

Jesus

Commends ...

Acronyms

AHD = (*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fifth Edition copyright ©2015 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.)

CWSD = *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, Spiros Zodhiates, Th.D. (AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN, 1993)

LXX = Septuagint version (Greek version) of the Hebrew Old Testament

OB = *Online Bible* (Cross Country Software, 2009)

OX10 = *New Oxford American Dictionary 3rd edition* © 2010 by Oxford University Press, Inc. included with MAC OSX Mavericks

WNWD = *Webster's New World Dictionary*

WSNCD - *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*

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Sep6 - Jesus' Commendations

In this series of lessons we will study people Jesus commended, or reproved, and why. Hopefully, it will give us a better understanding and appreciation of Jesus, his expectations of us, and provide motivation for us to ask how Jesus views us. We will base our study primarily on the four gospels and Revelation 2,3.

1. What is the purpose of the the gospels? **Mk 1:1...16:15,16; Lk 1:1-4; Jn 20:30,31.**

Produce faith in Jesus as the Son of God. This is more than belief that he exists, but trust in His nature, power, love, desire and ability to forgive sin and his atoning sacrifice. These lessons can hopefully help us to know and trust Him more.

2. Why should I care about what Jesus thinks about men?

- a. **Jn 1:1-3, 47-49; 2:25; Mt 9:4 (Mk 2:8); 12:25; Lk 6:8; 9:47; Rev 2:2,9,13,19; 3:1,8,15. Compare Heb 4:11-13.**

Being God, He **knows man perfectly**. Nothing we think or do is hidden from his sight. There what He thinks about us is completely correct even if we cannot see ourselves and will not be objective about ourselves.

- b. **Mt 25:31...34...41; Lk 12:35-48; Jn 12:47-50; 14:6; 2Co 5:9,10**

Not only does He know man perfectly, but **He will be our Judge!** There is no way to be right with God without Him, and His word will be the standard of judgment.

- c. **Jn 3:16; 10:11; 15:13; 1Jn 3:16; 2Co 5:14,15; Tit 2:14**

He loves man so much He gave His life for us. To fail to be interested in being the kind of people He died to make of us is the height of ingratitude and selfishness!

3. Jesus' commendations ...

- a. Are not molded by common opinion. **Mt 8:11,12; 23:5-7, 27-28; Lk 7:36-39...47**

Unlike the opinions men have of men, Jesus is **does not allow majority, culture, prestige, position, self-righteousness of others, to bias his view** of men. His opinion of men is based squarely on the objective reality of what men are.

b. Are not influenced by intimidation. **Jn 18:33-37, 19:8-12**

Civil power, threats, nor extreme persecution are able to intimidate him. His views of man, then, is not, and **cannot, be skewed by pressure brought against him**, however great that may be.

c. Show no partiality, whether rich or poor (**Lk 19:2; 21:1-4**), powerful or unknown (**Mt 8:5...10; 9:2—22**), friend or foe (**Jn 8:44; Mt 16:23**), moral righteousness or unrighteousness (**Mt 11:2-6; Lk 7:37,47**)

He is not interested in material things people can give him, nor does he seek the favor of those in position, will not allow friendship to blind his eyes to one's faults, and will warn even the most righteous and extend sympathy to even the most vile.

d. Have no mercenary motives. **Lk 9:57,58**

He lived a very common life, not even owning a house to our knowledge. "The love of money is the root of all sorts of evil" (**1Tim 6:10**), and though the world was his and could have lived the life of luxury and ease, he was not driven in anything he did or said by the love of money or material things.

e. Have no power motives. **Jn 6:15**

Though people were ready to make him a king, and even to fight to the death for his earthly reign (**Jn 18:10,11**), he had no political ambition and therefore did not court human favor as politicians do in their judgments of men.

f. Are righteous judgments, in accord with his nature. **Jn 7:24; 8:45,46**

He is the God of truth, and every word he ever spoke is accord with truth. He challenged his opponents to show where he had ever committed sin. When he exhorted men not to judge "according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment," such was in accord with His very nature.

4. The believer's goal is be commended by Jesus now and in that final day!
Mt 25:21,23,34; 2Tim 4:7,8

Sep9 - A Centurion: “Such Great Faith!”

Read **Mt 8:5-13; Lk 7:1-10**.

1. What do we learn about Capernaum from following scriptures? **Mt 4:12,13 8:14-9:1; Mk 2:1; Mt 11:23,24**. If you learn anything else about Capernaum from other Scriptures that might be pertinent to the event we are discussing, make notes to share what you learned with the class.

Mt 4:12,13 - Jesus settled in Capernaum. Became his “home base” for the great Galilean ministry, vv**12...14f** (not that he had a house there, **Mt 8:20**; did he stay with Peter in his house? **Mt 8:5...14,16**). Matthew called it Jesus “own city,” **9:1 (Mk 2:1)**.

Many miracles performed there, but the people were unrepentant, **Mt 11:23**. Some of the miracles he performed in Capernaum: **Mt 8:5-13** (the one we are studying); **Mt 8:14-17, Mk 1:32-34** (Peter’s mother-in-law; many others); **9:1-8** (paralytic); **12:9-13** (withered hand); **17:24-27** (tax-money from fish); **Lk 4:31-37** (demon-possessed man); **Jn 4:46-54** (royal official’s son). He taught on several occasions in the synagogue (**Mk 1:21; Mt 13:54; Lk 6:6; Jn 6:59**).

Capernaum had abundant opportunity to hear and see the words and miracles of Jesus. You would have thought this would be a stronghold faith. Yet, **Mt 11:23** indicates their unrepentant heart and it the story here chapter 8 highlights that. The centurion’s faith stands in bold contrast to the city and to those who should have been leading the way in faith!

2. Do a profile of the centurion, (“profile” -“ summary or analysis of data representing distinctive features or characteristics” *American Heritage Dictionary*). E.g., race? wealthy? prominent? etc.

He was a man of authority and power, being a centurion **Mt 8:5,9**. He was not an Israelite, **Mt 8:10**. Highly regarded by the Jews, **Lk 7:3-5**. Wealthy, **Lk 7:5**? Slave owner, but a caring one, **Lk 7:2,3**.

Besides not being an Israelite, when you add the fact of his wealth, position, and esteem by the community, his faith is even more remarkable!

3. What is the significance of this being recorded by Matthew and by Luke? (Think of who they were, their occupations, and the time they lived.)

Matthew was a Jew and a tax-collector. Jesus’ commendation of this Gentile, along with the severe judgment on Israel who should have welcomed the kingdom (“sons of the kingdom”) was not a favorable reflection on his nation and could have been stinging to a Jew. As a tax-collector, Matthew was familiar with fraud and deceit, yet none is even hinted at in this

remarkable miracle performed at a distance and with the witness of the Jewish elders (**Lk 7:3**). Matthew did not even have to mention them (Luke did)—they knew!

Luke was a physician (**Col 4:14**) and therefore familiar with disease, and especially with something as prevalent in their society as paralysis. He observes the servant's situation dire: "sick and about to die." Also, Luke was a careful writer who had "investigated carefully" so he could provide Theophilus with the "exact truth" about the things he had been taught about Jesus (**Lk 1:3,4**).

Both these men wrote their accounts within but a few years of the events, which would allow eye-witnesses to refute their testimony if it was fraudulent. They wrote the accounts as historical accounts, Matthew for Jews who were the first and fervent enemies of Christ, and Luke to give rational evidence to undergird the faith of a man who may not have been fully convinced ("so that you may know") and who, himself, may have been an official of some sort ("most excellent Theophilus").

4. What is it about this man's faith that caused Jesus to commend it as "such great faith"? Suggestion: Consider what the man said and did that indicate his belief in Jesus' dignity (**Mt 8:8a; Lk 7:7a**), His power (**Mt 8:8b; Lk 7:7b**), the range of His power (**Mt 8:6; Lk 7:3**), His authority (**Mt 8:9; Lk 7:8**), and His loving mercy (**Lk 7:3-5,9**).

- Jesus' **dignity** - "I am not worthy for you to come under my roof" He a centurion!
- Jesus' **power** - "just say the word, and my servant will be healed"!
- **Range** of Jesus' power - the servant was "at home" and the centurion sent Jewish elders to Jesus, i.e., Jesus was not where the servant was. Distance was no barrier!
- Jesus' **authority** - He had the right, or authority, to command disease like the centurion commanded soldiers!
- Jesus' **loving mercy** - though neither the centurion nor the slave were familiar friends or family of Jesus, and though the centurion was of a different race (the servant?), and though Jesus was busy in preaching and teaching, the centurion yet had the boldness of faith to seek Jesus blessing, evidently trusting his love and mercy. Although the centurion was wealthy and in a position of authority, no rewards or concessions were offered to entice Jesus to heal his servant. The plea was that his servant was "paralyzed...fearfully tormented" (**Mt 8:6**) and to come and "save the life" of his servant (**Lk 7:3**).
- NOTE: His faith *acted* - **Jam 2:14**

5. With what did Jesus contrast this man's faith? Why was it such a contrast? What would be the consequences to those to whom Jesus referred? Some scriptures to consider: **Jn 1:11-12; 12:42; Ac 3:25-26; 13:46; Rom 3:1-2; 9:4...6.**

He contrasted the centurion's faith to "Israel"—physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, (**Mt 8:10,11**)—the ones who thought they were the "heirs" of the kingdom of the Messiah ("sons of the kingdom" **Mt 8:12** - appearance, or opinion, of a thing put for the thing itself). While they thought they were the heirs of the kingdom by virtue of their relationship to A,I,J (**v12**), they did not have the faith of the centurion, a Gentile! Luke, like Matthew, records Jesus' statement that he had not found this kind of faith in Israel (**Lk 7:9; Mt 8:10**), but does not record Jesus' the solemn warning Matthew does. Note that it is Matthew, who writes for the Jewish reader and is himself a Jew, that records the solemn warning that the blind, unbelieving Jews would be cast into outer darkness (**Mt 8:11,12**).

Even some who came to believe did not have the faith to cause them to confess him, **Jn 12:42; 7:13; 19:38...Mk 15:43**. Whether the Jewish elders who were sent to Jesus by the centurion to ask Him to "save the life of his slave" (**Lk 7:3**) became believers is not stated. Whether they cared about the centurion, or whether they cared about his money (**Lk 7:4,5**) is also not known.

The Jewish nation's lack of faith is indicated in **Jn 1:11-12; Ac 13:46; Rom 9:6,30-33**. Further indicting the Jews was the fact they had the oracles of God entrusted to them (**Rom 3:1,2**), and had "the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh" **Rom 9:4,5**.

6. How did this man acquire this faith? See **Lk 7:3**. Compare **Rom 10:17**. Had he heard of the event recorded in **Jn 4:46-54...?** (We don't know...) Contrast **Lk 11:14-16; Mt 27:42**. See **Jn 20:26-31**.

Lk 7:3 says "he heard about Jesus." Had he heard about the event in **Jn 4:46-54** (royal official's son)? We don't know. John wrote that Jesus did "many other things" which were not recorded (**Jn 21:25**). Is it possible, especially since Capernaum was where Jesus "settled" during his Galilean ministry, that there were other miracles or discourses the centurion know about?

Lk 11:14-16 records people who saw Christ' miracles, did not deny he worked them, but attributed his power to the devil. **Mt 27:42** records the Jews still requiring a miracle—coming down from the cross—before they would believe. The gospel accounts were written to provide a record of his miracles for all generations thereafter to examine to determine whether he is the Son of God, **Jn 20:30-31**.

7. For thought: What would Jesus say of our faith? Read **Jam 2:14-26**.

8. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

The authority (7:29) and trustworthiness (7:24) of His message (chs 5-7) were *confirmed* by historical events like this open, public, miracle in the presence of both Gentiles and Jews and without the possibility of any “backdrop” to conceal magician aids nor any “helpers” to make it happen (like magicians today).

From this incident we learn about Jesus’ ...

- **Authority** - even over disease! Only God has such authority!
- **Power** (not only authority, but power to enforce that authority) - over disease, distance (and note that no faith required of the servant). If he can do this, he can raise the dead!
- **Knowledge of men** - the centurion and the Jews in regard to their faith. He knows yours!
- **Judges true, righteous judgment** - not blinded by self-opinion, nor fellow men (“sons of the kingdom”).
- **Appreciation of men for their faith.** He would commend you for an obedient, unashamed faith!
- **Compassion** - re the centurion’s concern for his slave. He has compassion for us in our concern over those we care about!

Sep13 - John the Baptist: Manliness

Read Mt 11:2-15; Lk 7:18-28.

Mt 11:1-5

John's testimony

- **confirmed**, vv1-5 - miracles
- **defended**, vv7-8 - character of the witness
- **reaffirmed**, vv9-15 - He is Elijah!

