

July 1

1 Samuel 13

V.1 – “Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel” – Saul had been invisible for a good while after he was anointed by Samuel (see 1 Sam. 10:16,22; 11:5). His seeming disinterest in taking up the role was evident. However, with the renewal of the kingdom after the victory over Nahash, he seemed to realize that it was time to institute some structure around his rule. This he did by choosing “three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with **Jonathan** in Gibeah of Benjamin” (V.2) most likely selected from the army that went to Jabeshgilead (11:8).

V.3-7 – Jonathan’s emergence in the record here is the first time he is seen and the contrasts with his father Saul could not be more pronounced. He is a man of faith and action, whereas Saul was uncertain and hesitant. Even though the ‘fake news’ that Saul had defeated the Philistines at Geba spread through the land, many in Israel took to the roads instead of joining Israel’s army. The Philistines amassed a massive army and arraigned themselves at Michmash while those who came to Saul “followed him trembling.” This was the first major test for Saul. Samuel had told him a couple of years before when he was anointed king “thou shalt go down before me to **Gilgal**; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: **seven days** shalt thou tarry, **till I come to thee**” (10:8). Saul’s army thinned out as the week slowly rolled by, and many fled across Jordan to safety in Gilead, while there was no sign of Samuel.

V.8-23 – Day seven arrived and Samuel was still absent. As Saul watched more and more of his army deserting, he made a hasty decision to make the sacrifices himself though he was not a priest. Samuel arrived as he promised and heard Saul’s lame excuse “I forced myself” because the situation had reached a crisis. It seems a heavy condemnation that Samuel immediately informed Saul that he had lost the kingdom for disobedience, but the disobedience was blatant in the presence of an unsettled and doubtful people. “Yahweh hath sought him a man after his own heart” would have deeply stung Saul. It was the beginning of a mental torment for Saul that brought him to the verge of insanity and made David’s life extremely difficult for 10 years, not to mention Jonathan’s. Meanwhile the Philistines went marauding through the land unhindered.

Isaiah 56

V.1 – “Thus saith Yahweh, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed” – What is meant by this? The answer is provided in V.2 – (Rotherham) “How happy the frail man, who doeth this! Yea the son of the earth-born who firmly graspeth **it**!” The “it” is identified in V.4 – “and take hold of my **covenant**.” Faith in the promises of God is fundamental to developing the characteristics enumerated in V.2-4 as is shown in 2 Pet. 1:3-9. The eunuch (a “frail man”) and the Gentile (an “earthborn”) though handicapped by circumstances have as much opportunity as the natural born children of Abraham on that basis.

V.5-8 – The reward for faithfulness and obedience is truly wonderful, for “unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters (reward for Gentiles): I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off” (reward for eunuchs). “To love the name of Yahweh, to be his servants” is the key to finding a place in the “house of prayer for **all peoples**” (Rotherham). That Gentile salvation is in view is revealed by the testimony in V.8 that Yahweh “which gathereth the

outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather **others** to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.”

V.9-12 – An abrupt change overtakes the prophet’s encouraging words for eunuch and stranger. The involvement of Gentiles and those cast out by the Law (eunuchs banished by Deut. 23:1) would not come until Judah’s Commonwealth was in the throes of being eclipsed by the Roman “beasts of the field, come to devour” in AD 70. God’s people were led by ‘blind watchmen’ (Matt. 15:14; John 9:30-41) who like lazy and greedy guard dogs were “lying down” on the job, and thinking “all things continue as they were from the beginning.”

Isaiah 57

V.1 – “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come” – There were many who fitted this description, including Isaiah himself if Jewish and early Christian tradition is correct. It is said he was “sawn asunder” (Heb. 11:37) during the brutal elimination by Manasseh of everyone who opposed his idolatry and corruption of Judah – 2 Kings 21:16. However, perhaps the most obvious case was good king Josiah. Yahweh’s message to him via Huldah the prophetess was that Josiah would not see the judgements that hung over Judah because of Manasseh’s evils – “but I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace.” This was merciful, and came to pass when Josiah was just 39 years of age – 2 Kings 23:29.

V.3-13 are a savage condemnation of the futility of Israel’s idolatry for which they would be taken away into captivity, but ends with a positive message for those of Isa. 56:5-8 – “he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.”

V.14-21 – A “way” is prepared for the remnant of Israel and Gentile converts who are children of Zion with whom Yahweh dwells – V.15. To share Yahweh’s eternity requires a humble disposition, the opposite of the haughty attitude exposed in V.3-11. Rotherham translates V.15 – “For, thus, saith he that is high and lifted up—Inhabiting futurity, and, holy, is his name: A high and holy place, will I inhabit, also with the **crushed** and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of them who are **crushed**.” The word translated “contrite” (KJV) is *dakkâ’* – crushed. It is a key to Christ’s teaching in Matt. 5. The 8 ‘blessings’ (a portrait of the Christ character) begin with the most essential requirement before that character can even begin to be developed – “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**.” This is a crushing of the human spirit and **self-will**. “Not my will, but thine be done” is a childlike acceptance of whatever God requires us to do, and of whatever He says in His Word. No arguments, no rebellion, no self-will; the natural inclinations of man must be crushed. The word “humble” is *shâphâl* meaning depressed; i.e. lowly in one’s own estimation (as Rotherham translated). “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (*râshâ’* – morally wrong) for these are self-willed and hardened in their own way (V.4) – “Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue?”

Revelation 21

V.1 – “And I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**: for the **first** heaven and the **first** earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” – This refers to a new order of things **beyond the Millennium** (1 Cor. 15:28). The word “first” means ‘the former’ and is

correctly translated by the Interlinear Scripture Analyzer as “former” meaning the Millennial ‘heavens’ and ‘earth’ that have now been superseded. The proof that the first 8 verses of Rev. 21 refer to the period beyond the Millennium is the fact that there is “no more **sea**” (symbol for mortal nations – Isa. 17:12-13; 57:20; Rev. 17:15; 15:2; 4:6). This was the promise of Jer. 30:11 – “though I make a **full end of all nations** whither I have scattered thee (Israel), yet will I not make a full end of thee.” Beyond the Millennium there will only be one nation on earth in fulfillment of the very first promise God made to Abraham – “I will make of thee a great nation.” This chapter deals with that promise. The “the holy city, new Jerusalem” is synonymous with that “nation” as Bro. Thomas explains – “It is the Yahweh-Elohistic municipality, symbolized by one hundred and forty-four cubits, each cubit representing one thousand of the numerical symbol of this ‘Holy Nation,’ the Israel of the Deity.” (Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 115).

Culmination of the 3 Great Covenants

Rev. 20 – Final fulfilment of Gen. 3:15

The Old Serpent bound and finally destroyed
Sin and rebellion eradicated - death abolished

Rev. 21 – Abrahamic Covenant fulfilled

The Holy City (Abrahamic) completed
One nation – Israel – embraces all
Eternal inheritance experienced by all

Rev. 22 – The Promises to David fulfilled

Divine authority over all the earth
David’s throne established forever
The spiritual house of David complete

Important additional proofs that V.1-8 describe the time beyond the Millennium are: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and **he will dwell with them**” (something not possible while mortality exists on earth); “there shall be no more **death**, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more **pain**: for the former things are passed away” (there is always pain and death while mortality exists); “Behold, I make all things **new**” (all things cannot be new if former things remain).

V.3 – “they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” is the language of God’s 5th promise to Abraham (Gen. 17:7-8).

V.6 – “It is done” – This is the third and final declaration of the purpose of God in His Son. The three phases of the redemption of the race are: (1) For Christ – “It is finished” – John 19:30; (2) The saints – Ezek. 39:8; Rev. 16:17; (3) At “the End” when God is “all in all.”

V.7 – “He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be **my son**” – An incredibly powerful incentive resides in this promise. It is very personal, for it is the singular “son” that stands out. The saints are often called “the sons of God” in Christ, but this is a step closer to the Almighty of whom it is said “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10).

V.9-27 – Typical of the Apocalypse, the end to be achieved is laid out first, and then the way it will be accomplished follows. The development of the Bride of Christ likened to “the holy city, new Jerusalem” (a corporation of people) with multiple symbols and features identifying it with Israel (“the Israel of God”) is too vast a subject to be considered here. See verse by verse notes available on web site <https://jimcowie.info> under the Bible Marking Notes tab.

Revelation 22

V.1 – “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the **throne** of God and of the Lamb” – The water of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; 6:63; Zech. 4:6) “the root of David” (V.16) is disseminated by the Saints from the throne of David (Rev. 4:2; 5:5-6)

Luke 1:32). This sustains “the tree of life” (*xulon* – wood or forest) representing the multitude of saints who bring healing to the nations (Cp. Ezek. 47:12. Trees = Saints – Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:7-8; Ps. 92:12).

This chapter deals with the fulfillment of the promise made to David. The family (“house”) that God promised to build for David (the most important thing to him – 2 Sam. 7:25-29) will be completed during the Millennial period.

V.8-9 – John’s humility in falling down before the angel messenger previously referred to on June 30 is an indication of how we feel in the light of all these glorious things revealed. The angels are about to hand over their work to the glorified saints as ‘fellow-servants’.

V.11 is a challenge – “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still” cannot be what Christ wants from his servants. He wants reformation and dedication. What then is he saying? The implication is, that if the outline of world history contained in the Apocalypse that was witnessed unfolding in every generation after John’s, and the visions of glory interspersed among them is not enough to convince us to change our way, then Christ can do nothing more for us. “The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable” (Rev. 21:8) have no part in the Kingdom of God (V.15). Access to the “holy city” via the “tree (wood) of life” is only to overcomers – Rev. 21:7.

V.16-17 – There is a brilliant parallelism in these verses – “the **root** and the **offspring** of David” is matched and explained by “the **Spirit** and the **bride**” who make the invitation “come.” The Spirit is “the root” of David = Christ (Isa. 11:1-3), and his “offspring” are the members of his Bride.

V.18-20 – Who would be foolish enough to tamper with this Book? The promise is certain – “Surely I come quickly” to which we should say with John, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

July 2

1 Samuel 14

V.1-23 – Jonathan’s demonstration of faith at Michmash is an amazing revelation of how different he was to his father. The hint is provided by “But he told not his father” when he decided to take on the garrison of the Philistines. While “Saul tarried,” Jonathan acted.

V.6 – Jonathan declared his faith against the enormous odds – “Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that Yahweh will work for us: for there is no restraint to Yahweh to save by many or by few,” and then backed it up with an incredibly unlikely proposition in V.9-10. They would remain in their place if the Philistines offered to come down to them (you would not need to go up!), “but if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for Yahweh hath delivered them into our hand.” Carefully analyzed, this proposition is a manifestation of absolute faith and confidence in God because there was only one possible outcome – a fight against the Philistines. The victory of Jonathan and his armour-bearer attended by an earthquake which was felt in Gibeah by Saul brought about a remarkable display of ineptitude and instability by Israel’s king. Jonathan was noted as missing and Saul called the priest to bring the Ark which he intended to use as a ‘magic box’, but when “the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased:...Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand.” This display of irreverence for the things of God was typical of Saul the Judaiser, and it was the shallowness and self-centredness of Judaism that attended the rest of this day.

V.24-46 – Saul’s rash and foolish vow that nothing should be eaten that day not only cost Israel a complete victory over the Philistines, but also nearly saw the death of Jonathan. Caught on the horns of a dilemma when Jonathan who had eaten some honey, not having heard of Saul’s edict, Saul was determined to kill his son until the people intervened. Saul did what he was afterwards to do again (“I feared the people, and obeyed their voice” – 1 Sam. 15:24), and also broke his vow. This started the rot. From here on he never kept another vow or promise consistent with the character of his hometown Gibeah – the place where foolish vows were made and broken (Judges 19-21). See comments June 19.

V.47-52 provide details of Saul’s antecedents and victories over Israel’s enemies.

Isaiah 58

V.1-4 – Unsparing condemnation of the hypocrisy of Judaisers in Isaiah’s day opens this wonderful exposition of the true meaning and purpose of the Sabbath. The word “aloud” is *gârôn* – the throat; i.e. the cry was to come from deep down in the being. This sets the scene, because the hypocritical Judaisers were all about shallow externals – (Rotherham) “Yet, me—day by day, do they seek, and in the knowledge of my ways, they delight,—**Like a nation that had done righteousness.**” They complained that Yahweh did not take notice of their fasting and sackcloth affliction, but He exposed their hypocrisy – (Rotherham) “in the day of your fast, ye take pleasure, But all your toilers, ye drive on!” i.e. while they sat in sackcloth fasting on the Sabbath they had their foremen out in the field driving on their slaves (breaking the Sabbath law). Even in their conclave they fasted “for strife and debate, and to smite with the **fist** of wickedness.” This introduces the primary symbol of this chapter. A clenched fist is a symbol for a closed mind that denies and seeks ill against others. Christ speaks of this kind of mind in Matt. 24:48-49, for he was alluding to Ps. 145:15-16 – “Thou **openest** thine hand,” matched here by Isa. 59:1 – “Yahweh’s **hand is not shortened**, that it cannot save.”

V.5-12 – The kind of ‘Sabbath fast’ that Yahweh desired was the antithesis of Israel’s. All of the kind acts listed are only possible with an **open hand**, and impossible with a **clenched fist** – “loose the bands”; “undo the heavy burdens”; “let the oppressed go free”; “break every yoke”; “deal thy bread to the hungry”; “bring the poor”; “thou cover him.” The word “undo” in V.6 is *nâthar* – to leap up – humorously illustrated at right. You cannot help such as the unfortunate ass (Israel) unless you leap up with an **open hand**.



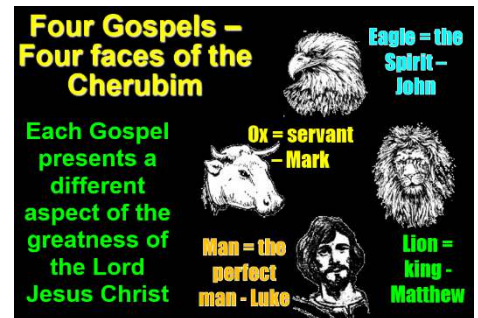
The double epithet for the positive and selfless builders of the house is an appropriate reward for their ‘open-handed’ attitude (V.12) – “Repairer of the breach” and “Restorer of paths to dwell in.” The word “repairer” – *gadar* means to build a wall; to wall in (see use Ezek. 13:5 “made up”; 22:30 “make up”).

V.13-14 – The call to deny self-interest in order to focus on mimicking Yahweh so that they might “call the sabbath a delight” and “honour it” (as it should read), “Then shalt thou delight thyself in Yahweh; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father.” Quite a desirable reward.



Matthew 1

The four Gospel records mirror the four major prophecies of the Old Testament – Isaiah and Matthew correspond in content, as do Jeremiah and Mark; Luke and Ezekiel; and Daniel and John. Each of the Gospel accounts of the life and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ match one of the faces of the Cherubim of Ezekiel 1. Matthew wrote for Jews and focuses on the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Christ (the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah) in the O.T.; Mark represents the **ox** face presenting Christ as the Servant of Yahweh; Luke expounds on the perfect man – Jesus Anointed (**man** face); and John the **eagle** (Spirit) face setting forth Christ as the Son of God.



The New Testament begins and ends the same way with reference to the three great covenants of promise – Gen. 3:15; Abrahamic and Davidic. The word “generation” is *genesis* – source, origin (Christ’s ‘source’ was the promise of Gen. 3:15). The proof lies in the fact that in the list that follows there are three batches of 14 ‘generations’ (V.17), this list constitutes the 14th (and last) generation in Scripture. 14 is the number of the ‘**certainty of covenant**’ in the Word. Seven is the covenant number and when something is doubled, it indicates **certainty** (see Gen. 41:32 – “the dream was **doubled** unto Pharaoh **twice**; it is because the thing is **established** by God”).

There are some interesting features in the list of generations which refers to the Davidic line of Joseph the adoptive ‘father’ of Jesus. The genealogy of Mary is in Luke 3. This list is not a genealogy like Luke 3. Genealogies do not list two brothers (note V.3 – “Phares and Zara”); there are five women in the list, including three Gentiles and one whose first husband was a Gentile (V.6 “Uriah”), included because of the Abrahamic Covenant. Three kings in the line of David are excluded in V.8 (Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah) because of idolatry. Perhaps the most unusual feature is the fact that if duplication of names is avoided in the count (as would be the case with a genealogy), then there is only 13 names in the third batch (V.12-16) because “Jechonias” (Jehoiachin) is also listed in V.11. This simply confirms that this is not a genealogy but a ‘parable’ surrounding the three great covenants which were made ‘certain’ by the birth and mission of Jesus Christ. This is another example of the need to accept whatever God says. He says there were 14 ‘generations’ in the third batch in V.17. We must include Jechonias twice in the count.

Two things are worthy of comment in the balance of the chapter. The quality of character of Joseph is obvious in his gentle handling of the dilemma that faced him when Mary was found with child (V.18-19). The fulfillment of Isa. 7:14 is mentioned in V.22-23.

Matthew 2

V.1-12 – The visit of the Magi to see Jesus is evidently about 2 years after they had seen the sign. This is what V.7 & 16 suggest. This chapter manifests the character of Matthew’s record, namely, frequent citations from the O.T. to demonstrate the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the appearance of Messiah. There are four in the chapter.

One of these was the sojourn in Egypt until the death of Herod to fulfil Hos. 11:1. Another was the fulfillment of Jer. 31:15 when Herod slaughtered all babies under 2 years of age in the Bethlehem region. The importance of this is that it proves that Rachel is the type of natural Israel in the Divine scheme.

V.23 – “He shall be called a Nazarene” – This has presented difficulty in interpretation. The following commentary seems worthy of some consideration.

1. He does not say “by the prophet,” as in Matt. 1:22; 2:5,15, but “by the **prophets**,” meaning no one particularly, but the general character of the prophecies.
2. The leading and most prominent prophecies respecting him were, that he was to be of humble life; to be despised and rejected. See Isa. 53:2-3,7-9,12; Ps. 22.
3. The phrase “he shall be called” means the same as he shall be.
4. The character of the people of Nazareth was such that they were proverbially despised and contemned, John 1:46; 7:52. To come from Nazareth, therefore, or to be a Nazarene, was the same as to be despised, or to be esteemed of low birth; to be a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness. This was what had been predicted by all the prophets. When Matthew says, therefore, that the prophecies were “fulfilled,” his meaning is, that the predictions of the prophets that he would be of a low and despised condition, and would be rejected, were fully accomplished in his being an inhabitant of Nazareth, and despised as such.

July 3

1 Samuel 15

V.1-2 – Though rejected, Yahweh still had work for Saul to do – “I remember that which Amalek did to Israel” (Deut. 25:17), a fact Israel was advised never to forget. Amalek represented the serpent in political manifestation and was the first nation to war against Israel. Yahweh had decreed their total destruction – Ex. 17:16.

V.3-9 – Saul is commissioned to utterly annihilate the Amalekites and does well until the end of the campaign. He gave the Kenites (descendants of Hobab, Moses’ brother-in-law) an opportunity to get out of the way because of their kindness to Israel.

V.10-23 – After a night of grief, Samuel went to convey Yahweh’s verdict on Saul’s disobedience. Stunned by Saul’s declaration “I have performed the commandment of Yahweh,” Samuel cannot help but remind him that the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen gave the lie to his assertion. Saul’s reaction is to blame the people for keeping the best of the animals, but there was another problem – Agag the king of the Amalekites was alive in the company, and incredibly Saul asserts “Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Yahweh...and have **brought Agag** the king of Amalek, and **have utterly destroyed** the Amalekites.” How is it possible to be as blind as this? The answer is Judaism – John 9:29-34,39-41. Judaism began with Cain (Gen. 4:3-8) and culminated in his actions being repeated by the murderers of Christ.

V.22-23 – “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice” – Saul’s excuse that the animals were retained for sacrifice was repudiated by Samuel for “rebellion is as the sin of **witchcraft**, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” Ironically, Saul’s last night was spent in the house of a **witch** – 1 Sam. 28:7-8,25.

V.24-34 – Saul’s admission of guilt was designed to retain Samuel’s public support, but as Samuel went to depart, Saul grasped his mantle which tore and gave Samuel the opportunity to deliver Yahweh’s edict – “Yahweh hath **rent** the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.” Samuel ordered Agag to be brought forth. He pleaded his case, but was hacked in pieces to complete the job that Saul had failed to do thoroughly. Though Samuel had reluctantly remained with Saul, when the time came to depart he was never to see him again before his death, but mourned the disaster that had overtaken God’s people with such a king. Saul had manifested the qualities of the nation of whom he was a microcosm, and Gibeah (breaking of oaths) had prevailed.

Isaiah 59

V.1 – “Behold, Yahweh’s **hand** is not shortened” – The theme of Isa. 58 continues in this chapter. Yahweh’s hand is not clenched like those in the nation who had the “act of violence...in their hands” by clutching knives to shed innocent blood – “For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity” (V.3,6), “they make haste to shed innocent blood.” The parlous condition of the nation is described in V.8-13 – “we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night.”

V.14-21 – Yahweh laments that “truth is fallen in the street” and “that there was no man” that could stand in the breach as an “intercessor” so “his arm brought salvation unto him,” and He raised up His son who “put on righteousness as a breastplate...and was clad with zeal as a cloke.” The scene changes to the return of Christ to the earth. God’s judgements will fall on the nations, firstly on Gog (“the enemy shall come in like a flood”), and “the Redeemer shall come to Zion” and will redeem Jacob. In V.21 there are loud echoes from Gen. 21:22-32 where Abraham and Abimelech make a covenant foreshadowing the inclusion of the Gentiles in the purpose of God. Phicol, whose name means “the mouth of all” (Gen. 21:22-23) is brought into the picture with the word “mouth” used 4 times in V.21 as he ‘speaks’ for all the seed of Abraham.

Matthew 3

V.1-12 – John the Baptist began his mission as the forerunner of Christ. It is the message of Isa. 40 (see comments June 16). Weymouth – “A voice, of one crying aloud! **In the wilderness**, prepare ye the way of the Lord” is a message to forsake the suffocating Judaism that dominated religious life in Judea. John could not have been more different than the sophisticated Pharisees and Sadducees who inquisitively came out to see him in their finery (Matt. 11:8), with “his raiment of camel’s hair” and his diet of “locusts and wild honey.” He was not gentle on them – “O generation of **vipers**, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” He refers to the stones Joshua had left beside Jordan (Josh. 4:2-3), and alludes to “the swelling of Jordan” (the jungle along the banks of the river) which was regularly set on fire in the dry season to scatter the serpents and wild beasts that endangered local inhabitants (Jer. 12:5; 49:19; 50:44). The day when the chaff and wheat of the nation would be separated (Jer. 23:28) was near (AD 70) when Christ’s armies (his “fire” V.11-12) would punish the “blind leaders of the blind.”

V.13-17 – Christ’s baptism by John established a fundamental of the Atonement – “for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” is a declaration that John’s message “All flesh is grass” applied equally to the Son of God (1 Cor. 15:22). He too needed redemption from death and this required the operation of the Spirit at his conception, birth and now at his baptism, and was given without measure (John 3:34). As a dove alighted upon him, a voice was heard from heaven – “This is **My Son**, the **Beloved**, in whom I have found delight” (LITV).

Matthew 4

V.1-11 – Even the son of God had to be tested. 40 days in the wilderness matching (on the day for a year principle) the probation of Israel in the wilderness laid the ground for him to be “in all **points** tempted like as we are” which is why the temptations include “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” (the points of 1 John 2:15-16). The seemingly endless debate about exclusively internal or external temptation ignores the simple truth that it was first external and then internal. Temptation is not temptation unless it

is processed in the mind and either accepted or rejected there. There was an external tempter as 'he' finally leaves the scene (V.11). If the temptations were all 'internal' without external suggestions, Christ had a different nature than the rest of us. Paul understood, as we all do, that the *diabolos* never leaves us (Rom. 7:15-24). The temptations were suggested from without and had to be processed and responded to within. The response of the Lord was from Deuteronomy 6 and 8 because he was being contrasted with his disobedient forefathers in the wilderness of Sinai. The key was his love for the Word of God – “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

V.12-22 – On the imprisonment of John, Jesus went north to the Galilee region where he gathered around him his disciples and began his three and a half year ministry. The prophecy of Isa. 9:1-2 – “The people which sat in darkness saw great light” was fulfilled.

V.23-25 – These verses contain a very important message in preparation for the Discourse on the Mount that follows. “Jesus went about all Galilee, **teaching** in their synagogues, and **preaching** the gospel of the kingdom, **and healing** all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” Note the order and emphasis. The priority in the lives of people should be believing the Gospel that they might ultimately have eternal life, but all too often they seek short term relief from mortal ailments. So, “they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases” and he healed them, but they had not come to **hear** him. Accordingly, “seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain” (Matt. 5:1). Their efforts needed to be redirected towards making an effort to hear his teaching as it alone leads to everlasting life. This is why the Discourse on the Plain is different. In Luke 6:17 when “a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem (Jews), and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon (Gentiles), which **came to hear him** (first), **and to be healed** of their diseases.” These had their priorities right.

July 4

1 Samuel 16

V.1-13 – The time had come to anoint the man Samuel mentioned in chap. 13:13 – “Yahweh hath sought him a man after his own heart, and Yahweh hath commanded him to be captain over his people.” The elders of quiet little Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2) were worried when Samuel turned up leading a heifer (V.4) for that was done under the Law when someone had been murdered in the district (Deut. 21:1-7). Samuel called Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice and feast and one by one seven of his sons were presented to Samuel and were dismissed. Mystified, Samuel enquired as to whether there was another son and Jesse confessed that his youngest son was out in the field minding the sheep. The question must be asked, “Why was David not invited to the feast?” The answer is the scandals that had plagued Jesse’s family that saw David ostracized and hated by his older brothers. Briefly stated, Jesse did not believe that David was **his** son, although he was (Ruth 4:22). Even the fact that the record states that David “was ruddy” hints at his suspicions. His brothers worked in the field too, so it is not about a sun tan. Add to that Ps. 23:5 which was written after the anointing – “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine **enemies**” (his brothers – see also 1 Sam. 17:28-29); and the fact that Saul would not let David return home once he had enquired about Jesse’s family (18:2), and you have the reason why David was not invited (see **Appendix 1** for a full treatment of this subject). Even David believed he was an illegitimate son (Ps. 51:5).

V.14-23 – As Saul's paranoia descended into manic depression and schizophrenia, for he knew God had forsaken him, David's widely known abilities in music saw him seconded to serve Saul. Some have thought that Saul's question to Abner in 1 Sam. 17:55-56 means that he did not know David. This is not so, for 1 Sam. 17:15 is conclusive – "But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem." The reason for Saul's query was that he suspected he would soon have to keep his promise to give his eldest daughter to David and he knew nothing about his family, and that was important to proud Judaistic Saul. David was able to calm Saul's ever-increasing moroseness as the kingdom slipped away from him, and was made Saul's armourbearer. The stage was set for dramatic events with far-reaching consequences.

Isaiah 60

V.1-2 – "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Yahweh is risen upon thee" – A dramatic change arrives in the prophecy. The darkness that attended repeated condemnations of Israel's pre-kingdom behavior in the preceding chapters is gone. Zion's glory is revealed, and their "light" Yahweh in the person of His son is in their midst. Before he arrives "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." Gross darkness is Egyptian darkness as in the 9th plague – "They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place" – Ex. 10:23. This refers to the paralyzing condition on earth that will precede Armageddon during "the time of trouble such as never was" – Dan.12:1. All true "light" will have been withdrawn when the responsible living have been removed to Sinai for judgement. God will have no need to moderate society for His servants then.

V.3-11 – "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" – Israel will no longer be the tail of the nations, but rather the head (Deut. 28:13) when Christ reigns in Zion and submissive Gentiles come to bask in the light. Zion will welcome her children whom she did not know in her widowhood (Isa. 49:21), and they will be nursed at her side (V.4). Nations that have submitted to Christ, like the Arabs (Kedar and Nebaioth descendants of Ishmael – Gen. 25:13), will bring their wealth and sacrifices to Zion to be offered upon Yahweh's altar (see **Appendix 2** for a selection from 'The Ministry of the Prophets' on sacrifice in the Kingdom). They will also assist the Jews outside the Land to return to it (V.8-9), and be involved in the building of the Temple (V.10-11).

V.12 – "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" – The rebellious Catholic nations, particularly of Europe, are doomed to utter destruction. This is the message of Dan. 7:11; Isa. 34; Rev. 18 and 19.

V.13-22 – Yahweh will make the place of His feet glorious (V.13) and exalt "Zion of the Holy One of Israel." Former oppressors will bring their wealth to Zion and her sufferings will cease, and her children "shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever." A wonderful reward awaits faithful saints.

Matthew 5

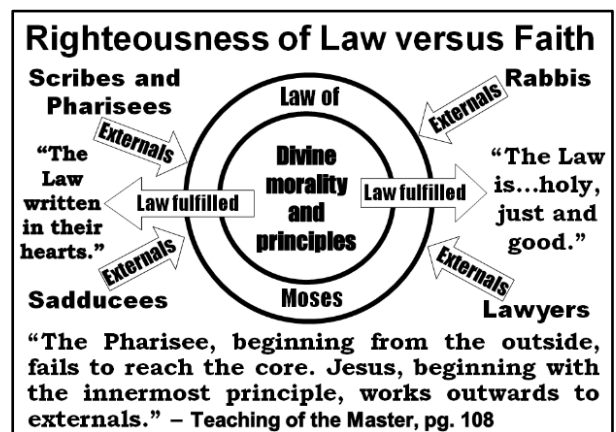
V.1-12 – The so-called Beatitudes (blessings) are actually a portrait of the character of Christ that we are called upon to develop. It is a building project that can only begin when the human spirit is crushed ("poor in spirit") and self-will set aside. That produces a 'mourning' when the weakness and constant bias of human nature is perceived so that we have incentive to meekly seek after better things ("hunger and thirst after righteousness"). Seeking after righteousness develops a likeness in approach to a merciful God and practicing His principles with pure motives will lead eventually to being made like Him. Seeking the salvation of others (making peace with God) will bring its tribulations

(persecution and opposition), but results in sharing the sufferings of Christ, for which there will be a reward (2 Tim. 2:12). (For a fuller treatment of the elements of the Christ Character – See **Appendix 3**)

V.13-16 – “Ye are the salt of the earth” – The Christ character preserves from corruption (like salt) and gives taste and zest to life. Salt stands for sound and wholesome principles and character, which kept unadulterated, preserve peace and harmony – Mark 9:50. If salt loses “his savour” it is useless for anything except to be “trodden under foot of men.” Similarly, “the light of the world” must not be obscured by everyday life and commerce (bushel), but stand out like a city on a hill (cp. Zion of the future – this Discourse on the Mount is based on Ps. 15). Manifesting God’s character allows men to “see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

In the balance of the chapter the Lord deals with his **new law** in operation where true righteousness must abound (V.17-20); and the **law of the heart** – V.21-24 – Dealing with hatred in the heart; V.25-26 – Humility when in error – judgement and mercy and peace-making; V.27-32 – Adultery in the heart; V.33-37 – Truth in the heart. (Only selected comments will be made).

V.20 – The Kingdom cannot be obtained “except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees” as shown in the slide at right. Law-keeping focuses on externals; true motivation comes from the “heart” impacted by the teaching of the Master (the Word of God).



V.27-32 – “whosoever looketh on a woman to **lust** after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” – This is not a reference to the casual and unbidden thoughts that are natural and common in the experience of human nature, but to the fixed desire and purpose of the Pharisees of Christ’s day who followed the teachings of Rabbi Hillel who taught a man could, with Moses’ authority, “put away his wife for every cause” (Matt. 19:3); any minor infraction provided a basis for summary dismissal. Ultimately, Rabbi Aquiba taught that a man “may divorce his wife even if he has found a prettier woman”. The important word is “lust” in V.28. It is *epithumeo* (16 occs.) – **to fix the desire upon**, to have the affections directed towards – Gal. 5:17; Luke 15:16; 16:21. That is why in V.29 Christ refers to the “right **eye**” and in V.30 to the “right **hand**” (note the ‘foot’ is absent), because the Pharisees would ‘eye off’ another woman and set about to write a bill of divorcement (with their right hand) in order to be rid of their current wife and marry the new woman on whom they had fixed their desire (see Luke 16:14,18). Hence, Christ then destroys their misinterpretation of Deut. 24:1-4 which is not about a moral problem with the wife, but a flippant desire for a new sexual partner (see comments May 7 on Deut. 24). There is no “Exceptive Clause” in V.32 justifying remarriage after divorce as the disciples clearly understood in Matt. 19:3-12 – “If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” An adulterous partner may be put away for a time as Yahweh has done with His wife Israel, but He is still married to her (Jer. 3:14), and will take her back when she reforms (Hos. 2:14-20). Little wonder the next matter is absolute integrity in vows and promises.

V.39 – Being smitten on the “right cheek” is more about **insult** than injury (a backhander).

V.43-48 – Loving enemies as God does His is about being **complete in character** – “Be ye therefore **perfect** (*teleios* – complete), even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” None of us can be perfect (i.e. without sin), but we can be single-minded.

July 5

1 Samuel 17

V.1-4 – “Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh” – Shochoh is a high hill to the east of Azekah, another hill of similar height. Between them is a saddle where the Philistines amassed their army. To the north and down below is the Valley of Elah, a fertile plain with a small brook running through it. Further north is a range of low hills where the army of Israel gathered. Looking across the valley, Saul had reason to fear the enemy opposite camped at Ephesdammim (“boundary of blood drops”). Hence, there was little movement in the camp of Israel except for retreat when Goliath came down to the plain each day.

V.5-11 – Goliath was a man of the flesh (he was covered in “brass” its symbol). His size and aggression struck terror into the hearts of Israelites, including Saul.

V.12-39 – With Saul at war, David had returned to Bethlehem (V.15). Jesse sent him with provisions for his three older brothers in the army and they showed their disdain for him when he declared absolute amazement that Saul had offered the hand of his eldest daughter Merab in marriage to the man who would remove the threat of Goliath (incredulous, he asked for confirmation twice – V.26,30). Where was the faith in Israel to deal with the blasphemer of Yahweh their God? Brought before Saul he recounted the killing of a lion and bear and refused Saul’s armour because, unlike Yahweh, it was untested by him.

V.40-58 – Goliath reminded David of the promised dominion of Gen. 1:26-28 by saying “I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field,” and declared he would restore it to Israel with Yahweh’s help. This theme is taken up in Ps. 8:6, written after this incident. The five smooth stones representing the power of the Word of God to shape thinking, faith and character became the weapon to overcome flesh (cp. Luke 10:21-22 – comments for March 19). The record is at pains to tell us in V.54 that “David took the **head** of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem,” when in fact he did not do that until after Abner had brought him “before Saul with the **head** of the Philistine in his hand.” Why would this be the case? It is because David saw in the death of Goliath the future sacrifice of Christ (Ps. 8). He knew where that would be from Gen. 22 (“a hill in the land of Moriah”) where Abraham offered up Isaac. This is proven by the fact that Ps. 8 is quoted in Heb. 2 in the context of the sacrifice of Christ. Now Saul had a problem. He didn’t know the standing or quality of the family into which he has to marry his daughter. As a proud Judaiser, Abner’s investigation of the background disgusted him. (See **Appendix 1**)

Isaiah 61

Isa. 60 ended with the blessedness to come upon the children of Zion (the saints drawn from both Jew and Gentile). This chapter expands upon that theme and reveals the source of the blessings – the work of Yahweh’s faithful Servant.

V.1 is cited in Luke 4:18-19 in the synagogue in Nazareth and repeated in Luke 7:22. It was the mission of Christ and he fulfilled it. However, in neither passage does the Lord quote the words “the day of vengeance of our God” of V.2 for that was still some way off.

V.2 – (Rotherham) “To proclaim—The year of acceptance of Yahweh” – This is a reference to the Jubilee year of release – Lev. 25:9-13. Christ came to release those in bondage – “to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,” and to provide the prospect of comfort to those “who mourn in Zion” looking for a better day when all the problems of human nature can be left behind (Matt. 5:4).

V.3 – When the comfort arrives it will see a change of nature – “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” for none of these comforts are available in mortality (Ps. 45:7-8 is cited Heb. 1:8-9 – note the context). Accordingly, the saints will “be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Yahweh.”

V.4-9 – The things that belong to Zion that were desecrated in the past will be restored, and the work performed by Gentiles for whom the saints shall be priests (V.6; Rev. 5:9-10), and they will be provided with the support due to priests and ministers. Priesthood has been given a ‘black name’ due to the shameful behavior of Israel’s priests in the past (Ezek. 44:12,15), and of the Apostasy thereafter. Trust and confidence will be restored by the priesthood of the saints – “But ye shall be named the Priests of Yahweh: men shall call you the Ministers of our God.”

V.10-11 – The chapter ends in a curious way. The voice of V.1 was Christ, and here it is him again as the **Bridegroom**, but he is not alone. The **Bride** is with him as John the Baptist (a member of the Bride himself) declared in John 3:29 – “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.” Echoes abound of the first marriage in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:23; Eph. 5:31-32), and of the garden of the Bridegroom in the Song of Solomon – Song 4:16; 5:1 – “so Adonai Yahweh will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”

Matthew 6

V.1-18 – The content is summarized at right. The Lord turns to matters concerning the secret of righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees – Matt. 5:20.

V.1 – “alms” – *eleemosune* – mercy, pity, particularly in giving alms. Other texts have the Greek word *dikaosune* – righteousness (see R.V. margin).

“reward” – *misthos* – pay for service. Used 6 times in the discourse (5:12,46; 6:1,2,5,16). See its final use in Rev. 22:12. The word relates to hire, wages or pay and is said to have been used in receipts, “I have received.” The singular motive of the Pharisee was self-worship. All their acts of piety were a theatrical performance to be “seen” (*theaomai* – to gaze upon, look at with a purpose; to see with desire; regard with admiration. Derived from the verb *theoros* – a spectator) of men – Matt. 23:5.

V.2 – “do not sound a trumpet before thee” – This is a vivid metaphor for self-advertisement based on a contemporary custom during public fasts. At the end of six benedictions concluding prayers for rain to break autumn droughts, the shophar was blown in public places, and then almsgiving was expected from the people. There were also 13 shopharoth in the Temple. These trumpet shaped openings for depositing money in the treasury were designed to draw maximum attention to the offeror.

The secret and the manifest

Matt. 6

Vv.1-4 Worship in relation to men

Vv.5-15 Worship in relation to God

Vv.9-15 – The Lord’s Prayer

Vv.16-18 Worship in relation to self

Personal issues covered:

- 1. Acts of giving – service offered**
- 2. Acts of worship – devotions given**
- 3. Acts of self denial – sacrifices made**

V.3 – Left hand = mortal weakness – Right hand = Divine authority. In the human body, the heart is set a little to the left (natural). Ecc. 10:2 – “A wise man’s heart is at his right hand; but a fool’s heart at his left.” We must not allow the pride of the natural man to boast and impinge upon the spiritual man. If we do, the reward has been paid.

V.3-15 – The same principle applies to prayer. It is a matter between an individual and their God, not an opportunity for public display. Some Pharisees would deliberately ensure that they fell just a little short of the temple when “the hour of prayer” struck so they could be seen and heard praying on the street corners from both directions. Like their modern counterparts, they used “vain repetitions” and probably bobbed their heads in public display. (The Lord’s Prayer will be left until Luke 11 is considered.)

V.16-18 – The ‘fast’ (self-sacrifice) that the Father seeks is a private matter between Him and his servant, not a public exhibition for human consumption. (See comments on Isa. 58 July 2).

V.19-24 – “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” – No one can serve two masters. If things on earth fill the vision the situation is – “thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.” Where there is a singular focus on serving God “thy whole body shall be full of light.” It is a matter of priorities in life.

V.25-34 – “Be not **anxious** for your life” (RV). This is a correct translation of the word *merimnao* – to be full of anxiety (which divides up and distracts the mind); to be full of distracting cares, anxious. It occurs 19 times in the N.T. – 6 in this discourse (Matt. 6:25,27,28,31,34 twice). It is a matter of trust and priorities – “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” The question is, what do we really want – the present or the future – Luke 17:33.

July 6

1 Samuel 18

V.1-5 – Jonathan would have seen David in Saul’s house (1 Sam. 16:21-23) providing comfort to his father with music for which Saul “loved him greatly.” He now saw him in a different light as David with the head of Goliath in his hand, with no hint of boastfulness, displayed his humility and absolute confidence in God. Jonathan proved himself to be different to his father in many ways. Perhaps he was more like his mother whom Saul was later to profane (1 Sam. 20:30). The love that developed between them was based on appreciation for characteristics they perceived in each other that reflected the influence of Yahweh in their lives – “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” It led to a solemn covenant between the two that was never broken (V.3), unlike the multiple covenants Saul made. As for Saul, his new found understanding of the meanness and scandal ridden family of Jesse so appalled him that he would not let his prospective son-in-law return home (V.2). Jonathan, one of the few with weapons and armour (1 Sam. 13:22), gladly gave David his royal robe “and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.” This demonstrated two things; (1) that David’s clothing and possessions were clearly those of a poor man and if he was to be the king’s son-in-law, he needed to be presented like one; and (2) Jonathan basically forfeited the idea of succeeding his father as king for he could see in David qualities superior to his own (Phil. 2:3).

V.6-16 – The victory song of the women – “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands” triggered a burning jealousy in Saul and he feared losing the kingdom to David, and “eyed David from that day and forward.” Much heartache was to come from this jealousy of human pride and non-acceptance of the Divine edit of 1 Sam. 15:26-29.

Twice David dodged a javelin cast at him by Saul while he was playing music in his presence. He was given a role as captain over a thousand men and behaved himself so wisely that Saul became apoplectic, “but all Israel and Judah loved David” because he filled a void left by Saul. The stage was set for much misery and shedding of blood. Pride is deadly.

V.17-30 – Saul was clearly delaying the fulfillment of his vow to give his eldest daughter Merab to David as the man who killed Goliath (1 Sam. 17:25), but he saw the growing love of the people for David and could delay no longer. He offered Merab’s hand to David, but only if David would fight a few more battles in the hope he would be killed so he couldn’t be blamed. But David provided Saul with a excuse not to fulfil his vow – “Who am I, and what is my life, or my father’s family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king?” “Saul of Gibeah” jumped at the opportunity to break his vow and gave Merab to Adriel the Meholathite, evidently a rich man, the son of Barzillai the Meholathite (2 Sam. 21:8), a decision that was to lead ultimately to a great tragedy. Hearing that Michal his second daughter loved David, Saul offered her in marriage. David was again reluctant due to his poverty and humility, but when the suggestion was made that the only dowry required was 100 foreskins of Philistines, he jumped at the idea and went and slew 200! Saul became increasingly fearful that David would succeed him as he saw Michal’s love for him matching that of the people, and his growing reputation as “David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.”

