus was too weak to carry it because of the torture that had already been inflicted on Him.

v. 33—They came to a place called Golgotha (Aramaic word for "skull"), which indicates either it looked like a skull or it was a place of execution where skulls had accumulated. There are two sights claimed for that. One is the traditional site (Church of the Holy Sepulchre) and Gordon's Calvary (and the Garden Tomb).

v. 34—They offered Him wine mixed with gall, a drink given to victims to deaden the pain. Jesus refused the drink.

v. 35—The soldiers got to divide up the clothes of the victims.

v. 37—The sign of the charges: This is Jesus the King of the Jews. This would politically be insurrection against

Caesar.

**Mocking:**

1. v. 39—No substance, just wagging their heads.
2. v. 40—Mocking from misunderstanding.
3. v. 41-42—They claim Jesus cannot save Himself. They point out the inconsistency that Jesus saved others but not Himself.
4. v. 43—The claim that God would not rescue Jesus. If He is the Son of God as He claims, then God would save Him.

v. 45—From noon until 3 in the afternoon, darkness fell over the land. Jesus said, *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?* The only time Jesus addressed God as “God” instead of as “Father.”

v. 50—He cries out with a loud voice and gives up His spirit. John 19:21, Jesus says, *It is finished.*

v. 51—The veil in the Temple separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place is ripped from top from bottom.

v. 52-53—After His resurrection, the tombs were opened and bodies came out of the tombs and appeared to many. They may have been in their former bodies like Lazarus but were probably in their resurrected bodies.

Intimacy with God has to ultimately be defined as faith in the Word of God.

v. 54—There is an earthquake, and the centurion says, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

v. 57—The burial—Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate for permission to get the body of Jesus. He laid the body in Joseph’s new tomb hewn out of a rock, and put a stone in front of it. Here is a rich man who is a disciple whom Jesus did not tell to sell all his possessions to help the poor. In fact, Jesus was buried in one of Joseph’s possessions—the garden tomb. Apparently Joseph’s possessions did not come between himself and God.

v. 61—Two Marys were sitting by the grave.

**Saturday**

v. 62—Now it’s the Sabbath. The religious leaders came to Pilate to ask that a guard be put around the tomb to make it secure because they remembered Jesus said He would be raised.

v. 66—They put a guard and seal on the tomb. These people were committed to the belief that Jesus was a deceiver. They wanted to make sure the disciples would not continue the deception.

**Applications from Chapter 27**

1. *Remorse is not confession. To feel sorry, like Judas, does not get the forgiveness of God.*
2. *It’s not always wise to respond to false charges. Paul did. Christ did not. Both with the point of carrying out their mission for God. Pilate knew Christ was innocent even though Christ did not defend Himself.*
3. *It will be likely that we’ll be called upon to suffer greatly before our death*
4. *There is nothing wrong with crying out to God when you are in pain. Take your pain to God.*
5. *It’s no sin to be wealthy, like Joseph of Arimathea. But if you are unwilling to give up your wealth, like the young rich man, then you won’t be a disciple of Christ.*

## Chapter 28

v. 1—Two Marys come to the grave.

v. 2—There was an earthquake, and the angel rolled away the stone.

v. 4—The guards were afraid.

v. 5—The angel tells the women to not be afraid.

v. 6-7—Go tell the disciples that Jesus is not here and for them to go to Galilee.

v. 9—Jesus appears to the disciples.

v. 11-15—The guards are bribed to say the disciples stole Jesus' body.

v. 16-17—Jesus meets the disciples in Galilee

v. 18-20—Jesus said that all authority has been given to Him. He wants them to make disciples. “Make disciples” is the verb. Outsiders are the object. Going, baptizing, and teaching are participles, they modify the verb—what they are to do as they are making disciples. They were to teach all (the full counsel of God) that Jesus commanded them. This is one of the clearest examples of the Trinity mentioned. Yet each one of the three are distinguished from the other.

### ***Applications from Chapter 28***

1. *Take the initiative to be available for God. The women were the first to see the tomb, the angel, and Christ because they were available. They weren't hiding somewhere, as apparently the disciples were.*

2. *Don't expect miracle evidence to convince unbelievers, especially if they already believe something else, like the chief priests did.*

3. *Believers tend to doubt and doubters tend to believe. Notice the eleven disciples doubted and the chief priests believed that Jesus would not remain in the tomb. Both followed their fears.*

4. *Make disciples the way Christ did. It's the one all-inclusive command for us of the church age. Discipleship occurs in the process of “going.” You can't just wait for them to come to you. It includes baptism, which is conversion of the lost. It also includes teaching all of Christ's commandments.*