1. By "manliness" we mean having the traditional qualities associated with manhood—being strong, brave, resolute to duty in the face of danger and difficulty. Compare **1Co 16:13**. (Note: manliness does *not* equate with stubbornness, rudeness, impatience, lack of meekness.)

"having or denoting those good qualities traditionally associated with men, such as courage and strength" OX10. "having the qualities generally regarded as those that a man should have; virile; strong, brave, resolute, honorable, etc." WNWD

1Co 16:13 "act like men" (NASB); "be brave" (NKJV); "quit you like men" (KJV)

"quit" - "8. To conduct (oneself) in a specified way: Quit yourselves like adults."

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Compare this word in OT (LXX)

(Phrase translates one word, *andrizo*. This word occurs in the LXX in the scriptures in this section.)

Josh 1:6,7,9,18

vv6,7 - Courage to obey, not "turn ... to the right or left"!

v6, "quit thyself like a man" LXX; "courageous" NASB; "of good courage" KJV, NKJV, ASV (LXX = *andrizo*)

v7, "quit thyself like a man" LXX; "very courageous" NASB, KJV, NKJV; "of good courage" asv (LXX = *andrizo*)

v9 - Not be dismayed in fear ("tremble") like a child who run away in fear and give up in dismay in face of difficulty and danger - Act like a MAN!

"courageous" NASB, LXX; "of good courage" KJV, NKJV, ASV (LXX = *andrizo*)

"...dismay implies loss of power to carry on because of sudden fear or anxiety or great perplexity" WSNCD, 1970

v9 - What give such courage?

"Have not I commanded you? [*it's the RIGHT thing to do*]... **for** the Lord your God is with you [*He will bless you!*]..."

v18 - In face of opposition of *own people!*

"courageous" NASB, LXX; "of good courage" KJV, NKJV, ASV (LXX = *andrizo*)

2Ch 32:7 - Not move by "multitude with them"

“courageous” LXX, NASB, KJV, NKJV; “good courage” ASV (LXX = andrizO)
What give such courage? *“for one with us is greater than the one with them”!*

Text itself - **1Co 16:13** - four terms, imagery of battle

- **“Be on the alert!”** (“Watch” NKJV)
Watch for the hidden foe!
- **“Stand firm...”** (“Stand fast” NKJV)
As enemy advances in fearsome lines of attack - stand firm. Don’t give ground!
- **“Act like men!”** (“Be brave” NKJV)
When the battle has begun, amid the tumult and the fighting, be courageous and perform like valiant warriors!
- **“Be strong”**
In the ebb and flow of battle, when it may at times seem as though the outcome is doubtful - be strong” as well-equipped soldiers and do not give up!

Note: manliness does NOT equate with:

- Stubbornness - e.g., Paul
- Rudeness, impatience, lack of meekness - **2Tim 2:24-26**

2. What does “reed shaken by the wind” connote about character?

Lack of conviction, confidence, courage based on faith in his testimony. One swayed by popular opinion, intimidation, or difficult circumstances.

“the reed shaken by the wind” - “...the tall reed (the *Arunda donax*) which skirts the Jordan, and which stands, bearing its beautiful blossoming top twelve feet high one moment, only to bow it to earth the next, the slender stem yielding submissively to the passing breeze” FFG. “light, fragile nature, easily shaken by the wind” Barnes

Note that both Matthew and Luke record that after dealing with John’s question which suggested confusion and/or doubt, Jesus “began to speak to the crowds about John.” The people had flocked to hear John, **Mt 3:5**. He was the “go before” the Messiah “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (**Lk 1:17**). Was he now wavering in his testimony about Jesus? Did this undermine his credibility with people?

He is in prison by Herod’s edict (**Lk 3:19-20; Mk 6:17-18**). Was he now willing to court Herod’s favor to avoid persecution?

Jesus defended John’s character very strongly. He exhibited manliness, they knew he had, and that has not changed. John testified about Jesus in the face of even the Pharisees and Sadducees, reproving them publicly for their impenitence. He strongly reproved Herod, for which he was thrown into prison. During his ministry he had exhibited no signs of “bending with the breeze” when facing the ruling authorities or the multitudes. He indeed exhibited the spirit of Elijah!

They were well familiar with John's stinging rebukes, plain and straightforward preaching, as well as his stern conduct, **Mt 11:18**. No, John had not borne testimony that was popular or easy. ***This they knew***. His motivations could only be found in the convictions he held. His doubts now did not change that.

He reasserts the role of John as the forerunner of the Messiah.

He then explains the cause of John's "stumbling," a problem shared by his hearers - misunderstanding of the nature of the kingdom, **vv11b-13**.

Observe how Jesus dealt with John. Though his understanding was lacking, Jesus dealt kindly (**Mt 11:4,5**) but firmly (**Mt 11:6**) with his doubts.

How did John react upon hearing what Jesus said? We do not know, showing that ***the emphasis of the narrative is not John, but Jesus***.

Note: Observe purpose of miracles, i.e. to confirm who He was, **Mt 11:3-5**.

3. What does "dressed in soft clothing" connote? (Note: Before you answer, consider that men like Joseph, David, Josiah, and Daniel lived in "king's palaces" and wore "soft clothing.")

"A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces!" **v8**

This may connote given to self-indulgence and therefore weak, without conviction, and easily corrupted. Some who wear this kind of clothing due to high station gained by flattery and bowing down to pressure, and it may be this is what Jesus has in mind.

Note: Not everyone who wears "soft clothing" and lives in a palace is weak, without conviction, and easily corrupted—e.g. Joseph, David, Daniel, Nehemiah.

Fact: John did NOT wear "soft" clothing, **Mt 3:4!**

About those wear "soft" clothing and live in palaces...

- **Question:** *How did they get to live in the palace?* Was it through concessions, seeking favor?
- **Question:** *What are they willing to do to stay there* with their "soft" clothing and easy life?

John preaching did not beget the easy life, nor had he sought it. **The people knew that**, and Jesus challenges them to judge John fairly. **John was not swayed as a reed in the breeze by fear or popularity, nor was he motivated by indulgence and ease in his testimony concerning Jesus. *This they knew!***

Point of these three questions (**vv7,8,9**): You went to hear John. You knew he was not swayed by public opinion nor intimidated by men and had no self-seeking motives. What were your views *then*? You believed him to be a *prophet!* See **Mt 14:5; 21:26**. Have you repented as this

prophet preached? (See **v16f**; **Lk 7:30**; **Mt 21:25**.) If you did believe John and repent, do not now lose that faith. If he was a prophet *then*, whatever he is *now* does not change that!

4. For discussion: Did John's question imply he doubted his own previous testimony? (Use your reference Bible to read what his previous testimony was. Make note of the passages. Contextually, "the Expected One," or, "the Coming One" (NKJV), refers to one expected or coming for what?)

Context, **Mt 11:1-6**

S: Who are you, Jesus?

C: I am the Expected Messiah, as confirmed by my miracles.

John's faith:

"The expected one" may readily refer to the one expected to establish the kingdom. Was he one and the same one?

John preached, "kingdom at hand." Misunderstanding of the kingdom was common and referred to in the context, **Mt 11:11-12**. Note **Mt 11:6** — John's misunderstanding could have been a problem to him. The tree had not been cut down, **Mt 3:10**, and in fact the wicked element was responsible for his imprisonment. Note **v6**. Nor did the apostles did not understand the kingdom, even after three years with Christ. John did not have such time and opportunity of association with Christ.

"another" = *heteros*. "Allos expresses a numerical difference and denotes another of the same sort; *heteros* expresses a qualitative difference and denotes another of a different sort." VN. I.e., "Must we look for another of a different sort to establish the kingdom?" *Are you the Expected (coming) King?* Note that John had been imprisoned by Herod and had now been in prison possibly for several months.

Yes, it looks like John had some doubt or confusion at this point. See **v6**. But, besides not defining his character (which Jesus deals with in **vv7,8**, that in no way invalidated his testimony. Compare...

- **Abraham**, "father of the faithful" (**Rom 4:11,12,16**) - **Gen 15:2; 16:2; 17:15-18; 20:2**
- **Moses** - **Num 20:2-13**. Undermine his work and miracles of the Exodus?
- **Peter** - **Mt 26:69,71,73**. Invalidate his confession of Christ (**Mt 16:16,18**)?

The credibility of the message does not depend on the infallibility of the messenger!

If a preacher apostatizes, it does not make the truth he preached untrue. *We can be thankful our faith does not rest on the perfection of the messenger.*

5. Comparing Matthew and Luke's accounts, what did Jesus do to confirm he was "the Expected One"?

Luke notes that "at that very time" (**Lk 7:21**) when John's question was posed to him that he worked miracles and told the messengers to report this to John. Jesus used miracles to confirm who he was. Cmpr **Jn 5:36; 10:37,38**.

Note: This is how Jesus settled John's doubt about whether He is the "One."! This is how we can settle OUR doubts and that of our children!

6. Why did Jesus say...

- a. "There has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist" (Notes: Was John in the kingdom when it was established...**Mt 8:11,12**? What is unique about John so that even prophets like Elijah or Moses were not "greater"?)

"none greater" - Why? In context, the immediate forerunner of the Messiah, **vv10-14**, esp **v10**, immediately following this statement, and **v14**, of Elijah who was expected by the Jews to precede the Messiah (**Mt 17:10; Jn 1:21**). Not, greater by moral comparison, or by results, with prophets like Moses, Elijah, etc. This not the context.

- b. "Yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he"? (Note: "Is" = present tense, but present tense is sometimes used when speaking of things in the future, e.g. **Mt 3:10; 22:30**. Consider **Lk 10:20; 11:27,28; 12:21,28-33**.)

"he who is least in kingdom of heaven greater than he" Hyperbole? What's the point?

"Is" - present tense. But not mean some in the kingdom already, or John in it and comparison lost. Also present tense used at times when speaking of things yet in future, e.g., **Mt 3:10; 22:30**.

Greater because John not in kingdom?

But,

- Was not John in the kingdom when it was established? Cmpr **Mt 8:11,12**
- No one in it now, so if above true, where comparison?
- Possible? To be a citizen in the kingdom of heaven is greater than to be the forerunner of the Messiah! See **Lk 10:20; 11:27,28; 12:21,28-33**.

7. On **Mt 11:12** ... Read **Jn 6:15**. This occurs in the evening of the very day Jesus told of John's death, **Mt 14:12-21**. Compare the miracle in Matthew with the one in **Jn 6:5-13**—same event recorded.

“take it by force” - verb for *attempt* to do a thing

Cmpr **Jn 6:15**. This in the evening of the very day Jesus told of John's death, **Mt 14:12-21**. (Compare the accounts of the miracle preceding and they will be seen to be referring to one and the same miracle.)

This is the key to *John's* problem, **v6**, and the people's. Neither understood the nature of the kingdom.

8. “For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John.” What changed when John came on the scene? See **Lk 16:16**.

I.e., *preached* until John. Then a change. A *new* message *also* proclaimed: “k. of h. at hand.” **Lk 16:16**. Not saying the law and prophets an authoritative law until John, then new law. Not the contrast in context. Not even saying the law and prophets ceased to be preached when John appeared. In fact, he urged the people to get back to obeying the law, “repent.”

9. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- **Jesus used miracles to confirm who he was.** Cmpr **Jn 5:36; 10:37,38; 20:30,31**.
- **Jesus expects and expects manliness in his disciples:** e.g....
 - Mt 10:16-39** - manliness to fulfill duty at all costs. Cmpr **2Tim 4:1-5**
 - Mt 18:15-18** - manliness to face the accused (some prefer guerrilla warfare)
 - Tit 1:9; Ac 20:19-21,27** - manliness to speak whatever is needed to whomever that may need it in a congregation
 - Eph 6:10-13** - manliness to fight the good fight of faith daily until death
- **Jesus deals kindly (Mt 11:4,5) but firmly (Mt 11:6) with us in our times of weakness.**
- **Jesus knows how we think...** “What did you go out to see...?”
- **Jesus was aware He was indeed the coming Messiah.**
- **Jesus desires to save all,** even the multitude.
- **Jesus again affirms the treasures of the kingdom to be the greatest treasures of all.**

Sep16 - A Leper: Giving Thanks to God

Read Lk 17:11-19.

1. What was the law governing lepers? Lev 13:45-46

Lepers were unclean and to live away from the other people.

Lev 13:45-46, "45 As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' 46 He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp."

Thus the need to "raise their voices" - ? I.e., due to the distance they maintained from people. *airO*, "1...b. to raise upwards, elevate, lift up:...the voice, i.e. speak in a loud tone, cry out, Lk 17:13..." TH. ISV, "shouted"; NIV, "called out in a loud voice"

2. If you have a New International Version, read the footnote on "leprosy."

NIV ftnt on "leprosy," "The Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin - not necessarily leprosy."