Isaiah 62

V.1 – “For **Zion's sake** will I not hold my peace, and for **Jerusalem's sake** I will not rest” – Jerusalem is not mentioned in Isa. 60 and 61, for the focus there is on **Zion**, the name given to the promises made to Abraham and typed by Sarah (see comments on Isa. 51 June 26). Now the blessings related to Zion’s children, the Bride of Christ (Isa. 61:9-11) will bring the city Jerusalem (now seen truly as the “Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” of Gal. 4:26) to the fore to become the focus of international attention and love – “the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory” (V.2).

V.2-12 – Much is made of the meanings of names in the balance of the chapter, for Jerusalem will “be called by a new **name**, which the mouth of Yahweh shall name,” a name as ubiquitous as “a crown of glory” and “a royal diadem” displayed by God. The names “Forsaken” (*azab* – relinquished) and “Desolate” (*shimâmâh* – devastation) will be superseded by “Hephzibah” (“my delight is in her” – the name of Hezekiah’s wife – 2 Kings 21:1), and “Beulah” (*bâ’al* – to be married). Yahweh (represented by Christ) and Zion’s children (the saints) will be ‘married’ to the Land promised to Abraham and Jerusalem made “a praise in the earth.” Yahweh’s oath of V.8 will ensure Zion’s enemies never again prevail over her, and all “shall call **them** (i.e. the inheritors of the Land), The holy people, The redeemed of Yahweh: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.”

Matthew 7

The connecting thought between Matt. 6:34 where the Lord said there is ‘evil’ in every day and this chapter dealing with judgement, is that evil cannot be avoided – it must be fought. The battle is not only without, more importantly it is **within**. We have no difficulty in discovering evil in others, but we are often blind to the evil within ourselves (V.3-5).

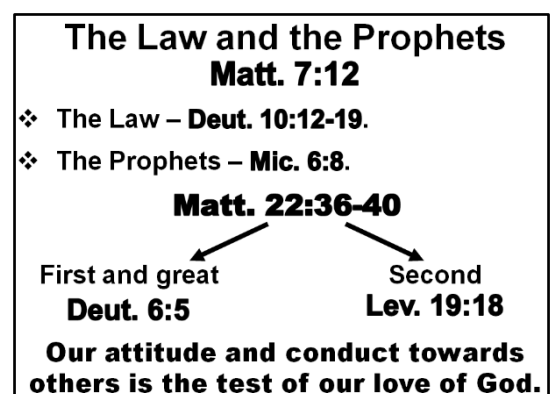
The manifesto has thus far been punctuated by the authoritative statement – “But (or For, Verily etc.) **I say unto you...**” (14 times in Matt. 5 & 6 = Certainty of covenant), but in Matt. 7 the focus shifts to outcomes where we see the disciples speaking (Luke 6:45); V.1 – “Judge not”; i.e. with words; V.4 – “...how wilt thou **say**...”; V.6 – “Give not”; V.7 – “Ask”; V.15-20 – false prophets speaking; V.21 – “Not everyone that **saith** unto me.”

V.1 – “Judge not that ye be not judged” – It is important to understand that the Lord is not banning all judgement. All through this final section of the Discourse he counsels the need for judgement on a range of issues. We have to judge a lot of things, but we have no right to judge anyone to be unworthy, or even worthy, of eternal life. That is the preserve of Christ himself as he asserts in V.21-27. Hypocrisy often covers its own major deficiencies by picking on the perceived minor infractions of others (V.3-4). We cannot judge motives, only fruits; i.e. **public actions** like fruit hanging on a tree (V.16), not rumours by ‘grapevine’ or social media (one of the scourges of the modern world).

V.6 – Judgements need to be made all the time in life. Evil men do exist so there is a need to be discerning and ‘judge’. “Dogs” and “swine” are symbols for the unclean (Rev. 22:15; 2 Pet. 2:22), and pearls are a symbol for the Gospel (Matt. 13:45-46). We must be careful not to allow the corrupt and scornful to “blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called” (James 2:7). The Lord’s underlying warning is ‘Beware – egotism can motivate attempts to force salvation on the unwilling and resentful.’

V.7-11 – The three verbs used in this section on asking, receiving and responding are in the Present Tense and Active Voice (3 = fruit, result – cp. V.16-20,22), so we must be active now! There is echelon here – V.7 – “Ask” – *aiteo* – to entreat, beg, supplicate; “seek” – *zeeteo* – seek after, strive to find – cp. Matt. 6:34; “knock” – *krouo* – to strike, knock or rap (on a door). Each builds on the former in intensity. God does not always answer prayers immediately. The shallow and self-centred often give up, displaying a lack of faith. Greater intensity is required (‘strive to find’), and then rapping on the ‘door’ (this is the message of the parable of the friend at midnight – Luke 11:5-9). Human fathers know how to give good gifts to their children – “what man” would substitute harmful things in providing for an imploring son. Ancient bread could be confused with stones – Matt. 4:3. The “serpent” of V.10 was a scaleless fish which looked like a serpent (unclean). So, if we are “evil” (Cp. Matt. 6:23 = selfish and avaricious) and can do good for our children, what will a righteous Father in heaven do for His?

V.12 – It would be a vastly different world if the “Golden Rule” as it is called were practiced by all. One day it will be. As Weymouth translates – “Everything, therefore, be it what it may, **that you would have men do to you, do you also the same to them**; for in this the Law and the Prophets are summed up” – see slide at right. Loving God with all our heart, soul and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves is the sum of the Law and the Prophets; in other words, of all Scripture.



V.13-14 – Wedding feasts in Christ's time were routinely managed (to keep unwelcome people out) by using a very narrow door (the meaning of "straight"). There was an attendant there with wedding garments over his arm, but some managed to sneak in (Matt. 22:8-14). Few find the 'narrow way' but by contrast, the bulk of humanity thunder down the 'broad way' to destruction.

V.15-20 – Choices and judgements need to be made. There are only two ways and two types of fruit, and therefore two types at the Judgement Seat.

V.15-20 – Christ could read men's minds in his mortality (Matt. 9:4; 12:25), we cannot. The only way we can make an assessment of "false prophets" (i.e. people with whom we have to do in ecclesial life – 2 Pet. 2:1) is to watch their actions, for these produce "fruit" or outcomes – "a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit," "wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." On the contrary, "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." It is an unerring method of assessment that the Lord himself will use at the Judgement Seat (the next subject) for "then he shall reward every man according to his works" – Matt. 16:27.

V.21-27 – Many will claim good and wonderful works they did in the name of Christ at the Judgement Seat, but he will disown them – "I never **knew** you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The word "knew" is *ginōskō* – to know personally. It is a relationship based on conforming to "the will of my Father which is in heaven" (V.21). When men create their own 'religion' as the Judaisers did, teaching for "doctrines the commandments of men" they abrogate the possibility of a relationship with Christ.

The parable of the two builders is a graphic picture of the issues of the Judgement Seat. The language is drawn from Isa. 28 (refer comments June 4) where "a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand" (Isa. 28:2), and "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the **waters shall overflow the hiding place**" (Isa. 28:17) – this in the context of Yahweh laying "in Zion for a foundation a **stone**, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" (Isa. 28:16). It is not difficult to see where the Lord's mind is. If we build on the "rock" of his teachings and commandments we need have no fear of the "waters" that will "overflow the hiding place" of our secret motivations. If not, the sandy foundations of our life will be revealed and the whole edifice of our life will collapse. There are good reasons to "build on the rock that naught can move" (Hymn 147).

The two classes of humanity Matt. 7:13-27

Vv.13-14 Two ways – Life and death

V.15 Two types of prophets

Vv.16-20 Two trees – Good or bad fruit

Vv.21-22 Two classes at the Judgement

Vv.24-27 Two builders

In the final analysis there is no middle path
– we will either live or perish according to
our choice of way now.

July 7

1 Samuel 19

V.1-6 – As David's 'star' rose, Saul's enmity burst out in public with orders for his henchmen to murder David. Jonathan immediately warned David and suggested he go into hiding while he tried to persuade his father to recant. He succeeded and Saul made another oath involving the name of Yahweh that he was to break in a very short space of time – (V.6) "And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As Yahweh liveth, he shall not be slain." This is "Saul of Gibeah" (the place where oaths were made and

broken – cp. Hos. 6:7; 8:1; 10:4 with Hos. 5:8; 9:9; 10:8) of whom Yahweh said in Hos. 13:11 – “I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.”

V.7-17 – Saul’s oath was forgotten not long afterwards when David returned from another victory over the Philistines and his jealousy sank him into a slough of despondency and envy. While attempting to sooth Saul’s dark moods with his music, the king again tried to kill David by casting a javelin. So much for his oath. David escaped but was pursued to his house where Michal let him down through a window to escape. Unlike Jonathan her brother, she did not uphold David’s integrity when responding to Saul’s angry rebuke.

V.18-24 – David sought refuge with the aging Samuel in Ramah, and they went to hide in Naioth (“habitations”) a dwelling place of the prophets Samuel had made into the “company of the prophets” (1 Sam. 10:10). Spies informed Saul and he sent arresting messengers to capture and bring David to him, but they were overwhelmed by “the Spirit of God” and returned empty-handed. Twice more Saul sent messengers who were similarly overwhelmed and returned prophesying. Finally, he made his way there only to be given the final sign by God that he needed to give up on trying to retain the throne. He too, was overwhelmed by “the Spirit of God” and “prophesied” “all that day and all that night,” something he was not known to do, “Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?” If this experience could not change Saul, then nothing would. It proved the truth of 1 Sam. 18:12 – “Saul was afraid of David, because Yahweh was with him, and was **departed from Saul.**” Saul knew this but went on his stubborn resistance to the will of God.

Isaiah 63

V.1 – “Who is this that cometh from **Edom**, with dyed garments from **Bozrah**?” – This prophecy has not been well understood in our community. In the Logos Magazine Vol. 38 page 410, Bro. H.P. Mansfield set the record straight. He wrote:

In Isaiah 63, reference is made to Christ as the Victor of Bozrah, and he is described as appearing in “dyed garments” as a result of his conquest there. This has led Brother Thomas to conclude that there will be a preliminary skirmish at Bozrah before Christ moves on to Jerusalem to complete the rout of Gog’s forces. Ancient Bozrah is south east of the Dead Sea, so that it is customary to trace the route of Christ from Egypt to Jerusalem via Bozrah. However, a careful consideration of the references to Bozrah impress us with the belief that Bozrah, like Armageddon, is a mystical name, and relates to the outpouring of judgment upon the forces of Gentilism which, however, will be initiated with the destruction of Gog’s might at Jerusalem. We therefore propose to consider in detail, Isaiah’s references to Bozrah.

Appendix 4 provides a two page extract from that article and is recommended reading. Also, refer to comments on Isa. 34 on June 10. We will proceed with the conviction that Edom and Bozrah are typical names for latter day Babylon the Great (the Catholic enemy of Christ which rebels against him after Armageddon – Ps. 2).

In Rev. 19:13, Christ is described as being “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood” having ridden the “white horse” of Israel against Babylon the Great (V.11). The language of that chapter is drawn straight from Isa. 63. Note V.13 which depicts Israel as “an horse in the wilderness” a reference to “the wilderness of the peoples” (Ezek. 20:35) for this is about Israel returning under Elijah in the Second Exodus and being deployed as a weapon against antitypical “Edom” (“Babylon the Great”).

V.1-6 – It is important to note that the KJV does not get the tense right in these verses. This is Rotherham’s translation of V.3 – “A winepress, **have I trodden**, alone, And of the

peoples, **there was** no man with me. So **I trod them down** in mine anger, And **trampled** upon them, in mine indignation,—And their life-blood **besprinkled** my garments, And all mine apparel, I **defiled**.” The Past Tense goes all the way to V.6. This, like Isa. 34, is a reference to the final victory of Christ over Babylon the Great. The “great wine-press of the wrath of God” has been trodden over the space of 40 years – Rev. 14:19-20. Refer comments on Rev. 14 on June 27.

V.7-14 – Yahweh’s past care for Israel (“the great goodness toward the house of Israel”) is recounted. Sadly, Israel “rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them,” but that will all change when Christ appears to “turn away ungodliness from Jacob” – Rom. 11:26.

V.15-19 – Isaiah’s prayer on behalf of Zion’s children (called “servants” in V.17), is a plea for redemption. Abraham does not yet know he has a multitude of children from among Jew and Gentile, and they have been consistently ignored all through history, but their day will come. Bro. C.C. Walker in The Ministry of the Prophets concludes his comments on this prayer as follows:

In the prayer before us we see evidence of Isaiah’s faith and obedience. He is “unacknowledged,” but his hope is in the Lord of hosts, and his “return” to Israel. It is a great example and encouragement to the brethren of the prophet in all ages, who, like him, are unacknowledged by professors by whom they are surrounded, and in proportion to their faithfulness are hated by the world for their testimony that its deeds are evil, and that the day of judgment is at hand. By and bye, as Isaiah had before testified, there will be a great reversal; for the Coming One having returned, and the judgments of God being abroad in the earth, then “all that see them shall acknowledge them”, that they are “the seed which the Lord hath blessed” (Isa. 61:9).

Matthew 8

Unlike Luke, Matthew’s record is not concerned with the chronological sequence of events in Christ’s ministry. He groups events and miracles together in themes and principles for a singular purpose – to set forth the work of Messiah in fulfillment of O.T. prophecies. His audience is primarily the Jews.

V.1-4 – “When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him” – In the wake of the Discourse on the Mount the Lord’s followers multiplied and he continued to heal as he had done prior to it – Matt. 4:23-24. However, the first miracle recorded here concerns a leper, who having been healed is instructed “go thy way, **shew thyself to the priest**, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.” All through his teaching on the mount, the Lord had swept away rabbinical teachings, “the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:28-29). Now, he challenges the priests. No priest under the Law (except perhaps Aaron for Miriam) had ever implemented the requirements of Lev. 14. The Gentile, Namaan would not have been subjected to it. So, for a Jew to turn up to the priest cleansed of leprosy was unheard of. Surely, this news would spread through the nation and the priests and leaders of the nation would say that Messiah had come. Christ knew the answer to that proposition, but he had to try. The leper was **willing** to be cured, and Christ was **willing** to heal him, but the nation was not **willing** to recognize him.

V.5-13 – Fittingly then, the next miracle is the healing at a distance of the centurion’s servant. It is an indication that Jewish rejection of their Messiah would lead to the call of the Gentiles

to create children for Abraham. This is why the Abrahamic promises are brought into view here and not in the other accounts (e.g. Luke 7 – see comments March 16 pgs. 36-37 which will not be repeated here) – “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with **Abraham**, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (V.10-12).

V.14-17 – Healing Peter’s mother-in-law and many others in Capernaum (“the city of comfort”) leads to a remarkable citation – “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Isa. 53:4). Bearing our nature, and because he was sinless, Jesus had an understanding better than anyone of its frailties and weaknesses. As Bro. Roberts wrote: “he partook of the common nature of our uncleanness—flesh of Adamic stock—in which, as Paul says, there ‘dwelleth no good thing’ (Rom. 7:18); a nature the burdensome of which arises from its native tendencies to foolishness and sin. This burden is felt in proportion as higher things are appreciated.” Christ’s empathy for sufferers in human nature was intense, as he carried the same burden, and due to his sinlessness could carry it away by a resurrection to life.

V.18-22 – Refer comments on Luke 9:57-62 on March 18 page 42.

V.23-27 – The calming of the storm on the Sea of Galilee (“Galilee of the nations” – Isa. 9:1) is the prelude to the healing of two men afflicted with Cysticercosis – the infestation of the human brain by the larval stage of the tapeworm whose host is normally swine (see comments on the healing of Legion February 9 pg. 3). However, Matthew records there were two, not one like Mark and Luke. This is not contradictory, but deliberate. Matthew involves both Jew and Gentile, but Mark and Luke are writing for a Gentile audience and mention only one. This occurs again with the blind men. These men affected by swine were experiencing the storm of schizophrenia and maniacal outbursts (a ‘storm’ in their lives). Jesus calms the storm on the sea of nations as a sign that he had the answers to all human afflictions – Ps. 65:7 – “Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.”

July 8

1 Samuel 20

V.1-23 – David fled from Naioth and sought out Jonathan in a final bid to establish Saul’s intentions. He had little doubt himself, but Jonathan was more confident asserting that his father would keep nothing from him. It was a false confidence as David knew. A pact was made to test Saul at a sensitive time – the annual feast for the new moon in the seventh month – Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1. David knew that Saul’s reaction to his absence would be a clear sign of his intentions. A way to surreptitiously convey that outcome was devised, and David and Jonathan made solemn covenants of their love and loyalty to each other.

V.24-34 – The day of the feast arrived and David was absent. Saul initially believed it could only be a matter of ritual uncleanness that kept David away – “he is not clean; surely he is not clean.” This is a revelation of his Judaistic mind twisted by pride and jealousy. He had tried to kill David several times, but that didn’t seem to register with him as a reason for David to stay away. The second day he challenged Jonathan showing his contempt for David by calling him “the son of Jesse” (the father of a scandal ridden family). When Jonathan gave the prefabricated answer, Saul burst into a tirade against his son, even going so far as to show his true feelings towards his wife – “Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman” doubtless because Jonathan was more like his mother than his father. When Jonathan

defended David, Saul threw a javelin at him “whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David” (not to mention Jonathan!).

V.35-42 – The agreed method of communication was implemented, but after dismissing the arrow collecting lad, David and Jonathan met for the second last time with deeply emotional farewells and reconfirmation of their covenant. David was now condemned to a life on the run for probably the next 10 years or so. It was not going to be comfortable.

Isaiah 64

Isaiah’s prayer which began in chap. 63:15 continues to the end of chap. 64. The Ministry of the Prophets makes an interesting observation – It is noteworthy that the prophets, in their prayers and prophesying, all take hold of the birth of the nation in the days of the Exodus from Egypt as the earnest of the greater deliverance to come, when “a nation shall be born in a day.” In V.1-3 there is a call for those days to return.

V.4-7 – The prophet laments the waywardness of his people in the light of the incredible blessings reserved for the righteous who wait on God – “neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him” (cp. Isa. 25:9). He laments the hypocritical Judaism of his nation – “all our **righteousnesses** are as filthy rags.” This is not a reference to faithful saints and should not be used of them. The saints will be in the Kingdom because of their righteous acts – LITV for Rev. 19:8 – “the fine linen is the **righteousnesses** of the saints.” Unless our righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees we will not inherit the Kingdom – Matt. 5:20. The next verses in Isa. 64 confirm the above – “there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee,” so that God hid his face from them.

V.8-12 – “Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire.” This was not then the case but is a prophecy of what would overtake the “hypocritical nation” in due time. But Yahweh will not “remember iniquity for ever.”

Matthew 9

V.1-8 – The following comments were made on the healing of the palsied man in Mark 2 on February 6 – The healing of the palsied (paralyzed) man effected by the faith of his four friends (4+1=5=grace) teaches something very important in relation to the mission of Christ. Mankind’s first great need is a **moral** one – **forgiveness of sins**. His second great need is **physical** – a **change of nature** healing the paralysis of human nature permanently. The first is “easy” for God and His son. It just requires a few simple words – “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” a blessing freely bestowed where God’s righteousness is upheld. But the second – physical healing and what it presaged – the bestowal of immortality, requires the expenditure of more effort and power. If men want the latter, it makes sense to draw on what is “easy” for God and which He freely provides through His son.

V.9-13 – The call of the writer of the Gospel is next. As a tax gatherer for the Romans he was despised by his Jewish contemporaries which is why other tax gatherers and “sinners” had no diffidence to enter his house to be with Christ. The Pharisees quibbled, “Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?” His simple answer was (Weymouth) “It is not men in good health who require a doctor, but the sick,” and then cites Hosea 6:6 saying “go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.” He is hewing them “by the prophets” (Hos. 6:5). Judaism relied upon rituals and sacrifices which were ephemeral (Hos. 6:4 – “as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away”); and law cannot give life, but Divine mercy can. What Yahweh required was a

manifestation of His character called “the knowledge of God” (V.6). The Pharisees had no concept of this. Rituals and external appearances dominated their life.

V.14-17 – Even the disciples of John the Baptist needed to lift their minds to more positive things. They queried why Christ’s disciples did not fast like them and the Pharisees. The Lord’s answer is incisive – “Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?” A new attitude was required lest there be rent and spillage. People needed to leave behind law and join the bridal party (see Rom. 7:1-2).

V.18-26 – Jairus (although he is not named here) arrived on the scene to report that his 12 year old daughter was dead, although in Mark 5 she had not actually died before Jairus left home. While Matthew’s account differs a little, the lessons remain the same. The following comments on this incident as recorded in Mark 5 were made on February 9.

A woman with an issue of blood (unclean under the Law) had wasted her substance on useless doctors while being kept out of the synagogue (a place of refuge) by Jairus, one of its rulers. He had a 12-year-old daughter grievously sick who had grown up watching her father exclude this pitiful woman. These two represent the two classes in Israel (12 being the number of Israel) that Christ came to save. Sinners and tax gatherers represented by the woman; the religious class living under law by Jairus’ daughter. Jairus, desperate, put his trust in Jesus, who is delayed by the woman, just as he had focused on the outcasts of Israel who saw their need for his healing power. Her faith healed her through his word (represented by the hem of his garment – Num. 15:37-49), but Jairus’ daughter (under law) died (law cannot save). The Lord encouraged Jairus to “just go on believing” as the Greek for verse 36 has it. Only 6 living beings are permitted into the ‘tomb’ of Jairus’ house with one dead = 7 = covenant and Spirit. 5 with faith (looking for grace), one with healing power, one dead. Then something incredible happened. The parents clutching their living daughter were instructed to tell no one, unlike Legion, who was to tell everyone. Why? Because most Jews living under law would not believe even though one went unto them from the dead (Luke 16:30-31).

V.27-31 – Two blind men represent Jew and Gentile. Everyone is born ‘blind’ in the spiritual sense. Many Jews desired to remain ‘blind’ (John 9:39-41), but many Gentiles sought to ‘see’ which is why Mark and Luke, writing for Gentiles only speak of one blind man. Faith is required to be cured of human ‘blindness’ so the Lord asked, “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” to which the men replied, yes. So he tested their faith saying. “According to your faith be it unto you.” We are tested the same way – James 1:5-6 – “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.” The reason why the Lord instructed the healed men not to tell anybody was revealed in the next incident.

V.32-34 – The dumb man was healed and the Pharisees began their campaign of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit for which there is no forgiveness – Matt. 12:31-32.

V.35-38 – Despite the opposition of the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees there was still a lot of interest among the common people as Christ continued to preach and to heal, but he lamented the lack of labourers to share the work with him – “Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

July 9

1 Samuel 21

V.1 – “Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest” – Tragedy awaited the family of Ahimelech as David and his companions arrived at Nob. It was 1.5 miles (2.4) kms NE of Jerusalem (thought to be on Mt Scopus), and the Tabernacle was there at this time. Ahimelech obviously knew of the problems between Saul and David and “was afraid at the meeting of David,” and asked why he was not leading a larger contingent of men on official business. He did have a few with him (V.4; Mark 2:25). Ahimelech had good reason to fear, for “detained before Yahweh” was “Doeg (“fearful”), an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul” (V.7). David’s untruthful answer to Ahimelech was to have dire consequences for all concerned as David later acknowledged – 1 Sam. 22:22.

V.3-6 – David’s request to eat the old shewbread replaced with new bread that day (a Sabbath) is an astonishing case. Only the priests were allowed to partake of the shewbread (Lev. 24:8-9; Mark 2:26). Christ used this incident to assert that he was “Lord of the Sabbath” in Mark 2:23-28. What motivated David? Hunger, desperation, or something higher? The fact is, he had been anointed king of Israel by Samuel. His faith in God did not allow him to seek to overthrow Saul whom he called “Yahweh’s anointed,” but he was the anointed king. He also knew that his reign would foreshadow Christ’s reign as King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. This becomes obvious when his psalms are studied. For example, Ps. 132 describes how he understood that the Ark belonged in Jerusalem when he was a youth keeping sheep in Bethlehem, and when he later brought it there, he operated as a ‘Melchizedek’ king-priest (2 Sam. 6) and distributed bread and wine to his people, Jew and Gentile, as Melchizedek did in Gen. 14:18. David was truly a man after God’s own heart in comprehension of the Divine purpose. Christ approved of his actions (Mark 2:25-26) for they foreshadowed him.

V.8-9 – An additional untruth as to why he was weaponless saw him receive the sword of Goliath stored there. It was to be a problem when he arrived in Gath.

V.10-15 – David and his small band fled to Gath in desperation. It was a serious mistake requiring David to act as a mad man – “he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.” He wrote about this dangerous and humiliating experience in Ps. 34, praising Yahweh for delivering him, as he did of the evil machinations of Doeg in Ps. 52. David was learning to taste that Yahweh was good, and the one to be trusted in all circumstances – Ps. 34:8 – “O taste and see that Yahweh is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (1 Pet. 2:3).

1 Samuel 22

V.1-5 – David escaped to the cave of Adullam and members of his family feeling their own lives to be in jeopardy from Saul’s wrath joined him there, as did many who were in trouble of some kind until he had 400 gathered to him. He sought refuge for his parents in Moab (echoes of Elimelech and his family) the original home of his ancestor Ruth. Feeling relatively secure in Adullam, David was to learn that Yahweh wanted to test his trust in God, not in his own wisdom – “the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah.” He obeyed and went to the forest of Hareth.

V.6-19 – Saul’s pitiful narcissism – “there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me” stirred a mercenary response from Doeg who told untruths about Ahimelech’s interactions with David. Called with

all his sons to Gibeah, Ahimelech's plea of innocence through ignorance was to no avail and Saul commanded his soldiers to kill the entire priesthood which they would not do. Doeg had no such inhibitions and not only slew all the family of Ahimelech present, but went and wiped out all his family in Nob, including their livestock. It says a lot about Saul that he could appoint Doeg an Edomite as the ruler of his servants (V.9).

V.20-23 – Only Abiathar escaped the massacre and fled to David who confessed that he was primarily responsible for the disaster. He should have not involved Ahimelech when he saw Doeg lurking in the background at Nob. He must have seen Ahimelech's fear. He could have found food elsewhere, and he didn't need Goliath's sword. The lesson is that telling untruths never turns out well for oneself and others – “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles” (1 Pet. 2:12).

Isaiah 65

V.1-2 are selectively cited by Paul in Rom. 10:20-21. He quotes the first half of V.1 in Rom. 10:20 in the context of the call of the Gentiles. Accordingly, the “nation” in the balance of the verse refers to the true ecclesia – the children of Zion that has been the subject of Isaiah's prophecy since chap. 49. Similarly, Paul cites V.2 in Rom. 10:21 in relation to Jews.

V.3-5 speak about Isaiah's idolatrous contemporaries who “had a form of godliness” in their apparent Judaism, but they routinely worshipped idols, ate “swine's flesh,” and yet somehow viewed themselves as clean and holy – “Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.” This was Judaism with a strange twist.

V.6-16 – Yahweh condemned them, but not the faithful remnant found among His people (V.8). The children of Zion would be preserved. This is why seven of the 11 uses of the plural term “servants” in chapters 54 to 66 are found in what follows. Seven being the covenant number, Yahweh confirms He will fulfil His covenant to Abraham, but destroy all his unworthy seed, the hypocritical professors of V.15 – “Ye shall leave your **name** for a curse unto my chosen.” Yahweh would “call his servants by **another name**.” That name was provided in Isa. 7:14 – Immanuel (“God with us”), the Lord Jesus Christ – “there is none other **name** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” A true child of Zion (one of God's “servants”) would “bless himself in the God of truth” (*amen* – surety; faithfulness).

V.17-25 – “behold, I create **new heavens** and a **new earth**: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” – The Millennium is spoken of. When God's promises to Abraham are fulfilled, not only will his spiritual seed find rest and reward in immortality as the children of Zion, but purged natural Israel will also find rest in the Land promised to Abraham. This is the Apostle's message in Rom. 11:11-15 – “through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles.... For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” The slide (above right) summarizes the content of this section. The purged third of “Judah” (Jews in the Land when Christ arrives – Zech. 13:8), and the younger generation of “Israel” (Jews outside the Land at Armageddon) will be settled in the tribal cantons and enjoy the blessings and fruitfulness of Christ's reign (Isa. 32). No oppressors will pass

The inheritance of Israel Isaiah 65:17-25

- ❖ A new heavens and a new earth – **V.17**
- ❖ Jerusalem a rejoicing, Israel a joy – **V.18-19**
- ❖ Mortal longevity greatly increased – **V.20**
- ❖ Build houses and plant vineyards without fear of plunder by enemies – **Vv.21-22**
- ❖ Do not labour in vain or produce offspring for trouble – **V.23**
- ❖ In harmony with Yahweh – **V.24**
- ❖ Violence eradicated from the Land – **V.25**

through the Land anymore, for the nations will be at rest, and at peace with Israel. That is the meaning of V.25 (see comments on Isa. 11 May 21).

Matthew 10

V.1-15 – The twelve apostles were appointed and sent out with instructions to go only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” What they were to preach, and the way they were to react to the response is detailed. They were to use the power to heal freely in gratitude for what had been given them. The “labourer is worthy of his hire” principle was invoked (Luke 10:7), but not all would go smoothly.

V.16-25 – “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore **wise as serpents**, and **harmless as doves**” – The wolves were the Sadducees, Pharisees and Scribes (V.17). They needed to be as observant and astute as the serpent in the garden, but as harmless as the dove of the Spirit (Matt. 3:16). When “they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak” – an ability only possible through the Holy Spirit (V.20). It is not applicable to us. We need to study to answer (Col. 4:6). The days of Micah would emerge again – “the brother shall deliver up the brother to death” (Mic. 7:5-6 – “a man's enemies are the men of his own house”). Fleeing to another place to preach was the only answer. It was by this approach that the Gospel spread so rapidly in the 1st century (Acts 8:1.4). The disciples were not to expect any different treatment than that would be shown to their Lord – V.24-25.

V.26-33 – Persecution might lead to death, but they were not to fear. Their names were in the Book of Life (Luke 10:20), and nothing that could be done to them was permanent. They were to be bold in their preaching – “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.”

V.34-39 – “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword” – Modern Christianity does not understand this. They mouth ‘peace’ and ‘unity’ when there is no peace (Jer. 6:14). It was God Himself that put enmity between truth and error (Gen. 3:15). Those who espouse truth will not be able to have peace with those holding error – “what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14). Hence, families would be deeply divided – “And a man's foes shall be they of his own household” (V.36). Those who compromised the truth to accommodate family were not worthy of Christ. The cross needed to be taken up to follow him, for “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”

V.40-42 – “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me” is the principle that will be revealed at the Judgement Seat – “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). Supporting teachers of the right way is tantamount to being the teacher and will receive his reward. Ordinary folk along the way needed to be nourished with the Word of God – “whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these **little ones** a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple” – Christ uses this term “little ones” in Luke 17:2. It is drawn from Zech. 13:7 when in the absence of the crucified shepherd, Yahweh would turn His hand over them to protect them. We have a duty of care to “**little ones**” as well.

July 10

1 Samuel 23

The events at Keilah are the background to the Messianic psalm, Psalm 31. They occur because God required David to leave the relative security of Adullam and enter the territory of Judah (1 Sam. 22:5). This was to test David's faith, and Keilah provided a massive challenge to his faith. The Philistines were pillaging Keilah at harvest time (V.1), and David enquired whether he should go and relieve them (V.2). He was instructed to do so – "Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah." David's men expressed their fear and so he enquired again, and received the same answer with the assurance that Yahweh would "deliver the Philistines into thine hand" (V.3-4). So the stage was set for an egregious act of betrayal by the men of Keilah.

V.5-9 – A great victory was won and the men of Keilah were saved from Philistine oppression, but news reached Saul that David was in Keilah and he immediately prepared his army to come down. David got wind of this and asked Abiathar to bring the ephod which he had brought down from Nob, after the slaughter of the priests, so he could again enquire of Yahweh.

V.10-13 – This transaction between David and his God speaks volumes about the way Yahweh works with His servants. He tests their faith and trust in Him so as to produce a rock solid faith like that of Abraham. He had directed David into Judah where he was exposed to danger; He directed him to save Keilah; and now He selectively answers David's questions. There were two questions – (1) "Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his (Saul's) hand?"; and (2) "will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?" He receives an answer to the second question, but not to the first – "And Yahweh said, He will come down." Some men would immediately turn to their own devices as Saul did in 1 Sam. 14:18-19 when having begun to enquire before the Ark he said to the priest "Withdraw thine hand," but not David. He patiently asked again, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" and received an incredibly disappointing answer – "They will deliver thee up," upon which David and his 600 men fled into the wilderness ending Saul's campaign. **Ingratitude** leading to **betrayal** to save one's own skin is a bitter experience which is why David under inspiration penned Ps. 31 as a Messianic psalm. One of the links with that psalm and the events at Keilah is found in Ps. 31:21 – "Blessed be Yahweh: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city" (Keilah means "a strong city"). Ps. 31:5 provided the 7th saying of Christ on the cross; the final words of Christ before he expired ("Into thine hand I commit my spirit"), and may have also provided the first words he spoke upon resurrection – "thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh God of truth." One thing is certain – Ps. 31 and David's experiences at Keilah meant a lot to Christ.

V.14-18 – David fled to a wood near Ziph. Saul had agents roaming the area to ascertain David's whereabouts. It would not have been easy to hide 600 men who needed to be fed every day. Saul could not find David, but amazingly Jonathan did, "and strengthened his hand in God." It was to be their last meeting, and a solemn covenant was made – "they two made a covenant before Yahweh." It was an example of the principle of Prov. 27:17 – "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

V.19-25 – The Ziphites perhaps concerned that David's large company would impinge upon their prosperity and tranquility, threw in their lot with Saul and sent messengers to Gibeah – "Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?" Jeshimon simply means 'wilderness'.

They were to do this again in 1 Sam. 26:1. Pitifully self-absorbed, Saul blasphemously blessed the Ziphites who joined his murderous campaign against David (V.21). Not wishing to be embarrassed again, Saul sent the Ziphites on a mission to identify with certainty where David was located. Once he heard David was in Maon, he was confident he had him trapped. He was right.

V.26-29 – “Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain” – **Divine providence** intervened to save David from capture and death. He and his men were saved by ‘the skin of their teeth’ (Job 19:20) – “for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.” At the critical moment a breathless messenger arrived to tell Saul that a massive Philistine invasion of the land was underway (V.27), and Saul was forced to retire. David named this place “Selahammahlekoth” to memorialize that God had saved him. The name means “the rock of the division” from the word *mahaloqet* signifying share, division, allotment; from the root *halaq* having the sense of ‘breaking apart’. It was Yahweh who had broken them apart. So the bitter events of Keilah culminated in some sweetness. David fled east to Engedi.

Isaiah 66

V.1-2 – The Almighty cannot be confined in a temple created by men, as Stephen asserted in his defence before the Sanhedrin, citing this passage (Acts 7:48-50). But Yahweh is pleased to dwell with a certain class of men (Isa. 57:15, V.2) – “to this man will I **look**, even to him that is **poor** and of a **contrite** spirit, and **trembleth** at my word.” Important words are used here, as in Isa. 57:15. The word “look” is *nabat* – to scan; look intently at. The word “poor” is *ʾānīy* – to be depressed; humble; i.e. not thinking highly of oneself. The word “contrite” is *nākeh* – maimed, smitten, stricken. This is the characteristic that comes first in the composite character of Christ presented in Matt. 5:2-12 – “poor in spirit.” It is a crushing of the human will so as to submit with a childlike acceptance to whatever God says (Matt. 18:4). The human will gets in the way of salvation – “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (1 Sam. 15:23). What is required is trembling at God’s Word. The word “trembleth” is *chârêd* – trembling, fearful, afraid; therefore also reverential. If we want Yahweh to look kindly on us, this must be our attitude to His Word. It happened at times in Israel’s history; e.g. Ezra 9:4 – “Then were assembled unto me every one that **trembled** at the words of the God of Israel.”

V.3-6 – The complete antithesis to those who trembled at God’s Word were the Judaisers of both Isaiah’s and Christ’s time (V.5). They were ‘religious’ but only according to their own prescription – “they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.” Judgement was coming, as it did in BC 587 and AD 70.

V.7-14 – Zion though, would finally prevail. This is a revealing section. “**Before** she travailed, she brought forth; **before** her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.” How is this possible? The answer lies in the events surrounding the return of Christ. His first work is to raise the responsible dead and to gather them and the responsible living to Mt Sinai for judgement. All this, unseen to the world at large, that will then be going through “a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation on earth” (Dan. 12:1-2 – note the resurrection and that time are concomitant events). At the end of 12 months (Ex. 40:2,33-38), the faithful saints will be glorified and the children of Zion ‘born’, as is explained next – “shall a **nation** be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” The “nation” here is that of Isa. 55:5 and 65:1 – the true ecclesia – the body of Christ (see comments on those chapters June 30 and July 9). Hence, “she **brought forth; before** her **pain** came, she was delivered of a **man child**” (the multitudinous

Christ Body – Rev. 1). Zion's final "**pain**" will be at the events of Armageddon (some 9 years after the glorification of the saints – the "children" of Zion). It is after those events that Zion will be seen to fulfil Isa. 60:1 – "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Yahweh is risen upon thee."

In V.9, Yahweh asks "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?" For millennia He has been at work among Jew and Gentile to produce children for Zion (Isa. 49:18-21). That energy will not go without results. The day of the birth of Zion's children will finally come. Then there will be rejoicing – "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad **with her**, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy **with her**, all ye that mourn for her." The phrase "with her" should be noticed, for it comes from Gen. 21:6 where upon the birth of Isaac "Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh **with me**." She also said "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given **children** suck?" That is, more than one. Sarah is the type of Zion (Isa. 51:2-3; Gal. 4:22-31), and Isaac the type of the seed of Abraham – the children of Zion. That "seed" was firstly singular (Christ), and then multitudinous (the body of Christ = the ecclesia). It is as though the children of Zion will "be dandled upon her knees" as Sarah did with Isaac. Thus, "the hand of Yahweh shall be known toward his **servants** (the children of Zion), and his indignation toward his enemies" (at Armageddon).

V.15-21 – "For, behold, Yahweh will come with fire, and with his chariots (the saints – Ps. 68:17) like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire" – Armageddon will see the destruction of Yahweh's enemies and the redemption of Israel. The destructive and hypocritical religions of Jew and Gentile will fall under Divine judgement and be cleansed from the earth (V.17-18). Christ will be king – "I will set a sign among them," and he will demand submission of defeated nations like Tarshish (Britain – Ezek. 38:13); Tubal (listed with Meshech in Gen. 10:2; Ezek. 27:13; 32:36; 38:2,3 = countries north of Israel); Lud (probably Libya); and Javan listed as trading with Tyre with Tubal and Meshech (Ezek. 27:13). These are countries in the Mediterranean and European region who were warlike – "that draw the bow." Other far flung nations come under the description of "the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory" (i.e. at the time of Armageddon, though they will have felt its effects). The call to assist scattered Jews to return to the Land of Israel, now under Christ's jurisdiction, matches that of Isa. 43:6 – "I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." The Second Exodus of Israel is the means whereby this will be accomplished. No Jew will be exempt – "they shall bring **all** your brethren" as Ezek. 20:38 indicates. From the younger generation, Levites will be identified to be the lower order of priests in the Temple (Ezek. 44).

V.22-24 – This refers back to Isa. 65:17. God will fulfil His promise to Abraham that his natural seed would also inherit the Land during the Millennium. Month after month "shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Yahweh," but some will not return home. As Bro. Sulley explains in The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy pages 81-82, the wicked whose sacrifices are not accepted will die and their bodies thrown on the dump to the west of the Temple for all passing by to see as a witness that "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

Matthew 11

V.1-19 – Even the 'greatest' of men may experience lingering doubts when commonly held expectations do not transpire as they thought they would. All Jews expected Messiah to come and relieve them from Roman oppression and establish the Kingdom. In prison;

oppressed by Roman agents, and not seeing any indication of the Kingdom being set up, John the Baptist sent disciples to enquire of Jesus “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” Isa. 61:1 was being fulfilled (V.5), and that was to be reported to John with an exhortation – “And, happy, is he, whosoever shall not find cause of stumbling, in me” (Rotherham). The Lord’s worthy forerunner was the greatest born among women, except for himself as he was the only one guaranteed a place in the Kingdom at that time (V.11). Because of John’s work many strove to enter into the Kingdom. Translators have struggled with the Greek for V.12. The word translated “suffereth violence” is *biazō* – to force, that is, (reflexively) to crowd oneself (into). It is not a reference to repugnant violence, but to extreme enthusiasm for a cause. It is clearer in Luke 16:16 – “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” What the disciples did not understand then was that John the Baptist had fulfilled Mal. 4:5 to Judah (i.e. the Jews in the Land). That is what Luke 1:15-17 had meant, but it took another attempt for them to understand (Matt. 17:14). Elijah the Prophet does not have a work among Jews in the Land in the future. That was completed for him by John the Baptist.

V.20-24 – Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum (all local towns) are condemned for their refusal to accept their Messiah. Their judgement would be worse than that on Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, and so it proved to be. Sodom was destroyed in an hour. The towns of Galilee were besieged, starved and ruthlessly overthrown by the Roman legions between AD 66 and 70 – a long drawn out and horrific affair as Josephus testifies.

V.25-30 – These verses draw heavily on Ps. 8 (see comments on Luke 10 – March 19 pgs. 43-44). God’s people were heavily laden by the demands of Judaism (Acts 15:10). No one could keep the Law, it condemned them at every turn. It was designed to lead them to Christ, and he was here. His yoke was much lighter and led to eternal life. It was a “yoke” indeed, but not heavy. As Paul noted, the only law that we are under now is the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:21), and though it is demanding, it is not hard to bear. Christ’s mind is on the Sabbath, and this is where the record goes next.

July 11

1 Samuel 24

A familiar pattern emerged in the life of Israel as the nation ‘trod water’ through poverty of leadership. Having deflected the Philistine threat, Saul immediately formed a force of 3,000 men to pursue David. The events at Engedi are well known, but an observation must be made about the involvement of **Divine providence**. How was it that in a barren region where there are thousands of caves, this one large enough to hold hundreds of men, that the king of Israel should end up in it in the absence of any supporting bodyguard? This is a remarkable situation and is clearly designed to provide a test for David, and another humiliation for Saul and an opportunity to change his approach. Pressure came on David from his angry and brooding men to kill Saul. He wrote Ps. 57 about this incident and said of his companions – “My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword” – Ps. 57:4. David would not kill “Yahweh’s anointed,” but did cut off a portion of his royal robe. Even that disturbed him greatly, and with difficulty he suppressed his agitated men.

The interchange between Saul and David revealed a humble David appealing for consideration of his mercy and respect for Saul, and the latter making a confession that he knew his days as king were numbered. The confession and the tears that accompanied it made no difference to the future however. Saul was past the point of return.