"(Geikie in his "Life of Christ" says: 'Leprosy signifies smiting, because it was supposed to be a direct visitation of Heaven. It began with little specks on the eyelids and on the palms of the hands, and gradually spread over different parts of the body, bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swellings and sores.

From the skin, it slowly ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints, and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, and the eyes, were attacked in turn, till at last, consumption or dropsy brought welcome death. The dread of infection kept men aloof from the sufferer; and the law proscribed him as above all men unclean. The disease was hereditary to the fourth generation.')

Smith's Dict.

Describe the scene. (E.g., Where these men were in relationship to Jesus, the volume in which they addressed Jesus...)

"stood at a distance...and raised their voices" vv12,13. The law concerning lepers (Q1) may have necessitated this.

3. Why did the Law instruct a leper to show himself to the priest? See **Lev 14**.

The priest must pronounce the man legally clean and with appropriate sacrifices and procedures admit him back into the congregation, **Lev 14**.

This act would serve:

- To show Jesus respected the Law [but, see note below, re show themselves to the priests at Mt Gerizim?]
- As a testimony to the priests that Jesus was the Messiah

4. When were the men cleansed? What does this say about the men?

“as they were going, they were cleansed”

Note: they were not first cleansed and then told to go show themselves to the priests. They had to have enough faith to start toward the priests while still unclean.

“Cleansed” IMMEDIATELY (“as they were going”) & COMPLETELY

- Luke - **physician**
- Leprosy – **visible** symptoms
- Challenge: “**Show yourselves to the priest**”!
- **Contrast “miracles” today!**
 - *Immediacy*
 - *Completeness*
 - *Uniformity* - 10 men, same disease, same result
 - *Challenge* - “Show yourself to the doctor”!

5. What attitude and action set the one leper apart from the others?

Sincerely, unashamedly, humbly gave thanks to Christ, “giving glory to God.”

As he was not ashamed to “raise his voice” to request healing, he was not ashamed to raise his voice to express thanks!

“turned back” - took time, expended the effort, went out of his way

“glorifying God with a loud voice” - unashamed praise “

“fell on his face at his feet” - homage to Jesus

He glorified God BY giving thanks to Jesus. Note **v18**, “turned back to give glory to God.” (Both “glorifying” and “giving thanks” in **vv15,16** = pres. part.)

See in the man’s prostrate form and the fact that he was “glorifying God” that there is more than simple gratitude of man to man - this is a gratitude filled with awe, awe for the one who could bestow such blessings.

6. What else was there about this leper that further highlighted the failure of the other men?

“foreigner” **v18** - *allogenEs*. **Lk 17:18***

”The old word was *alophulos* (Acts 10:28), but *allogenEs* occurs in the LXX, Josephus, and inscriptions. Deissman (*Light from the Ancient East*, p. 80) gives the inscription from the limestone block from the Temple of Israel in Jerusalem which uses this very word which may have been read by Jesus: *Let no foreigner enter within the screen and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary...*“ RWP

Use in Sept.:

- **Ex 12:43** - of uncircumcised, not allowed to eat Passover. See **vv43-49**.
- **Ex 29:33; 30:33; Num 16:40** - of someone other than Aaron and sons
- **Num 1:51** - of one not a Levite

He was a Samaritan, **v16**.

”Show yourselves to the priests,“ **v14**? Samaritan priests at Mt Gerizim? (McGarvey, Lenski, Meyer)

7. “The nine—where are they?” This question is presented by the Son of God to focus on a basic and vital attitude and responsibility men have, and have always had, before God. Failure is not only sinful, but paves the way for apostasy. Read the following. Be prepared to discuss these in class as they relate to this point.

All these scriptures emphasize the importance of *thanksgiving*. It not only is important *because God deserves it*, it is important in *developing within us the right attitude*.

a. Jews: **Ex 12:14; 13:8-10; Dt 8:10-18; 12:7; 16:11-12,14,17; 28:45-48; 32:15-18; Rom 2:4-5**

God appointed the feasts to cause them to remember that it was God who delivered them and blessed them, not their own power and wisdom. They were warned by Moses in his sermon that if they forgot this they would turn away from God. Why would turn from Jehovah to idols? When they think the idols are responsible for their blessings! This why men worship money, self, men...!

See this played out in their history. **Ex 32:4; Isa 44:17,20** (Note in these chapters, ch’s **40ff**, He declares his grace and power in the creation of the universe and Israel, and dares a comparison with other gods: what have they done, what can they do, what do they know nothing!) **Isa 46:5-7**.

Rom 2:4,5 seems to indicate they seemed to think God’s kindness and blessings were a sign of approval rather than causing them to be penitent.

b. Gentiles: **Rom 1:18-21...25...28**

Lack of thankfulness to God and the honor that implies He deserves likewise contributed to the Gentiles depravity.

c. Christians: **Eph 5:20; Php 3:1; 4:4,6; 1Th 5:17,18; 1Tim. 2:1; Heb 13:15**

Over and over, in letter after letter, Christians are exhorted to thankfulness!

What kind of God...??

Create universe ... earth as habitable place for man to live ... tree to give man shade and fruit, and with power to perpetuate itself ... flowers for men to enjoy and marvel at ... living cell more complex than the most advanced computers and essential to all human life ... man ... woman ... baby ... love ...??

Justify guilty men without violating justice ... cause men dead in sin to live in righteousness ... set men captive to sin free ... men stained with deepest dye of sin white as snow ... dying with most terrible disease and cleanse them ...??? A God who would BECOME MAN and DIE FOR HIM!!!

And yet, **“where are the nine??”**

Maybe a “thank you“ from the distance? Does he not deserve more? Is there no awe? Is there no gratitude? Have we forgotten we cannot live on our own, and DO NOT live on our own - NEITHER PHYSICALLY NOR SPIRITUALLY? Once cleansed, did we proceed on our way and forget where our cleansing came from? “Where are the nine...???” Do we find “giving glory to God” in songs, LS, giving, prayer tedious, time-consuming, and too much trouble to do more than once a week? **“Where are the nine??”**

Among those who ought to lead the way – “this foreigner”?? Apply to US...

- Complete **thoughtlessness**?
- **Thankful “in heart”**? This man demonstrated unashamed, humble, active, gratitude – US...??
- Jews – **expect to be blessed**? No “big deal”—been blessed for 1500 years. (US — parental training...bibles...freedom...churches...etc.?)
- **Too busy**...? Get back to family, friends, work?
- **Influenced by the others** who did not turn back? Only one of ten turned back... follow crowd, majority... intimidated by?
- **Procrastination**—plan to return and give thanks later?
- Reason is not given. *The fact is, they did not.* And they, esp. if Jews, *should have.*
There is no excuse!

All ten had faith – but compare the faith of this one with the others in **how it made him act**. Faith of the nine prompted action for self. One’s faith went further ... ***How far does our faith affect us...? Jam 2:14-16***

- Prayer...?
- Worship...?
- Life of service... **1Tim 1:12f**

8. If you have the New American Standard Version, read the footnote on **v19**. Check this alternative out based on (a) the meaning of the word, and (b) the context.

NASB fnt, “Lit., *has saved you*”

“has made...well” = perfect tense.

Did they not ALL manifest faith? If **v19** means “made you well” (instead of “saved you”), the other nine are NOT EXCLUDED—they, too, had faith to go to the priest and were healed. If this is the case, what set his man apart from the others is his *thankfulness* growing out of his faith. However, if this means “saved,” then indeed this is different from the other nine! Most commentators make it refer to his physical healing. Some say there was some additional spiritual blessing, but what it is is not clear. Some say it was designed to encourage him to seek higher blessings by his faith (FFG). Shepherd, *The Christ of the Gospels*, makes it salvation. Cambridge says, “Rather, hath saved thee.” The word is σῶζω *sOzO*, G4982 and is used of both physical healing and salvation from sin. Cmpr also **Lk 5:20; 7:9-10; 8:48; 18:42**

9. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- His **compassion** for those who are suffering, to the good and the evil (unthankful) (**Mt 5:45**)
- His **power** to do something about it, even what seems impossible!
- **Unafraid to have his miracles confirmed**: “Go and show yourselves to the priests”
- Imply His **deity**?
 - ▶ “glorifying God...giving thanks to Him...returned to give glory to God”
 - ▶ Q: How did Jesus know this one man was a Samaritan? How did he know the other nine were cleansed?
 - ▶ If “has saved you” in **v19**, forgive sin!
- Jesus **expects men to be thankful!**
- The **value he puts on active faith** in Him.

Sep20 - Mary: “Mary has Chosen the Good Part”

Read Lk 10:38-42.

Two good women

- Mary - text
- Martha
 - Hospitable
 - Diligent
 - Faith - see **Jn 11:20-27**

But, one mildly rebuked; one commended for “choosing the good part”—*Difference: One kept her focus on the “One Necessary Thing.”*

1. You are standing in the corner of the room watching all this. Be prepared to describe the scene in your own words. Consider the following notes.

- **v39**, *Young’s Literal Translation* has, “Mary, who also, having seated herself ...” The NAS77 has “moreover”; the KJV, NKJV, and ASV has “also.” The NAS95, ESV, NIV, and NRSV omit this word altogether, but there is a word in the original that is represented by the English translation “moreover” or “also.” What does “also” suggest to you about what was going on?

The word translated “also” or “moreover” is *kai*. The “also” may suggest that Martha “also” was seated (see YLT), listening to Jesus, but “was distracted” (**v40**). In contrast, Mary “kept on leaving” (**v40**) Martha to listen to Jesus!

- **v40**, “has left me” - “Imperfect active, she kept on leaving me.” *Robertson’s Word Pictures*.
“has left me” - had Mary already done some of the preparations? “Imperfect active, she kept on leaving me.” RWP
- **v40**, “help” me”; “to give a hand with anybody” H.A.W. Meyer. “Tell her to give me a hand!”

Other considerations:

Could not Martha have prepared ahead except for the finishing touches? Did not Jesus usually send ahead announcing his arrival? **Lk 9:52; 10:1; 22:8**.

Obj: Does not say he did so every time, nor that he did so this time.

2. Martha was “distracted” (“cumbered” KJV, ASV). **v40**, Look up these words.

a. If “distracted,” distracted from what?

From focusing, concentrating, paying attention to Jesus’ teaching.

“distract” - “1. To cause (someone) to **have difficulty paying attention to something**: *The voices in the other room distracted him, so he couldn’t concentrate on his homework.* 2. **To attract (the attention) away from its original focus**; divert.” AHD [bold mine]

b. If “cumbered,” with what, and how did it impact what was going on?

Being “**worried and bothered about so many things**” weighed her down and hindered her from concentrating and staying focused on Jesus’ teaching. “**Things**,” though innocent in themselves, can burden us down and distract us from what ought to be our priorities. ***This is Jesus’ warning.***

“cumber” - 1. To **weigh down; burden**: *was cumbered with many duties.* 2. To **hamper or hinder, as by being in the way**: *was cumbered with a long poncho.*” AHD [bold mine]

3. Jesus said Martha was “worried [“careful,” KJV; “anxious,” ASV] and bothered about so many things,” **v41**. When a person has many things they feel are demanding their attention, we may say they are “pulled in every direction,” and if it weighs too heavily upon them to where they lose control, we may even say they are “going to pieces.” This was Martha. Compare the instruction in Jesus’ commendation here with his teaching in:

a. **Mt 6:33** - in the context, what is Jesus cautioning against?

Worry, anxiety about the “**things**” (**v32**) the world “eagerly seeks” which will cause our “heart” to focus on them (**v21**) and our life to be “devoted to” (**v24**) acquiring and preserving them. The question is whether we have the “faith” (**v33**) to truly appreciate and value (**v21**) the kingdom of the Messiah and its treasures (**v33**) over “**these things**”!

b. **Mk 4:7,18-19** - in the context, what is the result of this attitude?

“the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other **things** enter in and choke the word, and **it becomes unfruitful.**”

“**worried and bothered**”

“**worried**” > *meros*, piece—“going to pieces”; “pulled in every direction”; inward anxiety

Life complex, with many “worries” (“pieces” or “parts” - cntrst, “good part”=*meris*)—personal, social, domestic, civil, and these in turn may be subdivided into the financial, physical, and mental

“**worry**” - Eng. word: “Notes: “Don’t worry” is a much milder injunction than it once would have been, for the word worry has softened its sense greatly over the course of its history. Its Old English ancestor, *wyrgan*, meant “to strangle.” Its Middle English descendant, *worien*, kept this sense and developed the new sense “**to grasp by the throat with the teeth and lacerate**” or “to kill or injure by biting and shaking.” This is the way wolves or dogs might attack sheep, for example. In the 16th century *worry* began to be used in the sense “to harass, as by rough treatment or attack,” or “to assault verbally,” and

in the **17th century** the word took on the sense “**to bother, distress, or persecute.**” It was a small step from this sense to the main modern senses “**to cause to feel anxious or distressed**” and “**to feel troubled or uneasy,**” first recorded in the **19th century.**” AHD [bold mine]

LXX uses *meris* in **Psa 73:26; Lam 3:24.** See **Jn 6:26,27,35,68.**

“**bothered**” KJV, NKJV, “troubled”; NIV, “upset”; outwardly agitated (reflected in “she came up” [idea of suddenness, RWP, Lenski, Hendriksen...exasperated? angry?] and her statement to the Lord...?)

4. “One thing is necessary,” **v42.** Isn’t food, rest, and shelter necessary (which Martha was providing)? What does Jesus mean? Compare **Jn 6:26,27...67,68.**

A lesson on priorities - the “one thing necessary” for life with God, eternal life, is the gospel of Christ which he was teaching.

Jesus often had not where to lay his head, wearied himself in much travel, exerted much energy in preaching and teaching, and often faced the stress of controversy and trial. A good meal in her home was a way of showing her regard for him and a way of truly helping him. Which is true, and good - Note: distracted with “Lit., much service” (NASB fnt; KJV, “*much serving*”). But, in all that Martha failed to focus on His purpose: The *great salvation* He came to teach!

“The expression ‘good part’ is an allusion to the portion of honor sent to the principal guest at a banquet. Its use shows that Jesus had food in mind when he used the expression ‘one thing is needful,’ and that he was contrasting spiritual nourishment with physical.” FFG. But, I found no confirming source for this analogy. RWP also makes a contrast with physical food, but does not refer to a custom concerning the “good part.” However, note setting ...table with foods and drinks - “necessary”? No — only one “portion” or “part” necessary—*spiritual* food of the gospel of Christ that provides, not temporal benefit, but *eternal salvation*. It was the “better” part and the only one necessary!

5. “Mary has chosen the good part,” **v42.**
 1. Our character, life, eternal destiny are affected by our *choices* — **Dt 30:19; Josh 24:15; Psa 119:30; Pro 1:29.**
 2. What did Jesus say about her choice?

“which shall not be taken away from her” - he would not grant Martha’s request, **v40.** He commended and supported Mary in her choice!

6. For thought and discussion: Which better pictures *us*—Mary, or, Martha? Do we need to make changes, and if so, what changes?

Contrasts in the text:

Martha	Mary
“so many things	“one thing”
“worried” (<i>merimnaO</i> , a divided mind)	“the good part (<i>meris</i>)” (single mind)
“worried & troubled” (present tense)	“chosen” (aorist tense)

Not to be used as an excuse to get out of doing the dishes to read the Bible. Reflects life choice (aorist) that was reflected in present action. Because of such choice, one will seize opportunities, e.g. ...

- Mary
- Assembly (**Heb 10:19f**, “Since [what Christ has done for us] ... Let us...” **v24-25**)
- Serve - **Mt 25:34-46** (**v40**, “did it to me”)
- Giving - **2Co 8:5**, “first gave themselves to the Lord”
- Growth, **2Pt 1:5f...v9**, “having forgotten his purification...”

Whether conflict is

- Material, **Mt 6:33**
- Family, **Mt 10:37**
- Life itself, **Mt 16:25**

7. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- **Jesus fits his rebuke to the person.** This is a mild rebuke, as the warning for John the Baptist was a mild warning. Contrast **Mt 23:13f**! See **Jude 22,23**.
- He **sometimes reproved people in front of others.** There is no indication he took Martha aside to reprove her. If the circumstances justified it and it would benefit the person and others present, he would use the situation for good though it might be embarrassing to some.
- **Close friendship did not prevent Him from reproving those He loved.** Martha, along with Mary, were some of his most devoted supporters, and he loved both dearly. **Jn 11:5,24-27; 12:2.** He loved her soul more than her hospitality!
- He does **not allow good intentions to justify bad choices.**
- As He did so often, He again teaches that **His mission and His kingdom**—the gospel of Christ— **should be the most important thing to men.** Even his personal comfort—a good meal— did not override the importance of His mission.

Sep23 - Nathanael: “Israelite Indeed, in whom is No Deceit!”

Read Jn 1:43-51

1. Define “guile” or “deceit” (NKJV) as a trait of character.

δολος *dolos*

#1388 - “properly, bait, Homer, Odyssey 12, 252; a lure, snare; hence, *craft, deceit, guile*” TH. “Ant. *aletheia* (225), truth, honesty; *eilikrineia* (1505), sincerity; *hagnotEs* (54), cleanness, pureness, and metaphorically without guile; *aphtharsia* (861), incorruptness, sincerity.” Zodhiates, CWSD.

“guile”

“1. Treacherous cunning; skillful deceit. ...

“*Archaic* To beguile; deceive.” AHD

“deceit”

“3. The quality of being deceitful; falseness.” AHD

2. Based on what is said in the following scriptures, note some ways in which guile or deceit will affect how one deals with the truth.

a. Ac 13:10

“deceit” (“subtilty,” KJV) = *dolos*. Pretense of having something worthwhile from God to offer people (see v6, Jewish false prophet), but pervert the truth for personal gain

b. 1Th 2:3

“deceit” (“guile,” KJV = *dolos*) Use deceitful means, decoys, gimmicks, to “please men” (v4) rather than God, especially in the face of “opposition” (v2).

c. 2Co 4:2

“adulterating” (“handling deceitfully” KJV, NKJV) = δολοω *doloO* 1389] Adulterate the truth in order to make it more “sale-able” and further one’s accomplishments or successes

d. 2Co 11:13

“deceitful” = δολιος *dolios*, #1386. Pretend to be or possess something one is not or does not have in order to further personal aims rather than seeking the truth in one’s life and that of others

3. What is the significance of saying, “an Israelite indeed ”(instead of simply “an Israelite”)?

a. Compare **Jn 4:42; 6:55; 8:31** (See KJV).

“indeed” = #230, *αλεθος alethos*. **Jn 4:42; 6:55** (NASB, “true”); **8:31** (NASB, “truly”); [1Tim. 5:3 #3689)]. *αλεθος alethos* “from 227; adv; AV - of a truth 6, indeed 6, surely 3, truly 2, very 1, misc 3; 21. 1) truly, of a truth, in reality, most certainly” OB. Interesting definition of 228: “228 *αλεθινος alethinος* “from 227; adj; AV - true 27; 27. 1) that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name, real, true genuine 1a) opposite to what is fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretended 1b) it contrasts realities with their semblances 1c) opposite to what is imperfect defective, frail, uncertain 2) true, veracious, sincere” OB. “adv. 1. Without a doubt; certainly: very cold indeed; was indeed grateful. 2. In fact; in reality: said the car would break down, and indeed it did.” AHD. “adv. certainly; truly; admittedly: often used for emphasis or confirmation [it is indeed warm]” WNWD.

b. See **Jn 8:39-40; Rom 2:17-29; 9:6-8,22-29**.

Nathaniel was not an Israelite in the flesh only, but a true “Israelite,” one who loved God in heart. It was not an outward pretense of being devoted to God based on race.

4. What converted Nathanael from doubt to faith that Jesus was indeed the Son of God?

His omniscience, demonstrated by what he said about him, **v48**.

An interesting note by Gill:

"It is said of Nathanael, in the Syriac dictionary {x}; that his mother laid him under a fig tree, when the infants were slain, i.e. at Bethlehem; which, if it could be depended upon, must be to Nathanael a surprising and undeniable proof of the deity of Christ, and of his being the true Messiah; since, at that time, he was an infant of days himself, and was the person Herod was seeking to destroy, as the Messiah, and king of the Jews."

Lenski observes:

“Who would not wish that the evangelist had told us more fully what actually happened under the fig tree when Nathanael was there before he met Philip? Something apparently disproportionate lies in the connection of this simple statement of Jesus and the instantaneous, magnificent confession of Nathanael who but a moment ago was filled with serious doubt; but we know that the disproportion does not really exist...What Jesus refers to is not this custom merely [i.e. of seeking the solitude of the fig tree for prayer - see Gill, srf] but something of a deep personal nature, known only to Nathanael and to his God, that

occurred say a day or two before when he had again sought seclusion under that tree. For the reference of Jesus literally strikes home in Nathanael's heart...Imagination seeks to supply something that would be great enough to justify the great confession that rose to Nathanael's lips...We leave the mystery as John left it to us."

5. Nathanael=Bartholomew?

Compare:

- a. **Mt 10:3**, "Philip and **Bartholomew**..."
- b. **Mk 3:18**, "Philip, **Bartholomew**..."
- c. **Lu 6:14**, "Philip and **Bartholomew**..."
- d. **Jn 1:45**, "Philip found **Nathanael**..."

Note also that Nathanael is mentioned with the seven in **Jn 21:2**, among which were Peter, Thomas, James, and John. Here he is found in the company of the apostles.

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- His **omniscience** - He knew Nathaniel, his character, and significant events in his life *though they had never met*.
- He was **willing to give evidence for faith in Him**. He did not reproach Nathaniel for not believing before he had evidence, and voluntarily provided such evidence. He indicated even further evidence of His approval by God, **vv50-51**.
- His **appreciation for those who do believe when presented with sufficient evidence**.
- His **ability and fairness in judging our character**—he knows us within and acknowledges sincerity of heart.
- He **knew who He was and accepted worship** by men for that.
- Jesus knows and appreciates those who are **genuine in their "faith," and not merely pretenders!**

Sep27 - His disciples: Eyes that See, Ears that Hear

Read **Mt 13:10-23; Mk 4:10-25; Lk 8:9-18; 10:21-24.**

1. Based on the *context*, what did Jesus mean by “see” and “hear” in his statement, “Blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear”? Note the *contrast* in **Mt 13:14,15; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10** and the fact that the parable of the sower is connected in all three accounts. (You may find it helpful to mark the “hear/know/see/understand” family of words.)

Understand with resulting obedient faith. That obedient faith is included in the understanding is clear from **Ac 28:23-28**. Paul was trying to “persuade them” but some would “not believe,” and these are the ones who did *not* “understand,” “perceive,” hear,” or “see.” “Understand” and “hear” is more than hear and understand the language, but includes “seeing” with the mind so as to be “persuaded” and “believe.” The “hearing,” “seeing,” and “understanding” of Mt 13:14,15 leads to people “returning” and being “healed.”

Note that understanding what is meant is critical — the “prophets and righteous men” did not “see” or “hear,” but there is no indication it was because their heart was hard, but rather that it had not been *revealed* what it meant. So, TWO things are necessary to “hear,” “see,” understand”: 1) right heart, **v15**; 2) Necessary information being revealed, **v17**. As an example of the latter, see the Ethiopian, **Ac 8:30-38**.

2. What did Jesus say was the purpose of teaching in parables? (Note the “Why...?” in **Mt 13:10** and the “For” and “Therefore” in **vv12,13**.)

To conceal the mysteries of the kingdom from those unfit by virtue of their disposition toward truth.

3. What did the disciples “see” and “hear” (for which they were blessed)? Note **Mt 13:11,19,24,31,33,38,41,43,45,47,52; Mk 4:11,26,30; Lk 9:60,62...10:1,9**.

The mysteries of the kingdom

4. Jesus asked, “How will you understand all the parables?” (**Mk 4:13**). What is the answer? Base you answer on the context—how were they enabled to know what the parable of the sower meant? Compare also **Mt 13:18,36**.
 - Having a heart that is receptive to the truth of God — contrast “the heart of this people has become dull,” “they have closed their eyes”
 - Through an inspired explanation (see **Mt 13:18,36**)
 - Study (to seek explanation) with honest heart.

5. Explain the warning Jesus gave about listening (**Mk 4:24; Lk 8:18**)—is this warning about *what* you listen to or *how* you listen? Compare **Mt 5:6; Lk 10:21; Jn 7:17; Ac 28:23-28; 2Th 2:10-12**; etc.

He warned to be careful *how* we listen (*Take care what you listen to* - **Mk 4:24**; “Take care *how* you listen” **Lk 8:18**). That is, we are to listen attentively and receptively to God’s word, not with our “eyes closed” and a “dull heart.” See the parable of the sower; **Mt 5:6; Lk 10:21**, “hide these things from the wise and intelligent”; **Jn 7:17; Ac 28:23-28; 2Th 2:10-12**; etc. “Whoever has, to him more shall be given” seems to be a proverbial expression stressing faithful stewardship with what we have been entrusted (cmpr **Mt 25:29**) and in the teaching of our texts referring to “understanding” the mysteries of the kingdom, with the understanding that bears fruit in life.