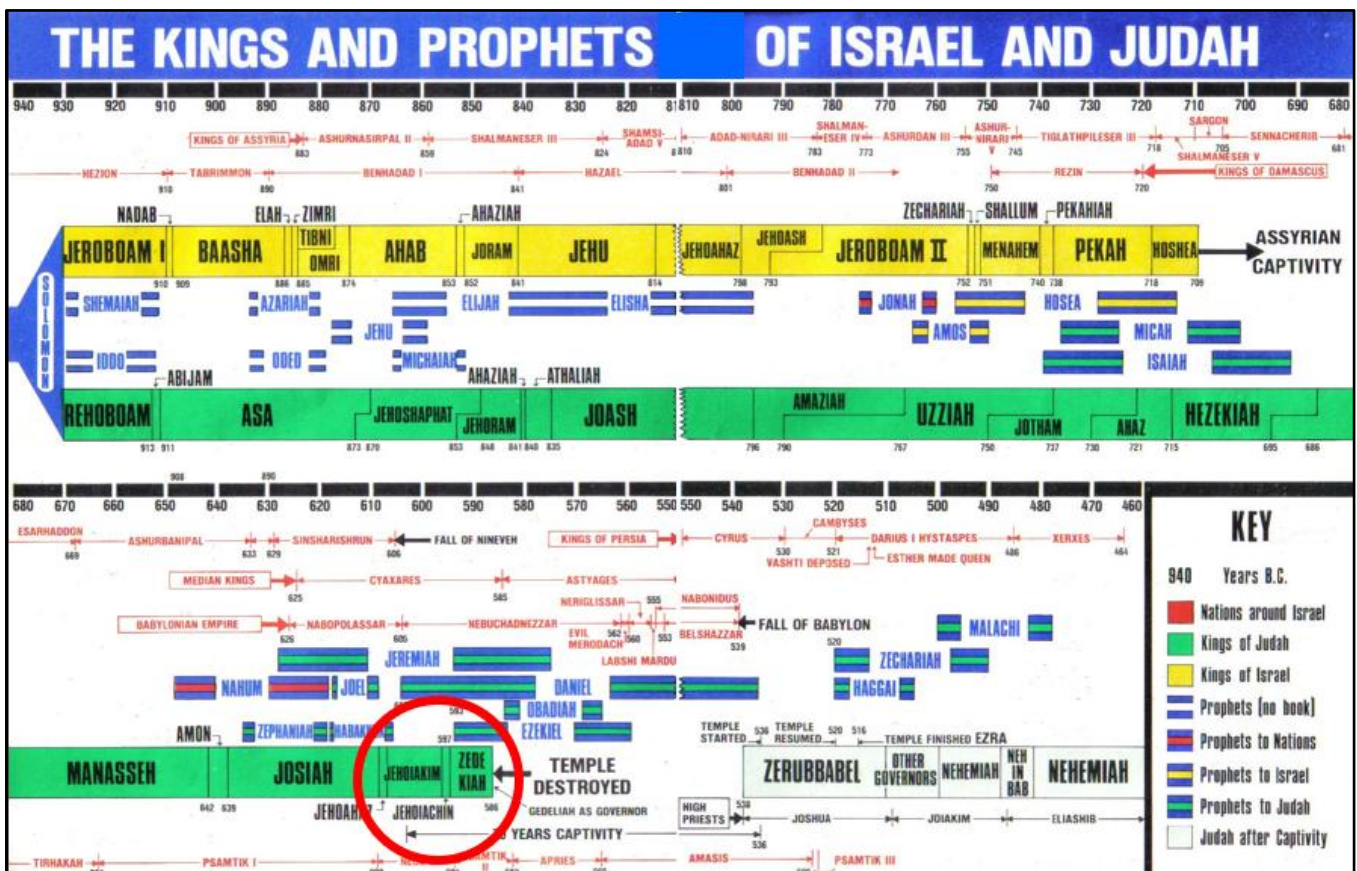
Jeremiah 1

Jeremiah (“Whom Yah has appointed”) was almost certainly the son of Hilkiah (“My portion is Yah”), the high priest in the reign of Josiah (2 Kings 22:4). They were of Anathoth (“Answers to prayer”) a priestly town about 5 kms (3 miles) north of Jerusalem. Jeremiah was a priest and began prophesying in the 13th year of Josiah (they were probably about same age). He never married and had no offspring (Jer. 16:2). In many ways he was a type of Christ. He was known by Yahweh well before his birth (Jer. 1:5), and was rarely free from opposition, derision and persecution throughout his life.

It has been well said of Jeremiah – “No prophet of God was at once more sure of his words, but at the same time so unsure of himself.”

Smith’s Bible Dictionary also makes another interesting observation – “His character is most interesting. We find him sensitive to a most painful degree, timid, shy, hopeless, desponding, constantly complaining and dissatisfied with the course of events, but never flinching from duty. Timid in resolve, he was unflinching in execution; as fearless when he had to face the whole world as he was dispirited and prone to murmuring when alone with God. Judged by his own estimate of himself, he was feeble, and his mission a failure; really, in the hour of action and when duty called him, he was in very truth ‘a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land.’ (Jer. 1:18). He was a noble example of the triumph of the moral over the physical nature.”

The times of Jeremiah are shown in the chart below.



V.4-9 – Yahweh had plans for Jeremiah long before his birth, just as He did for Josiah in whose reign he began to prophesy – 1 Kings 13:2 (“Josiah by name” 280 years before). They were friends and Jeremiah’s mourning for Josiah on his death was deep – 2 Chron

35:25. He was told “I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” and responded by claiming youth – “Ah, Lord Yahweh! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child,” but is overruled and commanded “whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.” To ensure his reticence didn’t get in the way, his mouth was touched by a Divine finger and a declaration made – “Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth” (V.8).

V.10 – Jeremiah’s appointment had wide ramifications for all nations, not just Judah – “See, I have this day **set** thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.” The word “set” was to find an important place in the rest of the prophecy. It is *pâqad* – to visit (with friendly or hostile intent). It occurs 49 times in the book.

V.11-12 – The vision of the almond tree indicated there would be no delay in the judgements Jeremiah was to warn of. The word rendered “almond” comes from a root signifying “to be awake;” and as the almond blossoms in January (in the northern hemisphere), it seems to be awake while other trees are still sleeping, and therefore is a fit emblem of early activity.

V.13-16 – The vision of the seething pot presaged the judgements to be delivered by the Babylonians for all of the desecrating evils of Manasseh – 2 Chron. 33:9; 2 Kings 22:16-17. “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north” (i.e. towards the south – Mgn.) Judgements always came from the north (Ps. 75:6-7).

V.17-19 – Jeremiah is commissioned and informed he would encounter stiff opposition to the messages he was to convey. Despite his own proclivities he was to set his visage as “a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land.” It was not going to be easy – “And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith Yahweh, to deliver thee.”

Matthew 12

V.1-8 – There are two companion records – Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5. Comments made on the latter follow:

The rabbis’ had developed 39 different regulations governing what might not be done on the Sabbath day. These included harvesting which is what they accused the disciples of. The Lord advanced David’s partaking of the newly replaced loaves of shewbread on a Sabbath day (1 Sam. 21:5-6) which was reserved exclusively for the priests (Lev. 24:5-9). How was that justifiable? For the same reasons Christ worked on the Sabbath day to heal and cure. David had been anointed king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:12-13). He had already in his youth worked out that the Aaronic priesthood would be superseded by the Melchizedek king-priesthood of Christ of whom he was now the forerunner (Ps. 132:2-9). Accordingly, when he brought the Ark from Kirjathjearim to place it in a tent of his own pitching (1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1) and not in the Tabernacle of Moses, as king he wore a priestly robe and dispensed to the people (both Jew and Gentile) bread and wine as Melchizedek had done (Gen. 14:18). That is why David could eat the shewbread without condemnation. Jesus Christ too, was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Luke 6:5). Like David he operated above the Law for a superior and more permanent cause.

V.9-14 – The healing of the man with a **withered hand** standing in the middle of a synagogue is another enacted parable where the actions are just as important as the words. The command to “Rise up, and stand forth in the midst” as a representative of all in that place indicates that their mind and thinking was of the withered/closed hand variety (1 Kings 13:4). The imagery is drawn from Isa. 58 where the principle of the Sabbath is beautifully

portrayed. The law keepers who sat together on Sabbaths fasting had a clenched fist attitude (Isa. 58:4-5). The fast that Yahweh desired was the **open hand** that loosed the bands of wickedness; unloaded heavy burdens; and let the oppressed go free; broke every yoke; dealt bread to the hungry; guided the poor to a safe place and covered the unclothed (Isa. 58:6-7). These were things that could only be done with the **open hand** – the symbol for the Sabbath, and the way of Yahweh Himself (Isa. 59:1) – “Behold, Yahweh’s hand is not **shortened** (by being clenched), that it cannot save.” Herein lay the huge gap between Judaistic law keepers and the presumptive Priest after the order of Melchizedek. If only these closed minded law keepers would open their ‘Sabbath hand’ and seek to cure like Christ, and not kill as they sought to do to him (V.14). At least the man with the withered hand becomes a little more like his healer – “Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.”

V.15-21 – Jesus continued to use the **open hand** of his Father as “great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all,” but his work was threatened by too much publicity – “And charged them that they should not make him known.” Isa. 42:1-4 is cited (see comments on Isa. 42 on June 18 pg. 48).

V.22-32 – Upon healing a blind and dumb man (a symbol for the Pharisees and others who could not ‘see’ or speak the truth), the amazed people present declared – “Is not this the son of David?” The lurking Pharisees took umbrage and declared that Jesus cured “by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” This was blasphemy of the power of the Holy Spirit for which there is no forgiveness. Simple logic – “every city or house divided against itself shall not stand” led to a condemnation from which there is no escape – “whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” One important principle emerged in the Lord’s teaching – “He that is not **with me** is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (V.30). There can be no neutrality in following Christ. Lack of commitment is actually opposition in his view. And, failure to labour with him is actually seen as scattering. This attitude would be objectionable in the Humanistic world of today where neutrality and independence are entrenched.

V.33-37 – The Lord continued his condemnation of the Pharisees using the principles of Matt. 7:16-20 – “the tree is known by his fruit.” Sometimes the Lord’s words – “every **idle** word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement” have been misunderstood. This is a reference to the blasphemous words of the Pharisees in V.24, and not to ordinary everyday conversations or times of lightheartedness.

V.38-42 – The blasphemous Pharisees and the Scribes disingenuously sought a sign and were held up against pagan Gentiles who unlike them humbly accepted the signs they were given. The prophetic sign of Jonah would be witness again when Christ emerged from the tomb after three days and nights having been murdered and put therein by his blaspheming adversaries.

V.43-45 – See comments on Luke 11 on March 20 pages 45-46.

V.46-50 – The Lord showed no disrespect for his family when his “mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him,” for they had come to restrain him (Mark 3:21; John 7:5) seemingly out of embarrassment and criticism from locals. His declaration – “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” eschews earthly loyalties. He had made this clear in Matt. 10:37 – “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy

of me.” Thankfully, after his resurrection his family chose to do the will of his Father and joined his true ‘family’ – Acts 1:14.

July 12

1 Samuel 25

Samuel died and while Saul ‘licked his wounds’ of conscience, David and his men were given partial rest from constant pursuit. They took up guard duties over the holdings of Nabal the Carmelite (not to be confused with Mt Carmel in the north). This Carmel is about 10 miles (16 kms) east of Hebron in a hilly and quite fertile area (in those days). David, not unreasonably, expected some reparations for preserving Nabal’s extensive livestock holdings from predators and thieves. It was to be another test for David. When one has to provide food and shelter for 600 men and some of their families, the pressure is enormous. When Nabal refused to offer anything on request, David’s pride and hurt burst out into vengeance. It was not the David everyone had known. As time went on, it is observable that David’s patience and confidence was being worn down. After the next interaction with Saul (chap. 26), “David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul” (1 Sam. 27:1). It is not without reason the Apostle exhorted in Gal. 6:9 – “And let us not be **weary** in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we **faint not**,” and again in 2 Thess. 3:13. Years of pressure and severe testing can have a negative effect on patience, endurance and confidence in God. This was one such case.

Again, Divine providence intervened to save David from regret over his intended actions. God was quite capable of handling the ingratitude and avariciousness of the fool Nabal (“fool”), and Abigail was quite capable of reigning in a furious and revengeful David.

V.18-31 – Abigail’s timely intervention is aided by God. How was it possible that two companies riding on asses through a hilly pastoral land meet face to face? – “she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.” The angels were involved. Abigail’s lengthy speech prostrated before David is a masterpiece of spiritual persuasiveness and intelligent perception of the place David held in the Divine scheme of things. It was irresistible to a man like David and he humbly submitted to her counsel.

V.32-38 – Accepting Abigail’s abundant gift, David returned to camp grateful that Yahweh had kept him from his purpose through a remarkable young woman – “Blessed be Yahweh God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.” The outcome was not so good for Nabal, for having been informed of their narrow escape, his heart failed and he died 10 days later.

V.39-44 – On hearing of Nabal’s death, David sent to take Abigail as his wife. She gladly came with five damsels (bridesmaids) to the ‘beloved’ in a scene foreshadowing a much greater marriage in the future.

Jeremiah 2

V.1-13 – The very first message of Yahweh through Jeremiah to His people goes back to Him taking Israel as His wife at Sinai – Ex. 19:1-6; Jer. 2:2; 3:14. The nation through idolatry had committed adultery against Him all through their history. The time to remove them from His ‘house’ had come. Reminded of the enormous privileges of that status as Yahweh’s wife, the reasons for the oncoming judgements are given. In the process, two important themes emerge. Firstly, the message is to “all the families of the house of Israel” because the

nation had been split into two in the days of Rehoboam and this is taken up in chapter 3 when bills of divorcement are mentioned. Secondly, the common word “said” and “say” (*amar* used 478 times in the book) becomes an important theme in what follows.

V.14-37 – This lengthy expostulation in which Yahweh remonstrates with His errant wife sees pushback from her. It is worth highlighting these. V.23 – “How canst thou **say**, I am not polluted.” V.25 – “but thou **saidst**, There is no hope.” V.27 – “**Saying** to a stock,” and “they will **say**, Arise, and save us.” V.31 – “wherefore **say** my people, We are lords.” V.35 – “Yet thou **sayest**, Because I am innocent,” and “because thou **sayest**, I have not sinned.” This constant pushback by Israel culminates in rejection of their ‘sayings’ – “for Yahweh hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.” Why is this important? For two reasons. Firstly, when there is constant differences of view on the true state of things, it is inevitable that some kind of breakdown of the family relationship will occur. Secondly, the beginning of Jer. 3 draws on this theme as we shall consider.

Some notable points from this section are: V.13 – the twin evils of forsaking Yahweh “the fountain of living waters” and of creating their own religion (“hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water”). How many have done that? V.34 – “the poor innocents” refers to the countless children immolated to worship Molech.

Matthew 13

In this chapter the Lord begins to speak in parables. The companion accounts are found in Mark 4 and Luke 8. There are some differences with parables appearing in one not found in another. The parable of the sower is the foundation parable in each record, and is therefore of immense importance.

V.1-2 – By the sea of Galilee, the pressing multitudes required the Lord to get into a fishing boat and pull off shore a little. This had advantages. Not only was he free from being crushed, but his voice would carry across the water to the multitude.

V.3-9 – The parable of the sower sets out the response to the preaching of the Gospel. The symbols are obvious. The seed is “the word of the kingdom” (V.19). The various types of soil are representative of the human mind and its relationship to the seed. Anyone who hears the message (i.e. the seed comes into contact with their ‘soil’) will end up in one of four categories. There are only four possible outcomes – oblivion or **rejection** at the Judgement Seat for (1) Disinterest; (2) Failure of faith and zeal after a brief probation; (3) Allowing the cares of life to choke the Word so that it becomes fruitless; or on the upside, **acceptance** (4) Due to bringing forth “the fruit of the Spirit” in varying degrees.

V.10-17 – The disciples were curious as to the reason why the Lord chose to speak in parables. They were doubtless mystified by his response – “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” Surely the Lord desired to save everyone like his Father does (Ezek. 18:32; 33:11; Heb. 2:9). However, salvation is dependent on recognition of one’s need, and the desire to seek it using God’s prescribed method (Rom. 2:7). Christ was confronted by a nation largely given over to rabbinical Judaism. Like Adam, they had created their own religion – a fig leaf covering (Gen. 3:7; Job 31:33; Mark 11:13), and rejected “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29; Rev. 13:8).

The citation from Isa. 6:9-10 is significant because that chapter begins with a vision of Christ in glory in the Kingdom surrounded by his glorified brethren (Isa. 6:1; John 12:39-41; Rev. 4 which is based on Isa. 6), but goes on to warn of desolating judgements in V.11-12 that fell on Judea in AD 70. That day was near. Only those with a hearing ear would be saved – “But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” Isaiah and the

remnant with him would have loved to hear the teachings of Messiah, but it was his disciples who had been given that privilege (V.17).

V.18-23 provide the explanation of the parable of the sower.

V.24-30,36-43 – The parable of the tares is based on the parable of the sower to expand upon the outcome of Christ's sowing. Sadly, he is teaching that "an enemy" would sow "tares" (*zizanian* – a kind of dandelion, resembling wheat except the grains are black) among the "seed" he and his apostles had sown. So it came to pass with the corruption of the truth in the latter half of the 1st century and into the next. The problem was, what to do about the apostates growing alongside the pure "seed." Mistakes have been made interpreting this parable. Some have used it as a vehicle for dealing with error within an ecclesia or the brotherhood. This was not its purpose as Christ himself explains. V.38 – "The field is the world" (*kosmos* – order of things). The brotherhood is not "the world" as Christ said in his prayer – John 17:16. There are two acceptable interpretations of this parable. The first is that of Bro. Roberts in *Nazareth Revisited* – EXPLANATION—Both the wheat-class and the tare-class in Israel to be left unmolested till the arrival of their respective times, to be dealt with "according to their deeds." The tare-class to be harvested "FIRST": the wheat-class afterwards—the one a long time after the other, as the event has proved. The harvesting to be performed by the angels in both cases, under Christ's command, but the harvesting of the tares to be done in the way of Providence, in which the angels work by influencing natural circumstances, while the harvest of the wheat would be done by them in an open and visible manner. The parable has been nearly all fulfilled, except the glorious part which is still future. "First" as the parable required, at the end of the Jewish world, the tare-class were gathered into Jerusalem, as into a furnace of fire, where there was wailing and gnashing of teeth, where they were destroyed with every circumstance of suffering and horror, as a study of the details of Josephus' account of the devastation of Judea, and the destruction of Jerusalem, nearly forty years after Christ's ascent to "all power in heaven and earth," will abundantly shew to the reader. Thus were retributively "gathered out of his kingdom all things that offended" during his personal ministry, and "them who did iniquity." The kingdom of the Holy Land is his kingdom which enables us to understand the interpretation.

The second is that of Bro. John Carter in *The Parables of the Messiah* where he applies the judgement process to the Second Advent of Christ when the apostate religious systems that grew up alongside the truth will be shown for what they were – the possessors of truth rewarded and all false religions destroyed.

There is a certain simplicity about the parables of the mustard seed and leaven (V.31-33); the parable of the hidden treasure (V.44); and the parable of the pearl of great price (V.45-46) that hardly requires comment. However, the parable of the net was the subject of comment on the three nets in the N.T. (see Appendix 4 for April pg. 76). This is the second net and speaks of the Judgement Seat of Christ.

V.51-52 – The disciples were overconfident when asked by Christ whether they understood the parables he had spoken – "Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord." He was dealing with long hidden secrets as he said in V.34-35 citing Ps. 78:2 – "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Some things he said were "old" (i.e. known by them); some things were completely "new" to them. Not that they had never been spoken about for the O.T. was the basis of everything that the Lord taught. Not even the angels had heard everything he was now revealing to his disciples – 1 Pet. 1:10-12. It needs to be remembered that the "new" here is not something out of 'left field' like the doctrinal teachings

Paul mentions in 2 Tim. 4:3-4 designed for “itching ears.” It is a reference to things we may have heard, but not understood. That requires ‘giving the sense’ – Neh. 8:8.

V.53-58 – Sadly, the people of the Lord’s hometown were not ready to hear and rejected him. He learnt that “a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.”

July 13

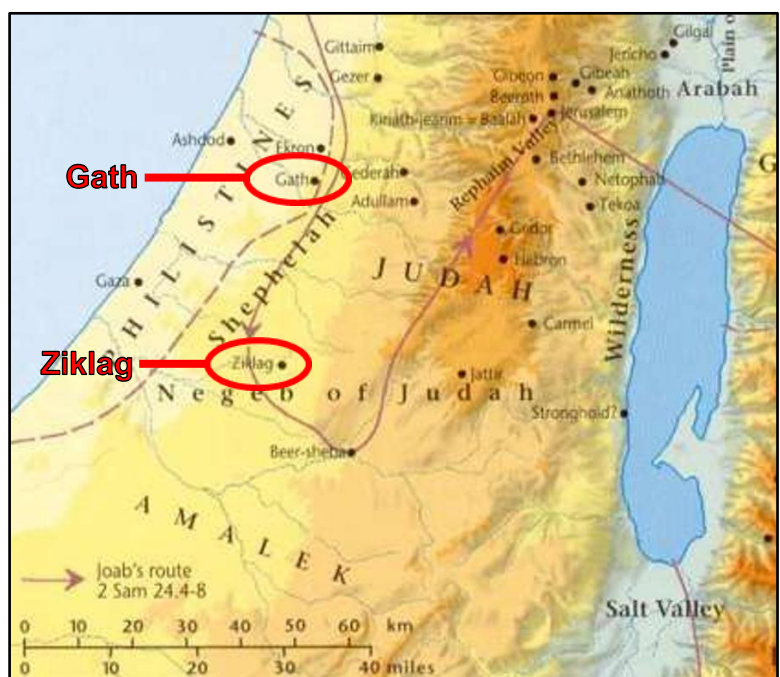
1 Samuel 26

The Ziphites betrayed David again and Saul this time reacted immediately with an army of 3,000 men. He pitched in the hill of Hachilah (“dark”) that the Ziphites identified as David’s hiding place, but in fact David was some distance away. He sent spies to confirm Saul’s position. At night, David took Abishai down to Saul’s encampment and none of the 3,000 men were awake “because a deep sleep from Yahweh was fallen upon them” (V.12). God was working again on David’s behalf. Abishai asked to kill Saul with one blow, but David again refused to kill Yahweh’s anointed. As evidence he could have done so, he instructed Abishai to take Saul’s spear and water bottle and left. When some distance away from the camp David shouted for Abner to wake up. This was heaping scorn on Abner the ‘king-maker’ who was the primary source of motivation for Saul to pursue David for his own aggrandizement (V.19). David claimed that Abner’s influence in the matter was tantamount to him “saying, Go, serve other gods.” David wrote Ps. 54 about the betrayal of the Ziphites, and he reflected on this latest challenge in Ps. 16:4 – “Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god.”

V.17-25 – The interchange between Saul and David, this time in pitch darkness (the meaning of Hachilah), is the last between them. David pleaded his case and his words betray a real weariness with the whole saga. He is not interested in any of Saul’s assurances and dismissed his mealy-mouthed words which had no credibility. He placed his future in the hands of God, but even that public confidence was now under pressure, for in his heart there was a different sentiment lurking – “And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.” The exhortation for us is obvious. After long endurance of trial, weariness can set in and human frailty start to undermine our faith and confidence in God. If it could happen to David, it can happen to anyone. The lesson is this – if we have seen the hand of God in our affairs in the past, as David could, then we should be confident He will not forsake us in the future if we trust in Him. Easy said, not so easily done.

1 Samuel 27

V.1-4 – David’s confidence was slipping so he devised a plan to get out of range of Saul by going into the land of the Philistines for refuge. It was a plan that set aside Yahweh’s command to be in the



territory of Judah (1 Sam. 22:5), and was to have serious consequences. Achish the king of Gath who had dismissed David as a madman some years before (1 Sam. 21:14), now embraced him on the principle among 'politicians' that the enemy of your enemy must be your friend! One of David's motivations was to get some rest for his, and his men's households (V.3), and his strategy for relief from pursuit worked for "it was told Saul that David was fled to **Gath**: and he sought no more again for him."

V.5-7 – David requested of Achish a town to reside in and was granted Ziklag in the south where he and his men and their families were to live for 16 months. The problem was that they were close to the dangerous and opportunistic Amalekites.

V.8-12 – David and his men went marauding surreptitiously to the south and ensured that no one was left alive to inform Achish to whom he told untruths, and was believed. This situation was to bring David a great deal of angst in time to come. We can sometimes dig ourselves into a deep hole for the sake of peace and relief from oppression. While life at times throws up very difficult situations, it is always best to trust in Yahweh to deliver us from evil.

Jeremiah 3

V.1 – Young's Literal – "**Saying**, Lo, one sendeth away his wife, And she hath gone from him, And she hath been to another man, Doth he turn back unto her again?" It is important to note who is speaking here. There is no chapter division in the text, so the speaker here is Yahweh who in the final verse of chapter 2 had rejected Israel's confidences. So it is not Israel who make this statement as the KJV infers.

A number of other versions support Young's translation of the final sentence in this verse, including Rotherham. It is not couched in the terms of an appeal by God for Judah to return to Him, but rather is an exclamation of astonishment and indignation that Judah in her corrupt state could even contemplate returning to her husband while she continued to consort with her lovers. This is borne out by the context. In verses 2 and 3, Yahweh immediately points to the idolatry of the high places and the continuing whoredoms of Judah as reasons precluding her return to Him. It was ludicrous for her to think that in such a polluted state God would take her back – He rejected her "confidences," but wanted her to return to him if she reformed. The word "return" is *shub* – to return, turn back; occurs 9 times in the chapter and twice in Jer. 4:1-2 which speaks of the requirements for them to return. It is worth highlighting the occurrences.

We have already observed that the theme of espousal and marriage runs through the context of Jeremiah 2 and 3. The nation had treacherously departed from her husband (3:20; 2:5,13, 17,19), and had committed adultery with many lovers – 2:20,25,33; 3:2-31. Yahweh as a faithful and merciful husband had sought repeatedly to restore His wife to faithfulness, but they had stubbornly resisted these attempts and had slain His messengers (2:30). The pinnacle of this resistance had come in the days of Manasseh, king of Judah who filled Jerusalem with the blood of "the poor innocents" – 2:34). But now in the days of Jeremiah's prophecy during the reign of Manasseh's grandson Josiah (3:6), who introduced a determined reformation in Judah, the attention of the people had been drawn to the horror of their ways and the depth of their apostasy. This had produced some token changes in them, but without real sincerity (3:10), so that they now presumed upon the mercy of God and sought to return to Him without complete reformation. They claimed innocence of idolatry (adultery) and violence (2:23,35), and insisted that they were worthy of being saved from destruction by restoration to their husband (2:27,35; 3:1,4-5). But they had still not forsaken their lovers (2:25,33,36) and sought to place their trust in Egypt, who would finally reject them (2:36-37). Could their husband Yahweh restore them to Himself as a true wife under such

circumstances as these? The answer of course was, No! And that is why the legislation of Deut. 24:1-4 is invoked. Moses' legislation did not deal with grounds for divorce, but with the **fact** of divorce and its consequences on remarriage of the original partners. A woman thrust away by a hard-hearted husband and "defiled" by remarriage could not return to her original husband. Rather, he was not permitted to return to her, even if she was willing to return to him. However, the situation here was quite different. God had not yet put Judah away for her adulteries as He had done with Israel in the north 100 years earlier. But like her sister, Judah had treacherously departed from her husband to consort with her lovers (2:25; 3:1-2,6-10). Her iniquities had separated her from her husband (Isa. 59:2), and though He laboured mightily to restore her to faithfulness, this He could not accomplish until she acknowledged her sin and changed her ways (3:7,12-13). Judah refused to be ashamed and turn from her whoredoms because she had "a whore's forehead" (3:3). So God had no choice but to refuse her advances, though she feigned a desire to return to Him (3:10).

Hence, the reason for Yahweh invoking Deut. 24:1-4 was to demonstrate His complete innocence in the breakdown of the marriage, and His absolute justification in refusing her return while she remained polluted with the idols of the land and continued to consort with "another man" – Egypt (2:36-37). The roles of Deut. 24:1-4 were totally reversed. The hard hearted Israelite found himself unable to return to a wife whom he had caused to be "defiled", in spite of her willingness to return to him. But in this case, though the husband remained completely free of culpability, the principle held true. The wife was 'willing', but wholly defiled by adultery. She had disqualified herself from returning to her husband. Of course, under the Law she would have been stoned to death, but God was here dealing with a nation that He could not destroy because of His eternal covenants.

V.8 – "Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a **bill of divorce**" – Israel forsook him and refused to return! After many unsuccessful attempts at restoration He had no option but to confirm the existing fact and put her away. The figure of a bill of divorce is used to represent the finality of the Assyrian captivity, but not the finality of the marriage; "for **I am married unto you**" (Jer. 3:14) still applies to this day, and there was no remarriage. Israel's ultimate restoration to her longsuffering husband is assured (Hos. 2:14-20). It grieved Yahweh that Judah proved even worse than Israel (V.8-11).

V.12 – "Go and proclaim these words toward the north" – That the north refers to Gentile lands is clear from V.18. Elijah's message is to scattered Israel, not to the Jews now in the Land.

"return thou backsliding Israel" – It is important to note that a distinction is drawn between Israel and Judah in this prophecy (note V.6-11,18). It is clear from V.18 that Judah and Israel will not be united until after Jerusalem becomes "the throne of Yahweh" (V.17), therefore the message carried to Israel must concern only those Jews scattered in all nations. Elijah's message is a call to repentance so that Yahweh's mercy might be extended to Israel – V.12-14.

V.14 – "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" – Though all Jews will leave their adopted lands and join the Second Exodus, not all will enter the Land to take up their inheritance. The purging out of rebels (Ezek. 20:33-38) during the Exodus will thin the ranks of Israel in a similar manner as occurred to Israel in the wilderness under Moses. Only a few of the older generation will manifest the faith required for entry into the Covenant Land and the younger generation (perhaps the "two of a family") will enter the Land to take up their inheritance leaving their father's bones lying in "the wilderness of the people" – Ezek. 20:35.

“I will give you pastors” – These will be Elijah and his associates whose task it will be to instruct Jewry in 'sound doctrine' that they might respond to Yahweh.

In verses 16-18 Jeremiah presents the ultimate results of Elijah's work. In the following verse he reveals how these results are attained.

V.19 – “How shall I put thee among the children” – Yahweh poses the question – How would it be possible for Him to restore to the status of sons a people who had rejected His Son and polluted His name among the Gentiles and still uphold His righteousness before all nations? Only through total repentance and confession of their guilt could Yahweh justly forgive and restore Israel – V.13. “Thou shalt call me, My father” – Israel in dispersion must learn to recognize their relationship to Yahweh, and manifest the proper filial respect to Him.

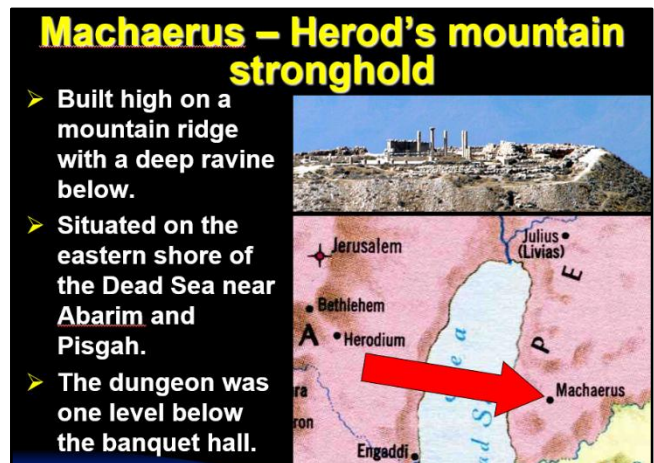
In verses 20-22 Jeremiah portrays the message that Elijah will deliver to Israel in order to cause them to review their past. The message in the form of rebuke followed by an appeal is calculated to produce in the Jews a repentant sorrow. This effect it will have, and the grateful, heart-broken response of Israel is then portrayed in verses 22-25.

Matthew 14

V.1-12 – When Herod Antipas heard of Jesus, he assumed it was John the Baptist whom he had beheaded. What follows is the account of that evil deed. Herod imprisoned John the Baptist in his mountain top fortress at Machaerus after his three and a half year ministry because of his serious criticism of Herod's actions in stealing his brother's wife. John's Nazariteship is brought to a successful conclusion as his head is separated from his body (the whole point of Nazariteship). The bitter hatred of Herodias craved revenge against John, but Herod feared upsetting the people who loved John (V.5). During Herod's birthday party, Salome, Herodias's daughter whose racy dancing so impressed him that he made a rash drunken vow to give her whatever she desired. Schooled by her mother, she asked John's head on a platter. Mortified by his own folly, Herod gave the order for the execution. It is said that Salome many years later was beheaded in Spain when skating on thin ice!

V.13-21 – For the feeding of the 5,000 see comments on Luke 9 on March 18 pgs. 41-42, and April 14 pg. 29.

V.22-33 – The disciples in the absence of Christ were crossing the Sea of Galilee (called “Galilee of the nations” – Isa. 9:1) towards Capernaum (“the city of comfort”) in a ‘ship’ (the ecclesia) in the company of their brethren (fellow disciples). The ‘ecclesial ship’ was being buffeted and tossed to and fro by a violent storm (Rev. 16:14), and only the appearance of Christ could save them. When he arrived, the storm was calmed (Ps. 65:7), and the ship was immediately at the place they had set out for – “the city of comfort” (John 6:21; Isa. 51:3; 66:13; Zech. 1:17). There is a lesson for us in this account. Peter's typical enthusiasm saw him ask, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” This sounds like an act of faith, but it was not wise. He started well, but the turbulence changed all that. It is better to remain in the ecclesial ship in a time of violent storms at the end of the days rather than test our faith in a turbulent world. The Lord is not here yet, and he was not yet in the



ship with his disciples when Peter made his request. Stay in the ship. The calm will soon come when he arrives.

V.34-36 – The healing continued especially when the hem of Christ's garment was touched. He was the Word made flesh after all.

July 14

1 Samuel 28

V.1 – “The Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel” – The time came for the price to be paid for David's refuge in the land of the Philistines against God's will (1 Sam. 22:5). Having created a confidence in Achish, he could not now back away from its demands. So, David feigned loyalty to Achish. It was one of the most difficult situations David ever faced. Jonathan his friend, and Israel his nation, were under serious threat of annihilation. What could he do? There are consequences to all important decisions we make.

Saul, on the other hand, was at the end of his tether. Samuel was dead; Yahweh had forsaken him and when he saw the Philistine host he knew he was doomed. One last vain attempt to seek help from Yahweh failed (V.6), and so Saul stooped to witchcraft in his desperation (1 Sam. 15:23 – “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft”). In his Judaistic zeal, Saul had tried to eradicate witches from Israel (V.3), but even in this the people had worked against him, for as soon as he requested that his servants find him a witch, they knew straight away where there was one (V.7). In desperation he crept across the Jezreel valley from Mt Gilboa to Endor. Though highly suspicious, the witch accepted the request to ‘bring up’ Samuel for Saul after he made an oath she would not die. It was the only oath Saul ever kept, and that only because he was dead the next day!

V.12-20 – This passage has caused a good deal of discussion. Was Samuel actually resurrected? The answer is no. The surprise of the witch, and her immediate realization that she was in the presence of Saul, the witch killer, is evidence that she had never seen anything like this before. Additionally, Saul did not see Samuel – “what sawest thou?” She responded “an old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle.” The same kind of thing was to happen at the Transfiguration. There, Moses and Elijah “appeared in glory” with Christ and spoke with him (Matt. 17:3; Luke 9:30-31). It was a vision – Matt. 17:9 – “Tell the **vision** to no man.” We should never question the ability of the Almighty to create visions before people of His choosing that seem as real as the real thing. He did this with Ezekiel, creating a vision before him of a completed and operational House of Prayer for all nations, and having Christ walk him around it. Ezekiel describes it as though it were actually there, but it too was a vision. The finite mind of man is unable to cope with this as Paul confesses in 2 Cor. 12:1-4. We simply need to accept without question the testimony – “the evidence of things not seen” – Heb. 11:1.

Samuel's chiding of Saul and the declaration of the death sentence, not only on Saul, but also on his sons devastated the failed king, and he lay prostrate on the floor for the remainder of the night. The sad sight moved even a hardened witch to show kindness to this doomed man. Saul trudged back to Gilboa to meet his end. Disobedience doesn't pay.

Jeremiah 4

V.1-4 – The humble response of repentant Israel at the end of chapter 3 elicits from Elijah the following instructions to Israel as to what they are to do (V.1-2). The terms of their restitution are:

1. Israel must recognize Yahweh by acknowledging His existence.
2. Their acknowledgement must be revealed by the action of putting away all abominations and making a genuine confession.
3. Israel must swear that Yahweh lives, that He is the epitome of truth, judgement and righteousness and that their punishment at His hands was perfectly just.
4. This confession of faith forms the basis of Israel's restitution and will provide a channel of righteousness unto all nations who in their turn will follow Israel's example.

This will require a massive change in attitude and approach – “Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns,” and spiritual circumcision – “Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh” as we must do by baptism into Christ (Col. 2:11-13) and taking up the cross daily to follow him (Luke 9:23).

V.5-18 – Despite the prospects of the future, the past and present wickedness of Judah needed to be punished. The ‘lions’ in the north (direction of judgement) were lurking and Nebuchadnezzar would soon arrive – Jer. 50:17 – “Israel is a scattered sheep; the **lions** have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.”

V.19-31 – Jeremiah mouths the anguish of his people as the judgements overtake them. These were deserved for they were “**sottish** children” (*sākāl* – silly, foolish). V.23 has language redolent of Gen. 1:2 – “I beheld the **earth**, and, lo, it was without form, and void.” The “earth” is the nation of Judah (Isa. 1:2; 24:19-21). The catastrophe that was to overtake Judah is likened to the catastrophe that overtook the previous order of things on the earth (Elpis Israel pgs. 9-10), but similarly, the earth was not totally destroyed then or on this occasion – “The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end” (V.27).

Matthew 15

This chapter is easily divided into two diverse parts. V.1-20 are a repudiation of Judaism and V.21-39 deal with the admission of Gentiles into the Faith.

V.1-9 – The criticism by the Scribes and Pharisees of the failure of Christ's disciples to observe the laws of ritual cleanliness sparked a stern condemnation of their Judaism. Their punctiliousness over ritual cleansing cloaked a huge betrayal of the 5th commandment through their Corban law. This rabbinical subterfuge allowed them to deny their parents any support because all their assets were devoted to the temple service. “Honour thy father and mother” had been completely submerged. Isa. 29:13 had been fulfilled – “in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the **commandments of men.**”

V.10-20 – What actually defiles men comes next. Edible food that goes into the mouth does no harm. What does harm is that which comes out of the heart of the natural man, the mouth being its spokesman (V.18; Luke 6:45). In the list of V.19, the Lord mentions seven things (a complete number), whereas in Mark 7:21-22 he lists 13 things (rebellion).

V.21-28 – Jesus escaped from the omnipresent critics, the Scribes and Pharisees, who would not venture into a Gentile land, and made his way to Tyre and Sidon. Here a Syrophenician woman (called “a woman of Canaan”) accosted him with an appeal to heal her daughter. He did not respond, so she badgered his disciples, who in turn appeal to him to get rid of this pesky Gentile. His answer was to test the woman's faith (not unlike Elijah and the widow of Zarephath) – “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” She passed the test, “Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.” His response was to throw a crumb – LITV – “It is not good to take the bread of the children to throw it to the **little dogs.**” The word “dogs” is not the normal word in the

N.T. which is *kuon* (Rev. 22:15 – “For without are dogs”). It is *kunarion* – a puppy. In Christ’s time, mature dogs were not permitted inside the house, but puppies were. She grasped at this crumb and said “Yes, Lord; for **even the little dogs eat of the crumbs** falling from the table of their lords” (LITV). The Lord was astonished saying, “O woman, **great is thy faith**: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” This kind of faith was rare in Israel, but often seen in Gentiles. The question may be asked – is it the same today?

V.29-31 – The Lord returned to the Galilee region. This was a three day journey (V.32) and many Gentiles had followed him from “the coasts of Tyre and Sidon” bringing with them the sick and ailing. He tested their faith too by ascending a mountain (it is not easy to climb a mountain when you are sick). Because of their faith the “lame, blind, dumb, maimed” were healed “and they **glorified the God of Israel**.” This is implicit proof that they were largely Gentiles. There would be no need to use the term “Israel” if they were Jews.

V.32-39 – The feeding of the 4,000 is quite different to that of the 5,000. The latter were primarily Jews. That is why 2 Kings 1 was invoked as they were organized into groups of 50 and fed with 5 loaves and two fish. Here, the 4,000 are fed with seven loaves. Even in the collection of scraps there was a difference. The comments made on the two feedings on February 10 are repeated here. There are important lessons involved.

Comments on Mark 6:33-44. There were two feedings of a multitude – the 5,000 mainly Jews – and the 4,000 mainly Gentiles (Mark 8:1-9). Jesus has compassion on ‘sheep’ with no shepherd (V.34). Here were Jews misled by Judaistic leaders who made their burdens unbearable (Acts 15:10). What these Jews needed was **faith** in the promises made to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob so that they might receive God’s **grace**. Hence, there were **5 loaves** (John 5:2) and **2 fish** (Jew and Gentile) for a total of **7** = covenant. The 4,000 were fed with **7 loaves** for they being Gentiles needed the covenant God made with Abraham (Gal. 3). This is noted in Rom. 3:30 where the Apostle says, “Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision (Jews) by (*ek* – out of) **faith**, and uncircumcision (Gentiles) through **the faith**” (Diaglott). The 5,000 Jews left 12 (Israel) wicker hand baskets (Gr. *kophinos*) of crumbs. The 4,000 Gentiles left only 7 small lunch packs (*spuris* – a lunch hamper woven from reeds). Don’t be deflected by those who point out that *spuris* is the word used of the basket Paul was lowered down the wall of Damascus in – Acts 9:26. Woven reed baskets can be of any size. It is ludicrous to think the disciples used a bag that size to carry their lunch on a day trip. What is the meaning of this? It is simple – the Gentiles were hungrier for the teachings of Christ than the Jews. History has testified to that.

July 15

1 Samuel 29

As preparations were made for the battle, the Lord’s of the Philistines got jumpy when they realized David and his men were in their rereward. They doubtless anticipated that David would most likely turn against them in the heat of battle and insisted on his dismissal from their ranks. Achish pleaded his case without success, and David maintained the charade that he was loyal to Achish, but the sense of relief as he turned his men around next morning towards Ziklag must have been palpable.

1 Samuel 30

V.1-15 – The consequence of joining the Philistine army was revealed on arrival at Ziklag. As smoke arose from the city it was evident disaster had struck. The only good sign was that there were no bodies lying in the ruins. The Amalekites had sacked the city which had no

male defenders and carted off everyone and every animal. So grief stricken were David's men at the loss of their families that they threatened to stone him. This was another severe test for David. However, in this crisis the true David came to the fore – “David encouraged himself in Yahweh his God” and called Abiathar to bring the ephod so he could enquire of God. The answer was very encouraging for the heartbroken company as the assurance was given that they would recover all. It would still require courage, faith and endurance however, and this proved wanting in a third of David's men (V.9). Providence led them to an abandoned Egyptian slave, who being revived offered to lead David and his remaining 400 men to the Amalekite camp at the gift of his life. At least he could trust David's oath.

V.16-31 – At dusk, the distracted and wildly celebrating Amalekites were caught unawares and were routed over the next 24 hours with only 400 young men escaping on camels. Everything taken from Ziklag was recovered, plus a massive quantity of spoil the Amalekite raiders had accumulated. The value of trusting in Yahweh in a time of crisis was again revealed, but the problems were not over. The worthless characters among the 400 sought to deny the exhausted and broken 200 who had stayed behind any spoil except for their family members. David would have nothing of it and laid down a permanent rule – “For as his share is who goes down into the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage. They shall share alike” (ESV). Anticipating that he would soon need their support, David sent some of the captured spoil to a number of cities in Judah and the south of the Land.

Jeremiah 5

V.1-13 – The reasons for the terrible judgements of the previous chapter are dealt with in this chapter. “Run ye to and fro through **the streets of Jerusalem**, and see now, and know, and seek in the **broad places** thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.” The only place where Jeremiah would find anyone matching this description was in the palace and the temple where Josiah and his close supporters were found. In the streets and public places there were none. Forced to comply with Josiah's reformation, their heart was not in it. They were hypocritical – “Yahweh liveth; surely they swear falsely” as Jer. 3:10 made clear. They were beyond redemption – “they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.” The wild beasts of the nations would come and exact just vengeance (V.6).

In V.9 and 29 the word “visit” begins a theme that continues throughout the book. It is the word *pâqad* – to visit (with friendly or hostile intent). It is used 49 times in the book and has a cognate word *peqûddâh* translated “visitation” 9 times. It is worth highlighting these occurrences for they weave a theme through the prophecy – “Shall I not **visit** for these things? saith Yahweh: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”

V.14-31 – The desecrations of the Babylonian invasion are detailed and the reasons for it. It is a long list of the most disgusting evils. The judgements were well deserved.

Matthew 16

V.1-4 – The perennial sign-seekers the Pharisees and Sadducees received a searching rebuke. They could predict the weather by observing the skies, but the clear signs of Christ's Messiahship were ignored. Accordingly, “no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” There were two aspects of Jonah's experiences inferred. Firstly, the success with the Gentiles in Matt. 15:21-31, just as Jonah's work was successful among the Assyrians; and secondly, the symbolic resurrection of Jonah which is one of the themes of this chapter.

V.5-12 – “Take heed and beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” – This mystified the disciples who had forgotten to bring bread in the boat. What the Lord meant adds another lesson from the collection of the scraps from the two feedings (refer comments on Matt. 15). It must be noted there are two different words used for “baskets” – *kophinos* and *spuris*. The Jews left a lot more scraps than the Gentiles who were hungrier for Christ’s teachings than the Jews, but the point being made here is the reason why that was the case. It was the “leaven” of rabbinical teaching (“**doctrine**”) that deflected many Jews from accepting Christ’s teachings. They preferred Judaism because it appeals to human nature. Its primary focus is on what we can **do** for God, not what He can do for us.

V.13-20 – Caesarea Philippi was known anciently as Paneas (the Banias of today from the peculiarity of Arabs pronouncing ‘B’ for ‘P’). In the far north at the foot of Mt Hermon it was the capital of Philip the tetrarch, the son of Herod the Great (the ruins of his palace can be toured today). Paneas came from the god Pan whose temple stood near the opening of the cave that was known as “the gates of Hades” (V.18). In preparation for the Transfiguration the Lord poses the question to his disciples “Whom do **the** men say that I the Son of man am?” There is a definite article before the word “men” as the reference is to the Pharisees and Sadducees of V.1,6,12. The disciples responded with the names of John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or “one of the prophets.” “But whom say ye that I am?” elicits from Peter the famous statement, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

“Blessed art thou, **Simon Barjona**” – This is a significant choice of name. Simon means ‘hearing’ and Barjona means ‘son’ (family builder) of Jonah (“the dove” = the Spirit). In other words, Peter’s statement would be the foundation on which God’s family would be built by the hearing of the Spirit Word through Christ – “the Word made flesh.” That is why Christ then says “That thou art Peter (a moveable stone, which he proved to be), and upon this **rock** (*petra* – a massive immovable rock) I will build my ecclesia.” The guarantee that this would be accomplished was the resurrection of Christ – “the gates of hell (the grave) shall not prevail against it.” This is drawn from Isa. 38:10 – from Hezekiah’s song after his ‘resurrection’ (15 year extension of life). This is the introduction of “the keys of the kingdom of heaven” which are “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet. 1:11). Christ gives these two keys to Peter who was to use them twice – the first time to Jews (Acts 2), and the second time to Gentiles (Acts 10). See comments on 1 Pet. 1 on June 11 pg. 29. V.19 is drawn from Isa. 22:22 as confirmation that the second key has to do with “the glory that should follow” – the immortalization and ascension of Christ to glory.

V.21-23 – Further confirmation of what the keys are is given – “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and **suffer** many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be **killed**, and **be raised again** the third day.” Having just been granted an enormous privilege, Peter stumbles by physically grabbing hold of, and strongly rebuking his Lord. Human nature is a perverse and deceptive thing. Hubris is one of its weaknesses. The same problem stalked the other disciples who were given at times to argue about who would be greatest in the Kingdom (Mark 9:34). The rebuke is stinging and destructive of human pride – “Get behind me, Adversary; you are a hindrance to me, because your thoughts are not God’s thoughts, but men’s” (Weymouth).

V.24-28 – Christ wove the **keys** of the Kingdom into the final words of this chapter. The **sufferings of Christ** are set as an example – “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his **cross**, and follow me” complemented by “whosoever will **lose his life** for my sake shall find it.” The glory to follow is then amplified by “For

the Son of man shall come in **the glory** of his Father,” in turn complemented by “the Son of man coming in his kingdom.”

July 16

1 Samuel 31

The death of Saul and his sons, particularly that of Jonathan, was a tragedy deeply mourned by David – 2 Samuel 1:17-27. Saul’s suicide was a fitting end in many ways. He had effectively been committing spiritual ‘suicide’ from the day he disobeyed Yahweh’s commands. Disobedience and hard-heartedness are suicidal. His breaking of every oath he made except for the one to a witch was another suicidal act. His murderous pursuit of David was another sin that could only lead to doom. And finally, turning to a witch was the final straw. We are the arbiters of our own destiny by the decisions and choices we make in life. The men of Jabeshgilead showed their gratitude (1 Sam. 11) by burying Saul and his sons.

Jeremiah 6

The “visitation” for Jerusalem was near. As a priest and a Divinely appointed prophet “set” (*paqad*) to pronounce judgement on “the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down” (Jer. 1:10), Jeremiah had the unpleasant task of starting with the condemnation of his own people. He was to shed many tears over them. In this chapter he began his first priestly inspection of the people who declared themselves to be “the temple of Yahweh” (Jer. 7:4), but were a leprous house. The stipulations of Lev. 14:33-45 dealing with a leprous house are invoked here. The slides and remarks below made on Luke 19 bring the elements of the condemnation together.

First inspection of house

- ❖ Owner of the house reports leprosy to priest – **Lev. 14:35** = Yahweh warns of leprosy in His ‘house’ through the prophets – **Isa. 1:5-6** – “putrifying sores”.
- ❖ 1st inspection by the priest – **Lev. 14:36-37** = Jeremiah (a priest) makes his 1st inspection – **Jer. 5 to 7**.
- ❖ House shut up 7 days – **Lev. 14:38** = Jeremiah stands at gate of temple – **Jer. 7:2** – and calls for cleansing of lepers – **Jer. 7:29 (Lev. 14:2-9)**.

Second inspection of house

- ❖ 2nd inspection by the priest – **Lev. 14:39** = Jeremiah makes 2nd inspection – **Jer. 16 to 29**. See **Jer. 16:13**
- ❖ Parts of leprous house taken to an ↙ unclean place – **Lev. 14:40** = Removal of ‘stones’ (Jews) to Babylon and Egypt.
- ❖ House ‘scraped’ and dust removed = Yahweh’s judgement through Chaldeans – “dust” **Lev. 14:41** first occurs **Gen. 2:7**. The word for “scraped off” (*qatsah*) **Lev. 14:41** is rendered “cut short” in **2 Kings 10:32**.

Comments on March 27 pgs. 59-60 – Luke 19:41-48 is based on a prominent theme of Jeremiah. The word *paqad* translated mostly as “visit” is used 49 times in Jeremiah. A cognate word *pequdah* translated “visitation” occurs 9 times. These words which foretell a time of Divine judgement are associated with the laying of a **siege** (Jer. 6:6); a cry from false prophets “**Peace, peace**; when there is no **peace**” (Jer. 6:14; 8:12); spiritual **blindness** (Jer. 5:21); the destruction of **families** (Jer. 6:11), and the bitter **weeping** of Jeremiah (Jer. 9:1; 13:34-35; 14:17). Jeremiah, as a priest, had inspected Yahweh’s leprous house twice (Jer. 2 to 14; 16 to 29). The time had come for the third inspection (Lev. 14:36,39,44) when the decree would be to dismantle the leprous house **stone by stone** (Lev. 14:45). Christ delivered that decree here in Luke 19 as he inspected the temple.

Luke 19:41-44 – “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and **wept** over it. If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy **peace!** but now they are **hid from thine eyes**. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall **cast a trench about thee**, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy **children** within thee; and they shall not leave in thee **one stone upon another**; because thou knewest not the time of thy **visitation**.” It is not surprising therefore that the Lord cites Jer. 7:11 in V.46. The slides below provide detail.

The leprous house rebuilt

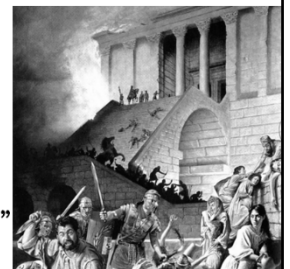
- ❖ New stones used to repair house – **Lev. 14:42** = Temple rebuilt by returned captives – **Ezra 3:8-10**.
- ❖ “other mortar” (same word for “dust” – **Lev. 14:41**) = New generation associated with temple – **Ezra 3:11-13**.
- ❖ Leprosy returns after rebuilding – **Lev. 14:43** = Period 516 BC to 30 AD.
- ❖ 3rd inspection by priest – **Lev. 14:44** = Christ inspects the Temple on 10th to 13th Abib – **Luke 19:28-47**.

The leprous house dismantled

- ❖ House dismantled and stones removed to unclean place – **Lev. 14:45** = AD 70 – Romans destroy Jerusalem and Temple, and Jews taken into captivity – **Luke 21:20-24**.



“Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation”



V.19 – The reason why the judgements were necessary and justified is provided – “they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.” The plaintive call to seek a better way had been rejected. V.16 – “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, where is the **good way**, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” – cited by Christ in Matt. 11:28-29.

Matthew 17

The Transfiguration of Christ is a subject that has seen a variety of views emerge. Allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture is the key to understanding. Firstly, the apparent discrepancy in the dating is considered in the slide at right.

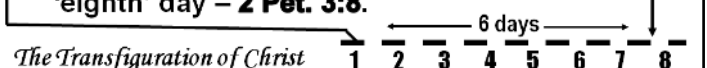
The promise at the end of chapter 16 was kept. Peter, James and John saw Christ as we will see him in glory in the Kingdom. That this is the case is shown by the context: (1) The Kingdom comes – Matt. 16:28; (2) It is the time of the apocalypse of Christ – Matt. 17:2; (3) and of the resurrection of the dead – Matt. 17:6-7; (4)

The saints appear in glory – Matt. 17:3; (5) Elijah comes and restores Israel – Matt. 17:11; (6) A great mountain (Babylon the Great) is removed (Zech. 4:7) – Matt. 17:20; (7) Mankind is cured of “falling sickness” – Matt. 17:15-18; (8) The mustard seed results in a universal Kingdom – Matt. 17:20. The context sets forth events at the return of Christ.

Why the discrepancy in dating?

- ❖ **Matt. 17:1** – “And after **six days**....”
- ❖ **Mark 9:2** – “And after **six days**....”
- ❖ **Luke 9:28** – “And it came to pass about an **eight days** after these sayings...” i.e. **Matt. 16**.

- ❖ Matthew and Mark use the **exclusive** dating method while Luke uses the **inclusive** method.
- ❖ **Six days** prefigures the **6,000 year history of man** before the apocalypse of Christ in glory, and **8 days** points forward to the culmination of this in the time beyond the Millennium – the ‘eighth’ day – **2 Pet. 3:8**.



The Transfiguration was a “vision” – V.9 – “Tell the **vision** to no man.” Moses and Elijah were not physically present for they were seen “in glory” (i.e. appearing as immortals – Luke 9:30-31), just as Christ’s transformation (the meaning of the word “transfigured”) was as he will be seen in the Kingdom. A similar situation occurred with Ezekiel, where Yahweh created a vision before him of a completed and operational House of Prayer for all nations, and had Christ walk him around it. Ezekiel describes it as though it were actually there, but it too was a vision. We should never limit the capabilities of our God, for nothing is too hard for Him – Jer. 32:17.

But why Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration? Was it because they represented the Law and the Prophets? Was it because they are both leaders of an Exodus, and Christ was speaking of his “Exodus”? (cp. Luke 9:31 and 2 Pet. 1:15), or were there more important reasons? Both Moses and Elijah were taught a very vital lesson, most likely in the same cave on Mt Horeb. That lesson was that men are not changed for the Kingdom by miracles, but by hearing and believing the Word of God. They learnt that lesson as fearful Divine power and glory “passed by” and a “voice of a gentle whisper” proclaimed the character and purpose of Yahweh. The phrase “passed by” connects the record of Moses on Mount Horeb (Ex. 33:21-23; 34:6) with that of Elijah on the same mount (1 Kings 19:9-14). It also links the above events with the call of Elisha to service in Elijah’s stead (1 Kings 19:19-21).

All of the above laid the foundation for the events of the Transfiguration in which Moses and Elijah “pass by”, and finally even the bright cloud and the voice “passed by” so that Jesus was found alone – the Word (the voice) made flesh – John 1:14.

Moses request to see the glory of God was answered by “the angel of his presence” (Isa. 63:9; Acts 7:38) manifesting the full glory of God which he could not see in its fulness, but the most glorious thing was the declaration of Yahweh’s character – Ex. 34:6 (Rotherham) – “Yahweh, Yahweh, A God (El = power) of compassion and favour,—Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness (*chesed*) and faithfulness (*emeth*).” But who would listen to the voice, rather than witness the miracles? Only Moses – Ex. 34:10 – “before all thy people I will do **marvels**” – Israel would not respond to the voice! Hence, Ps. 103:7 – “He made known **his ways unto Moses**, his **acts unto the children of Israel**.” That was the real challenge here at the Transfiguration. The ‘show us a sign’ crowd (Matt. 16:1) would not see in Jesus of Nazareth the Word made flesh “full of grace and truth” – John 1:14.

V.10-13 – The disciples were slow to realize that John the Baptist had fulfilled the role of Elijah to ‘Judah’ (see comments on Matt. 11 pg. 28), but they finally get it when the Lord said “Elijah was indeed to come, He replied, and would reform everything. But I tell you that **he has already come**, and they did not recognize him, but dealt with him as they chose. And before long the Son of Man will be treated by them in a similar way” (Weymouth). Hence, “Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of **John the Baptist**.” The work of Elijah in the Land is done. Christ will redeem the Jews in the Land when he comes – Zech. 12:7.

V.14-21 – The healing of the epileptic boy is a wonderful portrayal of the redemption of the human race in an enacted parable (see comments on February 13 pg. 7). The atoning work of Christ that will effect this is the subject of V.22-23 – “The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again.”

V.24-27 – A bemused Peter was confronted with the challenge, “Doth not your master pay tribute?” His answer was yes, but the Lord had to correct and educate him – “What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of

their own children, or of strangers?” This time Peter got it right – “Of strangers,” to which the Lord responds, “Then are the children free.” “Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to **the sea**, and cast an hook, and take up the **fish** that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.” This is an important statement. A **fish** from the sea of Galilee (“of the nations” Isa. 9:1) represents men of the human race (Ps. 8:8), all of whom need redemption. The “piece of money” was a stater, half an ounce of silver, and **silver** is the Biblical symbol for **redemption**. Under the Law, when a census was taken, each Israelite had to pay “the half shekel of the sanctuary” to signify his acknowledgement that he needed redemption – Ex. 30:13,15. Accordingly, Christ is saying very clearly that he too needed redemption. Without that, there would be no ‘transformation’ for him, or any “glory” for Moses and Elijah and all those they represent – the saints.

July 17

2 Samuel 1

V.1-16 – Three days after David and his men had destroyed the **Amalekites** and recovered their families, an **Amalekite** turned up at Ziklag with the evidence of the destruction of Saul’s family. This cowardly scavenger, feigning sorrow told a story he suspected David would be impressed with about the death of Saul. He claimed that Saul had pleaded with him to kill him, but in fact he had not – it was a lie (1 Sam. 31:4). While it was ironic that Saul died in the presence of an Amalekite whom he was supposed to utterly exterminate, the real tragedy was that the Amalekite had his **crown** in his hand. Christ’s exhortation to Philadelphia is relevant to us (Rev. 3:11) – “Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy **crown**.” The Amalekite had condemned himself – “Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee” (Luke 19:22). Being an Amalekite, this lying scavenger’s life was in danger anyway, but after confessing to killing Saul he was doomed. The last words he heard were “Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain Yahweh’s anointed.” David had resisted that sin a number of times when opportunity arose – it was ironic that an Amalekite should claim to have done it.

V.17-27 – “And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son” – David wrote a song to lament the death of Saul and Jonathan. It was called “**the song of the Bow**,—lo! it is written in the Book of the Upright” (Rotherham). The song speaks for itself, but David’s respect for Saul and love for Jonathan is very evident – “I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, **passing the love of women**.” It is almost unbelievable that in this foolish Humanistic world some on the fringes of our community have suggested sexual connotations to David’s final words to justify their own homosexual proclivities. What will Humanistic thinking come up with next? The fact is that David and Jonathan’s friendship was the model for the proverbs – Prov. 17:17 – “A friend loveth at all times”; 18:24 – “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother”; 27:9 – “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel.” The relationship was so spiritually pure, and so deeply loyal that it exceeded normal domestic relations between a man a woman.

Jeremiah 7

V.1-11 – “Stand in the gate of Yahweh’s house” – Jeremiah the priest is instructed to make an inspection of God’s leprous ‘house’ Judah. The cry, “Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.” They claimed to be “the Temple of

Yahweh” but were totally corrupt. The list of evils in V.5-10 is breathtaking. The ‘leprosy’ was everywhere – “From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores” (Isa. 1:6), but spiritual leprosy could be cured if they were willing to “thoroughly amend” their ways. The problem was brazen self-justification – “And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?” Christ’s citation of the words “a den of robbers” in Luke 19:46 demonstrates that he too was confronted by the same problem in his time.

V.12-16 – Jeremiah’s generation is directed to the fate of two other ‘leprous’ houses – Shiloh and the northern kingdom of Israel. They were about to meet the same fate. Accordingly, Jeremiah was ordered not to pray for them.

V.17-20 – Their devotion to false gods, particularly to Semiramis “the queen of heaven,” for whom the women made cakes, was unforgivable. The name Semiramis when transliterated into Hebrew becomes Shinar, the place where Nimrod and “the queen of heaven” worship began (Gen. 11).

V.21-29 – Yahweh of armies repudiated their sacrifices – “Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh,” and suggests they eat the burnt offerings themselves which was against the Law. In fact, He baffles them even more by saying, “I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices” which of course He did. The point being made is that obedience cancels the need for sacrifices, hence, “But this thing commanded I them, saying, **Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.**” This is the language of Gen. 17:7-8. He wanted an Abrahamic faith and obedience. This generation were “worse than their fathers” in the wilderness and would not repent – “This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of Yahweh their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.” The command “Cut off thine hair” could apply under the Law to two things. This is what a Nazarite was to do on the successful completion of a vow (Num. 6:18), but they were so far removed from being Nazarites that it could not apply. The other time when hair was shaven was at the healing of a leper (Lev. 14:8-9). Neither of these things applied, so they would be shaved like captives carried away by an invading army – Jer. 48:37; Mic. 1:16.

V.30-34 – The valley of Hinnom (“moaning, lamentation”) would become “the valley of slaughter” for there they had immolated their children to Molech. A particular part of the valley was called Tophet, or the “fire-stove” (Easton), where the children were burned. Hitchcock also gives the meaning as ‘a drum’, for drums were beaten to drown out the moaning of the burning children. Now it was to become the buryingplace for multitudes. Lacking Abraham’s faith, he would not be able to help them – “this people will be food for the birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth, and none will frighten them away” (ESV) – see Gen. 15:11 – “when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.”

Matthew 18

V.1-9 – Knowing that the disciples had debated among themselves who would be superior in the Kingdom, the inevitable question came. The Lord’s response was disarmingly simple – “Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,” and proceeded to teach that without a childlike acceptance of God’s Word there would be no admittance to the Kingdom. (See comments on Luke 17 on March 25 and on Matt. 5 on July

4). “Except ye be converted” is a necessary element because mature human beings are normally self-willed and quite sure of themselves. To become like a child and bow to everything that God says requires a change of disposition. Receiving such is to receive Christ; to put a stumblingblock before them will receive the fate of Catholicism – Rev. 18:21. Human nature is prone to stumbling, so drastic spiritual action is required. Hand, foot and eye must be sacrificed to achieve single-minded motivation and service.

V.10-14 – The “little ones” are those over whom Yahweh places His protective hand in the absence of the shepherd (Zech. 13:7). See comments on March 23 pg. 52 for the parable of the lost sheep.

V.15-17 – ‘Matthew 18’ is a mantra often heard in our midst. It sets out the process for dealing with serious issues between brethren.

Rule 31 in The Ecclesial Guide states – That no accusation or matter of evil report against any brother shall be listened to in public or private unto the brother bringing or reporting the accusation shall have taken the course prescribed in Matt. 18:15-18; and any brother refusing to take this course while persisting in his accusation, or in alienation on account of it, shall himself be considered and dealt with as an offender against the law of Christ.

In addition, Bro. Roberts wrote – The rule laid down by Christ for the treatment of personal offenses (Matt. 18:15-17) is doubtless applicable to sin in general. Sin of any kind on the part of a brother, becoming known to another brother, is a sin against that brother; more heinous, indeed, when Scripturally estimated, than a mere offense against himself. He is, therefore, bound to take the course Jesus prescribes, as John plainly indicates in the words, “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask”, etc. It is usual with some not to act upon this rule at all. The usual way is to speak of the fault, whatever it is, to a third party. This itself is sin. A brother's part (if the case be serious enough to speak of at all), is to be silent to all but the brother himself: first, to go himself and discuss the matter between the two alone. If this is successful, a brother is gained and saved, and the matter is not to be mentioned to anyone else. If not successful, Christ commands the interview to be repeated with the assistance of one or two others; and only in the event of these failing is the matter to be mentioned to the ecclesia, or those representing it. It is then the ecclesia's part to bring their whole influence to bear upon the offender to forsake his evil ways. Only when this has failed are we at liberty to withdraw. Nothing is so effectual as this rule for stopping evil speaking and ensuring merciful help to those who stumble, or the proper and timely treatment of incorrigible sin. Each brother then becomes a seeing eye and protecting hand of the ecclesia. There should be a stringent refusal to hear an evil report concerning any one until the reporter has taken the Scriptural course. Withdrawal, too, when it comes (it must be noted), is not expulsion. It is the apostolic form of separation which, though practically equivalent to expulsion in its effects on the separated, is more in harmony with the spirit enjoined by Christ upon his house than the form in vogue among professing bodies of all sorts.

V.18-20 – (LITV) “Whatever you bind on the earth shall occur, **having been bound in Heaven**. And whatever you loose on the earth shall be, **having been loosed in Heaven**.” This translation gives the proper sense. We have no license to create our own set of rules. We must conform to what is required by heaven. It is conformity to Christ's commandments that wins the approval of heaven, so that Christ can be in our midst.

V.21-35 – The parable of the unforgiving servant largely speaks for itself, but there a few things to note. The “seventy times seven” principle has its roots in Gen. 4. We know this from Jude 14-16 where Lamech, Enoch's murderous contemporary claimed such forgiveness

from God – Gen. 4:24. Lamech was a type of “certain men crept in unawares” in Jude’s day who turned God’s grace into license. Lamech was correct in one respect. God’s grace is boundless where His righteousness is upheld, but Lamech was not one of them.

The debt ratio was staggering. The unforgiving servant owed “ten thousand talents,” an amount unpayable in several lifetimes, whereas the other servant owed only “an hundred pence” a little over three months wages (Matt. 20:2). To avert being sold up to repay the debt, the hugely indebted servant makes a foolish promise – “have patience with me, and **I will pay thee all**” which was impossible. No one can redeem his own soul (Ps. 49:7). But when forgiven his debt he went out and brutally demanded from his own debtor the 100 pence. That man sensibly replied “Have patience with me, and **I will pay thee**” (RV). Note the absence of “all” here. This man is genuine and intends to repay the debt, but cannot because he is imprisoned. This parable emphasizes Christ’s teaching elsewhere – Matt. 6:14-15 – “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses,” and it must be done from the heart (V.35).

July 18

2 Samuel 2

V.1-7 – Typical of David, he sought Yahweh’s guidance as to what to do next and is instructed to go to Hebron. There the tribe of Judah anointed him king and informed him of the actions of the men of Jabesh-Gilead. One very important commandment of Christ is not to return evil for evil (Matt. 5:39,44; Rom. 12:17; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Pet. 3:9). David had practiced this all through his oppression by Saul; he had praised Saul in a song after his demise, and now he commended and rewarded the men of Jabesh-Gilead who had buried Saul and his sons out of gratitude for what Saul had done for them. There was no spirit of revenge in David as there is in the modern world in which we live where it is all about ‘payback,’ getting even and seeking redress and reparations.

V.8-11 – Abner, Saul’s uncle was the ‘king-maker’ who had stood behind Saul goading him against David for his own purposes. He regarded himself as the king even though he was compelled to place Ishbosheth (“man of shame”) the weak and indecisive surviving son of Saul on the throne (Abner took Saul’s concubine Rizpah to himself which is what aspiring kings did – 1 Sam. 3:7; 16:21-22; and spoke as though he owned the Land – 2 Sam. 3:9-10,12).

V.12-32 – Seven and a half years passed by as David ruled Judah in Hebron and skirmishes occurred between the opposing forces. The principal antagonists were Abner leading the forces of Ishbosheth and Joab the nephew of David leading his servants. The clash at the pool of Gibeon was indicative of how foolish and wasteful Abner’s greed for power had become. His challenge to Joab – “And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play (*śâchaq* – to laugh, play, mock) before us” was to produce a tragedy. It was no game, but a senseless loss of some of the cream of the nation’s young men. The naming of the place Helkathhazzurim (“the field of strong men”, or “swords”) memorialized the waste of 24 men. The battle that ensued saw the death of the athletic and persistent Asahel, the younger brother of Joab and Abishai at the hand of Abner, and this created a bitterness that led to a revenge murder in time. Joab and Abner declared an armistice and counted their losses – Asahel and 19 others on Joab’s side, and 360 on Abner’s. There was some recognition of the folly of the situation in Abner’s appeal to Joab – “Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?” But human pride stood in the way.

Jeremiah 8

V.1-3 – It was a shameful thing to be unburied – Jer. 9:22; 16:4; 22:19; Ezek. 6:5. This was to be the fate of Jeremiah's contemporaries for their idolatry and wickedness – Jer. 7:33.

V.4-17 – Backsliding was the hallmark of Jeremiah's times – “no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?” There was no remedy, so the judgements would descend from the north through “Dan” (“judgement” V.16), because they had “rejected the word of Yahweh,” He would reject them. It is noteworthy that V.11-12 are almost identical to chap. 6:14-15. The “visitation” was coming.

V.18-22 – Jeremiah grieved for his people. “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved” indicated that the opportunity for a spiritual harvest via repentance was over. “For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt” is the right attitude to have towards our own community when it is failing – Jer. 14:17; Rom. 9:1-3; Luke 19:41.

Matthew 19

V.1-12 – Entering into Judea inevitably led to clashes with the Scribes and Pharisees. Doubtless the latter were piqued at the Lord's teaching in Galilee about divorce and remarriage. The inevitable challenge came – “The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to **put away his wife for every cause?**” It is important to understand where this question came from. The Pharisees followed one of two rabbis on this matter. Rabbi Hillel taught that a man could, with Moses' authority, “put away his wife for every cause.” Any minor infraction provided a basis for summary dismissal. Burning a meal or dressing improperly were grounds for divorce. This was the increasingly dominant view of the two schools of thought at the time. The other was that of Rabbi Shammai who bitterly opposed the liberal views of Hillel and taught that “a man may not divorce his wife, except he found in her an unseemly thing (i.e. unchastity)”. So, this dispute is at the core of the question.

The Lord directed them to Gen. 1 and 2, particularly citing Gen. 2:24. They responded by citing Deut. 24:1-4 which they incorrectly understood to be a permission which it is not (see comments on Deut. 24 on May 7), to which he rejoined “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so” – so anyone who uses it is ‘hard-hearted’ (they did not like that!).

V.9 – Properly understood, this verse does not allow divorce and remarriage for any reason. If that were not so, then the Lord is actually agreeing with the rabbis, and he rarely did that. The actual Greek phrase translated “except it be for fornication” are the words *ie me epi porneia* and should be translated “not upon fornication” (i.e. it is not an exception, as such, that is being referred to, but rather a statement of fact – the fact that the husband knows full well that his wife has not committed adultery against him). That this is the case is inferred from the question that began the interchange – “Is it **lawful** for a man to put away his wife **for every cause?**” (For full ventilation of this vexed subject see **Appendix 5** extracted from the study notes ‘Marriage and Divorce’ accessible on <https://jimcowie.info>).

The critical fact in the use of the particle *me* is that it is the **subjective negation**; i.e. the husband knew that his wife was not guilty of sexual sin. If there had been sin in his wife, he could have put her away under Jewish law, but scripturally could not remarry. Most men confronted with that situation would do what Yahweh did with His adulterous wife Israel, namely, banish her until restitution of the marriage was possible – Jer. 3:8-14. This is why the disciples express their astonishment at the Lord's teaching – “His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.” They clearly

understood that there was a ban on remarriage under any circumstances, and that doing so involved not only committing adultery oneself, but also dragging others into the same sin – the Interlinear Scripture Analyzer translates V.9 – “Now I am saying to you that whoever should be dismissing his wife (not on prostitution) and should be marrying another, is committing adultery, and he who marries her who has been dismissed, is committing adultery.” The Lord then describes three ‘eunuch’ states: (1) born a eunuch; (2) made a eunuch by castration; (3) deciding on celibacy for the Kingdom’s sake when a wife departs. He knew that some would not have the courage to make the latter choice – “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” as history has shown. To suggest, as some have, that if one is unable to receive it, they are at liberty to remarry is quite pernicious.

V.13-15 – The lesson of Matt. 18:3 is driven home to impatient disciples.

V.16-30 – The encounter with the rich young ruler was considered on February 14 in Mark 10. There we read that Christ loved (*agapao*) this young man (V.21). He wanted to save him. To the question "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life," the Lord firstly reminds the young man that there is no good thing in any man naturally, and then lists 6 of the 10 commandments which he knew the young man had kept. The Sabbath (4th) is not mentioned for that was taken for granted for Jews, but the absence of the first three was an indication of this man's problem. He had another ‘god’ in his life, and that was wealth (therefore the 1st commandment was broken). He had graven images in his life, namely, money and things (the 2nd commandment was effectively broken because ‘covetousness is idolatry’ – Col. 3:5). He had taken upon himself service to God that would prove in the end to be “vain” and fruitless (the true meaning of the 3rd commandment). The lesson was clear. Rich men can be saved, but only if their **trust** is not in the things that pertain to the present. The incredulity of the disciples “Who then can be saved?” is swept away with “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.” God can work in men through their faith to make wise choices – 1 Tim. 6:17-19. Peter seized the opportunity to advance the very real sacrifices he and the other disciples had made in following the Lord, as he had counseled the young man to do – V.21. There was a trace of self-satisfaction in this claim – “Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?” but the Lord acknowledged their commitment to him and offered an amazing reward – “in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Only one of the twelve would miss out on that reward because he chose the riches of this world instead. His name was Judas Iscariot. There was a present reward as well, apart from “everlasting life” – “every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold.” The followers of Christ would have a ‘family’ of co-believers who would share what may have been lost, as it turned out when the 1st century ecclesia in Judea was formed – “all that believed were together, and had all things common” – Acts 2:44.

July 19

2 Samuel 3

V.1-11 – The ‘war’ dragged on for over seven years and David’s family grew as sons were born to the six wives he now had in Hebron. Abner could see that “David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker” and “made himself strong for the house of Saul.” Believing that he was effectively king, he took Saul’s concubine infuriating Ishbosheth who proved himself no equal to Abner the kingmaker. He

rebuked Ishbosheth's ingratitude and threatened to deliver the kingdom to David as though it was his prerogative to do so. Abner's narcissism was on display.

V.12-21 – Seeing the writing on the wall, Abner sent ambassadors to David with an incredibly narcissistic opening gambit – “Whose *is* the land?” The Land was Yahweh's, and He had anointed David to be king over it (Lev. 25:23). David stumped him though by demanding the return of his first wife Michal, Saul's daughter, a demand Abner knew something about. It was intolerable for someone to have the king's wife (cp. the folly of Adonijah – 1 Kings 2:22-23). Abner complied and much unhappiness and bitterness accrued for all. Having prevailed upon the elders of Israel to amalgamate the kingdom under David, Abner went to visit him in Hebron. It was to be his last trip.

V.22-30 – Arriving home from a raiding campaign with much spoil, Joab with David's men learnt of the mission of Abner and immediately suspected treachery, and severely upbraided David (something only close relatives could do without repercussions). Taking the law into his own hands, Joab sent messengers to recall Abner, and when he arrived, murdered him in revenge for the slaying of Asahel his brother. Utterly scandalized, David repudiated Joab's actions; claimed innocence and cursed Joab's house.

V.21-39 – David's mourning at Abner's funeral in Hebron was so obviously sincere that the people knew he had not been complicit in his death. “Died Abner as a fool dieth?” began a ditty highlighting the sheer perversity and hardness of the sons of Zeruiah – “the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me.” David's relatives were to make life very difficult for him as time went on.

Jeremiah 9

V.1 – “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” Jeremiah as a type and forerunner of Christ experienced what the Lord himself experienced – deep sadness at the oncoming fate of his people – Luke 19:41.

V.2-9 – A list of evils is recounted with a heavy emphasis on betrayal and deceit. Integrity, honesty and truthfulness are fundamental demands of God from His servants (Mic. 6:8), but “They are not valiant for the truth upon the earth.” Accordingly, “Shall I not **visit** them for these things? saith Yahweh: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” Visitation was at hand.

V.10-26 – A long list of awful judgements, and the reasons for them follows, in the course of which two noteworthy things are said. In V.23, the ‘wise,’ powerful and rich are advised not to glory in themselves, “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am Yahweh which exercise lovingkindness, judgement, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Yahweh.” The Apostle Paul quotes this passage twice to the Corinthians – 1 Cor. 1:31 and 2 Cor. 10:17. He does so in the context “That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1 Cor. 1:29), and in the context of Judaisers who insisted on **circumcision** (in which they gloried) for salvation. It is not surprising that the next thing Yahweh mentions through Jeremiah is “Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will punish all them which are **circumcised** with the uncircumcised,” and then likens His people to uncircumcised nations because “all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.”

Matthew 20

V.1-16 – Matthew 19:30 had ended with the words “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.” The parable of the labourers in the vineyard ends with the same words in V.16 with the addition of “for many be called, but few chosen.” This obviously connects Matt. 19:27-29 with the parable which clearly has these ‘bookends’.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard” is unmistakable language of the call to the truth from the Exodus to his second advent and the Judgement Seat. The first to be called were Jews living under law, because a contract is made – “when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard” is matched by what happened at Mt Horeb when Israel made a contract with Yahweh after He had promised them a great reward – “And all the people answered together, and said, All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do” (Ex. 19:8). Israel became God’s vineyard (Isa. 5:1-7). In V.3, at 9 am more labourers are invited into the vineyard, but they come on the basis of **faith** – “Go ye also into the vineyard, and **whatsoever is right** I will give you.” How many people accept employment without knowing what the wages are? unless they have complete **faith** in the promises of the owner of the vineyard. These represent the first cohort of Gentiles whose lives were spent “standing idle in the marketplace.” Again at midday and at 3 pm more were invited on the same basis, until at 5 pm (one hour from ‘knock-off’) the final batch are invited. These represent the Gentiles ‘called’ through the entire period of the Gentile Age down to our time in the ‘last days’. All come on the basis of **faith**. The pattern was set for the Judgement Seat of Christ when those who came **last** appear before the “householder” to receive their “hire” (ESV “wages”) **first**, hence, “the last shall be first” principle. Those who came “first” take umbrage when the “last” received a penny (denarius). The “penny” simply represented a reward. There was a reward for keeping the Law as we find in Ezek. 20:11 – “And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgements, which if a man do, **he shall even live in them.**” The Law could not give eternal life, but its observance did provide many blessings and freedom from “the evil diseases of Egypt” (Ex. 15:26; Deut. 7:15), but inheritance in the Kingdom is only on the basis of an Abrahamic faith, and that is what the “penny” represented to those who had come “last” and those who had preceded them on the same basis. It is important to recognize that the phrase “many be called, but few chosen” embraces all Jews under the Law from the time of Moses. That is a vast multitude relative to the Gentiles who have been called from the time of Christ. It is also important to remember that we actually ‘choose’ ourselves by the choices we make in probation.

V.17-19 – The Lord took his disciples back to the message delivered post-Transfiguration (Matt. 17:9-12). They did not understand it because “they thought the kingdom should immediately appear” (Luke 19:11).

V.20-28 – The expectation that the Kingdom would soon come resulted in some premature requests being made – “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.” She wanted James and John to be given the privilege of sitting at right and left of Christ in his Kingdom. It was a gob-smacking request and the Lord responded, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” to which they replied yes. They would indeed suffer with Christ, but the request was premature. This did not go down well with the other disciples who themselves had been jostling for prominent places in the Kingdom – Mark 9:34; Luke 9:46; 22:24. Gentiles wrestled for dominance over others. That was not to be the character of his disciples – “And whosoever will be chief

among you, let him be your servant.” The greatest of all servants was the Lord himself – “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” There is a lesson here for possessors of human nature.

V.29-34 – On the way to Jerusalem for the last time, the Lord passed through Jericho and “two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.” There is an enacted parable in this incident. Curiously, Mark and Luke have only one blind man, because they were writing for a Gentile readership, whereas Matthew included both Jews and Gentiles. Christ came to “give his life a ransom for many” (Jew and Gentile), and as Matthew had consistently included two men all along, the same occurs here. Salvation is not available unless ‘blindness’ is taken away, and this is only done by enlightenment in the promises of God, hence, “thou Son of David,” and this requires willingness to ‘see’ – “What **will ye** that I shall do unto you?” They were willing, so “Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him” as we do.

July 20

2 Samuel 4

V.1-12 – Without Abner, the power behind the throne, Ishbosheth was in serious danger, and so it proved. Two Gibeonites (Beeroth was one of their towns – Josh. 9:17) seeking revenge for Saul’s oppression of their folk (2 Sam. 21:1) assassinated Ishbosheth and foolishly took his head to David at Hebron thinking they would be rewarded. Citing the hubris and folly of the Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul, David slew Rechab and Baanah, cut off their hands and feet and strung them up over the pool in Hebron where everyone came each day for water as a testimony of the character of his reign.

One more interesting fact is provided in this chapter. Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan was maimed at 5 years of age when his nurse fell rushing to safety after hearing the news of the disaster on Mt Gilboa. Seven and a half years later, he was around 13 years old.

2 Samuel 5

V.1-5 – The elders of Israel came to David in Hebron and “made a league” (*berith* – covenant) with him and he became king of the whole nation. He was in his 38th year.

V.6-16 – It is highly significant that the very first thing that David did on becoming king of the whole nation was to capture Jebus. It had been in Gentile hands for 500 years. So confident in the impregnability of their citadel the Jebusites foolishly boasted, “You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off”—thinking, David cannot come in here” (ESV). Chafing under this insult to his God whom he knew would place His name there, David offered the leadership of the army to whoever could find a way up the gutter of the city’s water supply system. Joab, driven by ambition and utterly fearless, climbed up and opened the gates to the city. “So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David.” Why was Jebus/Jerusalem so important to David? From his teenage years, David knew from his understanding of Genesis 14 and 22 that this was the place where Yahweh would put His name (Deut. 12:5). He knew that Moriah would be where Messiah, typically foreshadowed by Isaac, would be sacrificed. He also knew that Messiah was foreshadowed by Melchizedek (“king of righteousness”) and would reign in Jerusalem. Accordingly, within a short while of capturing Jebus he brought the Ark to Zion and installed it in a tent of his own

erecting (1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1). David took more wives in Jerusalem and many sons were born to him.

V.17-25 – The ascension of David to rulership stirred the Philistines into action. David went down to Adullam and enquired of Yahweh, and was given permission to deal with the threat. The Philistines assembled “in the valley of the giants” (Rephaim), and were defeated there – “Yahweh hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim” (“possessor of breaches”). A second incursion of the Philistines was handled differently, again as a test for David. Rather than a frontal assault (emphasizing man’s own courage and ability), David was to circle around and **wait** until the evidence of angelic activity in the mulberry trees was heard. The word “going” in V.24 is *tse’âdâh* and means a march. Yahweh ‘marched’ before David and the Philistines were routed and quieted for some time.

Jeremiah 10

As in Isaiah, some time is devoted in Jeremiah to the folly of idolatry (e.g. Isa. 44), and idols are contrasted with the living God. This is one such chapter.

The utter folly of men creating their own gods out of “a tree out of the forest” is scorned and contrasted with the true God who created all things – “But Yahweh is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king” – V.10-12. But He is also a destroyer.

V.13 – “When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.” With these elements He can “sling out the inhabitants of the land” (V.18) and is able to “Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not” (V.25), “in the time of their visitation.” Rotherham for V.22 translates – “The noise of a rumour! lo it hath come! Even a great commotion out of the land of the North,—To make the cities of Judah, A desolation, A den of jackals.”