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- Jesus **expects us to be good stewards of the opportunities we have been given to “hear.”**
- “Behold then the kindness and severity of God” (**Rom 11:22**). Jesus **kindness** seen in revealing the mysteries of the kingdom, but his **severity** in teaching in such a way as to conceal these wonderful truths from those who did not want this kind of a message! God has so designed the truth as to not supernaturally overpower the hardened heart and the stubborn will!
- **Why he used parables.**
- Jesus was **fond of figurative language.**
- He **cared for his disciples as evident by his teaching and warning**, and in so doing preparing them for their mission.

Sep30 - Peter: Confession of the Christ

Read **Mt 16:13-19**; **Mk 8:27-29**; **Lk 9:18-20**.

1. What is the question of the context? (**vv13b,14b**)

Mt: "Who do people say that **the Son of Man** is?" [KJV, NKJV, ASV, "men say"]

Mk: "Who do people say that **I am**?" [KJV, NKJV, ASV, "men say"]

Lk: "Who do people say that **I am**?" [ASV, NAS77, "the multitudes"; NKJV, "the crowds"]

a. What did the people say in answer to this question?

John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets of old had risen from the dead. *Beware of believing on the basis of what "people say"!*

While the people understood some things about the coming Messiah, they did not understand His deity, **Mt 22:42f**; **Mk 2:5-10**; **Jn 5:18**, nor that He was to suffer and die, **Mt 16:21-22**; **Lk 2:26**; **Jn 12:34**.

b. What did Peter say in answer to this question?

Mt: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"; Mk: "You are the Christ"; Lk: "The Christ of God"

Note: Jesus statement, "flesh and blood did not reveal this to you" does *not* mean Peter had not heard and learned from men. In fact, "flesh and blood" *had* revealed it to Peter, **Jn 1:40-41** and this based on other "flesh and blood" testimony, **Jn 1:35-37...40**.

Commentators, besides being blinded by theology as in Clarke (see below), miss the "not..."but" idiom, and concoct all kinds of "explanations" to explain Jesus' statement that he did not learn this from man. Jesus was pointing to the *ultimate* authority for what we believe, just as He did in **Jn 21:25**.

"Is it not evident, from our Lord's observation, that it **requires an express revelation of God in a man's soul**, to give him a saving acquaintance with Jesus Christ; and that not even the miracles of our Lord, wrought before the eyes, will effect this? The **darkness must be removed from the heart by the Holy Spirit**, before a man can become wise unto salvation." Clarke. [bold mine] This is Calvinism.

It is not so, as evidenced by the facts that John the Baptist preached it (**Jn 1:34**), Nathanael confessed it (**Jn 1:49**), the miracles testified to it (**Jn 5:36**), and Peter and others in the boat had already confessed it (**Mt 14:33**).

c. What did Jesus say about the correct answer?

“Upon this rock I will build my church.” The “rock” is the truth about *who Jesus was*—**the question of the context**. This accords with what happened—**Ac 2:36; 3:13f; 4:12; 5:30-31; 5:42; 8:5,12,35,37; 9:5,20; 10:42-43; 17:2-3; 18:5**; etc.

2. Explain the *meaning* of Peter’s confession? Explain the terms he used.

The man Jesus is the “Christ,” the Messianic King of OT prophesy, the divine Son of God.

3. Why is Peter’s confession so important?

It is the foundation of what we, the “church” of Christ are—it is why we exist as this special body, the confession we are pledged to, and the foundation of our hope . If it is not true, our faith is vain, we are still in our sins, and have no hope.

4. Following is evidence that Peter is not the “rock.” Make appropriate notes.

a. The question of the context, **vv13,15**

The question of the context is about the identity of **Jesus**, not Peter.

b. **vv22-23**. Also, **Mt 26:70,72,74; Gal 2:11** - solid foundation?

Peter is sternly reproved by the Lord here (**Mt 16:22,23**) for his failure to understand and support Christ’ mission as the *suffering* Messiah. Later, Peter three times denied even knowing Jesus (**Mt 26:70,72,74**). When Jesus was on trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin, Paul reproved Peter openly for his failure to stand in the face of his Jewish peers (**Gal 2:11**). This hardly paints a picture of Peter as a “rock-solid” foundation!

c. **Mt 18:1-6; Mk 9:33-37; Lk 9:46-48; Lk 22:24-30** - later events. Were the apostles aware Peter was to be the foundation?

The apostles are arguing about who is the greatest, even on the night of his betrayal! If Christ made Peter preeminent, they didn’t get the message. Jesus reproved them for their prideful spirit, and instead of telling them that Peter had been made preeminent, reminded them of their need for *humility* and that their role would be to *serve*. He said to *all* of them that they would “sit on throneS judging...” (**Lk 22:30**) . Earlier he said “twelve thrones,” **Mt 19:28**.

d. **Jn 20:22-24b** - similar statement to ALL apostles

To ALL the apostles Jesus said, “If you forgive the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they have been retained.” This is equivalent to the statement in **Mt 16:19**, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever

you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

e. 1Pt 2:5-7 - golden opportunity, but no mention

Here, presented with a golden opportunity while likening the church to a spiritual house, Peter neither mentioned nor implied he was the foundation, but rather pointed the readers to Christ as the cornerstone.

f. 1Co. 3:11; Eph 2:20 - Jesus = foundation; ALL apostles and prophets in this figure

In **1Co 3:11**, Paul said he laid *Jesus* as the foundation in this analogy. In **Eph 2:20**, Christ is the cornerstone and ALL the apostles as well as the prophets form the foundation in this figure.

g. Ac 10:25,26 - refused worship

When given occasion where Peter could have confirmed men were to give him homage, he *refused* it. Jesus taught to reject exalting titles such as “Father” and that “you are ALL brothers.” **Mt 23:1...8-12**

h. Gal 2:6...8,9 - Paul denies other apostles preeminence (including Peter)

Paul denies others - *including Peter* - are preeminent. Paul argues emphatically that his apostleship was not from men, and *specifically mentions Peter*, **Gal 1:11,12...18**. Paul received his ministry some years after Peter had been given the “keys,” but *Peter was not consulted or informed and in fact had nothing to do with it* (**Ac 9,22,26**). Paul wrote thirteen epistles containing 2,023 verses whereas Peter wrote only two containing 166 verses.

i. Ac 2:36; 3:13f; 4:12; 5:31,42; 8:5,12,35; 9:5,20; etc. - preached Christ, not Peter

The apostles and prophets preached Christ, not Peter.

5. What do we confess when we become Christians? Ac 8:37; Rom 10:9,10

We confess what Peter confessed: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. “Jesus is Lord” (**Rom 10:9,10**) is equivalent.

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- He considered **this knowledge and faith vital and built His church upon it**. To be a “Christian” and in the body of the saved, one *must* know and believe what Peter confessed! **Jn 14:6; 8:24; Mk 16:15,16**.
- He says people are **blessed “because” it is ultimately Heaven’s testimony** about who He is! (“not...but”)
- He **challenges His disciples to draw from what they know and confess from their own faith** who He is. It is not a matter of, “Here, I’ll tell you what to say” and then men repeat the formula. Emphasizes the importance of us weighing the evidence. **Jn 20:30,31**. Compare **Rom 10:8-10...17**.
- He does ***not* approve of any ideas about who He is** as long as one professes some kind of faith in Jesus.
- He **entrusted the apostles with the authority** of being the King’s ambassadors and teaching things that are vital to one’s relationship to the King, **v19**. See **Ac 2:42**. This impacts how one views the NT letters, e.g., the 13 letters by Paul.
- A **“prophet”** (and thus, “The Prophet”) —stated *before the event* that death (“gates of Hades”) would not keep Him from building his church! He wanted men to know and have confidence in His power over death. See **Rev 1:18**.

Oct4 - Canaanite Woman: “Your Faith is Great”

Read **Mt 15:21-28**; **Mk 7:24-30**

1. What is the significance of a “Canaanite” woman in Matthew’s gospel? Compare **Mk 7:26**. This fact highlights Jesus’ commendation of her.

Matthew written for Jews. This woman a “Gentile” (**Mk 7:26**) of Canaan.

2. What did the *nature* of her request indicate that she believed about Jesus?

She called him “Son of David” (**Mt 15:22**), indicating her belief he was the Messiah.

3. What did her *persistence* in her request indicate she believed about Jesus?

Jesus not only had *power* to heal her daughter, but *compassion*. Although she “cried out” and Jesus “did not answer her a word,” the disciples said she “keeps shouting at us” (**Mt 15:23**) and Mark says she “kept asking” (**Mk 7:26**) Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

4. What did the *circumstances* of her request (public? private?) indicate about her faith?

Although Jesus “withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon” (**Mt 15:21**) and “entered a house” seeking privacy (“wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice” (**Mk 7:24**), she sought him out and kept crying out, or shouting (**Mt 15:22,23**), and asking (**Mk 7:26**) Jesus to heal her daughter. An unashamed faith!

5. What was the *result* of her prayer of faith and what did it indicate about who Jesus was?

Her daughter was healed “at once” (**Mt 15:28**) when Jesus spoke the word. He told her, “the demon has gone out of your daughter” and when she returned she found her daughter lying on the bed, “the demon having left” (**Mk 7:29,30**).

Further confirmation of His Deity and Messiahship. See **4:23...9:35**. Demonstrated his power over the spirit world, and that distance meant nothing. Shows the power of His word—he spoke and it was done. Compare Gen 1!

6. Compare our faith in Jesus as exemplified by our attitude toward Him and approach to Him in prayer—how does our faith compare with the Canaanite woman?

Do we have faith in His love and compassion *to ask*? Note: “it shall be done for you as you wish” (Mt 15:28). Do we have the faith to “*keep asking*” (Mk 7:26). Do we believe that even though we seem as nothing (“even the dogs...”), *He cares for us*? Do we trust in his *power* to do whatever He chooses?

7. Contrast Jesus’ miracle with so-called miracle workers today—note some differences.

- Did not have to be where the demon possessed girl was. Distance no factor. No need for “laying on hands” and other demonstrative acts.
- No stage, props, helpers.
- No contribution taken.
- Healing complete and instantaneous.
- No fanfare - no prep to get crowd excited, no screams and shrills as the demon departed.
- No faith required on the part on the girl that was healed.

8. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- His **love** and **compassion**, *even for those who are not of his race and even despised by his people*. While he did not deny racial distinction and responsibilities connected with that (“sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”), that in no way reflected his lack of esteem and love for all men. Note also that she was a *woman*.
- **Not afraid to oppose even his own disciples**. *Never intimidated by anyone*. Adds to his credibility.
- Further *objective evidence* that He is the Messiah, the Divine Son of God. His **power over the spirit world** (and thus over Satan), his **omniscience** (he knew all about the woman, where her daughter was), his **omnipresence** (distance was no hindrance to his knowledge or power) are reflected.
- He **sought “get away” times**...for rest and refreshment?
- Again we see the **value he put on one’s faith** in Him.

Oct7 - Samaritan: “Proved to a Neighbor” (Neil McLeroy)

Read Lk 10:25-37

(see Neal’s questions in class copy)

1. The lawyer asked two questions ...
 - a. What is the first one?
 - b. What is the second one?
2. The answers to the lawyer’s two questions ...
 - a. What is the answer to the first one?
 - b. What is the answer to the second one?

Note: people mistakenly associate the answer to the *second* question and its implied responsibility as the answer to the *first* question.

3. Jesus asked three questions ...
 - a. What is the first one?
 - b. What is the second one?
 - c. What is the third one?

"proved to be a neighbor"

KJV, NKJV, "was a neighbor"

NET, "became a neighbor"

"proved to be" = *ginomai*

i.e., *demonstrated* the love of neighbor, **v27**

Jesus' answer goes *beyond* the question of "Who" (**v29**) to graphically demonstrating what love of neighbor demands.

4. Jesus’ questions were not to seek information, but to cause the lawyer to focus on his own responsibility.
 - a. What responsibility is implied in the first question?
 - b. What responsibility is implied in the second question?
 - c. What responsibility is implied in the third question?

5. *Why* did the lawyer ask his first question?
6. *Why* did the lawyer ask his second question? Compare **Rom 2:15**.
7. What is the answer to the lawyer's second question?
8. How did Jews and Samaritans view one another? **Lk 9:52,53; Jn 4:9; 8:48**

In the Apocrypha, in the book of Ecclesiasticus (or, sometimes called, Sirach, c. 175-200 BC) 50:25,26: "There be two manner of nations which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation: Those who live in Seir, and the Philistines, and the foolish people that live in Shechem."