The problem lay in bad leadership (V.21) – “For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought Yahweh: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.” And this is because when men set aside God’s Word they have no light and no wisdom – “O Yahweh, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (V.23).

Matthew 21

Matthew’s account of the Lord riding into Jerusalem differs somewhat from that of Mark’s. He is not concerned with the inclusion of Gentiles in the purpose of God as Mark’s enacted parable is. For example, Matthew mentions the ass and the colt of Zech. 9:9, whereas both Mark and Luke only mention the colt. As Matthew is writing primarily for Jews, he includes the ass (a symbol of Israel). What Matthew does not do is answer the mystery of Zech. 9:9 – “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” It is impossible to ride two animals at the same time. Christ knew from Gen. 49:11 that he would ride the colt into Jerusalem, but in the N.T, we have to wait until Mark and Luke to find that out. So, while there are differences for sound reasons, the comments made on Mark 11 on February 15 can be repeated here.

There are three trees in Mark 11:1. The Lord comes to the Mount of Olives (symbol for both Jew and Gentile – Zech. 4:3; Rom. 11:17); Bethphage to which they arrive first means “the house of unripe figs” = symbol for Israel; from which Christ sent two disciples to Bethany –

“the house of date palms” = the Gentile nations. So it was that Christ first came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and then sent his Apostles to the Gentiles. Every verse that follows is pregnant with the call of the Gentiles. Christ seeks only a colt. There is no mention here of the ass of Zech. 9:9 as in Matt. 21:7. The Spirit in Mark only focuses on the unbroken colt pointing to the Gentiles. It is found ‘outside the house’ in “a place where two ways met” (Jew and Gentile), and is tied up (locked up in sin). That was the state of Gentiles in relation to the things of God. The Lord had “need of him” for it had always been God’s plan to call Gentiles, and he knew there would be an immediate response – V.3 “straightway.” Hence, palm (symbol for the nations) branches (John 12:13) were strewn in the way as Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem on the 10th of Abib (a Sabbath) to be inspected as the Passover lamb for the salvation of all who would come to him. The crowd sang the words of Ps. 118:25-26 – “Hosanna” (“save now”), but the Lord’s mind was on the preceding verse in the psalm – V.24 – “This is **the day** which Yahweh hath made, we will be glad and rejoice in it.” This is a reference to the “day” of the Millennium – the Sabbath day for which he was to die 5 days later that it might be made sure by grace.

V.12-17 – Next the Lord cleansed the Jewish traders from the Court of the Gentiles citing two passages from the prophets – Isa. 56:7 – “My house shall be called the house of prayer for **all nations**,” and Jer. 7:11 – “but ye have made it a den of thieves.” He healed the blind and the lame in the temple, for that was the spiritual condition of his people, but when they responded with Ps. 118:25 – “Hosanna to the Son of David” the chief priests and scribes took umbrage and demanded a retraction, to which he replied, citing Ps. 8:2 – “Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” Ps. 8 is a Kingdom psalm (Heb. 2).

V.18-22 – Next day Christ cursed a fruitless fig tree (Israel) which only had a fig leaf covering like Adam and Eve – a religion of their own invention. Fig leaves are preceded by a bud at the end of winter. That bud is the incipient fruit and can be eaten, if necessary, though bitter. A fig tree with leaves must by order of nature have some fruit (fit for repentance), but Israel did not. Consequently, men would not eat fruit from Israel until the end of the Gentile age (*aion*).

In response to Peter’s observation that the fig tree had dried up from the roots, Christ laid down the constitution of the new Abrahamic order – “Have faith in God.” It is a faith that can say to the Mount of Olives (“this mountain”), “be thou removed and cast into the sea” as it will be when the great earthquake of Zech. 14:5 occurs, with absolute confidence that it will be fulfilled. Those with that kind of faith will be there to witness it on that day. And we should pray for it earnestly now, for “whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

V.23-27 – While teaching in the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people demanded of him – “By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” This disingenuous question is brilliantly dealt with by throwing it back on them – “The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” This presented a snare for them. If they said of John that he was sent from heaven, then Jesus would ask “Why did ye not then believe him?” If they said he was not sent by God, the people would stone them. Because they wouldn’t accept John, they would not make a positive decision about Christ – “Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.”

V.28-32 – The parable of the two sons is a continuation of the failure of the priests and elders to give heed to the preaching of John the Baptist. Invited to work in the vineyard, one son refuses, but later repents and returns to his father’s vineyard. The other son says he would

but did not go. Asked, “Which of the two did the will of his father?” his interlocutors get it right, and are self-condemned – “For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.”

V.33-46 – The parable of the tenants of the vineyard is based on Isa. 5:1-7 – “For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant.” The tenants of the vineyard were the priests, Sadducees, Pharisees and Scribes. They were required to provide the owner of the vineyard with its fruit. Each season “he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it,” but they were brutalized and killed. Finally, he sent his son saying, “They will reverence my son,” but they killed him too. No one could miss the application of the parable and “when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.” In V.42 the Lord drew on Ps. 118:22-23, and in V.44 alluded to Dan. 2:44-45. In between, he alluded to Isa. 55:5; 65:1 when he said “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to **a nation** bringing forth the fruits thereof.” This “nation” is identified by Paul in Rom. 10:20 as the true ecclesia including the Gentiles.

July 21

2 Samuel 6

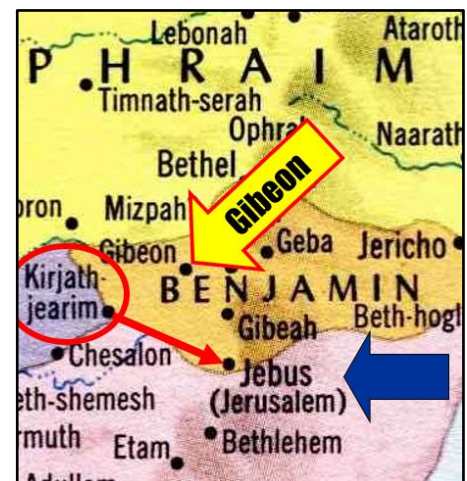
This chapter records the bringing of the Ark to Zion. It opens up a pervasive theme for the rest of Scripture drawn from Gen.14. The question needs to be asked: Why did David place the Ark in a separate tent to the Tabernacle of Moses? The Mosaic Tabernacle was at Gibeon in the days of David – 1 Chron. 16:39; 21:29. The Altar of Sacrifice was at Gibeon – 1 Kings 3:4; but David set up his own tent in Jerusalem to house the Ark – 2 Sam. 6:17; 1 Chron. 15:1-3; 16:1. David also acted as a king-priest when the Ark came to Jerusalem – 2 Sam. 6:14,18-19; 1 Chron. 16:2-3. And, like Melchizedek, David distributed bread and wine to the people when the Ark was brought into his tent – 2 Sam. 6:19; 1 Chron. 16:3; and then David appointed Levites to minister in the worship conducted at his Tabernacle – 1 Chron. 16:4-6.

David had been planning all this from his teenage years. He wrote Ps. 132 when bringing the Ark to Zion, and it is a revelation. In Ps. 132:1-5, David vowed to give the Ark rest. In V.6 he revealed he had comprehended the rightful place for the Ark while in Bethlehem as a teenage shepherd (see hint Ps. 78:70-71). While on the run from Saul “in the fields of the woods” he decided its destiny. He found it in Kirjathjearim (“city of forests” – 2 Chron. 1:4). Perhaps David’s ‘Melchizedek’ related vow elicited Yahweh’s vow to His as yet unborn son – Ps. 110:4. The Tabernacle of David was to play a massive role in the future; e.g. Acts 15.

2 Sam. 6:2 – “*Baale of Judah*” = “*lords of Judah*”. Called *Baalah* (“*mistress*”) – 1 Chron. 13:6 – also called there “Kirjathjearim” – “city of forests”.

V.3 – “a new cart” – A Philistine practice – 1 Sam. 6:7. “Abinadab” (“my father is willing”). “that was in Gibeah” (RV) – “in the hill.” “Uzzah” – “strength.” “Ahio” – “brotherly”.

V.5 – “played” – *sachaq* – to laugh. There are 5 (grace) instruments mentioned.



V.6 – “Nachon’s” – “prepared”. “Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark” – His motive was pure, but his desire to save the Ark unwittingly disrespectful. It had been in his father’s house for 20 years and probably familiarity had desensitized him to its sanctity; “for the oxen shook it” – If the Kohathites had been carrying the Ark as prescribed by law the disaster would have been averted. V.7 – “God smote him there for his error” – Even Kohathites were forbidden to touch the Ark on pain of death – Num. 4:15,19-20.

V.8 – “David was displeased” – *charah* – to be hot, furious, burn, become angry; “breach” – *perets* – bursting forth; breach. Hence, the place was called Perezuzzah.

V.9 – “How shall the ark of Yahweh come to me?” – David answered his own question by the choice of refuge for the Ark in the house of a Kohathite.

V.10 – “Obededom” – “servant of Edom” (1st of 20 occs. of this name. 5 Israelites bear this name – see Luke 1:59). David deliberately chose a ‘Gentile’ connected name because what he was doing was all about introducing Gentiles to the Truth (note Amos 9:12 – “the remnant of **Edom**”). “Gittite” – Refers to Gath-rimmon a town given to the Kohathites in the tribe of Dan – Josh. 19:40,45; 21:20,23-24; 1 Chron. 6:66,69. When, 3 months later he heard Yahweh had blessed the house of Obededom “because of the ark of God” he knew Yahweh approved of his project and that the Uzzah incident was not a sign of disapproval.

V.13 – “when they that bare the ark of Yahweh had gone **six** paces” – David’s comprehension of Gen. 14 and 22 was now joined by his appreciation of Gen. 1. The prophecy of 6 ‘days’ (2 Pet. 3:8) and the 7th day of rest moved David to humbly acknowledge that his vision could only be fully realized in the Kingdom.

V.14 – “linen ephod” – a priestly garment – Lev. 8:7; 1 Sam. 22:18; 23:6,9; 30:7. His kingly robes replaced; in which he offered “burnt offerings and peace offerings” – Dedication and fellowship the keys; before the “tabernacle” – *ohel* – a round tent – 1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1.

V.16 – “Michal” (“who is like God”) becomes a type of Judaism (like Saul her father); “looked” – *shaqaph* – to lean out; and “despised” (*bazah* – to disesteem, hold in contempt, disdain) David. In V.20-23, her severe ‘Judaistic’ and proud criticism of David’s actions led to her being childless. The Law could not give life, so she is a fitting type.

V.19 – As a Melchizedek priest, David “apportioned to all the people” – i.e. to Gentiles as well as Israelites; “as well to the women as men” (this the Law of Moses did not normally allow); “to every one” (Isa. 55:1; Gal. 3:28) “a cake of **bread**” (Roth. – “a loaf of bread”) and “a good piece of flesh” (*eshpar* – a measured portion – Companion Bible – “a measure of **wine**”); and “a flagon of wine” – *ashiyshah* – raisin-cake (Roth.). Comp. B. – “a cake of raisins.” “So all the people departed **every one** to his house” – This statement seems superfluous as we all go home after events like this, but indicates the unity of the nation with both Jew and Gentile having received a ‘Melchizedek’ blessing.

Jeremiah 11

This chapter deals with the breaking of the Mosaic Covenant by Israel’s continual adoption of false gods, the worst of which was Baal, adopted chiefly during the reigns of Ahab in Israel and Manasseh of Judah – 1 Kings 16:30-33; 2 Chron. 33:3. Baal was a title of Nimrod the first Pontifex Maximus of the Babylonian system. He became “the god of the earth” (Rev. 11:4) as the Pope is today. Significant points arise in what follows.

V.4-5 – “I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the **iron furnace**” – Being drawn from Deut. 4:20, to which book constant reference is made in this condemnation demonstrates that Deuteronomy informs the prophet’s words. Take for example, “**Cursed** be

the man that obeyeth not the words of **this covenant**” – Deut. 27:26; 28:15-68; 29:19-20. “Obey my voice” is drawn from Ex. 23:21-22; Deut. 11:27; 28:1-14.

The link between the Mosaic Covenant and the Abrahamic Covenant is made in the words “so shall ye **be my people**, and **I will be your God**: that I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey.” Israel were under the Mosaic Covenant which if they kept because of their faith in the Abrahamic promises would see them inherit in the Land in the Kingdom. That is why the language of the Abrahamic Covenant appears here – see Gen. 17:7-8.

V.16-23 – “Yahweh called thy name, A green olive tree” – The olive tree is a symbol for Israel, and its branches would be broken off while the Gentile wild olive was grafted in to the Abrahamic hope (Rom. 11:17-24), but another tree would have to be cut down first. Jeremiah is a type of Christ and speaks on his behalf in V.19 – “But I was like a **lamb** or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had **devised devices against me**, saying, **Let us destroy the tree** with the fruit thereof, and let us **cut him off** from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.” The priests of Anathoth (his home town) “that seek thy life” were plotting against him as their progeny would do to Christ 600 years later.

Matthew 22

The parable of the wedding feast covers a lot of ground from the mission of Christ among the Jews to the Judgement Seat. The invitation presages the sacrifice of Christ, just as the Lord's teachings made constant reference to his coming crucifixion – “Behold, I have prepared my dinner: **my oxen and my fatlings are killed**, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.” This was the invitation that was given to the Jews by Christ and his disciples. They, on the whole refused it, preferring the present to the future and offering a range of excuses before ‘shooting the messenger.’ The king responded and “sent forth his armies (the Romans – Dan. 9:26), and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city” (AD 70), and sent his ambassadors to the Gentiles – “Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (i.e. preach the Gospel to the Gentiles). This the apostles did, “and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests” (i.e. “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” – Rom. 11:25).

V.11-14 – The time for the Judgement Seat arrives – “when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had **not** on a wedding garment.” This is a Gentile who has not been baptized, or acts like one (i.e. has not on a Christ provided “wedding garment” – a covering for sin). The interchange that follows is interesting. Firstly, the king addresses the improperly dressed ‘guest’ as “Friend.” This same term is used in Rev. 3:19 where Christ said to the Laodiceans, “As many as I **love** (*phileo* – to be a fiend), I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent,” and these baptized brethren were “naked” and counselled to buy from Christ “**white raiment**, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.” Secondly, when the king says, “how camest thou in hither **not** having a wedding garment?” there are two words in the Greek to express a negation, i.e. for “not.” The word used here is *me*, i.e. the subjective negation, meaning that the subject (the man without a wedding garment) knew he did not have one on. It was a deliberate choice, whereas the word “not” in V.11 is *ou* the objective negation signifying an objective (i.e. outside of oneself) observation. The king saw that this man did not have a wedding garment on. The use of *me* (the subjective negation) later in V.29 is also important. We are the arbiters of our own destiny by the choices we

make. If we make the deliberate choice not to wear a Christ offered “wedding garment” either by refusing to be baptized, or taking it off, like the Laodiceans, we too will be “speechless” at the Judgement Seat. To be bound “hand and foot” and cast “into outer darkness” suggests not ‘walking in the way’ (foot) and therefore not working (hand) to bring forth fruit. Repeating Matt. 20:16 – “For many are called, but few are chosen” the parable underscores that the vast majority of Jews who received the invitation to the wedding, but refused it, will be rejected at the Judgement Seat. Hopefully, we Gentiles will be found wearing “white raiment.”

V.15-33 – What follows are two attempts to destroy Christ by the Pharisees and the Sadducees who throw their best at him, but are humiliated. The mealy-mouthed introduction by the Pharisees on the propriety of paying taxes to the Romans, receives a curious response – “Shew me the tribute money,” and when brought, “Whose is this image and superscription?” Stunned, they have no option but to say, “Caesar's” and were blown away when he said, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.” What could they say? They were “speechless” V.12.

The Sadducees, seeing the Pharisees humiliated, thought they could do better. They lay out a scenario involving the Levirate law about a woman who ends up having seven brothers as husbands who all die childless. “Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her” they asked, doubtless confidently rubbing their hands together. Sadducees, heavily Hellenized with Greek philosophy did not believe in the resurrection, or angels, but actually knew better – “Ye do err, **not** knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” The word “not” here is *me* (the subjective negation – see above V.11-14), and indicates that they did in fact “know the scriptures,” but deliberately chose to ignore the implications of what they contained. The Lord's response was brilliant. Firstly, he points out that immortals in the Kingdom will not marry like the **angels** (which they did not believe in, but knew they existed because the Scriptures said so), and then hits them with “But as touching the **resurrection** of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, **I am the God of Abraham**, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the **living**” calling “those things which be not as though they were” (Rom. 4:17). What could they say when “the multitude heard this,” and “were astonished at his doctrine.”

V.34-40 – Pharisees and Sadducees did not get on, but using the mantra ‘that the enemy of our enemy must be our friend’ “they were gathered together.” One of their doctors of the Law stepped forward thinking he could do better – “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” he asked. The Lord's citation of Deut. 6:5 would have been music to their ears, but, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” would have stung the band of murderers before him. Were they keepers of the Law they espoused? – “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

V.41-46 – The Lord had had enough. The time had come for his critics to be silenced. They ‘knew’ the Scriptures, but did not read them carefully enough. “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?” is met with the response “David” to which Christ cites Ps. 110:1 – “The LORD said unto **my Lord**” and asks “How then doth David in spirit call him Lord.” All Jews knew that a son could not be lord to his father. End of story – Jesus was the Son of God.

July 22

2 Samuel 7

This chapter is well known as one of the places where Yahweh made His promises to David. However, the focus on the promises can deflect attention away from other parts of the chapter. For example, the very first promise made to David is actually a confirmation of the promise made to Abraham – V.10 – “I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more.”

V.1-9 – Finally at peace, David sought to build a temple for Yahweh and received support from Nathan the prophet who is nevertheless sent back immediately to deny David that privilege. There were various reasons: (1) Yahweh doesn’t dwell in temples made with hands; (2) His association with Israel was always behind curtains (tents); (3) He had never asked for a temple made of cedar; (4) and David was a man who shed too much blood – 1 Chron. 22:8; 28:3. Building the temple would be left to a peaceful son.

V.11-17 – The list of promises to David continues in V.11 – “Yahweh telleth thee that he will make thee an **house**” – the word for “house” being *bayith* is used 15 times in the chapter. The first 5 occurrences are of a **building**, but this one is not. It is a reference to a **family**. The seventh occurrence in V.13 has a dual meaning, but the last 8 are all of David’s spiritual family. That became the most important focus of David, not so much the building of a literal temple, although he pursued that assiduously too.

While in the promises that follow, Solomon is in the background as an incipient fulfillment and a foreshadowing, the real focus is on Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, and of David through his son Nathan (Luke 3:31 – the genealogy of Mary). The blood line of David did not run through Solomon to Christ. God’s mercy was in fact withdrawn from Solomon for apostasy (see allusions to this context in Ps. 89:19-32), but it was never withdrawn from Christ. This is implied in the words, “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.” David would be dead when the “seed” in view would be born. Solomon’s kingdom was not “established” because it was divided and finally dissolved. That the promise concerns Jesus Christ is made clear in V.14 – “I will be his father, and he shall be my son.” The next words could never apply to David or Solomon when properly understood – “**If he commit iniquity**, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.”

V.14 – The phrase “If he commit iniquity” in the Hebrew is – *be ha awatho* (from ‘*awah*, signifying in the Niphil (Passive Voice); something done to one, cause to bow down, to suffer iniquity). Hence, a literal translation would be, “In his subverting,” i.e. in his deprivation of justice, or in the perverting of his right. Similar usages occur in Ps. 38:6; Job 33:27; 34:12; Ps. 119:78; Lam. 3:36,59. No conditional sense exists in the Hebrew, so Bro. Thomas translates – “Whom in his being caused to bow down I will....”, and Adam Clarke – “Even in his suffering for iniquity I will....” This is about Christ’s unjust murder.

V.16 can only be fulfilled in the Kingdom.

V.18-29 – “And is this the manner of man, O Lord Yahweh?” The word “manner” is *towrah* – law, custom, mode or manner (Gesenius); the idea is of a type or pattern. Lit. – “This is the type of the Adam” (i.e. the last Adam = Christ). David was astonished and humbled that he was chosen to be both a type and forefather of the son of God. The companion account in 1 Chron.17:17 says – “and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree.” The word “estate” is *towr* – a manner, mode. The

Interlinear Bible translates “as a type of the man who is on high.” Youngs. Lit. – “..and hast seen me as a type of the man who is on high.” LITV – “...and have looked upon me as a type of the Man who is on high.”

V.25 – “concerning his house, establish it for ever” – This ‘house’ looms large in David’s mind. This indicates that the final fulfilment is in the Kingdom Age. David’s request in V.26 – “Let thy name be magnified....let the house of thy servant David be established before thee” aligns Yahweh’s future glory with his eternal house – Rom. 8:30. V.27 – “I will build thee an house” was the most important element to David. V.29 – “with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever” – This is twice mentioned in the verse; i.e. an eternal house – a Divine family.

Jeremiah 12

V.1-4 – “Righteous, art thou O Yahweh, when I present my pleading unto thee,—**Yet, concerning the things that are right, let me speak with thee**,—Wherefore hath, the way of the lawless, prospered? Wherefore have all, utter traitors, been at ease?” (Rotherham). This is reminiscent of Asaph’s complaint “at the prosperity of the lawless.” Jeremiah is complaining that the priests of Anathoth that were seeking to murder him (Jer. 11:19) were carrying on as they always had, receiving the tithes of the people and enjoying all the blessings God had entitled them to, when Yahweh was “near in their mouth, and far from their reins.” Was that fair? when “thou hast seen **me**, and tried mine heart toward thee.” Why haven’t the judgements come he asks (V.4).

V.5-17 – God’s answer to Jeremiah provides a challenge that is relevant to every generation of His servants – “If thou hast run with the **footmen**, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with **horses**?” Jeremiah had been warned the going was going to get tough – Jer. 1:19 – “they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee” and this response is a call to “endure hardness, as a good soldier” – 2 Tim. 2:3. Even in “the swelling of Jordan” (a reference to thick jungle on the banks of the Jordan River from which emerged wild beasts – V.8) it is possible to endure by faith what you know is coming (V.6), and what the ultimate outcome will be. The judgements were coming through Judah’s “evil neighbours” who in turn would be plucked out of their land, but the outcome would be an opportunity for Gentile nations to find salvation. The words of V.15, “after that...I will return” are picked up by James to resolve the issues of the Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15:16 to demonstrate that God had a purpose with the Gentiles, even with those who had previously harmed His people. Yahweh would “have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, Yahweh liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people.”

Matthew 23

The 8 woes of Matt. 23 match by contrast the 8 blessings of Matt. 5 as set out in the slides below. No other Gospel record has this structure.

The woes begin in V.13 and the first 12 verses are the introduction. The Lord commands that the scribes and Pharisees were to be listened to when they read Moses’ law, but their example and conduct was not to be followed. They were good at demanding high standards from others, but did not require them from themselves. Everything they did was for public consumption and the plaudits of men. They loved “the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of

men, Rabbi, Rabbi.” Sounds like human nature doesn’t it? The Pope and his followers similarly ignore V.9-10 – “call no man your father upon the earth.” Humility is the key requirement for attainment to the Kingdom, and this is shown by service to others – “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant,” for “whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”

The eight Blessings and the eight Woes		The eight Blessings and the eight Woes	
Blessings – Matt.5:3-12	Woes – Matt.23:13-33	Blessings – Matt. 5:3-12	Woes – Matt.23:13-33
1. The Kingdom opened to the poor in spirit – V.3	1. The Kingdom shut by Scribes and Pharisees – V.13	5. The merciful to obtain mercy – V.7	5. Mercy omitted and left undone – V.23-24
2. Comfort for mourners – V.4	2. Mourners distressed – V.14	6. The pure within will see God – V.8	6. External purity – Blind to internal corruption – V.25-26
3. The meek to inherit the earth – V.5	3. Fanatics compassing the earth – V.15	7. Peacemakers to be sons of God – V.9	7. Hypocrites & lawless – Divisive and destructive – V.27-28
4. True righteousness sought by true desire – V.6	4. False righteousness sought by casuistry (resolving cases of doubtful propriety) – V.16-22	8. The persecuted rewarded – V.10-12	8. The persecutors condemned – V.29-33

V.23 is interesting. The Lord criticizes the punctiliousness of the scribes and Pharisees for their diligent approach to rituals which required measuring out certain substances, but they completely ignored Divine principles – “the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” In other words, there is a place for practical things, but these must never submerge the important spiritual things – “You blind guides, straining out the gnat while you gulp down the camel!” (Weymouth).

V.34-36 – This is apparently based on the events of 2 Chron. 24, but V.35 mentions “Zacharias son of Barachias.” Is there an answer to this problem? The established facts are: (1) The only Scriptural record of a Zechariah being slain in the Temple is contained in 2 Chron. 24:20-22; (2) The parallel account in Luke 11:51 omits reference to “Barachias”; (3) Zechariah the son of Berachiah is the prophet Zechariah of whom nothing is recorded concerning his death.

These are the suggested reasons why the Lord is referring to 2 Chron.24:20-22: (1) The omission of “Barachias” in the parallel record of Luke 11:51 lends some weight to the suggestion that it is an interpolation in Matt. 23; (2) The Lord draws heavily upon the context of 2 Chron. 24 when the accounts of Matt. 23 and Luke 11 are carefully analyzed; (3) Zechariah the son of Jehoiada is clearly a type of Christ – cp. the allusion in Matt. 23:37 to “which stood above the people.” Compare the reference to stoning in Matt. 23:37 and 2 Chron. 24:21. Almost conclusive evidence is found by comparing Luke 11:51, “It shall be required of this generation” to 2 Chron. 24:22, “Yahweh look upon and require it.”

Finally, a strong piece of evidence is that 2 Chronicles is the last book in the Jewish Bible – hence Zechariah the son of Jehoiada is the last prophet whose murder is recorded. This Zechariah was a type of Christ, and fittingly, the Syrian invasion in which Joash and the princes were destroyed was typical of the judgements on Judah in AD 70.

V.37-39 – This final lament by Christ over Jerusalem is based on Zechariah “which stood above the people” and said “because ye have forsaken Yahweh, he hath also forsaken you.” Similarly, Christ “as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings” failed, and so

– “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” They would not see him until Ps. 118:26 was fulfilled at his second advent.

July 23

2 Samuel 8

V.1 – “David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Methegammah” – The meaning of the name expresses its importance to the Philistines – “bridle of the mother city” is apparently a reference to Gath. In the parallel passage of 1 Chronicles 18:1 we read, “David took Gath and her towns;” and it is probable that Gath and its districts were called Methegammah in David’s time.

V.2-14 record David’s victories over the surrounding nations. Perhaps his attack on Moab was attributable to the possible mistreatment of his parents whom he took to Moab for refuge when being pursued by Saul – 1 Sam. 22:3-4. A correction needs to be made in V.12-13. The ESV correctly translates the first words of V.12 as “from Edom” (not “Syria” in KJV), and V.13 as “And David made a name for himself when he returned from striking down 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.” The next verse confirms this, for “he put garrisons in Edom.” The parallel account in 1 Chron. 18:11 also confirms this. It seems a transcriber made this error because of the closeness of the names Edom and Syria in the Hebrew (see at right).

עֲדֹמָא	Edom	סִירְיָא	Syria
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V.15-18 – The governmental structure of David’s kingdom shows that he was totally different to Saul who was initially reluctant to rule, for David was committed to executing “judgement and justice unto all his people.”

2 Samuel 9

Once David had organized the kingdom and subdued local enemies, he remembered his oath to Jonathan and asked “Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” Mephibosheth had now become a father; was lame, and was in hiding on the east of Jordan out of fear. Ziba a servant of Saul advised he was “in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar.” This town was situated beyond Jordan, and was probably the Debir of Josh. 13:26. When called, Mephibosheth was very fearful (it was common practice in those times for new rulers to exterminate the family of the former ruler to eliminate the revival of their dynasty). David saw this fear and put him at ease – “Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father’s sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.” The integrity of David was only ever blotted by his sin with Bathsheba. Unlike Saul, he was determined to keep his promises.

Jeremiah 13

V.1-11 – The enacted parable of the girdle had a solemn message for the people of Judah. Yahweh had bound His people to Himself like a girdle for an express purpose. It was “that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.” Jeremiah made two trips to the Euphrates (a very long journey) as a representative of his people. Israel in the north had already gone into captivity to areas near the Euphrates, and Judah was about to follow. Like Jeremiah’s girdle, recovered in a degraded state, so the return from the captivity in Babylon would be. It is as well to remember that we Gentiles have been called to be “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14). Our call is to manifest the character of our God that it might be “for a praise, and for a glory” to Him.

V.12-14 – Like bottles filled with wine, so the leaders and people would be filled “with drunkenness” and would be dashed “one against another” as the judgements fell on them.

V.15-27 – The adulterous behavior of Judah would see the nation “wholly carried away captive” to the home of the god Baal they worshipped – Babylon. Just as the Cushite (“Ethiopian” KJV) could not change his skin (V.23), so the people of Judah would not change and would end up in the home of Cushites (see Amos 9:7).

Matthew 24

A full set of Bible marking notes on the Olivet Prophecy is provided in **Appendix 6**.

V.1-3 – Taking pride in Herod’s temple the disciples drew the Lord’s attention to its beauty, but he declared it to be a leprous house – “See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down” – Lev. 14:45.

Question 1 concerned the issue at hand (V.2) – the coming destruction of the temple;

Question 2 concerned a clear sign indicating the imminent fulfilment of V.2; and **Question 3** sought a sign indicating the end of the age. In the context two ages are in view – the Jewish Age leading to AD 70, and the Gentile Age leading to Christ’s Second Advent.

In V.4 to 29a, Christ deals with matters leading up to, and the consequences of the Roman invasion from AD 66 to 70, and the end of Judah’s Commonwealth. In V.29b to 51, Christ deals with matters relating to his Second Advent, Armageddon, and the redemption of Jews in the Second Exodus of Israel. Notes in **Appendix 6** provide the detail. We will comment on some important elements of the prophecy.

V.14 has been misused to suggest Christ will not return until the whole world has been evangelized. This view completely ignores the context which is the period leading up to AD 70. This is proven by V.15 – “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).” This would be the fulfillment of Dan. 9:26-27, and therefore V.14 is about the apostles preaching in all the then known world prior to AD 70.

V.21 has also been misused to suggest that Christ’s return will be preceded by a time of “great tribulation” – “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” In fact, the exact opposite will be true as Christ made clear in such places as Luke 17:26-30; 21:34-35; Rev. 3:14-22; etc. Humanism and general prosperity have made sure of it. No one cares about what you believe nowadays, so persecution is rare. The prosperity that Christ refers to will last to the day of his return, so there will be no tribulation from starvation and privation. The challenge for the final generation is “remember Lot’s wife” which would be incomprehensible in a time of great tribulation. She wanted to stay in Sodom!

V.22-24 – In the Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come (November 1860 Vol. X No.11 pages 256-257) Bro. Thomas comments on these verses – “In v.22, the shortening of the days has relation to Israel, the enemies of the gospel, but still beloved for the father’s sakes; and ‘the elect’ in v.24 relates to the chosen in Christ, who are warned not to be deceived by false prophets and teachers and pseudo Christs.”

V.28-29 – “there will the **eagles** be gathered together” is so clearly a reference to the Roman legions with their eagle standards that there is no mistaking that AD 70 is being referred to. So, V.29 speaks of the outcome – “the sun be darkened, and the moon shall

not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven” referring to the overthrow of Judah’s Commonwealth; its government (sun); religious system (moon); and notable leaders (stars), which is why the singular “heaven” is used. It is just one nation being spoken of. However, the next phrase of V.29 is different – “and the **powers** of the **heavens** shall be shaken.” In the Greek, both the words “powers” and “heavens” are plural, and therefore refer to many nations. It is a simple fact of history that between AD 69 (when Vespasian became emperor) and 180 there was peace across the Roman world that consisted of many nations. This is why the Apocalypse has a “white horse” period for the first Seal (Rev. 6:2). This phrase is the equivalent of Luke 21:26 (ESV) – “For the **powers** of the **heavens** will be shaken.” The KJV is incorrect in using the singular “heaven” for it is plural in the Greek. There can be no dispute about the time period involved in Luke 21:24-28. It is the period just before the Second Advent of Christ. Accordingly, Matt. 24:29 must be divided between two separate eras. Part A up to the word “heaven” referring to AD 70; and Part B the words “and the **powers** of the **heavens** shall be shaken” referring to the period just prior to Christ’s return to the earth.

V.30 – “then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven” is a reference to Armageddon as is explained in Rev. 1:7 (see Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 84,99,134-150). Therefore, “the tribes of the earth” is a reference to all nations. Armageddon is the beginning of the redemption of Israel which is the subject of V.31.

V.31 – “And he shall send his **angels** (Elijah and the saints) with a great sound of a **trumpet** (Isa. 18:3; 27:13; Zech. 9:14) and they shall gather together his **elect** (Israel – Isa. 45:4; 65:15-22) from **the four winds** (Zech. 2:6), from one end of **heaven** (Deut. 30:4) to the other” – That this verse refers to the Second Exodus is obvious from the fact that the saints have been immortalized before Armageddon. They are the “clouds” of V.30.

V.32 – “Now learn a parable of the **fig tree**; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves” – The fig tree is a symbol of Israel (Joel 1:7,12; Hos. 9:10; Jer. 24) and being “tender” indicates its revival, not its awful fruitless state prior to its cutting down in AD 70 – Mark 11:13-14; Luke 13:6-9. The parallel account in Luke 21:29-33 settles the matter. It is clearly a reference to the revival of the state of Israel in 1948. Not only would the **fig tree** of **Israel** emerge then, but “all the trees” for when the United Nations voted to partition the Land in November 1947 there were only 56 nations in the UN. Now there are 193. The generation (a lifetime) that saw that milestone event will survive until Christ returns. Do not get hung up on “this generation” being the disciples of the first century as some suggest. They did not see the fig tree shoot forth leaves. They saw it cut down. Luke 21 is conclusive, as is Matt. 24:36-51. It can only refer to the latter days.

V.45 introduces the three parables of Matt. 25 as will be explained.

V.36-44 – The day and the hour of Christ’s return is not known and the prosperity of the final years can do to others what it did to Lot’s wife. The Judgement Seat will come (see comments on Luke 17:34-37 on March 25 pg. 56) for V.40-41.

V.46-51 is an exhortation to readiness and steadfastness. The faithful steward providing therapy (the word “household” in V.45 is *therapia*) and food, can change attitude due to the corrosive influence of prosperity (days of Noah), and the apparent delay of the Lord’s coming – “**But and if that evil servant** shall say in his heart, **My lord delayeth his coming**,” and “begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken,” his loss of faith and hypocrisy will be punished severely (being cut asunder is poetic treatment for hypocrisy).

V.12-13 sits in the pre-AD 70 section of the prophecy but is relevant to both eras. It has been left till last here because of its immediate relevance to us – “And because **iniquity** (*anomia* – lawlessness) shall **abound** (*plethuno* – be multiplied), the **love** (*agape* – sacrificial love) of many (Diag. “the many”) shall **wax cold** (*psucho* – to cool by blowing). But he that shall **endure** (*hupomeno* – to remain behind after others have gone; to keep one’s ground; hold out; bear up) unto the end, the same shall be **saved**.” Can anyone deny that the ‘chilling winds’ of lawlessness are cooling the zeal of Christ’s followers in the latter days? We must resist the influences of Humanism, narcissism and immorality ‘blown’ at us from so many different directions, much of it by sophisticated technology. As inspiration would have it, the very voice of the verbs used in this passage drive home the message. The words “wax cold” are in the Passive Voice; i.e. we are the reluctant **receivers** of the world’s constant chilling winds of doctrine and evil. However, the word “endure” is in the Active Voice; i.e. we must do this for ourselves actively. But even if we do, it is Yahweh who will save us, not ourselves – the word “saved” is in the Passive Voice. We will be the recipients of His grace.

July 24

2 Samuel 10

Nahash the king of Ammon had been subdued by Israel, through Saul (1 Sam. 11), and by David (2 Sam. 8), but on the death of Nahash, his son Hanun acceded to the throne. David sought to maintain the peace with Ammon, but when his ambassadors arrived they were humiliatingly treated because Hanun was ill-advised by his courtiers. It was to be a costly mistake. War seemed inevitable. The Ammonites hired Syrian mercenaries, and David sent Joab and Abishai to Rabbah. Outnumbered and virtually surrounded, Joab showed rare confidence in God, rather than in his own abilities, and a great victory was won. The Syrians rallied under Hadarezer and returned to fight against Israel. This time, David led the army and the losses of the Syrians were so great that “they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.” David’s act of kindness began a series of events that ultimately led to the worst period of his life – the sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah, a despicable act – 2 Sam. 12:9. Can we learn something from this?

Had David not reacted to the humiliation of his ambassadors to Hanun in the way he did, things may have been different. National pride and a desire for revenge of the debasement of his emissaries and their wounded pride saw him ignore the advice given by Abigail in 1 Sam. 25:30-31. Not returning “evil for evil” is always a better course, and leaving the matter to Yahweh is even better, but human nature doesn’t naturally operate that way. Hanun was probably young; he was certainly an inexperienced monarch who foolishly listened to bad advice. Perhaps he should have been given another chance. Ultimately, the matter did not end well for anybody, including David as the next chapter reveals.

Jeremiah 14

One curious aspect of the prophecy of Jeremiah is that the events recorded in some chapters are not always in chronological order. In some cases the reasons for this are obvious (e.g. Jer. 34 & 35). This chapter which speaks of the dearth (*batstsôreth* – dearth, drought, destitution) some suggest might be a reference to the famine in the time of Zedekiah, but is more likely an earlier drought. The following snippet from one commentator is useful.

The prophet represents himself as twice interceding with Yahweh on behalf of the people, and twice receiving a refusal of his petition, (Jer. 14:1-22; 15:1-4) the latter reply being sterner and more decisive than the first. The occasion was a long period of drought, involving much

privation for man and beast. The connection between the parts of this first portion of the discourse is clear enough. The prophet prays for his people, and God answers that He has rejected them, and that intercession is futile. Thereupon, Jeremiah throws the blame of the national sins upon the false prophets; and the answer is that both the people and their false guides will perish. The prophet then soliloquizes upon his own hard fate as a herald of evil tidings, and receives directions for his own personal guidance in this crisis of affairs (Jer. 15:10-21; 16:1-9). There is a pause, but no real break, at the end of chapter 15. The next chapter resumes the subject of directions personally affecting the prophet himself; and the discourse is then continuous so far as Jer. 17:18.

The above being the case, chapters 14 to 17 should be seen a package in which Jeremiah passed through a period of great uncertainty and personal grief, which culminated in him being brutally treated at the hands of Pashur in chap. 20 and the deep depression that followed it. All through this he questions God and pleads his case only to be told to continue with his mission because that is what he had been appointed to do (Jer. 1). The words quoted in the comments on Jer. 1 are appropriate in this context – “No prophet of God was at once more sure of his words, but at the same time so unsure of himself.”

V.2-6 clearly describe the consequences of the drought. V.7-12 are a plea by Jeremiah on behalf of his distressed people for some restraint from God (“the hope of Israel”), but is repudiated with the advice “Pray not for this people for their good.” The judgements, including famine would continue.

V.13-22 – Jeremiah complained that the false prophets who prophesied in God’s name were to blame, and infers that Yahweh had allowed this to happen. This was met with the response that the false prophets would meet their comeuppance in due time, along with those who foolishly listened to them (Jesus gave a similar response – “Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”). In V.17-18 a message from God that the calamity would be so overwhelming as to cause perpetual weeping is set before the people under the representation of Jeremiah’s own sorrow – “Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease.” Another plaintive appeal for clemency is made in V.19-22 and is answered in chap. 15.

Matthew 25

The three parables of this chapter are all part of the one discourse that began in Matt. 24:4 (i.e. it is the continuation of the exhortations at the end of chap. 24). This is clear from Matt. 26:1 – “And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings.” The three parables were introduced in Matt. 24:45 – “Who then is a **faithful** (parable of the talents) and **wise** (parable of the ten virgins) servant, whom his lord hath made **ruler over his household** (stewardship – parable of the sheep and goats), to give them meat in due season?” That each of these parables deal with the return of Christ and the Judgement Seat is so obvious it hardly needs stressing, but it is necessary to do so in the face of the notion that the Olivet Prophecy is all about the events of AD 70 and not about the latter days in its latter portion from Matt. 24:29b.

V.1-13 – The parable of the ten virgins is well known, but is based on the traditions and practices of Christ’s time that are unfamiliar to us. One commentator described the customs of the time as follows:

Marriage “ceremonies” in the East were conducted with great pomp and solemnity. The ceremony of marriage was performed commonly in the open air, on the banks of a stream. Both

the bridegroom and bride were attended by friends. They were escorted in a palanquin, carried by four or more persons. After the ceremony of marriage succeeded a feast of seven days if the bride was a virgin, or three days if she was a widow. This feast was celebrated in her father's house. At the end of that time the bridegroom conducted the bride with great pomp and splendor to his own home. This was done in the evening, or at night (Jer. 7:34; 25:10; 33:11)...(he recounts an observer's account) Many friends and relations attended them; and besides those who went with them from the house of the bride, there was another company that came out from the house of the bridegroom to meet them and welcome them. These were probably female friends and relatives of the bridegroom, who went out to welcome him and his new companion to their home. These are the virgins mentioned in this parable. Not knowing precisely the time when the procession would come, they probably went out early, and waited until they should see indications of its approach. After waiting for some hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, in the very words of Scripture, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.' All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession. The "lamps" used on such occasions were rather "torches" or "flambeaux." They were made by winding rags around pieces of iron or earthenware, sometimes hollowed so as to contain oil, and fastened to handles of wood. These torches were dipped in oil, and gave a large light.

Given that the lamps were as described above (made by winding rags around pieces of iron or earthenware), they only burnt brightly for a short time as the fuel (olive oil) was consumed. To keep them burning it was necessary to have a vessel with additional oil. This is the scenario of V.3-10. The lesson is obvious. Readiness for the return of Christ is dependent on faith, and faith can only be sustained by continual dipping into the Word of God (oil) – Rom. 10:17. Those who do not do this will have their lamp go out ("our lamps are gone out"). Nobody else can do this for us. We must fill our own "vessel" with oil.

It is not without significance that the word "wise" occurs 4 times in this parable, as does the word "faithful" in the next. Four is the Biblical number for righteousness and God manifestation.