"The Samaritans are said to have done everything in their power to annoy the Jews. They would refuse hospitality to pilgrims on their road to Jerusalem, as in our Lord's case. They would even waylay them in their journey (Joseph. Ant. xx. 6, 1); and many were compelled through fear to take the longer route by the east of Jordan. Certain Samaritans were said to have once penetrated into the Temple of Jerusalem, and to have defiled it by scattering dead men's bones on the sacred pavement (Ant. xviii. 2, 2). We are told too of a strange piece of mockery which must have been especially resented. It was the custom of the Jews to communicate to their brethren still in Babylon the exact day and hour of the rising of the paschal moon, by beacon-fires commencing from Mount Olivet, and flashing forward from hill to hill until they were mirrored in the Euphrates. So the Greek poet represents Agamemnon as conveying the news of Troy's capture to the anxious watchers at Mycenae. Those who "sat by the waters of Babylon" looked for this signal with much interest. It enabled them to share in the devotions of those who were in their father-land, and it proved to them that they were not forgotten. The Samaritans thought scorn of these feelings, and would not unfrequently deceive and disappoint them, by kindling a rival flame and perplexing the watchers on the mountains. {d} Their own temple on Gerizim they considered to be much superior to that at Jerusalem." Smith's Dict.

9. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

Oct11 - A Woman: “She has Done What She Could” (Craig Moore)

Read **Mt 26:6-13**, **Mk 14:3-9**; **Jn 12:2-8**.

1. Do Matthew and Mark record the same incident as **John 12**? We will discuss in class. Consider the (a) similarities, (b) differences.

Similarities

- Same **town** - Bethany
- Same **week** - last
- Same **basic story**
- Same **perfume** - kind, amount, cost
- Same **objection from disciples**
- Same **response from Jesus**

Differences

- Chronological statements
- Perfume on head - Mt & Mk; on feet - Jn
- John records names; Mt & Mk do not

See notes in Harmony of the Gospels, last week

2. On the chronological differences (see verses just preceding the story in all three accounts), compare in Matthew and Mark the verses just preceding and just following the story ... does this explain?

Chon. note:

- If follow Matthew (**Mt 26:2,6**) and Mark (**Mk 14:1,3**), then this feast later in the week - Tue. even. (AT Robertson, *Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 152; Davies, p. 184)
 - FF Gos. follows John - see **Jn 12:1** and **12:12** (“next day” = triumphal entry). Hendriksen agrees with FF Gos. (John, p. 173).
-
- Mt. & Mk. do **not state a chronological time** for the supper they record. They simply note that it happened while Jesus was in Bethany.
 - Mt. & Mk. sometimes **write topically**, rather than chronologically.
 - **Good reason can be seen in Mt. & Mk. putting their accounts here** if they intended to give the background of Judas’ betrayal of the Lord for money, **Mt 26:14-16**; **Mk 14:10-11**. “Then” in **Mt 26:14** and **Mk 14:10** would resume the topic they introduced earlier, i.e. how the chief priests and elders could seize Jesus without a riot, **Mt 26:3-5**; **Mk 14:1-2**, with the intervening story of the supper being a parenthetical explanation of the background to Judas’ conduct.

3. How “costly” was the perfume (or “ointment,” or “oil”) the woman poured on Jesus? How many days of a laborer’s wage would this represent? Compare **Mt 20:2**.

300 denarii - approximately day laborer’s wages for a year, **Mt 20:2**

“alabaster vial” (“box,” “jar,” “cruse,” “flask” - diff. versions)

“nard” - imported from India...“very costly”

“The essence of this ointment was derived from pure *nard*, which is an aromatic herb grown in the high pasture-land of the Himalayas, between Tibet and India. In view of the fact that it had to be procured in a region so remote, and carried on camel-back through miles and miles of mountain-passes, it was very high-priced. Note, moreover, that *this* nard was no substitute. On the contrary, it was the *genuine* article. The ointment was extracted from *pure* nard. Moreover, the Synoptics point out that this ointment was in an alabaster jar; i.e., in a jar of white (or perhaps delicately tinted) fine-grained gypsum.” Hendriksen

4. What did this woman seem to understand that the male disciples did not? Note the stated purpose of what she did and compare **Mt 16:21-22; 26:39-44; Jn 18:10-11**. This is real focus of this incident.

The real POINT of this incident: “A good deed...beforehand for the burial...wherever gospel preached” . - A SUFFERING MESSIAH - not understood before his death, nor after his death, and significance of it still not appreciated.

- Before his death - **Mt 16:21-22; Mk 9:9-10, 31-32; Lk. 9:46, 54-56; 18:31-34; 22:35-38; Mt 26:36-46; Jn 18:11**
- After his death - **Jn 20:11; Ac 2:23; 3:13; 4:10; 5:30-31; 26:22-23; 1Co 1:23-24**
- Today - **Mt 16:24-26; Jn 6:26**; social gospel

Note: **Women sometimes more spiritually perceptive than men!** “Weaker vessel”?... mentally or spiritually...? *Neither*. In fact that (1Pt 3:7) text doesn’t say she weaker at all. But, point here, **this women understood and believed what few of her day did! AND she was not ashamed** to give evidence of her faith in the face of unbelief! Not only did she evidence strong perception, but strong faith!

5. What do we learn about Mary from **Lk 10:38-42**? Might this have any bearing on why she did what she did in the incident we are studying?

Maybe if we spent more time “seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to the His word” we would have better appreciation for and ability to walk in the way of the cross!

6. What did Jesus commend this woman for?

He said she did a “good deed” (**Mt 26:10**) in “doing what she could” (**Mk 14:8**) to “prepare for His burial” (**Mt 26:12**) by “anointing His body” (**Mk 14:8**).

Consider **some things she could NOT do...**

- Cause her fellow disciples to understand
- Stop the Jews from having him arrested
- Stop the Jews from giving an unfair trial. Trial a mockery. Already decided to kill him.
- Could not stop Pilate from sentencing him. His wife tried...but he would not listen to his wife.
 - >>>Maybe men ought to listen to their wives sometimes. And if wife says, “Have everything to do with that just man” - that’s good advice!
- Could not stop those who spit on and slapped Jesus.
- Could not stop the soldiers from scourging Jesus.
- Could not stop the soldiers from nailing him to the cross.
- Could not stop the people passing by from mocking him.
- Could not stop Jesus from dying. Ever felt helpless when a loved one dying...?

But, Jesus commended her because *she did what she could!* (**Mk 14:8**) At this moment, under these circumstances, she availed herself of the opportunity to do what she could to honor Christ and serve the Master.

7. Contrast the concepts and attitudes of the disciples reflected in the incident recorded in **Mt 20:20-28** with this woman’s concepts and attitude.

Mary’s interest was in “doing what she could” to serve and honor Jesus. By contrast their interest is in self and self exaltation, and the Lord takes the occasion to teach them a lesson on serving, using Himself and his mission to die as a ransom for man as the supreme example. The idea of the Lord dying is foreign to their thinking, much less that they would be called on to give themselves, and possibly their lives, in service of others.

8. What principle relative to serving God is reflected in the following: **Mt 25:14-30; 2Co 8:12; Php 4:10?**

God expects to “do what we can”—we will be held accountable “according to our own ability” (**Mt 25:15**) and opportunity (**Php 4:10**). We are not expected to do more than we can (**2Co 8:12**).

9. Other examples of people who did what they could. Note what they did.

- Abraham - **Gen 18:1ff...Heb 13:2**
- Shunammite woman - **2Ki 4:8-10**
- David - **1Ch 28:2-3...29:2**
- Lois and Eunice - **2Tim 1:5; 3:14**

For thought and discussion: *What can YOU do?*

- Abraham and visitors - **Gen 18:1ff...Heb 13:2** (hospitality...? meal..? **Only friends?**)
- Shunammite woman and husband - **2Ki 4:8-10** (feed preacher in meeting...?)
- David and temple - **1Ch 28:2-3...29:2** (give for work of the church...?) (limited income...? Poor widow and two coins - **Lk 21:1-4**)
- Lois & Eunice...Timothy - **2Tim 1:5; 3:14**. Cmpr **Josh 24:15** (teach children!)

Proper to commend others at times. Jesus criticized when needed - here, in fact, he told them to “let her alone.” But, he also commended. So did Paul. So should we. Some considerations for commendation ...

- Attend assemblies. Encouraging. **Heb 10:24-25**
 - Sometimes ill, pain.
 - Sometimes difficulty due to inability to hear well.
 - Sometimes hear little due to children (mothers, and sometimes fathers). You may be criticized—even by fellow disciples!
May not always get a whole lot, may not teach or preach, but you have done what you could!
- Teachers.
For years some have taught. Sometimes subject to criticism (parents, those who don’t teach.) But you taught and kept on teaching. Again, may not teach all ages, auditorium, from pulpit - but, you did what you could! How much have we who grew up being taught by faithful teachers been impacted by their efforts!
- Serve God alone.
No mate to help—in fact may discourage. But you serve. You may be limited. You may not be able to do all you would like to. You may not be able to do what others do. But, you do what you can. Keep it up! Won’t it be wonderful to hear Jesus say, “They did what they could.” Eunice...Timothy, **Ac 16:1; 2Tim 1:5; 3:14**
- Good works.
Ac. 9:39, Dorcas. May not know who they are. Do not “sound a trumpet before them.” But, the Lord knows, for he knows those who “do what they can”!

Question: Are we doing what we can...?? Sun pm, Wed pm, ladies class...? Taking people to doctor ... Taking food to the sick ... Calling those who are ill or discouraged ... Visiting and sitting with those in hospital ... Writing cards ... LS preparation

10. How was this woman treated for doing this good deed?

Criticized! **Mt 26:8-10; Mk 14:4-6; Lk 12:4-7**

- We may be criticized when do what we can. May even be a disciple who will criticize you! Remember the Lord’s response: “Let her alone!...She has done a good deed to me.”
- Remember: They criticized Jesus! He did everything right. But, he died for his critics!
- Listen if criticism valid. But, don’t worry about unfounded criticism. When you try to do the right thing, you will be criticized.

11. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- He **commended people for good deeds**. Do we?
- He **defended people who were unjustly criticized**. Do we?
- He did **not allow closeness of friends and coworkers (apostles) to overlook their errors**— He judged righteous judgment.
- He **knew he was going to die** and that it was imminent. *He did not try to avoid it.*
- **Good deeds out of a good heart** were *more important to Him than things*.
- He **loved men and could see their potential** *though they manifested disappointing weaknesses in character and conduct*, i.e., the apostles. Note **Jn 13:1**. See the lesson he taught them, **Jn 13:2-17**, and the humble service they rendered as recorded in Acts.
- He did **not let wicked, ungodly hypocrites, even among His disciples, turn Him from His mission** (Jn 12:4-6). *Nor should we.*

Oct14 - Lazarus: “Carried Away...to Abraham’s bosom” (Doug B.)

Read **Lk 16:19-31**

(see Doug’s questions in class copy)

1. Whether this is a parable or an actual incident with real people, it teaches *truth* about man’s state after death.
 - a. Etymology of “parable”: Greek, *parabolē* (παροβολή), a placing beside, from *para* (παρα), beside + *ballein* (βαλλειν), to throw, thus *to throw down beside*.
 - b. In Biblical parables, events from every day life “thrown down beside” a spiritual truth in order, by comparison, to teach that truth. They have been called, “An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”
 - c. In parables in the New Testament, even if the events narrated are fictional, they were always *possible*. See, e.g., **Mt 13:3,24,33,44,45,47**. They were events taken from everyday life. They were not like *fables*, which relate events that are *impossible*, e.g., trees talking, etc., as In **Jud 9:7-15**.
2. What is the difference in the two main characters in this story
 - a. On earth - financially, physically, socially?
 - b. After death?
3. Read **vv1-18**, and note especially **v14**.
 - a. Is wealth a sign of ungodliness? How do you know?
 - b. Can wealth indicate ungodliness? Explain. See **Lk 12:13-21**.
 - c. Can one’s possession of and attitude toward wealth affect godliness? Note the context here. See **Mk 10:17-22; 1Tim 6:6-10**.
 - d. What is expected of those who have means relative to those who are poor and in need? **Lk 10:25-37; 1Tim 6:17-19; Jam 5:1-6**
4. God, poverty, and righteousness...
 - a. Is poverty a sign of godliness? How do you know?
 - b. Can poverty affect godliness? Explain. See **Pro 28:3; 30:7-9**. Consider the philosophy of Job and his friends.
 - c. What did Jesus commendation of Lazarus imply about him? Compare Jesus further comments in **vv29-31**.
5. How could the rich man’s brothers on earth listen to Moses and the prophets (**vv29,31**) since they had been dead for centuries?
6. Compare the rich man’s thinking about what will bring about repentance
 - a. in contrast to what Jesus said

- b. in comparison to how people think today about what moves men.
7. What do you learn about Jesus from this story?

Oct18 - Children: Spirit of Humility (Jeff Bogs)

Read **Mt 18:1-6; Mk 9:33-37; Lk 9:46-48**

(see Jeff's questions in class copy)

1. What is the background to Jesus' teaching in **Mt 18:1-6**?

“Who then is greatest” NASB

KJV, ESV, omit "then." But it represents ἄρα G686, "then." ASV, NKJV have it.

"When placed after pronouns and interrogative particles, it refers to a preceding assertion or fact, or even to something existing only in the mind: τίς ἄρα *who then?* Mat 18:1" TH

See **Mk 9:33-37; Lk 9:46-48**. This background shows the attitude of the apostles and is important to the understanding of what is said here.

“Except you are converted and become like children” applies to the apostles!

2. What is the characteristic of children Jesus is focusing on?

- a. This text is sometimes used to prove the innocence of children, but that is not the context.

The *context* is not innocence, but *humility*, "Whoever then **humbles himself** as this child..." **Mt 18:4**.

If innocence, then one must be innocent to enter the kingdom!

- b. While this text does prove children are not totally depraved, that is not the focus of the text.

3. What two ways does Jesus emphasize this attitude and the importance of receiving in this attitude “one such child in My name” (**vv5,6**)?

1 - To receive one “in His name” reflects attitude toward Christ. Cmpr **Mt 25:40,45; Mt 10:40-42; 3Jn 6-8**.

2 - If cause one to stumble, better to have millstone hung around neck and drowned in the far out open deep sea!

“whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me **to stumble**” NASB

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me **to sin**” NKJV

“whoso shall **offend** ...” KJV

“offend”

“: to cause (a person or group) to **feel hurt, angry, or upset** by something said or done

“: to be **unpleasant to** (someone or something)

“: to do wrong : to be **against what people believe is acceptable or proper**

“2a : to **cause difficulty, discomfort, or injury** <took off his shoe and removed the *offending* pebble>

“2b : to **cause dislike, anger, or vexation** <thoughtless words that *offend* needlessly>

“2 **obsolete** : to cause to sin or fall

“3 : to cause to feel vexation or resentment usually by violation of what is proper or fitting
<was *offended* by their language>

“offend need not imply an intentional hurting but it **may indicate merely a violation of the victim's sense of what is proper or fitting** <hoped that my remarks had not *offended* her>.” <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/offend>> [bold mine]

σκανδαλίζω *skandalizō* G4624

“*cause to be caught or to fall, i.e. cause to sin*” Gingrich

“properly, *to put a stumbling-block or impediment in the way, upon which another may trip and fall; to be a stumbling-block; in the N. T. always metaphorically... a. to entice to sin...*” TH

“offend” here does NOT mean ...

- “to cause difficulty” - **Mt 21:23-27**
- “to cause discomfort” - **Ac 24:25**
- “to cause dislike, anger, or vexation” - **Ac 7:51-54**

DOES MEAN “to cause to sin or fall” (obsolete meaning in Eng.) - “to stumble” NASB; “to sin” NKJV

Jesus came to save the lost, **v11**. Woe to the man who in his pride causes one of the “little ones” who believe in Him to “stumble” and lose his soul!

4. While the discussion begins with Jesus setting a child before them, what does he mean by “little ones” in **vv6ff**?

Jesus has moved from a “child” physically, **Mt 18:2-4**, to a “child” *spiritually*, referred to as “little ones who believe.” The context clearly shows he has in mind a believer, one who was lost that He came to save, and that we should be interested in saving, **Mt 18:10-18**.

5. The importance of humility in sharing in the kingdom of Christ is found throughout the scriptures, e.g. **Mt 5:3,4; Jn 5:43,44; 12:42,43; Php 2:1-11**. Observe how humility (or the lack of it) affects our attitude toward Christ and toward others.

“unless you are converted”

- "you" - includes the apostles!
- “converted” - ASV, ESV, "turn"; NET, "turn around"; NIV, NRSV, "change"
- Not “converted” in the sense of being saved then enter the kingdom.
- Rather, “reverse your present trend of thought” Wuest
- “The picture is that of turning round in a road and facing the other way.” Vincent WS
- “The second aorist passive is used reflexively...’turn yourselves,’ ...” Lenski
- Compare **Jam 5:19**.
- The word is a word referring generally to a change (i.e. **Mt 7:6; Mt 16:23; Lk 7:9; Ac 7:39; Ac 7:42; Ac 13:46; Rev 11:6**). What that change is will be determined by its use.

Note: Would have been opportune time to point out the primacy of Peter!

If the kingdom already established as some teach, would not these men, the apostles, already have been in it? "you will not enter the kingdom..."

6. Are we responsible for the consequences of our actions if due to our pride and thoughtlessness about the impact they may have on others? Contrast with Jesus’ teaching the attitude: “I don’t care; it’s their problem.” Compare also **Ex 21:22-36**. For discussion: Consider what application this would this have to our dress, entertainment, work habits, and other areas of life in which we impact others.
7. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?
- His **omniscience** — He knows what we are *thinking* and *talking about* even when He is not with us! Just as He knew what they were discussing “on the way” (**Mk 9:33; Lk 9:46,47**), so he knows what we say “on the way” *to* and *from* the church building!
 - His **love and compassion for those who may be less grounded in the faith**, “little ones who believe in me.” He came to seek and save the lost, **v11**, and that includes the “little ones,” **v14**. Lesson for elders, preachers, mature Christians.
 - Again see his **fondness for figures of speech** — “as this child” (simile) ... “one such child” (child *spiritually*)... “little ones” (*spiritually*).
 - His **patience** — His apostles *still do not understand the nature of his kingdom* (discussing who would be greatest in the kingdom). Besides their *ignorance*, they manifest a *pride* they must divest themselves of. But, Jesus did not give up on them...he kept trying to teach them

(note **Mk 9:35**, “He called the twelve and said to them.”)... And, look at the result! Lesson for us in dealing with others. Lesson for us as teachers.

- He **expects His disciples to *change*** - “unless you are converted”

Oct21 - Thyatira: “Your Deeds ... are Greater than at the First” (Craig O.)

NIV, “you are now doing more than you did at first”

Read **Rev 2:18-29**

1. Thyatira was a commercial center and many trade guilds were there (compare unions today). Compare **Ac 16:14; 19:24,25**. If these guilds were idolatrous and immoral, and could wield powerful influence in whether one had a job ...

Thyatira was located northeast of Ephesus along the trade route between Sardis and Pergamum. Especially known for textiles and dyes (purple fine clothes). Compare **Ac 16:14**, “Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics”

Note the phrases the Holy Spirit uses to address the Christians in this city

- **v18** “The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze;”
- **v27** And he (those that overcome) shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces...”

Ac 19:24,25

- Note the Influence artisans had on society
- Trade guilds no doubt gained much profit from the idolatry business and were intertwined in it.

“Because of its location on a main line of communication and trade Thyatira developed into a thriving and prosperous manufacturing and marketing center. Inscriptions show it was home to numerous trade guilds including coppersmiths, tanners, dyers, leatherworkers, woolworkers and linenworkers. More guilds were found in Thyatira than any other contemporary city in the Roman province of Asia. Every guild owned property in its own name, made contracts and wielded wide influence in the city's political, economic, social and religious life. **Guild membership was compulsory for anyone pursuing a trade. Each provided specific benefits and took actions to protect its interests. Each guild had a patron deity, and all proceedings and feasts commenced with paying homage to that god or goddess. The guilds held banquets, probably in temples, which included sexual orgies and wild feasts at which food offered to idols was served.** This posed a dilemma for the shopkeepers and craftsmen among the city's Christian community who risked loss of income for refusing to join guilds or for not taking part in their rituals.”

- a. How might this impact their perseverance in faithful, loving service?
 - Suffering and tribulation for Christ
 - Difficulties in making a living for the family

- Consider the treatment and accusations against Paul in **Ac 19**.
Ac 19:26-27. They dragged along Paul's companions into a mob riot scene.
- Struggles with a society who thrives on idolatry and divination
Ac 16:16-24. Paul in Philippi, after conversion of Lydia, helped cleanse a woman of an evil spirit, and because of the idolatry profit loss by her owners – Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown in prison. **1Th 1:8-2:2; 2:13-15**

b. How could this encourage toleration of Jezebel and her immorality and idolatry?

- Gentiles who converted from this way of life – **1Co 6:1, 8-11, 15, 19**
- Idolatry and Fornication were so wide spread that 1st century churches were dealing with it among themselves – **1Co 5:1-2, 11-13** Should have removed that individual
- Jezebel mentioned by name, but could have undue influence on weak Christians.

2. *Whatever* it was they had to endure (“perseverance” NASB; “patience” NKJV; “patient endurance” ESV), Jesus commends them for what?

v19 “I know your deeds, and your love, and faith and service and perseverance, and your **deeds of late are greater than at first.**”

a. Contrast Sardis, **3:1-3**, and Laodicea, **3:14-19**.

- Jesus says to Sardis “**(3:1)** I know your deeds... (2) wake up and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of my God”
- Jesus says to Laodicea “**(3:15)** I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot.” A lack of true trust and obedience in God. Stale in works.

b. In the judgment scene of **Mt 25:14-30**, what are two men commended for and one man condemned for?

Parable of the talents

- Two men commended for using their ability to increase
- One man condemned for not working and using his ability

- c. If one is not “diligent” and “increasing,” how does Peter describe him, **1Pt 3:9**? (See **vv5-11**.)

v9 “He who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins”

vv5-7, note **v8** and **v10**

“(8) For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ”

“(10) be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing You”

Heb 5:11-6:1

“(1) Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God”

Without GROWTH, our faith grows dim and is more easily thwarted by Satan’s attempts to ruin it.

3. While we learn something about our Lord by seeing what he *commends*, we also learn something about Him by seeing what he *reproves*.

- a. What did He sternly express displeasure about relative to Jezebel and her followers? **vv20-23**

- Calls herself a prophetess (and is not acting on behalf of God)
- Teaching and leading God’s bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. Remember how we read during Jeff’s class on humility, **Mt 18:6** “whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea”

The apostles and NT writers OFTEN warned against the dangers of the society they lived in and the idolatry that was practiced. Paul even made it a point to encourage brethren not to eat meat sacrificed to idols, if it could be construed as idolatry or cause someone to stumble

- She does not want to repent of her immorality

Compare 2 Pet. 1:21-2:3... note vs 9-10 “(9) the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgement, (10) and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties.”

Rom 1:21-25, 32

- For Jezebel, and those who continued to follow her, the Lord had prepared judgement.
Rev 3:21-23

b. What did He have “against” the church in Thyatira? **v20**

- They tolerated Jezebel, some even followed after her sins.

As we read in **1Co 5:2**, they should have removed them from their midst and no longer associated with those that would not repent.

- Some were conforming to the idolatrous teachings

4. What exhortation did He give the church in Thyatira? **vv25,26,29**

- **v24** “what you have, hold fast until I come”
- Amidst all the struggles surrounding them, Jesus exhorts them to persevere and grow. **v25** “He who overcomes, and who keeps My deeds until the end...” would receive the blessings from God – eternal life in heaven.

5. After His graphic description of Himself (**v18**), Jesus begins this letter with, “I know...” (**v19**). He know all about them, both the *good* and the *bad*. He will be the Judge! **vv26-28; 2Co 5:10-11**. Are we comfortable with what he knows about us?

2Co 5:10-11

Note: “(11) hope... that we are made manifest also in you consciences”

Are we comfortable with what he knows about us?

If we find ourselves entangled, what do we do? Or if we are not growing?

Jam 1:21-25

Heb 10:22-24 “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who is promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds”

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this?

- He knows our circumstances and our struggles, our needs and our tribulations.
Matt 6:31-33 “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ (32) For the Gentiles eagerly seek for all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things (33) But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you”.
- He knows our good deeds – “your love and faith and service and perseverance” v.19
- He knows our bad deeds, and our hearts

- He is concerned for his own that would be carried away by ungodliness
- He expects us to not tolerate sin or those that don't seek repentance, but to remove them from our midst
- He gives everyone an opportunity to repent
- Jezebel was given chances, but her heart didn't want to repent.
2 Pet 3:9 "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
- He is the judge and will bring every deed into account, dealing out eternal condemnation to those who do not repent and remain faithful until the end
- Jesus EXPECTS his disciples to grow, in knowledge, in faith, and in good deeds "your deeds of late are greater than at first" v.19
- Jesus rewards those that persevere and are faithful subjects, those that listen, and obey v.29
"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches"

Oct25 - Repentant Thief: “You Shall be with Me in Paradise”

Read Lk 23:39-43; Mt 27:38,44; Mk 15:27,28

1. The two robbers

a. What is the difference in them?