V.14-30 – The parable of the talents is also well known. The "talents" are not like the "pounds" of another parable (Luke 19:12-13), for whereas the pound represented the deposit of the truth that is given equally to everyone who accepts it, the talents represent opportunities, abilities possessed or acquired from God, etc. This is confirmed by the statement – "to every man according to his several **ability**" (*dunamis* – strength power, ability). Some have more, some have less. Most of us probably consider ourselves 'one talent' people, and accordingly are in the most danger. The five and two talent people did well ("Well done, thou good and **faithful** servant"), but the one talent man did not. One of the challenges for those who have less ability, scope or opportunities is that human nature is prone to negligence when it perceives it is not as well-endowed as others. They can attribute their position to lack of favour from God, and to unreasonable demands being made of them. This was the position of the one talent man – "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an **hard** (*sklēros* – hard, harsh, rough) man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed (*diaskorpizō* – to scatter abroad): And I was **afraid**, and went and **hid thy talent in the earth**: lo, there thou hast that is thine." He wrongly accused his lord of unreasonable harshness; unjustly reaping what is not rightly his; and engendering fear in his servants. He excuses himself and says 'you haven't lost anything, here is your talent' to which his lord responded, "wicked and **slothful** servant," if you perceived me to be harsh and unfair, why weren't you afraid enough to do something to avoid




rejection? The problem was laziness. There is an antidote for those who believe they are only 'one talent' people – “Your duty then was to deposit my money in some **bank**” (Weymouth). The bank is the **ecclesia**. When many single 'talents' are put together 'interest' can accrue to the 'owner' of the 'bank'.

The modern Humanistic world would take issue with the next statement – “Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.” That would be regarded as unfair by many, but it is a Divine approach – “For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.” Faith and diligence pay dividends.

V.31-46 – The parable of the sheep and goats is about the Judgement Seat of Christ, not the judgement of the nations which is the subject of Dan. 7:9-12. Bro. Thomas recognized this in Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 219; Vol. 2 pg. 254; Vol. 5 pg. 82 (Logos Edition) whatever may be made of his use of sheep and goat nations. Nations will not be invited to “inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (V.34), or be granted “life eternal” (V.46) as the “righteous” will. These are the rewards reserved for individual “sheep.”

V.31 – “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the **throne of his glory**: And before him shall be gathered **all nations**” – the reason Christ mentions “all nations” is that his disciples had no concept that Gentiles would be called to the truth and be represented at the Judgement Seat. The language is similar to Zech. 14:2 – “For I will gather **all nations** against Jerusalem to battle.” All nations there doesn't mean every nation (about 200 today), but representatives of many nations, as it does here. Furthermore, the throne of glory is not the throne of David which will be set up later in Jerusalem. Any throne that Christ sits in is a throne of glory, even judgement thrones – see Rev. 20:11-12; Isa. 22:23.

V.32 – “he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd **divideth his sheep from the goats**” – This infers there are more goats than sheep – the lesser number extracted from the larger (“many are called, but few are chosen”). There can only be two outcomes. We will either be a sheep or a goat. The characteristics of these animals are shown on the slide at right. See **Appendix 7** for a fuller description of the characteristics of sheep and goats. It helps to understand why Christ chose them. The reward for sheep is eternal life (V.34).

Two classes at the Judgement		
	SHEEP	GOATS
	Dependent	Independent
	Submissive	Rebellious
	Willing	Callous
	Obedient	Disobedient
	Gregarious	Solitary
	White	Black
	Selective eaters	Eat anything
<small>Events surrounding the return of Christ</small>		

V.35-36 – The kindnesses listed are only those the Lord could fittingly identify with, as Bro. Carter suggests – “To feed a sick soul may have greater value than feeding a hungry body; to help the spiritually weary may fill a greater need than restoring physical vigour.” Christ was never spiritually hungry, thirsty, naked and sick, but he did identify with the mortal afflictions of men. To provide for these needs in others was to do it to him.

V.40 & 45 – There is a chilling contrast made in these two verses. After their glorification, the Lord is depicted as telling the accepted “sheep” why they are on his **right hand**. He says “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of **these my brethren**.” But of those “goats” still on his left hand before their dismissal he says, “Inasmuch as ye did it

not to one of **the least of these**, ye did it not to me.” What happened to the “my brethren” of V.40? Were they not members of the ecclesia? Were their names not recorded in the ecclesial roll? Were not their names once in the Book of Life? Yes, but they are no longer considered his brethren because they proved themselves to be goats!

July 25

2 Samuel 11

V.1 – “And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. **But David tarried still at Jerusalem**” – So began the blackest year of David's life. David should have been at the head of Israel's army as he had been in 2 Sam. 10:17, for it was the time “when kings go forth to battle.” The battle that David now exposed himself to was with his own nature, and “there is no discharge in that war.” While we are active in the warfare of the truth “as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3) we are practicing the principle of Rom. 12:21 – “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,” and of Eph. 4:28 – “Let him that **stole** steal no more: but rather let him labour.” David's idleness (“it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from **off his bed**, and walked upon the roof of the king's house”) proved fatal for Uriah, and four of David's sons, for he **stole** Uriah's wife from him (2 Sam. 12:9-10), and then **stole** Uriah's life. Yahweh was to forgive David for this heinous sin after 10 months of agony, but he never forgave himself – “my sin is ever before me” (Ps. 51:3). Activity in God's service is the antidote to the perverse leanings of human nature towards evil behavior which all too often proves the truth of Jer. 17:9 – (RV) “The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is desperately sick: who can know it?” and of course, adultery and fornication nearly always head the list of the evils that come from it – Mark 7:21; Gal. 5:19. The perversity of human nature is shown by the fact that David had at least 20 wives and concubines. He did not need Bathsheba, but that is how the nature works – the more it gets, the more it wants, and in this quest it is very short-sighted, not thinking about consequences. The consequences were enormous.

V.3-5 – When David received the response as to the identity of the beautiful woman he had seen from the palace rooftop bathing outdoors in the twilight, that it was “Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite,” that should have been the end of the matter. She was the wife of one of his mighty men (a Gentile convert – 2 Sam. 23:39), and the granddaughter of Ahithophel his closest advisor and friend, but burning lust got the better of him and he swept all of that aside. This was not the David that Yahweh knew, a man after His own heart, but “a traveller” a “wayfaring man” (2 Sam. 12:4). It was almost inevitable that “the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child” a couple of months later. Now was the time for confession, not cover up and murder.

V.6-17 – The agonizing story of Uriah being recalled from the war and his insistence on not going down to his house to see his wife (almost inconceivable nowadays) because of his duty to the nation at war, is indicative that he was suspicious of the reasons why he had been recalled. This is hinted at when he said to David “shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to **lie with my wife?**” Even when plied with overmuch wine he maintained his steadfastness, much to David's chagrin. His loyalty was a death sentence, and he carried his own death warrant to Joab.

V.18-27 – The cold and calculating Joab played his part in the crime by arranging the demise of Uriah and then confidently wielded his new found power over David by instructing the

messenger what to answer when David angrily said “why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.” Joab knew how to twist the knife. Uriah was dead; Bathsheba mourned and within months brought forth a doomed son, “But the thing that David had done displeased Yahweh.”

Jeremiah 15

V.1-9 – Jeremiah’s appeal for clemency at the end of chapter 14 – “Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake” is rejected out of hand by Yahweh with a searing condemnation of Judah’s sins, mainly attributable to over 50 years of apostasy under Manasseh (V.4). Nothing could be done to redeem this people as Yahweh said, “I am weary with repenting.”

V.10-21 – Jeremiah bursts into a complaint about his situation and vents his sorrow at the rejection of his prayer. He feels completely alone and abandoned to misery, abuse and oppression – “Woe is me, my mother, that you bore me, a man of strife and contention to the whole land!” Yahweh assured him of support on the worst of occasions (V.11), but Jeremiah’s intercession (“iron”) would not hold back the northern invader (“northern iron and steel”) from coming down (V.12). V.15 – “know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke” – This is the prayer of a man in bitter grief who has had enough of the persecution and hatred that had come his way because he had passed on Yahweh’s messages – “Thy words were found, and I did eat them.” He had not sought prophetic office, but had accepted it. Now he complains that it is all too much. It was a lonely job – “I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation,” and painful, “Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable.” He complains that God had not intervened on his behalf adequately – “Wilt thou, indeed be, to me as a brook that disappointeth, waters that cannot be trusted?” (Rotherham). The response from God is that Jeremiah had effectively walked away from his commission. He needed to return and get on with the job – “If thou **return**, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me.” The principle Jeremiah had not yet grasped was that of Luke 11:23 – “He that is not **with me** is against me.” There was no option but to accept the consequences of the commission to work on God’s behalf. God would fulfil His promise of chapter 1:18-19, repeated here V.20-21.

Matthew 26

V.1-5 – “Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified” – The time had come for “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:30) to be sacrificed at Passover, and “the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people” were plotting to take his life in the high priest’s house. Their intention was to avoid killing Jesus on the feast day to avoid an insurrection, but God had other ideas. It was necessary that the antitype of the first Passover lambs be crucified on the 14th Abib.

V.6-16 – Commentators debate whether the anointing in the house of Simon the leper is the same as that recorded in John 12:1-8 when Mary anointed the Lord’s feet. There are differences; e.g. the woman here poured the ointment of the Lord’s head; but the almost identical words of Jesus in response to the complaint about waste strongly suggests they are same occasion. We are left to speculate whether Simon a cured leper was the husband of Martha. We do not know, and it doesn’t matter. This woman, and Mary (if not the same) understood what the disciples did not – Jesus was about to be crucified – “For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.” Wounded by the rebuke of his Lord, Judas the thief, left in anger to betray him for thirty pieces of silver.

V.17-30 – The Passover feast having been prepared, “when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve” and issued the challenge “one of you shall betray me.” Judas was revealed as the betrayer, but the disciples did not perceive it. The memorial feast was instituted with the promise that it would culminate in the Lord sharing it with his disciples in the Kingdom.

V.31-35 – A further challenge came on the way to the garden of Gethsemane – “All ye shall be offended because of me this night,” and Peter exceeded his companions with assertions of his loyalty. It was not to be a pleasant night for him.

V.36-46 – Taking the inner circle of the disciples, Peter, James and John into a quiet place in the garden, the Lord made three plaintive prayers to his Father, who succoured him by sending an angel (Luke 22:43) because each time Jesus returned to his three disciples they were asleep. His words to them – “the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh *is* weak” also applied to him. In each prayer he says firmly in conclusion, “thy will be done,” for his spirit was willing to obey his Father “to the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8), but like his disciples he was saddled with a nature that was “weak” and naturally recoiled from the horror of crucifixion that awaited him. There was no other way, and he knew it, but that didn’t prevent his nature working the same way as ours would have under the same circumstances. The difference was that he would remain firm and loyal to his Father right to the end, whereas Peter and the other disciples would run away to save themselves, and even deny they knew him. No wonder he was determined to destroy this weak nature on the tree.

V.47-56 – The arresting party from the high priest arrived led by Judas who would have been taken aback by his welcome – “Friend (*hetairos* – a comrade, mate, partner), wherefore art thou come?” A more heinous betrayal is hard to imagine, particularly as it was accompanied by a kiss (Luke 22:48). Peter hacked off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest’s servant but is commanded to put away his weapon “for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” as history has so often shown. He didn’t need Peter’s support for “twelve legions of angels” were available on request, but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. He was the Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7 – “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us”).

V.57-75 – The trial recorded here before Caiaphas was the second of **six** the Lord was to endure. He was first brought before Annas (the effective high priest and father-in-law to Caiaphas – John 18:13.34), and then taken to Caiaphas. Peter followed at a safe distance and snuck into the high priest’s house “to see the end.” He saw “many false witnesses” come to this farcical trial who could not agree, until two schooled ‘witnesses’ twisted John 2:19 – “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” when Jesus actually spoke of his body, but they falsely claimed he said – “I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.” The high priest theatrically stood up and berated Jesus who remained silent (Isa. 53:7), until an oath of adjuration compelled him to respond – “Thou hast said (i.e. you are right): nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power (Ps. 110:1), and coming in the clouds of heaven” (perhaps inferring Caiaphas will be at the Judgement Seat). Accused of blasphemy, Jesus was condemned to death and brutally treated and scorned blasphemously after being blindfolded (not stated here – Mark 14:65).

Peter learnt how true the statement was that “the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Whereas the three plaintive prayers of Jesus in the garden saw an increasing resolution each time, it was the reverse for Peter. The first charge that he was a disciple of Jesus produced a relatively mild “I don’t know what you are talking about” response. The second “he denied with an **oath**, I do not know the man,” and the third time, “Then

began he to **curse** and to **swear**, saying, I know not the man.” The rooster immediately signaled his failure to keep his commitment and he departed weeping bitterly. Etched on his brain was the image of his Master looking sadly at him as he denied him the third time (not recorded here – Luke 22:61). Sometimes necessary development in eternal things can be very painful and embarrassing.

July 26

2 Samuel 12

V.1-14 – The parable of Nathan the prophet spoken to David immediately after the birth of his son by “the wife of Uriah” (stated 3 times in this chapter and again in Matt.1:6) was a masterpiece designed to restore the mind and character of David after a miserable period of more than nine months of the “arrows” of his conscience tearing into him and an awful sickness bringing him low (see the vivid description in Ps. 38:1-11). The fabric of the parable is very pointed. Uriah the “poor man” has just one prized “little ewe lamb” (Bathsheba), while the “rich man” (David) has a huge flock (a harem of 20 plus wives). “And there came a **traveller** unto the rich man” and he took the poor man’s little ewe lamb to provide for him. This “traveller,” also called “a wayfaring man,” sets forth the fact that David had acted out of character. While the tendencies of human nature never leave us, there are times when ‘good men’ (Ps. 37:23 – “The steps of a **good man** are ordered by Yahweh: and he delighteth in his way”) act completely out of character. It is as though “a wayfaring man” has come along for a while. There is incredible mercy in the way Yahweh undertook the recovery of David. The expected response from David was “As Yahweh liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die,” not initially realizing he was condemning himself, until Nathan solemnly intoned “Thou art the man.” Yahweh had done great things for David and in despising His commandments not to commit adultery and murder he had “given great occasion to the enemies of Yahweh to blaspheme” so the sword would never depart from his house; his own son would steal his wives, and the son born to Bathsheba would die. Under the Law, David should have been stoned to death, but God’s grace was granted to him on confession and the upholding of God’s righteousness.

V.15-23 – The true David emerged in the following days as the newborn son declined until dying before he was old enough to be circumcised (a hint at the source of the sin). David “besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth,” but when the child died, “David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of Yahweh, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.” This was a revelation to the courtiers, but a declaration of the man that Yahweh knew – prayerful, hopeful, trusting, humble, and accepting. Sanity and some equilibrium had been restored.

V.23-25 record the birth of Solomon, but he appears not to have been born until some years later after Bathsheba produced at least three other sons before him – 1 Chron. 3:5. The reason why David saw Solomon as special was that he had reached a point of recovery after his sin where he felt in complete harmony with his God again. It can take a long time, even after forgiveness for a serious sin for the offender to feel at one with God again. Hence, David called Solomon “Jedidiah (“beloved of Yah”), because of Yahweh” for “Yahweh loved him.”

V.26-31 – Joab continued the war against the Ammonites and finally breached Rabbah. He cruelly rubbed in the fact that he had something over David and invited him to come and

finish the job in case the glory went to Joab. David conquered the city, captured the king and wore his crown, but it is the record of his apparent cruelty to the people of Ammon (V.31) that produces the most debate among commentators. Some believe that David massacred multitudes (comparing the companion account in 1 Chron. 20:3); while others, like Bullinger, go to great lengths to demonstrate that the Hebrew words used can be construed another way to produce a translation like the ESV – “And he brought out the people who were in it and set them to labour with saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them toil at the brick kilns.”

Jeremiah 16

V.1-13 – Having been appropriately rebuked by God for his complaining, and agreeing to return to his commission, Jeremiah received some new instructions – “Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place.” The reason for this is revealed in V.3-4. Entire families “shall die of grievous deaths, neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth” and would not be lamented. When they objected to this awful prospect, Jeremiah was to reply, “Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith Yahweh, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law.” There was no remedy for the present, but a brighter future was foreseen.

V.14-21 – Yahweh will fulfil His promises to Abraham and finally redeem his natural seed, but it will not be until the latter days. As the time drew near it would be necessary for Yahweh to use force again to get His people back to the Land – “Behold, I will send for many **fishers**, saith Yahweh, and they shall **fish** them; and after will I send for many **hunters**, and they shall **hunt** them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.” This can only be in the latter days, for the return from the captivity in Babylon cannot be described in this fashion, but the events of the last couple of centuries can. During the 19th century, Jews oppressed by pogroms and persecution for centuries across Eurasia, especially in Russia, began to return to what was known as Palestine ruled by the Turks. Wealthy and influential Jews like Baron Rothschild, Theodore Herzl and Chaim Weizmann were “fishers” but their efforts only produced a trickle of returnees. Yahweh raised up hunters like Adolf Hitler and his Nazis who murdered over 6 million Jews in the Holocaust, forcing a massive migration of European Jews back to Palestine, which within a few years became the State of Israel. With only 600,000 Jews at the end of the War of Independence in 1949, Israel now has close to 9 million Jewish inhabitants. However, He declared, “For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not **hid** from my face, neither is their iniquity **hid** from mine eyes,” and so evil has their behavior become that He has hidden His face from them at present – Ezek. 39:23,24,29. Only when Christ appears again will the reformation come, and “Then shall they know that I am Yahweh their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.”

Matthew 27

V.1-10 – When Judas saw that Jesus did not walk away from and escape the clutches of those who sought to kill him as he had done several times in his presence before (Luke 4:30), he knew the game was up. Remorsefully, but not repentantly, he brought the price of blood back to the priests who refused it, and so he cast it into the temple compound and went and committed suicide. Not wanting to be tainted by blood money the priests bought the

potter's field in the valley of Hinnom as a burial ground for visiting expatriate Jews and outcasts. So was fulfilled Zech. 11:12-13.

V.11-26 – Pilate had never had an accused prisoner like Christ stand before him. He marveled at his refusal to defend himself, so he turned to the people and offered the release of Jesus in lieu of Barrabas who was an insurrectionist and murderer (a real enemy of Rome – Luke 23:25). A message from his wife distracted him giving the priests and elders an opportunity to sway the people to demand the release of Barrabas. Caught in a vice of his own making, he condemned Jesus (against the counsel of his wife and his own better judgement), and released the murderer (Acts 3:13-15).

V.27-31 – Jesus was brutally mocked by the Roman soldiers with scarlet robe, crown of thorns and feigned reverence – “Hail, King of the Jews!” but Pilate got a measure of revenge as he insistently “set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

V.32-44 – The condemnation of the Lord had to be by the Romans because their method of execution was crucifixion, and that is what Scripture required. The Jews would have stoned him (cp. Stephen). Matthew is concerned about Scripture being fulfilled and notes the fulfillment of Ps. 22:18 as the soldiers callously divided Christ's garments. Refusing palliative relief from pain (laced vinegar), Jesus was also conscious so as to hear a rising tide of abuse and scorn from crowd and thieves crucified alongside of him. The Lord's mind was on Ps. 22, and so was that of the priests, scribes and elders – “He trusted in God; let him deliver him now” (Ps. 22:8).

V.45-56 – Thick darkness from noon to 3 pm scattered the crowd. Matthew only records one of the seven sayings on the cross – the citation of Ps. 22:1 (the 4th). This was the psalm that spoke most eloquently about the crucifixion. As the Lord died at 3 pm, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain **from the top to the bottom** (i.e. a work of heaven); and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” exposing the access to local tombs. Curiously, some recently buried “saints” rose from the dead after the Lord's resurrection as additional evidence of his rising. They had to be known locally for this to be of any value. The presiding centurion experiencing unprecedented things declared what God's people refused to believe – “Truly this was the Son of God.” Loyal to the end, Mary Magdalene and her faithful companions watched from a respectful distance with much grief.

V.57-61 – Before the sun went down “**a rich man** of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple; he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.” Another prophecy was fulfilled – “he made his grave with...the **rich** in his death” – Isa. 53:9. Wound in graveclothes and laid in Joseph's new tomb, the three days and three nights of his sleep began, closely monitored by the two Mary's.

V.62-66 – Already fearful after eerie darkness, earthquake and rent veil, the rulers visited Pilate with a request for an extra guard of Roman soldiers apart from their own. He refused saying, “You have a guard, go away, make it as secure as you know how” (LITV). Pilate was unsurprisingly not in a mood to accede to any more of their demands.

July 27

2 Samuel 13

It was not long before Nathan's declaration of the chaos that would attend David's family because of his sin with Bathsheba began to appear. His oldest son, Amnon the son of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, was so infatuated with Tamar the sister of Absalom that he was

physically unwell. Unable to see any legitimate way of fulfilling his desire towards her, he foolishly took the advice of “Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother” who “was a very crafty man.” The subterfuge of having Tamar come and prepare a meal for an allegedly sick half brother turned into rape, shame and desolation for Tamar, and a death warrant for Amnon. It is a sickening story of uncontrolled human lust that sadly David understood perfectly well.

V.15 – “Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her” – This is so typical of human nature. The common Hebrew word for love is used here, but this was not true love, for it is clear it was solely sexual desire that being unsatisfied in terms of his dreams turned to vengeful hatred. Vengeance however, was what Absalom planned on encountering his distraught sister with ashes on her head and a torn virgin's garment. Amnon was doomed.

V.23-39 – Absalom waited for the dust to settle and after two years held a feast at the time of sheep-shearing (a common practice of the time) and “invited all the king's sons.” David declined to attend, but Absalom's persistence led to him agreeing that all his sons, including Amnon could attend. There was doubtless a degree of foreboding in David's mind. At the feast, Amnon, applied with alcohol, fell victim to Absalom's well-schooled and emboldened servants who slew him. The news reached David that all his sons had been slain, but the subtle Jonadab put his mind at relative ease that only Amnon was dead. The outpouring of torn and ravaged emotions dominates this record. Only bitterness can come from illegitimate and uncontrolled human lust. The pleasure it promises is invariably overwhelmed by the heartache and misery it produces. David's family was paying the price for his sin.

Absalom fled for refuge to Talmai king of Geshur (as no city of refuge would receive a brazen murderer). Talmai was the father of Maachah Absalom's mother (2 Sam. 3:3), and therefore his grandfather. When the record says “David mourned for his son every day” it is not a reference to his son Amnon, although doubtless he mourned for him too. Remember his reaction to the death of Bathsheba's son which informs this account. For three years David mourned the absence of his favourite son and “longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, **seeing he was dead.**” It was to prove to be a misplaced and deadly favouritism.

Jeremiah 17

V.1-13 – It is no accident that language drawn from the life of Job appears in this record; e.g. “The sin of Judah is written with a **pen of iron**” is an echo of Job 19:23-24 – “Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an **iron pen** and lead in the rock for ever!” for by the time this episode of uncertainty in the life of Jeremiah is over it produces Job's desperate lament (Job 3:3) from his mouth – Jer. 20:14 – “Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed.” The Spirit in James confirmed this connection between Job and Jeremiah, a suffering prophet (James 5:10-11). The sin of Judah was “graven upon the table of their heart.” What is supposed to be written there is “the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart” (2 Cor. 3:3). The judgements would come because of this – “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Yahweh” (V.5). But there was a different option – “Blessed is the man that trusteth in Yahweh, and whose hope Yahweh is” (V.7). Choosing that option leads to fruitfulness – “For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river” (V.8). But the problem was the heart of man (V.9 LITV) – “The heart is deceitful

above all things, and it is incurable.” Only God can truly see what is in man’s heart for our heart is capable of deceit. It is always trying to justify its thoughts and actions. We too can flounder like Jeremiah did for a while, but like him we need to reach up to higher things – “A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary” (V.12). Yahweh is “the hope of Israel” and those who forsake Him “shall be written in the earth” (see comments on John 8, April 16 pg. 33), for they have forsaken “the fountain of living waters” (this goes right back to Jer. 2:13).

V.14-18 – Jeremiah was on the road to recovery from his depression and anguish over the high cost to himself of his prophetic obligations, but it would take time – “Heal me, O Yahweh, and I shall be healed.” He had bravely passed on God’s messages about judgements to come and was repudiated, scorned and plotted against for it, but nothing had happened – “Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of Yahweh? let it come now.” He had faithfully spoken the word even though he did not want “the woeful day” (the destruction of his people) to arrive. He pleaded for more support from God, and the arrival of the judgements so that it might be all over (V.17-18).

V.19-27 – God tests whether Jeremiah is genuine and fully committed to the task ahead – “Go and stand in **the gate** of the children of the people, whereby the **kings of Judah** come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the **gates** of Jerusalem.” Public witness to the king and all the people on a touchy point would verify his commitment to his commission. The Sabbath day was treated with contempt in the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (see Ezek. 20:12-24 where the word “sabbaths” occurs **6 times** and the nexus is made between despising the Sabbath and idolatry). Jeremiah was to pronounce, “Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem” which would rile ruler and subjects. Adherence to the Sabbath law and its principles would bring great blessings, but ignoring it would bring destruction for Judah. In Christ, we are not required to keep the Sabbath as Israel were under the Law, but we are required to keep its principles expressed beautifully in Isa. 58 (see comments July 2 pg. 5).

Matthew 28

V.1 – “In the **end** of the Sabbath” – The word “end” is *opse* – after a long time, long after. Jewish days ended and began at 6 pm (and in Israel still do). Christ rose from the dead and was immortalized at 6 pm on the Sabbath (see comments on John 20, **April 24** pg. 51) exactly three days and three nights (required by prophecy – Matt. 12:40) after being entombed at 6 pm on Wednesday 14th Abib (see comments on Ex. 16:1 on **February 8**). What we are reading of here is a reference to nearly 12 hours later as the sun began to rise on the first day of the week (we call Sunday). The two Mary’s who had sat and watched Jesus being interred on Wednesday evening were back again early in the morning and were astonished when an earthquake accompanied the arrival of an angel whose task it was to roll away the stone and sit upon it as a testimony to them and the guards watching the tomb, that the Messiah had been raised from the dead (remember – Christ did not need to have open doors to enter and leave any place as an immortal – John 20:19). It is evident he was outside the tomb (V.9), and this in itself, added to Zech. 3 (the foreshadowing of John 20) is proof that he was immortal before the tomb was opened. He had prevailed over the gates of Hades (Matt 16:18). The two Mary’s, instructed by the risen Lord to go and tell his disciples the good news were not long afterwards overtaken by fearful guards who fled to tell of their frightful experience to the chief priests (V.11). The Sanhedrin being urgently assembled, they proceeded to surreptitiously protect themselves and the soldiers from the ramifications of the obvious failure of their enterprise. How far God’s people were removed from Him. Their

confident 'release' granted to Pilate's obvious reluctance, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25) would return heavily and justly upon them between AD 66 and 70.

V.16-20 – Meeting his bemused disciples on a mountain in Galilee, the risen Lord gave them a commission – "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Some time back a suggestion that the words "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" were possibly an interpolation by the Trinitarian translators under King James who commissioned the KJV, was questioned. We now know that it was in fact a manipulation of the original text, just like 1 John 5:7-8 (see comments June 18 pg. 49). You know when the Catholics themselves acknowledge that what we have in the KJV for Matt. 29:19 is not what the original Hebrew text (in which Matthew wrote) said, that it was indeed manipulated by Trinitarians. Here is the evidence:

Catholic Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) wrote: "The basic form of our (Matthew 28:19 Trinitarian) profession of faith took shape during the course of the second and third centuries in connection with the ceremony of baptism. So far as its place of origin is concerned, the text (Matthew 28:19) came from the city of Rome." Source: Ratzinger, Joseph (1968. Introduction to Christianity, Munich, pp. 82,83

The Catholic Encyclopedia says: "The baptismal formula was changed from the name of Jesus Christ to the words Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by the Catholic Church in the second century." (pg. 263). Source: [Mat 28 19 Baptismal Formula Changed : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

There is no such form of Trinitarian baptism in the Bible. The apostles baptized only in the name of Jesus Christ – Acts 2:38 – "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." To which can be added Acts 8:12,16; 10:48; 19:5.

While we have interpreted the words of Matt. 28:19 in harmony with the doctrines of the truth, there seems little point in holding to a form of words that God did not inspire.

He who was given all power upon resurrection and glorification ("All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth") will soon come to sweep away "the refuge of lies" and "the vail that is spread over all nations."

July 28

2 Samuel 14

One positive thing that can be said about "Joab the son of Zeruiah" is that he was loyal to David until almost the very end when he fatally preferred Adonijah instead of Solomon as king. Joab had no great love for Absalom, but when he saw the ongoing heartache of David over the absence of his son, he was moved to have Absalom return from exile. The chapter is a revelation of Joab's dubious underhanded methods to achieve his objectives. Firstly, he primed "a wise woman" of Tekoa to fabricate a story about two sons to mirror the scenario of Absalom and Amnon. She acted the part of the grieving and distressed mother very well, and David was accepting and approving of the request she made to spare the surviving son who had murdered his brother, until she highlighted the hypocrisy in his response – "for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished," then David knew the hand of Joab was involved – "Is not the

hand of Joab with thee in all this?” Joab’s elaborate scheming worked, and Absalom would be brought home, but the outcome was not as Joab had planned.

V.23-33 – The first hurdle came when David refused to see Absalom face to face (doubtless from family pressure) and this aggravation went on for two years while Absalom lifted his stocks in the eyes of the nation – “But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.” This rise in popularity detracted from Joab’s prominent position, and when Absalom sent twice to Joab to ask him to intercede between him and his father and was ignored, he had his servants set fire to Joab’s ready to harvest barley field. In so doing, he achieved an audience with David, but signed his own death warrant. Joab did not forget acts of treachery like that. It is unsurprising after all this that the next chapter records the rebellion of Absalom against his father to usurp the throne, and that gave Joab an opportunity for revenge.

Jeremiah 18

V.1-17 – “Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words” – The clay-field where the potters exercised their craft lay to the south of Jerusalem just beyond the valley of Hinnom. That valley had played a huge part in the formulation of the impending judgements, for there the nation had sacrificed their children to Molech (Jer. 32:35). Jeremiah watched the potter mar one vessel and start on another and Yahweh told him “cannot I do with you as this potter?” He had chosen Israel and fashioned them into His own likeness, but they were unresponsive, so the vessel would be discarded and God would start all over again. He could do that for His people **if they repented**, but if not their demise was certain. He got His response, “And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart” to which He expostulates “who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing.” Incongruities are highlighted for which there could only be one outcome, “I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy.”

V.18-23 – Jeremiah now faced the consequences of this latest prophecy – “Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah...let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.” Abuse and persecution follow. This again tested Jeremiah’s fortitude. He pleaded for God’s help and complained about the ingratitude of the people for whom he had prayed who had returned evil for good, and then pleaded for their destruction. There is turbulence in the mind of the prophet, and who can say that they would be any different in this vexing situation?

Romans 1

Together with Hebrews, the Epistle to the Romans presents the most wonderful exposition of the atoning work of Christ. There was a problem in the ecclesia at Rome between believing Jews and Gentiles. Their backgrounds and customs were quite different and this had brought some agitation to ecclesial life. Romans is a masterpiece of inspiration guiding the pen of a wise and experienced Apostle. After the majestic introduction in chapter 1, the Apostle launches into a condemnation of the depravity of the Roman world from which the Gentile contingent in the ecclesia had been drawn. Then in chapter 2 he turns on the hypocrisy of the Jewish world with its Judaism that could not save. All this was designed to impress the universal need for redemption which could only be accessed through the atoning work of

Jesus Christ. Our consideration in this forum can only be relatively superficial because of the extensive detail of the Apostle's exposition.

V.4 – Rotherham – “Who was **distinguished as the Son of God**—by power, according to **a Holy Spirit**, through means of a resurrection of the dead,—Jesus Christ our Lord” – This is the key to all that follows. What distinguished Christ from all other men was his sinlessness. His ‘spirit of holiness’ that enabled his obedience to “the death of the cross” ensured his resurrection from the dead to immortal life. No man born of two human parents could ever accomplish this, so accordingly, he was distinguished as being the Son of God. This is the essence of the Atonement.

V.5 – “for obedience to the faith among all nations” – There being no article before “faith” it was once asserted among us that “faith **is** obedience.” This is incorrect of course. Faith should lead to obedience, but that is not always the case. True obedience is not possible without faith, but faith is not of itself obedience.

V.16-17 – These are key verses. Most reliable translations exclude the words “of Christ” and read as the RV “For I am not ashamed of the gospel.” It is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” to both Jew and Gentile, and has in it the power to produce righteousness (“the obedience of faith” V.5) in developmental stages as “from faith to faith” suggests. The citation from Hab. 2:4, “The just shall live by faith” is employed three times by the Apostle (see Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38) always with a slightly different emphasis determined by the context. The emphasis here is on faith and its development over time – from one stage of faith to another (a similar principle is found in 2 Cor. 3:18 – “are being transformed into the same image **from one degree of glory to another**”). Development in the truth is incremental.

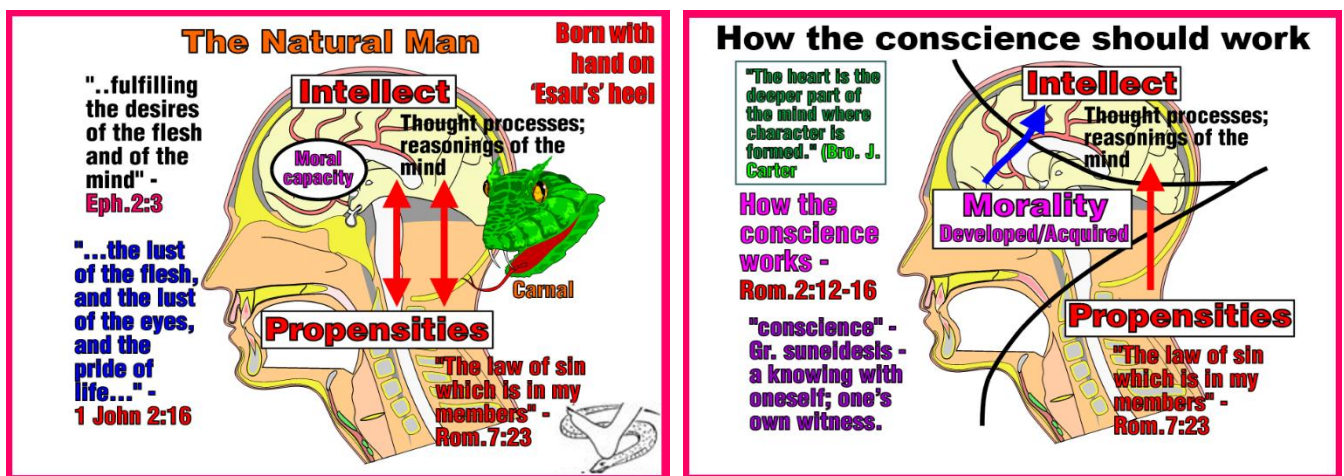
V.18-32 – The balance of the chapter is devoted to the condemnation of the evils of the philosophical pagan Roman world. It should be noted that the concluding words of V.18 are better translated “who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth.**” This they did by ignoring the obvious evidence of a Creator and Sustainer of all life, and “changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.” When men descend to worship animals, they become animalistic, and even worse. Not even animals practiced the evils enumerated here. Our world has returned to these monstrous practices. The list is long and is observed on every side in our godless world. Our danger lies in the corrupting influence of Humanism that not only justifies these behaviors, but promotes them as the Roman world did – “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” We must not wink at these abominations, but rather condemn them.

Romans 2

Jewish readers of chapter 1 condemning Gentile behavior might have felt a warm glow of self-satisfaction in their Judaistic bubble, but the opening words of chapter 2 put an end to that confidence – “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.” Some of the behaviors of the Gentiles were not unknown among professing law keepers (witness John 8:1-11), so Paul now bundles Jew and Gentile together, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). There being “no respect of persons with God” (V.11), He “will render to every man according to his deeds.” Accordingly, the outcome will be – “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life. But unto them

that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.” All need the atoning work of Christ.

V.12-16 are very important as to how the positive outcome can be achieved. It is about the operation of a Divinely implanted conscience. The first thing to note is that V.13-15 inclusive are a parenthesis. You could read V.12 and then pass to V.16 and it would read like this using Rotherham’s translation that gets the definite articles right – “For, as many as without law sinned, without law, also shall perish, and, as many as within law sinned, through law, shall be judged; in the day on which God judgeth the secrets of men according to my glad-message through Christ Jesus.” V.13-15 in brackets show how the Word of God which can develop a conscience works to overcome sin. The slides below illustrate the starting point for all men – a ‘serpent’ nature biased to sin where propensities and brain work in harmony to fulfil lust and desire, whereas with a Divinely developed conscience, sin in its conception can be rejected by a “thus it is written” after the example of Christ.



All ‘men’ (used here generically) are born with an incipient moral capacity, but in many it is never developed, or if so, developed according only to societal norms and not the principles of the Word of God. (LITV) “For when nations not having Law **do by nature** the things of the Law, they not having Law **are a law to themselves.**” There are some inscrutable things here. No one does God’s will “by nature” for it is contrary to the things of God – Jer. 17:9; Rom. 8:7-8; Gal. 5:17. The word “nature” is *phusei* which the Diaglott margin and Bro. John Carter say means ‘an infused disposition’ which is consistent with what Paul says next “Which shew the work of the law **written in their hearts.**” This is what he means also by the phrase “are a law unto themselves” for unlike Judaisers for whom the law of God is an external thing, these have the laws of God ‘written’ on the fleshly tables of their heart. It becomes “their conscience (*suneidesis* – one’s own witness) also bearing witness.” This is like a little ‘voice’ in the brain that approves or disapproves the natural motions and thoughts of the flesh. That is what Paul says next, (Weymouth) “while their consciences also bear witness to the Law, and their thoughts, as if in mutual discussion, accuse them or perhaps maintain their innocence.”

V.17-29 – Having exposed the common failure of those living under the Law, namely, a failure to develop a lively conscience, the Apostle now continues to uncover the hypocrisy that marked the Judaistic approach of Jews which resulted in “the name of God (being) blasphemed among the Gentiles.” The Jews took pride in circumcision, but it was pointless unless what it represented, namely, the cutting off of the flesh in one’s thinking

(V.29) was manifested in daily life. On that score, Gentile converts who had a *suneidesis* were 'Jews' (contraction of the name Judah = praise) inwardly whose **praise** is not of men, but of God."

July 29

2 Samuel 15

V.1-12 – In the years after his sin with Bathsheba and as numerous troubles wracked his family, David fell so sick that some thought he would die – Ps. 41:5 – "Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?" He wrote Ps. 38 about the consequences of his sin – "There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin" V.3). "My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness" (V.5). This is why he was nowhere to be seen while Absalom usurped his role as king ("so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel"). This went on for **four years** as the ESV correctly translates – "And at the end of four years" (the 40 years was apparently due to a transcription error). When he perceived that the time was right, Absalom implemented his treasonous plan. His mealy-mouthed avowal of desiring to keep oaths made while in exile was designed to deceive David into thinking he was genuine and up to nothing. Absalom called Ahithophel (a secret enemy of David seeking revenge for the besmirching of his family's reputation) to Hebron as the trumpet blew throughout the Land and the declaration was made "Absalom reigneth in Hebron."

V.13-37 – David's decision to flee was to save lives, not just his own. It is remarkable that a good proportion of those who went with David were Philistines. David's bodyguard of Cherethites and Pelethites, were complemented by 600 Gittites who had come from Gath. A very recent new-comer was Ittai the Gittite with his family (V.22), and David recommended he not get involved in this spat in his newfound nation, but he told the king what all the Philistines would have said if asked. They came to Israel **because** of David to serve his God. David sent Zadok and Abiathar back with the Ark as this was not a religious conflict and expressed his submission to God's will – "if I shall find favour in the eyes of Yahweh, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation." David and all that were with him dragged themselves up the mount Olivet weeping and with heads covered. This was a very low point for David. Concerned about the counsel of Ahithophel, David sent Hushai the Archite on a dangerous mission to combat it with Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son as his messengers.

Jeremiah 19

This chapter focuses on the horrors of the valley of Hinnom. "Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests" – In chapter 18 Jeremiah had gone to the potter's field and watched a potter go about his business. Now he is instructed to obtain an earthen vessel from the same place – "go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom." This is where kings like Ahaz and Manasseh passed their children through the fire to Molech (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6; 2 Chron. 28:2-4) and "filled this place with the blood of innocents." They also did so to Baal (Nimrod and Cush) – "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal," for which savage judgements would fall – "Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle," so that a new name would be given to this stained place – "The valley of slaughter."

V.7-15 – As the elders stood around him, their doom was announced – “I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place.” They would eat the flesh of their own children and friends in the siege, and then be eaten themselves by “the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth.” Then dramatically, Jeremiah was to smash the potter’s vessel – “Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shalt say unto them, Thus saith Yahweh of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter’s vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.” He then left the valley and stood in the temple to pass on the same message to the people there and inform them that the judgements on Tophet would equally apply to the city of Jerusalem.

Romans 3

V.1-8 – The design of the first part of this chapter is to answer some of the objections which might be offered by a Jew to the statements made in the last chapter – “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?” The Jews had been given “the oracles of God,” and there is nothing more important than the Word of God because it can produce faith (Rom. 10:17), but many Jews did not take advantage of this privilege, while many Gentiles had done so once it was delivered to them (Rom. 2:14-15). The problem with Judaism is that it imbued the Jews with the notion that they were so privileged as God’s people, the seed of Abraham, that they could excuse bad behavior, and God would not care. Paul had made that point in chapter 2:1-3. In a series of questions he demonstrates the folly of that approach. He answers the question “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” by advancing the words of their greatest king, David in the depths of his remorse over his sin with Bathsheba – Ps. 51:4. He had all the privileges, but failed to live up to them and rightly received God’s punishment (note that Paul was later to use the same principle in relation to Gentile converts – Rom. 11:17-22).

For the exclamation “God forbid” (KJV) which is badly translated, other translations correctly have “Let it not be!” or similar, and it should be read that way.

V.5-8 – For the Jews who thought they should not be punished for sin because of their privileged position, the question is posed “then how shall God judge the world?” Man’s unrighteousness magnifies God’s righteousness by contrast, and He is at liberty to judge. If He failed to judge Jewish sin, how could he be seen to be righteous (i.e. consistent) by judging Gentile sin? The fundamental rule was Rom. 2:11 – “For there is no respect of persons with God.” However, being himself once a rabid Judaiser, Paul understood their thinking. So if our failures (‘lies’ in effect V.4) result in glory to God, why don’t we just sin more and increase the glory ascribed to Him, rather than bust our gut keeping law and ritual to achieve His approval? (“some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come?”). He is later to deal with this pernicious thinking in Rom. 6. In this bracket of verses Paul has brought about an equality in the need of both Jew and Gentile for redemption. The Jew was privileged (see Rom. 9:4-5), but just as much in need of the work of Jesus Christ as the Gentile.

V.9-20 – “we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin” is a summary of what has gone before. A series of citations mainly from the psalms follow to cement his conclusion. These are worthy of consideration, but his conclusion is the key – “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (amplified in Rom. 7).

V.21-31 – Seeing that the Law of Moses only condemned and could not give eternal life, there had to be a different way – a way that upheld God’s righteousness. That way was by God’s “grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” In his life, death and resurrection to life, the righteousness of God was manifested in every aspect and provided the only path to eternal life for the sinful sons of men – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Weymouth translates V.25 – “He it is whom God put forward as a **Mercy-seat**, rendered efficacious through **faith** in his (Christ’s) blood, in order to demonstrate His (God’s) righteousness, because of the passing over, in God’s forbearance, of the sins previously committed.” In V.26-28, the Apostle hammers home the fact that only the declaration of God’s righteousness in the sacrifice of Christ is able to save when it is accepted in faith. Obedience to law, which men find impossible anyway, cannot save. Therefore, God is the justifier of both Jew and Gentile by faith in the absence of law. The Jews needed faith and the Gentiles needed **the Faith** – Diaglott for V.30 – “Since one the God, who will justify circumcision **from faith**, and uncircumcision **through the faith**.”

Romans 4

Two great men of faith dominate this chapter to demonstrate the absolute necessity for **imputed righteousness** in order to attain to life in the Kingdom of God. The first, Abraham, though a Semite, lived like a Gentile in the kingdom of men (Nimrod’s ‘Babylon’), and was called out of it and redeemed by faith 430 years before the Law of Moses came along (he never lived under law). The second, David, lived under the Law and was condemned by it for adultery and murder. Only by faith in the grace of God and having sins forgiven, and **righteousness** (that was not possessed) **imputed** unto them could they be saved. This was another powerful argument about the need for Christ’s sacrifice for both Jew and Gentile and culminated in Paul’s conclusion in Rom 10:4 – “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to **every one** that believeth.”

There are 19 occurrences of the Greek word *logizomai* (‘to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over’) in Romans and 11 of them are in chapter 4. This sets the theme of the chapter, but this might not be obvious from a casual reading of the KJV for the word is translated variously in the English – “counted” in V.3,5; “reckoned” V.4,9,10; “impute/d/th” V.6,8,11,22,23,24. It is worth highlighting these.

V.1-5 – Abraham was not declared righteous (“justified”) by works of law but by faith – Gen. 15:6 – “Abraham believed God, and it was **counted** unto him for righteousness.”

V.6-8 – David’s sin which required death under the Law was forgiven (he was “counted” righteous when he was not) only when he declared God’s righteousness by confession – proof Ps. 32:1-2 is cited.

V.9-12 – Both Jew and Gentile benefit. As a major blow to Jewish pride in circumcision as a mark of their special position, Paul points out that Abraham was imputed righteous by faith before he was circumcised. Gen. 15:6 was 14 years before he was circumcised. In Gen. 17, “he received **the sign of circumcision**, a **seal** of the **righteousness of the faith** which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the **father of all them that believe**, though they be not circumcised; that **righteousness** might be **imputed** unto them also.” This is a crushing argument. Jews who claimed a special status in Abraham and pointed to their circumcision needed to rethink. Paul has gone back to his words in Rom. 2:25-29 about what circumcision really represented.

V.13-18 – The promise to Abraham was “that he should be the heir of the world” and that by faith. If law keepers were the heirs, then faith is voided. Law condemns; faith justifies, “Therefore it is of **faith**, that it might be by **grace**; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” If we have “the faith of Abraham” he “is the father of us all” for Yahweh promised him “I have made thee a father of many nations” (Gen. 17:5). This He did when delegating His ‘fatherhood’ to Abraham. Typical of inspiration, there is an incredible symmetry in this section of Scripture. There were 14 years between Gen. 15:6 and 17:5 cited in V.17. The name “Abraham” occurs in this chapter **7** times (only 9 in the book) **7** = covenant; “father” occurs **7** times (12 in the book); “circumcision” (6); “circumcised” (1) for a total of **7** times; “uncircumcised” (2); “uncircumcision” (3) for a total of **5** times. Note V.16 – Lit. “Wherefore **out of faith**, that according to **grace** it might be.” **5** is the number of **grace** hence, if we multiply 5 x 14 (years) we get 70 = “all nations” (Gen. 10; Deut. 32:8). Abraham is indeed the “father of many nations” who can attain salvation by his faith.

V.19-25 – Rotherham’s translation of V.19 is correct (amend the KJV) – “And, without becoming weak in his faith, **he attentively considered his own body**, already deadened—he being a hundred years old, the **deadening also** of Sarah’s womb.” In other words, Abraham took into account all the realities preventing natural conception and simply believed God – “So shall thy seed be.” When Abraham said in Gen. 17:18, “O that Ishmael might live before thee,” it was not unbelief in the promise of the birth of Isaac, but seeking a place for Ishmael in the scheme of things because he would now be displaced by Isaac. Paul’s words here are proof of that – “He **staggered not** at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” It was this faith that “was imputed to him for righteousness” and we can be equally counted righteous (i.e. without recorded sin) if we have that kind of faith in the atoning work of Christ “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

July 30

2 Samuel 16

Crises often provide opportunity for men to ‘feather their own nest’ at the expense of others. All kinds of emotions and schemes come to the fore amidst the confusion. This was the case in this crisis for David, and he really struggled to make sound decisions. We can learn important lessons from this.

V.1-4 – Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met David as he crested the mount of Olives and took advantage of the lameness of his master Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s son. Ziba brought abundant supplies for David who appeared to be bemused – “What meanest thou by these?” He may have been suspicious of Ziba’s motives and enquires, “And where is thy master’s son?” to which Ziba replied, “Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.” This is one of the most disingenuous accusations ever made. Why would Absalom steal the throne to give it back to the house of Saul? That made no sense at all, but David was in a very emotional state and he made a hasty judgement granting all Saul’s property to Ziba who doubtless left with a wry smile on his face. David was to find out later he had been deceived – 2 Sam. 19:24-30. It would have been better to accept Ziba’s largess and say, I will deal with the situation of Mephibosheth later, but how many of us would have done better?

V.5-14 – The next trial for David is the abuse of Shimei of the tribe of Benjamin who took out his political spleen on the fleeing king. Human nature is given to parochialism and political bias. Shimei hated David for ‘stealing’ the kingdom from Benjamin and held him responsible

for the death of Saul and his sons. Being of an irascible character, he took advantage of the situation and threw abuse, stones and dust at David. Abishai sought permission to deal with the disrespectful Shimei, but David refused and acknowledged that the trial may have been from Yahweh, and it was best left in His hands. That was a more considered decision.

V.15-23 – Meanwhile, Absalom and his supporters, including Ahithophel, settled in Jerusalem. Hushai the Archite also made an appearance and convinced a suspicious Absalom of his fealty. Ahithophel's immediate advice was for Absalom to go into David's 10 concubines who had been left behind. This was the practice when someone took over the throne. Hushai was faced with a huge challenge to deflect the wise counsel of Ahithophel whose reputation "was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God."

Jeremiah 20

V.1-2 – There were serious consequences for Jeremiah from his prophecies in the previous chapters – "Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks." Pashur, whose name means "liberation, freedom" was "deputy-overseer in the house of Yahweh" (Rotherham), and he took brutal action against Jeremiah. The word "smote" is *eth nâkâh* in the Hebrew "he did strike," suggesting Pashur personally applied the "forty stripes save one" (2 Cor. 11:24), and then locked him in the stocks in public view near the temple at "the high gate of Benjamin" where he could be seen and abused by the priests going to and from Anathoth. Bleeding, bruised and delirious from the beating, Jeremiah spent a painful night in the stocks. Was this the cost of his acceptance of the commission?

V.3-6 – "And it came to pass on the morrow" – Left overnight in the stocks, Jeremiah had time to prepare for his encounter with Pashur – "Yahweh hath not called thy name Pashur ('freedom'), but Magormissabib" ('terror on every side'). Pashur would be a terror to himself as many were slaughtered around him, and he carted off to Babylon where he would die in miserable captivity.

V.7-18 – The brutal and shameful treatment was too much for Jeremiah – "O Yahweh, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me." He spews out a long list of complaints about his thankless commission as Yahweh's spokesman which had brought him so much derision, and perhaps during his long lonely night in the stocks made a decision to be mute – "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name." But he could not stay, and in the morning delivered Yahweh's condemnation of Pashur – "his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jeremiah's alternating thoughts from frustration to humble trust was the hallmark of this very difficult period in his life, and it culminated in a desperate cry – "Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed," a complaint that continues to the end of the chapter matching that of Job's plaintive cry – Job 3:3-16. Jeremiah is not in a good place at this time.

Romans 5

V.1-11 – Because Christ "was delivered for our offences (securing forgiveness), and was raised again for our justification" (newness of life) – Rom. 4:25 – "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (V.1). That newness of life brings "tribulations" which when patiently endured produces "experience," and that in turn promotes hope which builds a relationship with, and love for God. This is such a dramatically different position from our previous situation – "For when we were yet **without strength**, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" which virtually no one would willingly do, "But God commendeth

his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” The phrase “Much more” stands out in V.9-10 to emphasize the truth of chapter 4:25 – “we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son (“delivered for our offences”), **much more**, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (“raised again for our justification”). RV – “and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received **the reconciliation**.”

V.12-21 – To emphasize the greatness of the Lord Jesus Christ as the redeemer of the human race, Paul goes right back to the beginning and the entrance of sin and death into the world. Adam is attributed with its entry even though he was not the first to transgress (1 Tim. 2:14), because whereas Eve was utterly deceived by the serpent’s reasoning, Adam knew what he was doing and chose to be with his fallen wife rather than obey God. Hence, Paul says “by **one man** (masculine singular in the Greek) sin entered into the world,” but the Son of God burdened with Adam’s fallen nature was obedient to “the death of the cross” so that “through the disobedience of the **one man**, the many were constituted sinners: so also through the obedience of the one, shall the many be constituted righteous” (Young’s Lit. V.19). In V.15, Paul had again used the emphatic phrase “**much more** the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by **one man**, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” Note that V.13-17 are in parenthesis explanatory of V.12. Grace, not law, saves – “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even **so might grace reign** through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6

Paul introduced the theme of monarchs at the end of chapter 5. That is his theme in chapter 6 – the baptismal chapter. Here he expands on the challenge of his Judaistic detractors whose false charge was, “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” – Rom. 3:8. He counters with (LITV) “Let it not be! We who died to sin, how shall we still live in it?” and then explains what is accomplished by baptism – a change of masters.

V.3-14 – Baptism is a figure of entering into the death of Christ and rising again to a newness of life after his pattern – “that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Patterning ourselves on the glorified Christ highlights the fact that **morally** he was no different before and after crucifixion. A change of nature did not require a change of character in him, but walking in a newness of life does require a change of attitude, direction and character in us. We have changed masters – “Let not **sin** therefore **reign** in your mortal body, that ye should **obey** it in the lusts thereof.” No man can serve two masters – “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto **sin**: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto **God**.”

V.15-23 – By baptism we have chosen to be slaves unto righteousness having “obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered” to us, “being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” This is a wise choice, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” We do not die because of our sins; we die because we are in Adam (1 Cor. 15:22), as did the sinless Christ. However, unforgiven sins will result in permanent death “for the wages of sin is death.” This is why God’s grace that forgives sins through Christ, and ultimately leads to eternal life is such an incredible “**gift**” – 2 Cor. 9:15 – “Thanks be unto God for his **unspeakable gift**.”

July 31

2 Samuel 17

Ahithophel's counsel to form an army of 12,000 chosen men and pursue David that same night was very wise. David's company was in a shambles and totally disorganized (V.2), and they were not yet across the Jordan. Absalom needed to act immediately while there was confusion and dislocation among David's followers, but his pride gets in the way of wisdom. He saw the wisdom in Ahithophel's counsel, but asked Hushai to offer advice as well.

V.8-10 – Hushai painted a picture of David and his mighty men “chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field,” and David as a spritely “man of war” not ensconced with the multitude. The opposite was actually the case. He also created the scenario of an initial slaughter as David's mighty men fought hard in the early skirmishes. Then he played his most important card aimed at Absalom's ego.

V.11-14 – “Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and **that thou go to battle in thine own person**” – The image of Absalom gorgeously arrayed and leading the whole nation as their military general to a glorious victory was very impressive to Absalom and his courtiers and they approved it. Ahithophel knew it was a pipe dream and doomed to failure because of the delay required. However, Yahweh was involved and “had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel.”

V.15-22 – Hushai immediately advised “Zadok and ...Abiathar the priests” to get a message to David to cross the Jordan as quickly as possible in case Absalom changed his mind and went back to Ahithophel's good counsel. “Jonathan and Ahimaaz (their sons) stayed by Enrogel” so they might remain undetected. Receiving the message of Hushai via a maidservant, they were noticed by a lad who told Absalom, and they only narrowly escaped through the loyalty of a supportive woman in Bahurim. These events illustrate the division and intrigue that gripped Israel at this time. Bahurim was where Shimei abused David, yet here is a woman loyal to him. David received the advice and crossed the Jordan that night.

V.23-29 – Ahithophel knew that everything would unravel because his obviously sound counsel had been ignored. He was so determined to exact vengeance on David for defiling his family (Bathsheba being his granddaughter), and his pride was so badly injured by the rejection of his counsel, that the only option in his mind was self-destruction. As a forerunner of another close friend who betrayed his lord, Ahithophel set the pattern for Judas Iscariot and committed suicide by hanging himself. David arrived at Mahanaim and was soon supplied abundantly by “Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon (a Gentile), and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim.” Meanwhile, Absalom having appointed Amasa as his military commander (a death sentence for him as Joab's replacement) crossed over the Jordan. Amasa was later to prove his incompetence as a General (2 Sam. 20:5), and the outcome of the coming battle suggests that such a reading was the case.

Jeremiah 21

This chapter is not in chronological order. The charts in **Appendix 8** show the chronological structure of Jeremiah. This chapter occurred in the 9th year of Zedekiah (2 years before the captivity in BC 587) while chapter 20 occurred in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim some 17 years prior. This is one peculiarity of the Book of Jeremiah.

V.1-10 – Zedekiah sent Pashur (not the one of chap. 20) to Jeremiah to enquire of Yahweh “for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that Yahweh will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.” He could not have received a worse response. Not only would Yahweh **not** fight for Judah, but would fight **with** Nebuchadnezzar and his forces against Judah – “And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.” However, individual deliverance was available, but required something in short supply at the time – faith. The proposition was that if people went out and surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, then their lives would be preserved by Yahweh’s intervention, but if they stayed within the city they would die. Only those who had absolute trust in God would take up that offer.

V.11-14 – The reason for the coming judgements is now revealed to “the house of David.” It was injustice and oppression that stained Zedekiah’s kingdom – “Execute judgement in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor.” For the phrase “inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain” see Jer. 17:3; 22:1.

Romans 7

V.1-6 – Having dealt with the choice of masters in chapter 6, the Apostle now turns to choice of ‘husbands’ who have dominion. He paints the scenario of Jews living under law as having a living husband – “the woman which hath an **husband** is bound by **the law** to her husband so long as he liveth,” i.e. the Law of Moses is their ‘husband’ and has dominion over them – “but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.” ASV – “So then if, while the husband liveth, **she be joined to another man**, she shall be called an adulteress.” It is important to note that there is no equivalent for the word “married” (KJV) in either V.3 or 4 (the ASV is just one translation that is correct). This is important for Paul’s argument. We are not yet ‘married’ to Christ (just “espoused” – 2 Cor. 11:2), so if a Jew living under the Law wants to come into Christ, then her ‘husband’ has to be dead; i.e. they must make the choice to leave the Law behind and treat it as being **dead**. One of the problems in the ecclesia at Rome was that some Jewish converts insisted on keeping aspects of the Law and kept special days and dietary restrictions (Rom. 14:1-6), and this created friction. Paul is saying they were effectively adulterers. The Law condemned and produced death, but if it was treated as a ‘dead husband’ they could consort with Christ “that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

V.7-25 – Paul now turns to his own experience of living under the Law of Moses. The problem was not with the Law, but with human nature. No one could keep it. Paul came to understand what lust was when the law said, “Thou shalt not covet.” It exposed the perverse operation of human nature in order to convince Jews that they needed another way to attain to eternal life (V.8-11). There was nothing wrong with the Law; it was “holy, and just, and good.” Sin was the problem “working death in me by that which is good.”

In the remainder of the chapter Paul presents himself as virtually two men when he says “Now then it is no more **I** that do it, but **sin** that dwelleth in me” (V.17), and “I delight in the law of God after the **inward man**: but I see another law in my **members**, warring against **the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to **the law of sin** which is in my members” (V.22-23). He uses a graphic and grisly image of the Roman practice of binding a rotting corpse to a living prisoner on the field of battle to represent the “wretched” state in which he found himself – ESV – “Who will deliver me from **this body of death**?” Thankfully, “God through Jesus Christ our Lord” can deliver through the forgiveness of sin and ultimately a change of nature. That is the subject of chapter 8.

Romans 8

V.1-11 – The Apostle introduces two ‘laws’ – “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (meaning a newness of life) which provides freedom from “the law of sin and death” (the result of living under the Law which could only produce death). The proof follows – “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.” God’s answer to this problem was to send His son “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Lit. of the flesh of sin). Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15) which can only mean that he had an identical nature to the rest of mankind. The purpose of this was “**for** sin” – the word “for” is the preposition *peri* which signifies about, concerning, around, on account of. So, it was ‘on account of sin’ that God sent His son in the identicalness of human nature. The result was that He “condemned **sin** in the flesh” (Diaglott – “**the sin** in the flesh”). This is the language of metonymy where the container is put for the thing contained and vice versa. It is used in such statements as “that **the body of sin** might be destroyed” (Rom. 6:6); and (Rotherham 2 Cor. 5:21) – “Him who knew not sin, in our behalf, **he made to be sin.**” This is simply saying that Christ possessed the same nature as all men which has a bias, or inclination towards sin. He destroyed its influence daily, never succumbing to its motions, and finally literally crucified it with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24). This triumph was won in the arena of sin – “in the flesh.”

The “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” of V.2 is now amplified because whereas Paul found that the Law condemned him, life in Christ (with forgiveness for failure) enables the living of its principles which he describes as “the righteousness of the law,” but this depends on being “spiritually minded” – (ESV V.5) “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.” The thing about the flesh is that “it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot” (ESV), so that “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” The summation of Paul’s argument is “if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin (defined in V.11 by “mortal bodies”); but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (i.e. the minding of the Spirit).

V.12-17 – Paul builds on the previous section. We have a choice. We can live after the flesh and perish, or “mortify the deeds of the body” by the power of the Spirit Word of God (our only access to the Spirit) and become “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”

V.18-30 – The prospect of being “delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” is the key message of this section. The primary motivation is the recognition that God subjected the race to vanity after Adam’s transgression so that the difficulties of life would make the perceptive look for something much better – V.20. Even those imbued with the Holy Spirit gifts “groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (V.23). This is a reference to our physical body which has many “infirmities” and these can only be handled with a degree of equilibrium if “the mind of the Spirit” engendered by the Word of God intercedes by assisting our prayers “with groanings which cannot be uttered” by a fleshly mind. We need to have the confidence “that all things work together for good to them that love God,” for “whom he fore-approved, he also fore-appointed to be conformed unto the image of his Son. And, whom he fore-appointed, the same, he also called, and, whom he called, the same, he also declared righteous, and, whom he declared righteous, the same, he also made glorious” (Rotherham V.29-30). Paul is using the principle of chapter 4:17 where he says of God that He “callesth those things which be not as though they were,” because that is how certain they are.

V.31-39 – Rotherham – “Who shall bring an accusation against the chosen ones of God? God, who declareth righteous? Who is he that condemneth? Christ Jesus who died?” – Questions answer questions here. To ask the question is to answer it. This is why Paul began, “If God be **for us**, who can be against us?” God and Christ are on our side. In asking the question, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Paul lists 17 (absolute completion) things in two batches that should not. There are seven in V.35, and ten in V.38-39, the last of these inferring that there is only one “creature” that can – ourselves! “We are more than conquerors” because in overcoming all these negatives we are actually improved in faith and character and trust in the love of God and Christ who seek to glorify us – V.30.

APPENDIX 1

SAUL'S JUDAIST OUTLOOK CLASHES WITH DAVID'S BACKGROUND

SAUL THE CLASSIC JUDAISER

1 Sam. 14:18-19 – The first indications of Saul's Judaistic approach – The Ark is treated as a magic box, not as the vehicle of Yahweh's presence.

1 Sam. 14:24 – A “touch not, taste not” approach – Col. 2:20-23 – Saul's focus was on external self-righteousness designed to achieve his own personal vindication.

1 Sam. 15:13-15,17 – Saul mimics Cain (the first Judaiser) by prescribing what is acceptable to God, completely dismissive of specific instructions.

1 Sam. 15:20-23 and 28:3 – Saul in his zeal to uphold law tried to eradicate witches but fell to its equivalent in God's sight – Rebellion.

1 Sam. 20:24-26 – Saul's mind fixated on being ritually clean but not spiritually clean.

2 Sam. 21:1 – Saul's zeal for Israel and Judah overrides a 500 year old oath by Israel.

1 Sam. 17:55-18:2 – Saul recoils from the prospect of connection with a scandal ridden family. His kingly status and self-righteousness rejected association with ‘sinners’.

A promise not kept

- ❖ **1 Sam. 17:25** – Saul promised Merab to the man who slew Goliath.
- ❖ **V.55-58** – Saul realises David will soon become his son-in-law. Cp. **1 Sam. 16:19-23**. Note **1 Sam. 18:2**.
- ❖ **1 Sam. 18:17-18** – David gives Saul an excuse not to keep his promise.
- ❖ **V.19** – Merab (“increase”) marries Adriel (“flock of God”) – the scene is set for an agonising disaster decades later.

Gibeah of Saul

A problem with David's origins?

- ❖ **1 Sam. 17:28-29** – His brethren despised him and could not speak kindly to him.
- ❖ **1 Sam. 17:55-58** – Saul realises David will soon become his son-in-law.
- ❖ **1 Sam. 16:19-23** reveals David was well known by Saul personally – but not his family background or connections.
- ❖ **1 Sam. 17:12** – Jesse had 8 sons but was regarded as beyond any influence.
- ❖ **1 Sam. 18:2** – The impending connection with Jesse's house disgusts Saul.

What were the reasons behind Saul not allowing David to return to his family after killing Goliath? The answer lies in the information that Abner had garnered after Saul commanded him to enquire about David's family. David had returned home from Saul before the war with the Philistines – **1 Sam. 16:19-23; 17:15**. He was personally well known by Saul.

Why was David not invited to Samuel's anointing feast?

- ❖ **1 Sam. 16:5** – “And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.” Did Jesse have a reason to ignore David as one of his sons? Was Jesse embarrassed or worried about tensions in the family?
- ❖ **V.12** – “ruddy” – *admoni* – reddish. May be evidence of time in the open as a shepherd, or perhaps more importantly of natural birth colour (and perceived to be not that of Jesse's wife by whom the other sons were born).

- ❖ **V.13** – “anointed him in the midst of his brethren” – The ‘enemies’ of **Ps. 23:5**.
- ❖ **Ps. 51:5** is generally interpreted as a figure of speech *Asterismos* (or indicating – employing some word which directs special attention to some particular point or subject) referring to the acquisition of human nature with its bias towards sin (as in Job 14:4; 15:14), but may also hint at something else much more embarrassing – an incorrect suspicion by Jesse that David was not his son that was accepted as fact by David given the hatred of his brothers.

Scandals in Jesse’s family?

2 Sam. 17:25 - And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man’s son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab’s mother.

No reason! → Why not Jesse if she is David’s sister? i.e. seduced ‘Ithra’ a contraction of ‘Jether’

Should read “Ishmeelite”
1 Chron. 2:15-17 – “...David the seventh (of Jesse): Whose sisters were Zeruiah, and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three. And Abigail bare Amasa: and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmeelite. Abigail (at least) was fathered by Nahash (not Jesse) via David’s mother.

Comparing these two passages raises a number of issues:

- The name of Abigail’s seducer (Lit. “who had gone in to”) is different in each;
- Ithra is a contraction of the name Jether;
- He was an Ishmeelite, and so Rotherham translates – “Ithra the Ishmaelite”, and the Companion Bible – “Jetheran an Ishmeelite.”
- Abigail’s father was Nahash (not Jesse);
- Hence, two scandals blotted Jesse’s family;
- When Saul heard this information he was clearly horrified.

We know Jesse was David’s father (Ruth 4:22; Matt. 1:6), and his mother was Jesse’s wife – 1 Chron. 2:15-17 – as David has one full blood sister, namely Zeruiah and a half sister Abigail – 2 Sam. 17:25. The evidence suggests there had been scandal in Jesse’s family involving his wife around the time of David’s conception creating his suspicion about David’s origin just as it was for Joseph at the conception of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:18-20) – a suspicion still alive 30 years later – **John 8:41** – Compare Isaac – Gen. 21:9 and Jephthah – Judges 11:1-2.

David was one of the greatest types of Christ in the O.T. – 2 Sam. 7:19; 1 Chron. 17:17

- ❖ **2 Sam. 7:19** – “And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?” - “manner” is *towrah* - law, custom, mode or manner (Ges.) The idea is of a type or pattern. Lit. - “This is the type of the Adam” (i.e. the last Adam = Christ).
- ❖ **1 Chron. 17:17** – “and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree”. “estate” is *towr* - a manner, mode. Interlinear Bible translates “as a type of the man who is on high”.

Perhaps David is a fuller type of Christ than we first realized!

APPENDIX 2

Ministry of the Prophets on sacrifice in Isa. 60 – pages 701 to 703

"The Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation" (Isa. 19:21). That is in the day of Christ when Assyria and Egypt are blessed with Israel. The righteous "sons of the stranger" and eunuchs, "even them," saith God, "will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56:7). It will be remembered that Christ referred to this passage when he cleansed the temple. He also referred to another notable scripture which tells of the restoration of sacrifice, namely Psa. 118. Speaking of the day of Christ, in which Israel shall say, as Jesus told them they would, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (verse 26, with Matt. 23:39), the psalm continues, "God is the Lord which hath showed us light; hind the sacrifice with cords even unto the horns of the altar" (verse 27). "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel. Neither shall the priests, the Levites, want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually" (Jer. 33:17,18). That is in the day when "Judah shall be saved."

How all this is to be brought to pass is very explicitly revealed through Ezekiel, as a man peculiarly representative of "the Son of Man," a title borne by that prophet some ninety times in his book. In his last nine chapters the details of the "house of prayer for all peoples" are very elaborately specified, as also are all the ordinances of the house. Among these is provision for sacrifice, both for the Prince and for the people. Chapter 46 provides for the entry of the Prince by the east gate; "and the priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offering, and he shall worship" (verse 2). His offering on the sabbath "shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish" (verse 4). "Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt offering unto the Lord of a ram of the first year without blemish. Thou shalt prepare it every morning" (verse 13). In the corner courts are "the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifices of the people" (verse 24). The dual character of the priesthood must not detain us here.

The remnant "of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the king the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:16). This involves the offering of the sacrifices appointed for that feast, as Ezekiel declares (ch. 46:24). The Messenger of the Covenant "shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Mal. 3:3-4).

If, against all this testimony, it be argued that Jesus offered one sacrifice of sins for ever (Heb. 10), and that, therefore, there can be no restoration of sacrifice, it must be answered that that cannot be a right division of the word of truth which would exclude any of its appointments.

The bread and wine instituted by the Lord Jesus in memorial of "Christ our Passover sacrificed for us," was expressly limited by him in its use as "until he come." Then, as he declared—and as the prophet Ezekiel, by the Spirit, had foretold—he will keep the Passover anew with his disciples in the Kingdom of God (Ezek. 45:21-24; Luke 22:16,30). The bullocks and rams then sacrificed will point to the Prince as an object of faith on the part of the people, who will be required to believe that he "died unto sin once," as the basis of acceptable approach to the Father in the worship over which he is the High Priest of that glorious age. Men will then come to understand the true nature of the long Gentile interregnum in which they now so foolishly boast; and they will confess that it was but an age of "lies and vanity, and things wherein there was no profit." As a matter of fact, one of the foremost elements of the glory of the Father's house will be the renewed and emphatic exhibition of the ancient divine principle that "without shedding of blood there is no remission."

APPENDIX 3

The Christ Character

A SINGLE PERSONALITY

The beatitudes are a portrait of a single personality. The character is Christ's own. To lack any of the particular characteristics is to be deficient. The desirable characteristics are arranged in a special sequence- an order of development. All must be developed to attain the fulness of the stature of Christ.

THE CHRIST CHARACTER

1. POVERTY OF SPIRIT Isa.66:2, Ps.51:17
A crushing of the human spirit A denial of the human will - ie. an emptying process by which self is displaced and God's will installed. The crushing of the natural rebelliousness of the flesh under the impact of the word.
 2. MOURNING IN ZION Isa.61:1-3
The natural outcome of a crushed spirit - A longing for the divine will to be vindicated in all the earth. A desire for "the redemption of the body" - the end of corruption.
 3. MEEKNESS OF WISDOM Ps.37:11, 25:9-14
A development of poverty of spirit and mourning - A teachableness and malleability flowing from self control and perceptive wisdom. Requires faith and courage.
 4. HUNGER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS Ps.42:1-2
An insatiable desire for identification with God - The seeking of total harmony and fellowship with God - A striving to attain to God manifestation.
 5. A RESPONSIVE MERCY Ps.18:24-27
A balancing of zeal for righteousness by a mercy which responds to a recognition of one's own need. A tempering of justice by mercy without compromise.
 6. PURITY OF HEART Ps.24:4
An unmixed purity of heart - A cleansing of the mind of all impurity and corruption. A singleness of desire and purpose resulting in shamelessness.
 7. A CONSTRUCTIVE PEACEMAKING
A positive attitude of constructiveness motivated by love which builds up. An attribute flowing from a development of the foregoing characteristics.
 8. SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS
A consequence of the development of this composite character which is the antithesis of the natural tendencies and character of man.
- * While the 7th refers to that which flows out from a disciple for the benefit of others the 8th refers to that which flows out from others towards him.

WHY BLESSINGS ONLY?

Contrast the Law - Deut.28, Lev.26. The absence of curses points to a grave reality. No disobedience will mar Christ's Kingdom. All wickedness will have been destroyed. While disobedience could and did exist under the Law of Moses, no such thing will exist in Christ's Kingdom.

It was not mildness of disposition but stern logic that impelled Jesus to open with blessings only.

APPENDIX 4 – Extract from Logos Vol. 38 pages 410-412

The sacrifice of Bozrah as proclaimed by Isaiah

In two highly dramatic prophecies, expressed in apocalyptic language, Isaiah predicted the coming triumph of Israel over its enemies. In Chapter 34, he represents the nations as being summoned to view the great sacrifice of Bozrah, that they might recognize in the fate of Edom (Idumea – V.6), a foreshadowing of their own destiny; whilst, in Chapter 63, he draws attention to the mighty Conqueror who shall preside over the sacrifice, and destroy Edom with great slaughter. The prophecy of Chapter 34 extends into the following chapter. It speaks of the destruction of Edom in the "day of Yahweh's vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion" (V.8), and this conquest is shown to be preliminary to the glory that shall be revealed in Israel, and by the presence of the Redeemed in Zion in the day of their triumph. It is obvious, as one reads the chapters, that the prophet was concerned with a power greater than ancient Edom, and that his words have application to the time of the end. Furthermore, the Edomites must not be confused with the Ishmaelites; the former nation was completely destroyed, the final remnants of it being overwhelmed in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; on the other hand, the Ishmaelites relate to the Arabs. Prior to the birth of Esau, his mother was told that her son represented a certain nation and manner of people. It is obvious that in prophecy, Edom came to represent the power of the flesh in political manifestation. In the latter days, the political organization of Gog will be representative of this.

The latter-day prophecies of Edom, therefore, will find their fulfilment in the Divine judgments to be poured out upon the Gentiles, including the Gogian confederacy. Writing of Isaiah's references to Edom, C. C. Walker stated in *The Ministry of the Prophets*. Isaiah, p.498: "The opening of this chapter is an emphatic challenge of wide-reaching application, that at once tells us that we must not limit the matter to the times of Isaiah, or a century or two later, nor to the few hundred square miles of territory that properly belong to Edom in his day..." If the prophecy is not limited to ancient Edom, to whom does it apply? The answer is given by Isaiah himself in language that is unmistakable: "The indignation of Yahweh is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies; He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter" (Isa. 34:2). In other words, the prophet saw in the destruction of Edom, a type of the destruction that is to come upon the Gentiles as a whole.

How was Edom destroyed? The Maccabees subdued the Idumeans, and gave them the choice of conversion or the sword. Many accepted the first, were circumcised, and were absorbed into Judah; the rest perished. That will be the fate of Gentilism in the day when the Lord shall return to subdue the power of the flesh, politically and otherwise, and to reign as king. Thus the fate of Edom in the past foreshadows that of Gentilism in the future. At the epoch of Christ's manifestation in the earth, the nations of Europe and Asia will be confederated under one head, called in the Apocalypse "Babylon the Great," or in the prophecy of Daniel, "the fourth beast." In the latter place, it is shown in fierce and dreadful aspect; with iron teeth and brazen claws, "devouring, breaking in pieces, and slaying the residue" of nations (Dan. 7:7,8,19). This fourth beast, in its latter-day manifestation, will wield tremendous ecclesiastical and military power, compelling men to acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the pope, and the political power of Gog, then enthroned in Constantinople.

But though the Gogian confederacy will wield such power and influence among men as is unprecedented in history, the iron shackles by which it will bind the nations to its chariot will be broken by the Lord Jesus; and whereas it will be destroyed, they will be liberated to enjoy

the felicity of the Kingdom over which Christ will rule. Daniel declared: "I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame (the destruction of the political organisation of Gog). As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time" (or 1,000 years – Dan. 7:11-12). This fourth beast, to be completely destroyed, symbolises the power of the flesh in political manifestation. It is antitypical Edom, and for that reason, in Isaiah 34, the nations are called upon to consider the overthrow, and consequent desolation, of the ancient Kingdom of Edom, as a warning of what its latter-day organisation (of which they will form a part) shall suffer as its fate.

The Gentile fort to be breached

The prophet saw the sword of Yahweh bathed in the political heavens, and coming down with devastating force upon Idumea (Edom), "the people of His curse" to judgment (V.5). This was divine judgment, recompense and vengeance in the "day of Yahweh" (V.8). When divine judgment is again revealed world-wide, the result will be disastrous for the powers that be. The "host of heaven shall be dissolved," and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and their host shall fall to the earth" (V.4). This will be seen in the complete overthrow of the Gentile institutions, then irreparably destroyed. There will be an utter end of all systems and forms of man's government. Those in high office, whether kings, presidents, prime ministers, or statesmen of lesser order will be deposed, ejected from their positions of eminence and power, and divested of their authority to rule. A new aristocracy then will take control in the name of Yahweh (Rev. 5:9-10; Isa. 32:1). The full weight of this divine judgment is represented as coming upon Bozrah (V.6). Bozrah was the capital of Edom (Amos 1:11-12; Gen. 36:33), and after centuries of desolation had hidden it from public view, it was rediscovered by the celebrated traveller and archaeologist, Buchhardt, in the early nineteenth century. Bozrah means "a fortified city". It is significant that the word "Rome" in Hebrew also means "fortification," and that Babylon was situated in the "plain of Dura" which likewise means "wall" or "rampart," or fortified place. Etymologically, therefore, Bozrah, Babylon and Rome are linked together by a common meaning. Bible prophecy, likewise, links them as one, for Babylon the Great, Mystical Rome, and typical Bozrah, all relate to the same thing: the "lofty city" of the Gentiles that Yahweh will bring low in the day that Zion is elevated (Isa. 26:5). This city, of course, is antitypically a system, and of that system the Gogian confederacy is a manifestation in the time of the end. The widespread power of Gogue will "wall in" the political and religious institutions of the flesh against assault. But the wall will be breached through the zeal of Yahweh of armies (Isa. 9:7). Yahweh's sword will be bathed in heaven, and will come down upon the "people of His curse" to judgment.

It is interesting to learn that the Jews understood the prophecies concerning Edom as having a double application, and relating ultimately to the Gentiles. C. C. Walker, in *Ministry of the Prophets* (pg. 508), quotes Jewish writers to show how they saw, in the oppression they suffered from Rome, the "rule of Esau." They referred to the Roman Captivity as the Jaluth Edom, and considered the miseries they suffered from AD 70 onwards to be an antitypical application of the oppressions their forefathers had suffered from ancient Edom. In their understanding of the prophets, therefore, the destruction of the Fourth Beast would be tantamount to the overthrow of Edom. These references indicate that the Jews often had a deeper conception of their scriptures than many give them credit for!

APPENDIX 5

CHRIST'S CONTROVERSY WITH THE PHARISEES

Matthew 19:3-12

Introduction

Only Matthew records the “exceptive clauses” spoken by Christ on two separate occasions. It is characteristic of Matthew's gospel to mention a topic twice, indeed to quote a saying twice. See for example 3:2,4:17; 3:10/7: 19; 5:29-30/18:8-9; 13:12/25:29. This suggests that the exception clauses, “except for immorality”, ought to be understood in the same way in both passages even though the Greek is slightly different. We shall find this to be so.

Some texts and translations suggest that Matt.19:9 is in fact virtually identical to 5:32. The following is a list of the alternative texts: Westcott and Hort – “without a reason of unfaithfulness (lit. harlotry) causes her to be made an adulteress and he that marrieth the divorced woman committeth adultery” (see Rotherham mgn.). Vatican Manuscript - “on account of whoredom, causes her to commit adultery: and he who marries....” R.V. (margin) - “Some ancient authorities read – “saving for the cause of fornication maketh her an adulteress”: as in 5:32. RSV (margin) – “Other ancient authorities, after 'unchastity', read 'makes her commit adultery'.”

If these texts were accepted as correct it would be unnecessary to comment at length on Matt.19:9. But we shall proceed on the basis that the text employed in the translation of the A.V. is correct. We shall find that the meaning of Christ's teaching is the same in both places, but that the emphasis in each case was slightly different. In both cases Jesus condemns the adulterous motivation of men who used Moses' law to justify divorce for the purpose of remarriage. The difference lies in the emphasis placed on the consequences of divorce for the participants.

The reason for Matthew's duplication of the “exceptive clause” is to be found in the purpose of his gospel record. Matthew wrote principally for Jews and portrays Jesus as Israel's Messiah and King, coming to fulfil the many Old Testament prophecies concerning Messiah. Because he wrote for Jews it was essential that he include the Lord's discourses concerning the fallacious and destructive interpretations of Moses' words in Deut.24: 1 by the Rabbinical schools of the day which so much influenced the lives of Israelites. The latter desperately needed clear and unequivocal direction on the subject of marriage to overturn in their minds the distortions of the Rabbinical schools which were widely practised. On the other hand, Mark and Luke who record the same discourses omit reference to an “exceptive clause”. They did so because their narratives were written principally for Gentiles who, not being under the Law, were not concerned by false views on Deut.24:1. Thus the Spirit through Mark and Luke elected to record only the words of the Lord which were relevant to Gentiles. If the “exceptive clause” was intended to be a universal course of action in cases of unfaithfulness, then Gentile converts who might have only ever read Mark or Luke were kept in ignorance of its existence. This could not be so. The simple fact is that there never was an “exceptive clause” permitting divorce and remarriage, only a succinct phrase to summarise the motivation of an adulterous mind influenced by perverted Rabbinical tradition.

THE “EXCEPTIVE CLAUSES”

The context of Matt.19 like that of Mark 10 concerns the theme of discipleship and that obedience to divine commandments which springs from faith. A contrast is drawn between

those who “follow” Christ with childlike faith in his promises for the future (19:12,14,21,27-28; 20:7), and those who live by law for present advantage (19:3,7,16-22; 20:2,10-16). The former “receive” his sayings (19:11) and deny themselves, the latter assert the claims of law and seek to use it for their own temporal advantage. That the disciples understood Christ to forbid remarriage after divorce for any reason (19:10) is proof that his words in verse 9 were neither a qualification of verses 4 to 6 nor a simple explanation of the meaning of Moses' law. He did not repudiate their suggestion but rather reinforced it with the counsel of self-denial. Thus, his statement beginning, “And I say unto you” was calculated to dispose of the spirit of law-keeping which motivated the Pharisees and led them to wrongly employ Deut. 24:1 in order to justify divorce for the purpose of remarriage. Much previously written on Matt. 5:27-32 is also relevant here and need not be repeated at length in the following verse by verse notes.

Matthew 19:3-12

V.3 – The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him. Whether these Pharisees were of the school of Hillel or of Shammai cannot be determined with certainty, although it is probable they were of the former. However, it does not matter because their purpose in asking the question that follows was to tempt Jesus to repeat his earlier teaching on divorce and remarriage so that they might accuse him before the “multitudes” (v.2) of contradicting Moses. This is why their question begins, “Is it lawful for a man....?” They had in mind Deut. 24:1 and Jewish tradition based on that 'law' (refer pages 37 & 38).

“put away” – *APOLUO* to let loose from, loosen away from, let go free. The same word occurs in vv.7,8,9; Matt. 5:31,32. Its meaning is 'divorce'.

“every cause” – *PAS* – all. *AITIA* – a cause, origin, ground. This is a reference to the teachings of the school of Hillel, that a man could put away his wife for almost any reason, perhaps even including preference for another woman.

V.4 – “Have ye not read” – When the negative particle *OU* occurs in a question, as it does here (“not”), the expected answer is always 'yes'. They had read all Moses' words, yet had clearly misunderstood Deut. 24: 1-4 and as Christ shows completely ignored the import of Gen. 2:24.

“he which made them at the beginning” – This phrase assumes great importance in this exchange because Jesus repeats it in v.8. To combat the distortions imposed upon the law of Deut. 24:1-4 there was a need to return to the principles established by God at the beginning of all things.

“made them male and female” – To state this seems unnecessary for it is axiomatic, yet the words are cited from Gen. 1:27 in order to emphasize that in the beginning God by a creative act made one man, and one woman out of that man, who being truly and uniquely 'one flesh' were joined in marriage. Thus, was established the basis for all subsequent marriages. The strength of this quotation is that in the beginning there was only one man and one woman joined as 'one flesh' – divorce was unthinkable, and divorce for the purpose of remarriage an absurdity.

V.5 – “And said” – i.e. God said what follows, on the basis of His creative act. Jesus adduces the words of his Father from Gen.2:24 to teach the fundamental principles of marriage. The marriage relationship is a divinely appointed institution and no man has the right to sever into two what God has made one. Although Adam and Eve experienced a unique relationship due to the creation of Eve from Adam's own flesh, their posterity who marry are also deemed to be 'one flesh' relations when joined together in the bond of a marriage covenant sealed by

union. In this 'one flesh' relationship they become a new family unit sharing an unbreakable kinship relation for life.

“cleave” – *PROSKOLLAOMAI* – to join fast together, to glue, cement; to cleave unto. This is not a reference to sexual union but to the indissolubility of the family relationship established by marriage.

“twain” – Roth. “two”. (Refer to notes on page 12).

“shall be one flesh” – The Greek for 'shall be' is *ESOMAI* in the plural, future indicative; signifying to become a fact in future time. Adam and Eve were 'one flesh' from the moment of Eve's creation: their posterity become 'one flesh' relations by marriage. This is proof that Gen. 2:24 refers to all marriages subsequent to that of Adam and Eve in whose unique relationship the principles of marriage were established.

V.6 – “Wherefore they are no more twain” – This statement confirms the above interpretation.

“What therefore God hath joined together” – “Joined together” is the word *SUZUGNUO* – to yoke together (the only other occurrence is in the companion account – Mark 10:9). This is a key word in the context because it explains the meaning of “one flesh”. In marriage a male and a female from different families are yoked together into a new family unit which takes priority over all other family relationships. They each become the other's closest relative and are deemed by God to be “one flesh” after the pattern of Adam and Eve who were actually of the same flesh. Adam and Eve were one by a creative act; their posterity are yoked by a divinely appointed relationship through marriage. This is why the Lord said, “What God yoked”, and not “Who God yoked”. The preposition in the singular neuter points to the 'one flesh' relationship not to any particular participants in marriage.

“let not man put asunder” – *KORIZO* – to put a space between, put apart, separate. The word occurs here in the singular, present tense, imperative mood, and active voice. The imperative mood supplies force to the command, “let not”; while the singular number and active voice point to the direct action of any man who being a constituent of a 'one flesh' relationship attempts to put a space between what God has yoked together as one. The commandment is emphatic. Men are expressly forbidden to break the marriage relationship.

There has been much discussion on the question of the indissolubility of marriage. It is undoubtedly proper to assert, as many have done, the indissolubility of marriage based on Christ's words in this passage, for this is plainly their import. But some have countered by saying that though man should not “put asunder”, the fact is, this does occur. And, it is said, in some cases (e.g. adultery) divorce and remarriage are justifiable (hence the addition of the “exceptive clause” v.9). This interpretation is clearly a grave error. However, there is an element of truth in this second position. The proponents of this view suggest that the command, “let not man put asunder”, is of itself implicit proof that marriage can be sundered. Their view is that it is possible to separate what God made 'one flesh'! Obviously, men do break marriages and by remarriage create new marriages. Those asserting the indissolubility of marriage rejoin that the original marriage persists in the divine sight and the new marriage is an illicit union. It has also been thought by some that this new union places the participants in a permanent state of adultery. What is the answer to this problem?

Clearly, the issue of indissolubility requires careful analysis. Firstly, what is it that is indissoluble? The state of marriage as a partnership and a sharing relationship with all its attendant responsibilities is plainly not indissoluble. Men do break marital partnerships and covenants by separation and divorce and consequently any viable association between two people which might properly be called a marriage ceases to exist. What is indissoluble however, despite all the efforts of men to terminate a marriage is the 'one flesh' family or

'blood' relationship established by the original marriage. This we have seen is not created solely by, or dependent on the continuance of a sexual relationship (Adam and Eve were 'one flesh' long before any sexual union). What God joined together in Eden was a male and a female, as man and wife, in a family unit or kinship relation that was closer even than the relationship that exists between parents and children. For this cause a man would leave father and mother in order to give priority to a transcendent family relationship. However, just as his 'leaving' father and mother does not sever or dissolve his family relationship to them, so divorce does not dissolve the family relationship created by marriage. The marriage partnership might be broken and even 'legally terminated' by divorce, but the 'one flesh' family relationship remains intact. Only death dissolves a family relationship. Consequently, remarriage in the lifetime of a former partner is always incipiently adulterous in the divine sight.

Men may create realities but they cannot alter the facts. New marriages by divorcees do create new 'one flesh' family relationships and may even be recognized as totally legitimate by society at large and in some cases by the Brotherhood, but this does not alter the fact that their foundation is adulterous because the original 'one flesh' relationship persists in God's sight. Some may ask, "Can a man have more than one 'one flesh' relationship? The answer is clearly 'yes' if 'one flesh' is understood simply to refer to a family or kinship relation. This may be duplicated as it was by those in Old Testament times who practiced polygamy (seemingly without stated divine condemnation in their dispensation), but that same relationship cannot be dissolved by divorce. The divine standard has always been, one man and one woman yoked together for life and where men have failed to meet the demands of this standard by such practices as polygamy they have had to suffer the consequences of that abuse. Divorce for the purpose of remarriage is the ultimate abuse of the divine standard.

V.7 – "Why did Moses then command" – The prepared question which the Pharisees waited to hurl at Christ was seriously flawed. They regarded Deut.24:1 as a virtual "command" by Moses to divorce. The Lord immediately rejoins that far from being a commandment or even a permission to divorce, Moses' precept was a sufferance of hard-heartedness. That same hard-heartedness was now evident in the Pharisees who used his precepts to justify divorce and remarriage.

"divorcement" – *APOSTASION* – defection, desertion, departure from. Roth. – "repudiation".

V.8 – "hardness of your heart" – *SKLEROKARDIA* – hardness of heart. This is an exclusively biblical word (because only God truly knows man's heart and can so write of it – man does not see himself as hard-hearted – witness these Pharisees!). Note the curious use of the same word in the Septuagint for Deut. 10:16, and Jer. 4:4 ("foreskin of your heart"). However we may choose to interpret Deut. 24:1, one fact is clear from these words; Moses' law was designed to deal with fleshly hard-heartedness and insensitivity to divine principles, not provide a justification for divorce even on 'legitimate' grounds as some suggest adultery may be.

"suffered" – *EPITREPO* – to turn upon, direct upon; to commit or entrust to any one; give up, yield, allow. The word does not signify permission, but merely sufferance or toleration. Moses' law was a concession to hard-heartedness and nothing more. No grounds justifying divorce were provided. His purpose was to limit and regulate divorce by impressing the finality and consequences of divorce upon those who insisted on the right to dismiss their wives. If a difficulty is seen in this: that God would allow such a contravention of His principles, perhaps consideration of the reason why polygamy and slavery were not also outrightly banned will assist. Divorce for the purpose of remarriage was an economical form

of polygamy. Prohibition of one without the other was virtually pointless. God's toleration of these practices of men did not however constitute permission or justification. This is the import of Christ's next words.

"but from the beginning it was not so" – Both the RV and Young's Literal translate, "but from the beginning it hath not been so"; giving proper emphasis to the grammar. Divorce was not a part of the divine standard from the beginning and has never been "permitted" or justified since, notwithstanding its toleration under the Mosaic constitution. Christ's absolute prohibition of divorce is perfectly consistent with his Father's standard. On two occasions the Lord refers to the principles established in Eden in order to refute the suggestion that there were any proper grounds for divorce and remarriage. It is inconceivable that his next words should provide an exception to that rule as some contend.

Verse 9

V.9 – "And I say unto you" – The Lord now carries the matter a step further. What were the consequences of their misuse of Moses' law? Again, his commandment is to be transcendent both of tradition and of the Law as it had been in Matt. 5:32.

"whosoever shall put away his wife" – *APOLUO* is the verb used here to speak of divorce. In the subjunctive mood and active voice the word indicates the probability of divorce on the basis cited. It was a familiar practice among Jews.

"except *it be* for" – Omit the words "it be" in italics. The Greek words are *ME EPI* – Lit. "not for" or "not upon". The particle *ME* expresses a dependent and conditional negation, i.e. depending on the idea, conception, or thoughts of some subject, and therefore subjective. In other words, the use of the negative particle *ME* here instead of *OU* which simply states an objective fact, shows that the subject (the man putting away his wife was conscious that his wife was not guilty of "fornication". He is portrayed as knowing full well that his wife was innocent of any sin against him.

For a demonstration of the manner in which the Spirit has employed the two negative particles *ME* and *OU* consider Matt. 22:11-12 and refer to Bro. J. Carter's exposition of "Parables of the Messiah" pages 156-157. The use of *OU* in Matt. 22:11 to state an objective fact is matched by the use of *ME* in verse 12 to state a fact subjectively known. That is, the offender knew that he was inappropriately attired for the wedding feast, yet had entered regardless. The use of *ME* again in Matt. 22:29 also illustrates that the Sadducees were more than simply ignorant of the scriptures; they were willingly ignorant of them! This sense of the word must be taken into account in 19:9.

The word *EPI* signifies upon the ground of. Thus, this phrase "except it be for fornication" which would be far more accurately rendered "not for fornication" is added not as an exception to a rule, but to specify the exact conditions under which the men in question (Pharisees of the school of Hillel) sought to put away their wives. The followers of the school of Hillel and the proponents of his teaching who encouraged putting away of wives "for every cause" (v.3) had introduced a pernicious and destructive influence into the domestic fabric of Jewish national life and there were doubtless many who had put away their wives for considerations other than fornication on her part. In many cases for the flimsiest of reasons that they might be free to "marry another". It was this adulterous motivation of those who divorced their wives "for every cause" that Christ here condemns. A man divorcing in the absence of considerations of sexual sin by his wife could only have one object – a desire for a new partner; and that was adultery (Matt. 5:28). The inclusion by some texts of the word *EI* ("if") before the phrase *ME EPI PORNEIA* does not affect this interpretation. The emphasis is still upon the motivating considerations in the mind of a man.

“fornication” – *PORNEIA* – illicit sexual intercourse. Refer to notes pgs. 34-35 and 55-56. The broad term signifying immorality is employed instead of *MOICHEIA* (adultery) because the Lord is not attempting to specify a ground upon which a wife might be divorced. His subject is the hard-hearted motivation of men who dismissed their wives for “every cause” knowing there was no sexual sin in her. Previously in Matt. 5:32 he had taught that the only basis on which a man could escape the charge of adulterous motivation in putting away his wife was if she was already guilty of serious sexual sin (thus requiring her dismissal under Jewish law). But his teaching here is aimed straight at the terrible misuse of Deut. 24:1 by the school of Hillel advanced in verses 3 and 7. Hillel's “every cause” included the most trivial of grounds to justify divorce and were obviously a thinly veiled pretense to be rid of one woman in order to marry another. A man acting under the compulsion of Jewish law to dismiss an adulterous wife might be excused, but an adulterer at heart so acting for his own satisfaction was condemned. However, in every case remarriage was adultery, hence the next words.

“and shall marry another, committeth adultery” – The difference here with Matt. 5:32 is that the focus is on the consequences of divorce and remarriage for the man divorcing: in particular, the man using “every cause” as an excuse for so doing. His motivation and the act of adultery involved in remarriage is thus outrightly condemned. However, it is clear that where “fornication” had resulted in divorce, remarriage was still adultery. The negated prepositional phrase, “not upon fornication” qualifies the preceding verb *APOLUO* (“shall put away”) and not the following verb *GAMEO* (“shall marry”). This is true in an overwhelming majority of cases where similar phrases are used in the N.T. Hence the very syntax of the Greek suggests that the qualifying phrase applies only to “putting away” and not to remarriage. Had the Lord intended to provide permission for an offended party to divorce and remarry, the qualifying clause would most likely have been placed after both verbs. Then Christ's words would read something like this: “Whoever puts away his wife and marries another, if it is not for immorality that he puts her away and marries another, commits adultery.” This would be a real exceptive clause permitting divorce and remarriage for one cause, but Christ does not say this. Allowance is made for the possibility of “putting away”, but not remarriage. The Jew who found himself compelled to dismiss his wife for sexual sin could not remarry. It was this total prohibition which elicited the stunned response of the disciples in verse 10. That this is the meaning of Christ's words is borne out by the closing words of the verse.

“and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” – There are no qualifying phrases in this case. Any woman put away for any cause at all was not an acceptable partner for another man. He committed adultery if he married her. The reasons for this are obvious. She was still another man's wife regardless of the reason for her dismissal. And if this was the case, then divorce even for adultery on her part had not dissolved the first marriage. That being so, neither the innocent husband or the guilty wife were free to remarry without adultery resulting.

V.10 – “His disciples say unto him” – The disciples of Jesus had listened intently to this exchange because doubtless their minds too had been influenced by Rabbinical thought on the subject of divorce and remarriage. It seems his earlier teaching in the discourse on the mount had not been fully appreciated by the disciples and it is possible that some of them were not present at that time. His categorical prohibition of divorce and remarriage and the condemnation of those who followed the teaching of the Rabbinical schools deeply impressed them. The ramifications of this new teaching loomed large in their minds and they instantly responded to it. Perhaps theirs was a typical over-reaction, but Christ does not repudiate their response as misunderstanding; he explains that acceptance of his teaching depends upon attitude of mind towards the things of the kingdom. The response of the

disciples and Christ's reply is the crowning proof that there was no "exceptive clause" in the Lord's words. If there had been, then their response is inexplicable and the Lord's reply virtually meaningless.

"case" – *AITIA* – is the same word for "cause" v.3.

"it is not good to marry" – Why? Because on the basis of the Lord's words there were no grounds for divorce and remarriage. There was no way out of a poor or broken marriage. The disciples were struck by the ramifications of this, and so reason that it would be better not to marry at all if a man had no liberty to put away his wife for any cause and remarry; and furthermore would even be held guilty of causing adultery in others should he do so!

Mark records that the disciples later questioned Jesus on the same matter while "in the house" (Mark 10:10-12). It is obvious that they were still in a quandary over his earlier remarks concerning remarriage. His reply was quite direct and without qualification – any man or woman putting away their spouse (for any reason) in order to marry another commits adultery.

V.11 – "All men cannot receive this saying" – The word 'receive' is *CHOREO* – to give space, make room for; is used metaphorically of receiving with the mind. The word 'cannot' is the particle *OU*, a word that expresses a negative objective fact. It actually begins the phrase in the Greek which should literally read, "not all make room for this word (*LOGOS*).". Hence Rotherham translates, "not all find room for the word", and the Diaglott, "none can admit the word." The Lord is stating plainly that hard-heartedness (v.8) prevents some from making room for his word. The "saying" in question is undoubtedly that of verse 9 prohibiting remarriage after divorce.

"save they to whom it is given" – The word 'save' is *ALLA* and simply means "but" (Diag.). The word 'given' is *DIDOMI*, a commonly used word signifying to give, present; hence to deliver, supply. Roth. – "to whom it hath been given". Not all men make room in their minds to receive the word, but for those who do is 'given', not only an understanding of Christ's teaching, but the faith to humbly submit to it. The carnally minded and hard-hearted reject his teaching because it is not to their liking, or seek to pervert it because it stands in the way of their chosen course.

The suggestion that Jesus taught that not all men were capable of receiving his teaching (i.e. some are not given the ability to remain unmarried where a marriage has broken down) because some men "burn" (1 Cor. 7:9), and should therefore be permitted to remarry, is clearly erroneous. If such was the Lord's intention then he contradicted his own teaching in verse 9 that remarriage produced adultery. This cannot be so.

Verse 12

V.12 – "eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb" – This may refer to those born with physical deficiency, or may be a reference to those who are hereditarily inclined to celibacy. Their situation is intrinsic and unchangeable.

"made eunuchs of men" – Castration was widely practiced in the ancient world to produce totally committed servants. Consequently, they were often found as advisers or body-guards (Dan. 1:3-5, 18-20; Gen. 37:36 mgn; 2 Kings 9:32). Again, their condition was unalterable.

"made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" – This particular class of eunuchs comprises two groups who have had to make the same choice. Namely, men like Jesus, John the Baptist, Paul and others who chose celibacy for the sake of labours associated with the Kingdom of God, and others who chose not to remarry following the departure of their spouse so that they might attain to that kingdom.

The contrast drawn between the two former classes and this class is obvious. The former had no choice in the matter. Their situation was unchangeable. However, this class had a choice and made it in favour of higher issues pertaining to the kingdom. The attitude of accepting his teaching without question as “little children” would lead men to this choice (v.14).

“He that is able to receive it, let him receive it” – Roth. – “He that is able to find room, let him find room.”

APPENDIX 6

Exposition and Bible Marking Notes on the Olivet Prophecy

Matt. 24 and Luke 21

In recent times different interpretations of the Olivet Prophecy have arisen sowing confusion in the minds of many who are familiar with long-standing Christadelphian teaching on this subject. The writings of brethren from John Thomas to H.P. Mansfield are very clear that the Olivet Prophecy has application to both the events of AD 70 and to the latter days which will see the Second Advent of Christ. While Bro. Mansfield differs with Bro. Thomas on the interpretation of Matt. 24:31, both agree that from at least verse 30 the Lord is speaking of events pertaining to the latter days. The following notes are designed to provide a brief exposition of Matt. 24 and the related words of Luke 21.

<p style="text-align: center;">Matthew 24</p> <p>¹ And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to <i>him</i> for to <u>¹shew him the buildings of the temple.</u></p> <p>² And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, <u>²There shall not be left here one stone upon another,</u> that shall not be thrown down.</p> <p>³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, <u>¹the disciples came unto him privately, saying, ²Tell us, when shall these things be? ³and what shall be the sign of thy coming, ⁴and of the end of the world?</u></p> <p>⁴ And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.</p> <p>⁵ For <u>¹many shall come in my name,</u> saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.</p> <p>⁶ And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all <i>these things</i> must come to pass, but the end is not yet.</p> <p>⁷ For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.</p> <p>⁸ All these <i>are</i> the beginning of sorrows.</p> <p>⁹ <u>¹Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall ²kill you:</u> and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.</p> <p>¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.</p> <p>¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.</p>	<p><u>Christ foretells the destruction of the temple</u></p> <p>¹ This temple, a major project of Herod, took 46 years to build – John 2:20.</p> <p>² The fate of a leprous house – Lev. 14:44-45; cp. Luke 19:41-44.</p> <p>* Bro. Thomas – “In the 23rd and 24th of Matthew; two comings are evidently brought to view; first, that mentioned in the 39th verse of the former, when Israel as a people shall hail Jesus with acclamation as the blessed of Yahweh: and second, the coming of the Son of man, not ‘in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory’, but with the publicity of the lightning to destroy Jerusalem by Titus and his Romans – Matt. 24:27-28.”</p> <p><u>The disciples ask three significant questions</u></p> <p>¹ Two sets of brothers (cp. Mark 13:12) Peter, James, John and Andrew were the disciples present – Mark 13:3.</p> <p>² Question 1 concerned the issue at hand (V.2) – the coming destruction of the temple.</p> <p>³ The Greek word for “coming” is <i>parousia</i> – being near, presence. Question 2 concerns a clear sign indicating the imminent fulfilment of V.2.</p> <p>⁴ The word “world” here is <i>aión</i> – age. Question 3 seeks a sign indicating the end of the age. In the context two ages are in view* – AD 70 and 2nd Advent.</p> <p><u>A warning about false Messiah's</u></p> <p>¹ Fulfilled – 2 Cor. 11:13; Gal. 1:7-8; Titus 1:10-11; 2 John 7.</p> <p><u>The signs that would precede the destruction of the temple</u></p> <p>Robert Roberts – The Ways of Providence – “The ‘signs’ consisted of natural occurrences of a calamitous nature, which would slowly gather over the Jewish nation. The process extended over thirty years. It began in apparently trifling incidents which, one after another, exasperated the public mind and gradually brought on the tempest which engulfed the nation.”</p> <p>¹ Fulfilled – Acts 8:1-3;</p> <p>² See Acts 12:1-2.</p> <p><u>Christ's warning and exhortation for a final generation</u></p>
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<p>¹² And because ¹<u>iniquity</u> shall ²<u>abound</u>, the ³<u>love</u> of ⁴<u>many</u> shall ⁵<u>wax cold</u>.</p> <p>¹³ But he that shall ⁶<u>endure</u> unto the end, the same shall be saved.</p> <p>¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.</p> <p>¹⁵ When ye therefore shall see ¹<u>the abomination of desolation</u>, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)</p> <p>¹⁶ Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:</p> <p>¹⁷ Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:</p> <p>¹⁸ Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.</p> <p>¹⁹ And ²<u>woe</u> unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!</p> <p>²⁰ But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:</p> <p>²¹ For then shall be ³<u>great tribulation</u>, such as was not since the beginning of the ⁴<u>world</u> to this time, no, nor ever shall be.</p> <p>²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the ⁵<u>elect's</u> sake those days shall be shortened.</p> <p>²³ Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here <i>is</i> Christ, or there; believe <i>it</i> not.</p> <p>²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if <i>it were</i> possible, they shall deceive the ⁶<u>very elect</u>.</p> <p>²⁵ Behold, I have told you before.</p> <p>²⁶ Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, <i>he is</i> in the secret chambers; believe <i>it</i> not.</p> <p>²⁷ For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the ⁷<u>coming</u> of the Son of man be.</p>	<p>¹ <i>anomia</i> – lawlessness.</p> <p>² <i>plethuno</i> – multiplied.</p> <p>³ <i>agape</i> – sacrificial love.</p> <p>⁴ There is a definite article here – Diag. “the many”.</p> <p>⁵ <i>psucho</i> – to cool by blowing. Refers to the chilled winds of lawlessness cooling the zeal of Christ’s followers.</p> <p>⁶ <i>hupomeno</i> – to remain behind after others have gone; to keep one’s ground; hold out; bear up.</p> <p>V.14 has been misused by some who suggest that Christ will not come again until the latter day Brotherhood preaches to every nation on earth. This passage refers to the events of AD 70. Paul claims to have done this prior to AD 70 – Col. 1:6,23. The prophecy was fulfilled in the 1st century.</p> <p>The sign provided to warn to flee Jerusalem</p> <p>¹ Refers to the defiling presence of invading armies who corrupted the temple mount. Three such ‘abominations’ are mentioned in Daniel – (1) 11:31 of the Seleucid defilement of the temple; (2) 9:27 of the Roman desecration; (3) 12:11 of the Saracen defilement in the building of the Dome of the Rock over the Most Holy Place site. The Roman is referred to here.</p> <p>“Tradition has it that before the siege of Jerusalem, Simon, remembering the warnings of Christ in the Olivet sermon, led the Jewish Christians to Pella beyond Jordan, thus saving them from the awful massacres of Titus.” – Arthur Hall “What’s in a name?” pg. 37</p> <p>² The contrast between the two eras of Christ’s advents is sharp. AD 70 would be a bitter and terrible experience, while his second advent would catch the world and some of his servants in general prosperity and comfort – V.37-39.</p> <p>³ Some have used this passage to suggest that the latter day brotherhood will face extremely hard times at the end. This is contradictory to the clear message of Christ (V.37-39; Luke 17:26-30; 21:34-36; Rev. 3:14-16) that prosperity and peace would be the greatest challenge of the latter days.</p> <p>⁴ <i>kosmos</i> – order of things. Refers to the Jewish order.</p> <p>⁵ <i>eklektos</i> – Bro. Thomas suggests the elect here refers to the Patriarchs and their seed – Christ; arguing that if the judgements had not been shortened the entire Jewish race would have been destroyed. Bro. Thomas also says that the “very elect” of V.24 is a reference to Christian believers of that era. See Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come – November 1860 Vol. X No.11 pages 256-257 – “In v.22, the shortening of the days has relation to Israel, the enemies of the gospel, but still beloved for the father’s sakes; and ‘the elect’ in v.24 relates to the chosen in Christ, who are warned not to be deceived by false prophets and teachers and pseudo Christs.”</p> <p>⁶ <i>eklektos</i> – clearly refers to believers in danger of being deceived by the claims of false messiahs. The tumultuous and hard times would provide incentive to look in hope to such false claims.</p> <p>⁷ <i>parousia</i> – presence. Christ would be ‘present’ at the head of the Roman legions in fulfilment of Dan. 9:26-27; Matt. 10:23; 22:7. The judgements would be so great as to be unmistakably from God – Luke 17:22-24.</p>
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<p>²⁸ For wheresoever the ⁸<u>carcase is, there will the eagles</u> be gathered together.</p> <p>²⁹ ⁹<u>Immediately</u> after the tribulation of ¹⁰<u>those days</u> shall the ¹¹<u>sun</u> be darkened, and the ¹²<u>moon</u> shall not give her light, and the ¹³<u>stars</u> shall fall from ¹⁴<u>heaven</u>,....</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>The transition from the events of AD 70 to those of the Latter Days is indicated when the language of Christ shifts from singular to plural. Vespasian and his successors restored peace and order to the empire and its regions so this prophecy cannot refer to the period immediately beyond AD 70 – cp. Luke 21:24-26 where this is amplified.</p> </div>	<p>⁸ Drawn from Deut. 28:26,49. Fulfilled when the Roman armies whose standard was an eagle surrounded Jerusalem swollen with 2 million people.</p> <p>⁹ <i>eutheos</i> - straightway, immediately, forthwith.</p> <p>¹⁰ The events of AD 70.</p> <p>¹¹ Symbol for political power/government - Isa. 24:21-23; Joel 2:10,31.</p> <p>¹² Symbol for an ecclesiastical system - Gen. 1:16; Acts 2:20.</p> <p>¹³ Symbol for rulers – Dan. 12:3; Isa. 14:13.</p> <p>¹⁴ Symbol for the governing region or aerial. The noun is singular and refers to Judah's Commonwealth eclipsed in AD 70.</p>
<p>...and the ¹<u>powers</u> of the ²<u>heavens</u> shall be ³<u>shaken</u>:</p> <p>³⁰ ⁴<u>And then shall appear</u> ⁵<u>the sign of the Son of man in heaven</u>; and then shall ⁶<u>all the tribes of the earth mourn</u>, and they shall ⁷<u>see</u> ⁸<u>the Son of man</u> ⁹<u>coming</u> in the ¹⁰<u>clouds of heaven</u> with power and ¹¹<u>great glory</u>.</p> <p>³¹ And he shall send his ¹<u>angels</u> with a ²<u>great sound of a trumpet</u>, and they shall gather together his ³<u>elect</u> from ⁴<u>the four winds</u>, ⁵<u>from one end of heaven to the other</u>.</p>	<p><u>Christ's prophecies of the Latter Days and his Second Advent</u></p> <p>¹ <i>dunameis</i> - The word is plural and refers to a number of powers.</p> <p>² This noun is plural and refers to a plurality of national governments. The period after AD 70 until AD 183 was a period of relative political stability and peace. Prior to that there were rumblings, rumours, conflicts and disasters as Christ foretold (v.6-8). This prophecy refers to the period prior to the Second Advent of Christ.</p> <p>³ <i>saleuo</i> - a motion produced by winds, storms, waves, etc, to agitate or shake. Cp. Luke 21:25-26 where the nouns "powers" and "heavens" and the verb "shaken" in V.26 are all in the plural signifying a multiplicity of nations.</p> <p>⁴ i.e. following the agitation and turmoil of nations after the events of Luke 21:24, namely, the recovery by Israel of Jerusalem from Gentile control.</p> <p>⁵ This is a reference to Armageddon – an unmistakable sign in the political arena of mankind ("heaven"). Proof is found in Rev. 1:7 where this prophecy is further amplified by Christ.</p> <p>⁶ Rev. 1:7 explains that this refers to all nations on earth.</p> <p>⁷ Rev. 1:7 adds "every eye shall see him". This is not literal but a way of indicating that the severity of the Divine judgements will be so great that no one will be unaware that Christ is in the earth. That knowledge will be reinforced by the 'mid heaven proclamation' that follows - Rev. 14:6-7.</p> <p>⁸ This is the title referring to Christ's delegated authority to judge in the earth – John 5:27; Matt. 25:31.</p> <p>⁹ <i>erchomai</i> – to move from one place to another, hence come. A reference to Christ coming from Sinai to the Sanctuary (Ps. 68:17).</p> <p>¹⁰ Clouds are a symbol of a multitude (Heb. 12:1; Ezek. 38:9,16). This is a reference to the glorified saints who accompany Christ to establish the Kingdom of God – the 'heaven' here.</p> <p>¹¹ This excludes reference to any other time than the revelation of Christ to the world and the setting up of the Kingdom at his Second Advent.</p> <p><u>The work of Elijah and the Second Exodus of Israel</u></p> <p>¹ <i>aggelos</i> – messengers. These can be mortal or immortal. Here it refers to both - the saints who go forth with Elijah for the work of the Second Exodus (Zech. 9:13), and some mortals of Judah – Jer. 3:18.</p> <p>² The blowing of the trumpet is associated with the restoration of scattered Israel – Isa. 18:3; 27:13; Zech. 9:14.</p> <p>³ Here a reference to Israel – Isa. 45:4; 65:15-22.</p>

<p>³² Now learn a parable of the ¹<u>fig tree</u>; When his branch is yet tender, and ²<u>putteth forth leaves</u>, ye know that ³<u>summer is nigh</u>:</p> <p>³³ So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, <i>even</i> at the doors.</p> <p>³⁴ Verily I say unto you, ⁴<u>This generation shall</u> ⁵<u>not pass</u>, till all these things be fulfilled.</p> <p>³⁵ ⁶<u>Heaven and earth</u> shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.</p> <p>³⁶ But of that day and hour knoweth no <i>man</i>, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.</p> <p>³⁷ But as ⁷<u>the days of Noe were</u>, so shall also the ⁸<u>coming</u> of the Son of man be.</p> <p>³⁸ For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until grinding at the mill; the one shall be ¹⁰<u>taken</u>, and the other ¹¹<u>left</u>.</p> <p>the day that Noe entered into the ark,</p> <p>³⁹ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the ⁸<u>coming</u> of the Son of man be.</p> <p>⁴⁰ Then shall two be in ⁹<u>the field</u>; the one shall be ¹⁰<u>taken</u>, and the other ¹¹<u>left</u>.</p> <p>⁴¹ Two <i>women shall be</i> the one shall be taken, and the other left.</p> <p>⁴² Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.</p> <p>⁴³ But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.</p> <p>⁴⁴ Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.</p> <p>⁴⁵ Who then is a ¹²<u>faithful</u> and ¹³<u>wise</u> servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his ¹⁴<u>household</u>, ¹⁵<u>to give them meat in due season</u>?</p> <p>⁴⁶ Blessed <i>is</i> that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.</p> <p>⁴⁷ Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.</p> <p>⁴⁸ But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;</p> <p>⁴⁹ And shall begin to ¹⁶<u>smite</u> his fellowservants, and ¹⁷<u>to eat and drink with the drunken</u>;</p>	<p>⁴ Citation from Zech. 2:6 in the context of the Second Exodus.</p> <p>⁵ Citation from Deut. 30:4 in the context of the restoration of Israel.</p> <p><u>The signs of the Latter Days heralding Christ's return</u></p> <p>¹ If there was any doubt about Christ's meaning in V.31 it is resolved by his immediate reference to the restoration of the nation of Israel in 1948. The fig tree is one of the O.T. symbols for Israel – Joel 1:7,12; Hos. 9:10; Jer. 24.</p> <p>² When Christ cursed the fig tree (Mark 11:13-14) it was like Israel it had no fruit. Its subsequent withering represented the dissolution of Judah's Commonwealth in AD 70. When Christ returns the nation will have been restored but will again only have leaves – no fruit.</p> <p>³ Summer is harvest season. This is a hint at Armageddon ("A heap of sheaves in a valley for judgement").</p> <p>⁴ i.e. the generation who witness the sign of the fig tree.</p> <p>⁵ At Christ's first advent very aged people were promised that they would not pass until they saw him – Luke 2:25-32. This may hint that the generation who saw the fig tree sprout forth will also be very aged.</p> <p>⁶ Symbols for rulers and the ruled (Deut. 32:1; Isa. 1:1,10). Judah's Commonwealth dissolved in AD 70 and so will latter day governments and their civilisation.</p> <p>⁷ Christ's choice of the days of Noah, and of Lot in Luke 17:28, is very important. He mentions nothing of the major issues of those eras – immorality and violence. He isolates the prosperity of those days and declares that so it will be at his second advent. This is in sharp contrast to conditions in Judea in the days prior to AD 70 which are described by historians and hinted at in V.19-21.</p> <p>⁸ <i>parousia</i> – presence. A reference to Christ being present on earth to raise the dead. Right up to the last day when the responsible are removed to judgement it will be generally prosperous in the world. This is supported by Rev. 3:14-18 which reveals the latter day ecclesia will be found living in prosperity (see Rev. 3:20).</p> <p>⁹ The field of labour in the truth.</p> <p>¹⁰ <i>paralambano</i> – to receive near; especially into a marriage. See use in Matt. 1:20,24.</p> <p>¹¹ <i>aphiemi</i> – to put out of a marriage – see use 1 Cor. 7:11-12. This is amplified in Luke 17:30-37. It has to do with the resolving of destinies.</p> <p>¹² In the same discourse Christ amplifies this aspect of service in the parable of the talents – Matt. 25:14-30.</p> <p>¹³ Amplified in the parable of the ten virgins – Matt. 25:1-13.</p> <p>¹⁴ <i>therapeia</i> - service rendered by one to another; spec. medical service; curing, healing. The English word therapy is derived from it. The ecclesia should be a place for spiritual therapy where each renders a service to others. This is amplified in the parable of the sheep and goats – Matt. 25:31-46.</p> <p>¹⁵ Citation from Ps. 145:15-16 where God's open hand is seen.</p> <p>¹⁶ Smiting is normally done with a clenched fist (Isa. 58:4). This shows a complete change of attitude from V.45.</p> <p>¹⁷ Another clear indication that Christ will come in the latter days during a period of prosperity and laxity when his</p>
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<p>⁵⁰ The lord of that servant shall ¹⁸<u>come</u> in a day when he looketh not for <i>him</i>, and in an hour that he is not aware of,</p> <p>⁵¹ And shall ¹⁹<u>cut him asunder</u>, and appoint <i>him</i> his portion with the ²⁰<u>hypocrites</u>: there shall be ²¹<u>weeping and gnashing of teeth</u>.</p>	<p>servants are in danger of being distracted – 2 Pet. 3:3-4; Luke 21:34-36.</p> <p>¹⁸ <i>heko</i> – arrive. Refers to Christ's 2nd Advent to judge the household – 1 Pet. 4:17.</p> <p>¹⁹ <i>dichotomeo</i> – bisect. Fitting end for the duplicitous.</p> <p>²⁰ <i>hupokrites</i> – an actor, stage player.</p> <p>²¹ Language used of the Judgement Seat – Luke 13:24-30.</p>
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Abbreviations

RSV – Revised Standard Version
 Roth. – J.B. Rotherham's Emphasised Bible
 Ygs. Lit. – Young's Literal Translation
 Cp. – Compare
 Lit. - Literally

Harmony of Matt. 24:28-30 with Luke 21:24-27

Sequence of Events

1. AD 68-70 – The siege of Jerusalem by the Roman legions
2. AD 70 – Defeat of the Jews and destruction of the temple
3. AD 70 – Eclipse of Judah's Commonwealth, its religious order and elimination of its leaders
4. AD 70 to 1967 – Jerusalem trampled by foreign powers until its release in June 1967
5. 1968 – The watershed year of revolution and chaos that shaped the modern world (see below)
6. 1968 to present – Universal foreboding at the political, religious, economic and environmental chaos
7. 1968 to present – Governments everywhere shaken by political turmoil, terrorism and impotence
8. ? – Armageddon signals a change of government for humanity – The Kingdom restored to Israel
9. ? – Everyone on earth will know Christ and the saints have arrived to establish the Kingdom



See the numbers in brackets inserted in the texts below – where they are placed indicates the fulfilment.

Matthew 24

²⁸ **(1)** For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

²⁹ **(3)** Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven,...

Luke 21

²⁴ **(2)** And they shall fall by the edge of the sword,

(4) ...and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

²⁵ **(5)** And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

²⁶ **(6)** Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth:

<p>Luke 21:24-26 provide an amplification of events in the long interval between the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the return of Christ to 'restore again the kingdom to Israel' (Acts 1:11).</p> <p>Just as AD 70 was an unmistakable sign of Christ's presence at the head of the Roman armies, so the events of June 1967 and the watershed year that followed – 1968 are latter day signs of the imminence of the re-establishment of the Kingdom.</p>	<p>(7) ...and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.</p> <p>³⁰ (8) And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, (9) and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.</p> <p>²⁷ (9) And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.</p>
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APPENDIX 7

The characteristics of sheep and goats

The characteristics of sheep

- ❖ **Attentive** – **John 10:27** – “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”
- ❖ **Willingly led** – **Ps. 23:2** – “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.”
- ❖ **Submissive** – **Isa. 53:7** – “...he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”
- ❖ **Occasionally stray** – **Isa. 53:6** – “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.”

The characteristics of goats

Unlike sheep, who graze, goats feed on the leaves and shoots of shrubs, a habit that enables them to thrive in semi-arid scrublands and mountains.



Goats are capricious. They are impulsive and unpredictable, devious and contrary. If they are not poking their heads through fences, they may be standing on their hind legs, stretching for those tender leaves just out of reach. Goats are never content with what they have.

Events surrounding the return of Christ

Encarta

Goats – Violence and herd order (From a long time goat farmer)

No matter how you want them to always get along, there will be occasions where your goats fight and take “pot shots” at each other. The best thing to do is let them fight it out. It's brutal, but it is the way of goats. It is their nature. You may also see other goats get involved, and take sides in a fight. Goats will ram “lesser” goats for no other reason than to just to make sure they know their place.

Goats hate restriction



Goats are intelligent and playful but impulsive, unpredictable, and devious. They are experts in opening gates and squeezing through small gaps because they hate to be confined. Fences that will handle sheep, cattle, and horses will not hold goats. They will work tirelessly to spring themselves from any situation they deem inhibiting. Goats do not push well. If you push them to get them out of your way, they will lean into the push.

Goats are not good followers

Consequently, goats are not very good followers. “Gregarious behavior” is a term that refers to the flocking or herding instinct which is found strongly in sheep, cattle, and horses. Again, this quality is rather weak in goats; they prefer leading or going off on their own. Meat packers use this instinct in sheep and goats to their advantage. They will train an old goat, appropriately called a “Judas”, to lead sheep to the pens for slaughter. A well-trained Judas will lead group after group of sheep to the slaughter all day long.

APPENDIX 8

Jeremiah The Prophet

Date	Kings Of Judah	Year Of Rule	Contemporary Prophets	World Events Impacting on Judah	Chapter In Jeremiah	Theme of Chapter or Events Described in Chapter	Specific Events Affecting Jeremiah and his Friends
645	JOSIAH					Birth of Jeremiah – Son of High Priest	
639		1		Assyrian dominant			Josiah on throne 8 years old
631		8					Josiah seeks Yahweh
627		12		Assyria in decline			Josiah's reforms and purge of idolatry
626		13		Nabol-Polassar – King in Babylon	1	Call & Commission of Jeremiah	
					2	Israel – God's Unfaithful Bride	
					3	Judah & Israel – Backsliding children	
					4 – 6	The Foolishness and Wickedness of Judah	/
					7 – 10	The Temple Prophecy and Appeal	
622		18			(15:10)	Jeremiah Rejoices to Read the Law	Book of Law found & read
621		19		Egypt invades Philistia	47	Prophecy Against Egypt / Philistia	Great Reformation & Passover
					11 – 12	Conspiracy Against Jerusalem	Men of Anathoth condemned
608		31		Necho goes to Carchemish to help Assyria against Babylon			Josiah goes to fight Egyptians
	(31 Years)				(22:10)	Death of Josiah	Great mourning by Jeremiah
608	JEHOAHAZ (3Mths) called Shallum	1		Egyptians invade Judah	(22:11-12)	Jehoahaz Taken Captive	Necho sets up Jehoikim as King
608	JEHOIAKIM called Eliakim	1			26	Murder of Urijah, Jeremiah Appeals to People, Put on Trial	Ahikim saves Jeremiah
605		3		Great dearth & famine	14	Jeremiah Not Allowed to Pray for Judah	
					15	Terrible Condemnation Pronounced	Jeremiah in depression / reassured
				Egypt defeated by Babylon	16	Jeremiah's Example of Self Denial	
					17	Rebuke of the King	
					18	The Parable of the Potter's House	
					19	The Potter's Vessel Broken	
					20	Pashur Puts Jeremiah in Stocks	Jeremiah's great depression
				Nebuchadnezzar comes to power	23	False Prophets Rebuked	
604		4		Siege of Jerusalem	46	Prophecy Against Egypt	
				First captivity of Jews	36:1-7	Baruch Begins to Write Jeremiah's Words	Daniel, Mordecai & others go to Babylon
					25	Final & Fateful Message of Doom Added	Baruch's depression
					45	God's Message to Baruch	

603		5	Habak	Dan 2 – Nebuchanezzar honours God's Word	36:8-32	Baruch Reads Scroll – King Burns it	Daniel honoured in Babylon, God hides Jeremiah & Baruch
601		7		Jehoiakim rebels – bands of marauders invade land	35	Faithfulness of Rechabites Shown	
			Daniel		22:1-19	Condemnation of Jehoiakim	
597	(11 Years)	11		Second invasion of land	48 – 49	Prophecies Against Nations	Terrible death of Jehoiakim
597	JEHOIACHIN	1	Ezekiel	Babylon withdraws	13	Parable of Unwashed Girdle	Jeremiah goes to Babylon
	Called Coniah or Jeconiah (3 Mths)			Babylon invades again	22:20-30	King's Doom Foretold	King & Queen Mother go into captivity
			Daniel		24	Parable of Good & Bad Figs	
597	ZEDEKIAH (Called Mattaniah)	1			29	Jeremiah Writes Letter to Captives in Babylon	Sent with Elasah & Gemeriah
			Ezekiel		27	Parable of the Iron Yoke	
					28	Hananiah Condemned – Dies in 3 Mths	
593		4	Daniel	Ambassage sent to Babylon	50 – 51	Jeremiah Prophesies Doom of Babylon	
					51:59-64	Seraiah Reads the Prophecies	Ezekiel's Vision (Ezek 8:11)
			Ezekiel		32	Purchase of Hanameel's Field	Jeremiah promised an eternal inheritance
					33	God's Eternal Promise to Save Judah	
588			Daniel	Babylon resumes siege	30 – 31	Glorious Prophecies of Restoration	Jeremiah comforted by vision
		8		Siege of Jerusalem begins	34	Jeremiah Prophecies Doom of City	
			Ezekiel	Hophra new king in Egypt			
				Babylon withdraws	37	Jeremiah Put in Prison of Jonathan	Left for "many days" in misery
		9	Daniel	Babylon invades again	21	King Enquires of Jeremiah	Jeremiah condemns the king
				Zedekiah rebels again	38	Jeremiah Arrested – Condemned to Sewer Pit	Terrible sufferings (Lam 3:53-57)
			Ezekiel		39:15-18	Rescued by Ebedmelech	God's message to Ebedmelech
					39:1-10	Siege is Resumed	
587		11	Daniel	City falls	39:11-14	King Blinded / Sons Killed	Jeremiah sought out & cared for
	(11 Years)			70 Years Captivity begins	Lam 1 – 5	City Wasted & Burnt	Jeremiah's Lamentations
586	GEDALIAH (Governor)		Ezekiel		40	Gedaliah's Good Government	Jeremiah & Baruch assist Gedaliah
					41 – 42	Ishmael Kills Gedaliah – Chaos Begins	
585	Various Upstarts		Daniel		43:1-7	Jeremiah's Warnings Ignored	People take Jeremiah into Egypt
					43:8-13	Prophecy From Egypt	
			Ezekiel		44	Women of Judah Condemned	
582				Nebuchadnezzar invades Egypt	52	Historical Appendix	Jeremiah dies in Egypt