Both were guilty (Lk 23:40,41). One was penitent; one was not. One exhibited faith in Jesus; one did not.

Yes, this is true repentance on his “death-bed (cross)”!

b. What is remarkable about the penitent thief’s faith as evidenced in his request? Consider the circumstances they are in.

Note their present condition—mangled, bleeding, nailed to cross to die. Yet, “Remember me when you come in your kingdom.” *He expected Jesus to be raised and be the King and he, too, would be able to share in His rule!*

See Lk 23:39, “Are you not the Christ?” Also, there was the inscription above him, “This is the King of the Jews” Lk 23:38. And, there were the charges of the onlookers, “if this is the Christ, the Chosen One...if You are the King of the Jews... (Lk 23:35,37), “if you are the Son of God ...” (Mt 27:40), “Let this Christ, the King of Israel ...” (Mk 15:32).

Also, the crowd was taunting him, challenging to prove his claims: “...save yourself... come down from the cross, and we will believe Him” (Mt 27:40,42 - and note Mt 27:44 indicates the other thief [maybe both if one changed his mind] threw these things at him).

Does his belief in resurrection and a Messianic King who would rise from the dead indicate he is a Jew? Where did he learn this? We do not know. Was he once devoted and had fallen away from the Jewish faith? We don’t know. What we know is his remarkable faith in seemingly impossible circumstances and contrary to his counterpart and the multitude!

2. Was Jesus granting the repentant thief salvation?

Yes, “Today you shall be with me in Paradise.”

Paradise - *paradeisos*

“an Oriental word, first used by the historian Xenophon [ZEN o fun, 434?-?355 BC, srf], denoting the parks of Persian kings and nobles. It is of Persian origin...whence it passed into Greek...to the oriental mind it expressed the sum total of blessedness...” VN. Used in LXX of gardens and parks, including the garden of Eden, Gen 2:8.

“1. among the Persians *a grand enclosure or preserve, hunting ground, park*, shady and well watered, in which wild animals were kept for the hunt; it was enclosed by walls and furnished with towers for the hunters...2. univ. *a garden, pleasure-ground*” TH

Origin of the English word “paradise” -“Middle English paradis from Old French from Late Latin paradhsus from Greek paradeisos *garden, enclosed park, paradise* from Avestan pairi-daTza- *enclosure, park* pairi- around” - AHD09.

Only three occurrences in NT:

Lk 23:43 Where Jesus went immediately (“Today”) after death, and where those he saves are promised to be with Him (“you shall be with Me”). Jesus says who goes there.

2Co 12:4 Either in or equivalent with the “third heaven” (v. 2) where men may be either in or out of the body (v. 3) and may hear intelligible words (v. 4). On “third heaven,” compare “heaven of heavens” (KJV) or “highest heaven” (NASB) in Dt. 10:14; 1 Ki. 8:27; Psa. 148:4.

Rev 2:7 The “tree of life” is in it and those who “overcome” shall granted entrance into it.

3. If Jesus saved the thief without baptism, does that mean He doesn't require baptism to be saved today? Consider ...

a. Do we know the thief was not baptized? **Mt 3:5,6; Jn 4:1**

b. Was the New Covenant Jesus ratified by His blood in effect yet? **Heb 7:12; 9:16,17; 10:9,10**

Cmpr: Law requiring seat belts. If stopped by officer one month before law went into effect, no penalty.

c. After dying and rising from the dead, what did Jesus instruct His apostles to teach the world about what was required in order to be saved in New Covenant? **Mt 28:18-19; Mk 16:15,16**

d. When believers under the New Covenant asked these apostles what they needed to do to be saved, what were they told? **Ac 2:36-38**

e. What did the man sent by Jesus to a penitent believer under the New Covenant tell him he had to do to wash his sins away? **Ac 22:16**

f. The penitent thief was saved by grace; so were others, **Eph 2:8,9**. Did salvation by grace nullify their need to be baptized to be saved? Cases in point ...

Ephesians: **Ac 19:1-5; Eph 5:26**; Ethiopian: **Ac 8:35-39**; Saul: **Ac 22:9-16**; Philippians: **Ac 16:14,15; 16:31-33**; Corinthians: **Ac 18:8**; Romans: **Rom 5:1,2; 6:3,4**.

- g. The thief was not a *pattern* for forgiveness—neither under the New (scriptures above) nor under the Old Covenant (**Lev 6:1-7**). What is our responsibility? **Mk 4:9; 2Tim 4:2**

If a Jew (believed in Jesus as the Messianic King), he did not comply with the terms of forgiveness for Jews under the Old Covenant, **Lev 6:1-7**. We saw above what the term of forgiveness are under the New Covenant. Jesus, the Divine Judge has the authority to forgive whom he will—we do not. As the Lawgiver, he has the authority to state the terms of forgiveness—we do not. If He chooses to make an exception to His law, that's His prerogative (**2Ch 30:18**)—not ours. What is our responsibility? **Mk 4:9; 2Tim 4:2**

4. Should the salvation of the thief be an encouragement to death-bed repentance? Consider ...

- a. What could happen unexpectedly? **Lk 12:20; Jam 4:13-15**

May die suddenly and without warning!

- b. What could change that would prevent repentance? **Eph 4:18**

Heart becomes callous and unreceptive to the gospel. The attitude of heart that does not want to serve God now may signal that very hardness that effectively forever shuts the door to repentance!

- c. God is not mocked! As we have learned, Jesus knows the heart!

Those who plan to spend their life in sin and then “sneak under the wire” at the end may be in for an unwelcome surprise—an eternal surprise!

5. What do you learn about Jesus from this?

- Jesus **desires all men to be saved**, regardless of their past, their failures, their shame.
- Jesus is the **Divine Judge**—He can forgive sins on His terms.
- Jesus **extends his grace conditionally**, in this case to a penitent, believing person, *not* to everyone, i.e. the other robber.
- The **identity of Jesus and His power is not affected by the sneers and unbelief of men** (the crowd, the other robber).
- Jesus **omniscience enables him to know individual men even among a crowd** (the penitent thief among the jeering crowd and the other robber)! He knows *you* and He knows *me*, regardless of family, friends, the world. Both a warning and a comfort.
- His **incomprehensible love**—He could have come down from the cross and avoided the shame and suffering, but he “drank the cup” so we could live!

Oct28 - Moses: "He Wrote about Me"

Read **Jn 5:45-47**

1. When did Moses live? What books did he write?

c. 1500 BC. Wrote Genesis-Deuteronomy

2. By saying Moses "wrote about me," what is He implying about Moses?

That Moses was a prophet. **2Pt 1:20,21; 1Pt 1:10-12**

Moses prophecies confirmed his claims to be the Messiah, **Jn 5:45,46**

"For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me"

What demonstrated they did not believe Moses as he wrote about the Christ?

Interestingly, Jesus told the two men on the road to Emmaus something similar, Lk 24:25, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" His next statement indicates he had reference here to his death, resurrection, and ascension to glory, Lk 24:26. Then, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." Lk 24:27.

The apostles, also, did not understand that the prophets, and that would include Moses, had foretold his death and resurrection.

More seems in view here than simply not understanding the fulfillment of all Moses wrote. Even the disciples did not understand that. But, Jesus seems to allude to a perversity of heart that hindered the proper reception of his message and the evidences confirming who he was.

Moses wrote that men fell into sin and under the curse of death and that God would provide from the seed of the woman the one who would conquer their enemy and thus rescue them from the fall, Gen 2:17; Gen 3:1-6; Gen 3:15. Had they believed Moses about their sinful state would they have sought the grace of God Jesus came to bring and preached rather than reveling in their pride?

Moses wrote that in Abraham's seed "all the families of the earth would be blessed," Gen 12:3. This included more than the physical descendants of Abraham. Had they believed Moses would they have rejected Jesus statements and actions that indicated He loved, cared for, and came for the good of ALL nations, including the Gentiles?

Moses wrote that it was Abraham's obedient faith that enabled him by the grace of God to be reckoned as righteousness and sustain a relationship with God, Gen 15:6. It was not simply that he was a Hebrew and circumcised that gave him favor with God, things in which they put their hope. Had they believed Moses, would they not have thought and acted like children of Abraham by faith instead rebelling against Jesus' reproofs and wanting to kill Jesus, Jn 8:37-42?

Moses wrote about the need for the sacrifices, and their repeatedly being offered year by year, and the need for the priesthood to have a relationship with God through forgiveness of sins based on an atoning victim who died in their stead. Had they believed Moses as he extensively wrote about these showing their guilt and unworthiness and that death of a covenant victim was the only way to be right with God, would they have believed that Jesus mission, not to be an earthly king, but to be a suffering Messiah was in accord with God's plan as revealed through Moses?

Believing Moses about these things would have enabled them to believe in Jesus as the prophet like Moses, **Dt 18:18**.

And, while much of what Moses wrote about the Messiah was not understood until revealed later (types, typical events, typical feasts, etc.), had they believed Moses on these other matters they would have been better prepared to believe Jesus as he unfolded his person and mission in his teaching and work.

3. See also **vv37-40**. Who is Jesus saying testifies to His identity, and *how*? The "Scriptures" Jesus referred to with this audience would include the writings of Moses. Compare **Lk 24:25-27, 44-47**.

The Father, through His Word, the Scriptures, which would include the writings of Moses

4. How did Jesus view Moses and his writings in the following ...
 - a. **Mt 8:4** Moses' writings authoritative "that Moses commanded"
 - b. **Mt 23:2,3** Jews of that day ought to "observe" what Moses said
 - c. **Mk 7:10 ... Mt 15:4** (*compare these two scriptures*) What "Moses said" is what "God said"
 - d. **Mk 12:26** men were expected to "read in the book of Moses" and draw conclusions as to their faith from that. See also **vv28-31**.
 - e. **Lk 16:29,31** Moses' writings, along with the other prophets, were the authoritative standard for faith and practice for generations after Moses and the prophets were dead. Men were accountable for basing their faith and practice on these and not on visions from the dead.
 - f. **Jn 7:19** Moses gave the "law" to which they were accountable

5. Why is this commendation of Moses by Jesus so important to us? (Think of what Moses wrote, e.g. **Gen 1-3, 6-9, 12:1-7**, etc.)
- Foundation for our belief in Creation by God in six days, the uniqueness of man, the origin and purpose of marriage, the entrance of sin, the thread of Messianic promise, the origin and role of the nation of Israel, etc.
 - Establishes the age of these books
 - Highest credibility for historical document: eyewitness intimately involved in the events e.g., Exodus, Mt Sinai, Wilderness wanderings (lead and supported by God)
 - These books worthy of faith as the “Word of God”: **Dt 18:15-18; 34:10; Num 12:6-8; 2Pt 1:20-21**
 - “He wrote of ME”! **Jn 5:46; Lk 24:27**
6. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?
- Jesus expects men to read the Scriptures and base their faith and practice on them.
 - Jesus believed Moses to be a historical person and a prophet of God, and his writings to be authoritative.
 - Jesus was not interested in pleasing people, but saving people, even if it meant telling them things they needed to hear but might not like.
 - Jesus pointed to prophecy as one of the evidences of His identity as the Messiah.
 - He indicated the copy of the Scriptures they had was reliable.

Nov1 - Ephesus: Perseverance in Testing False Apostles

Read **Rev 2:1-7** (note especially **vv2-3,6**)

“To the angel of the church” - ? “angel” *angelos* - used of men, **Mt 11:10**, John the Baptist; **Lk 7:24 (19)**, John the Baptist’s disciples, agents; **Lk 9:52**, messengers, or agents, for Jesus. Even in higher order of beings, servants of God. Possibly, “Reader (or, agent) for the congregation.” In the synagogue, a leader of worship, read or supervised the reading of the law. (See article by Mike Willis, “Unto the Angel of the Church Write”). Cmpr **Lk 4:16f; 1Th 5:27; Col 4:16**.

1. Jesus’ commendation of what they *did* was inseparably linked to what he said “you cannot” do, **v2**. What is it? Compare **v6**. Contrast this with the attitude men commend today.

v2, “cannot tolerate [KJV, NKJV, ESV, “bear”] evil men”; **v6**, “hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans” Not only were the Ephesians commended by Jesus for not tolerating these false apostles and the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but for their "perseverance" and having “not grown weary” in doing so. Today, failure to tolerate another's views, even if considered seriously in error, is considered “unChristian" or lacking human kindness, and certainly not "politically correct.”

Good to “hate” some things! The “love” Christians encouraged to have is not the syrupy love that oozes with emotion and physical demonstration (hugging, kissing) and says nothing negative. Nothing wrong with hugging one another, but that is not necessarily an indication one has the “love” of Christ he ought to have.

“teaching of the Nicolaitans” - According to ISBE post-apostolic literature has the sect deriving from Nicolas of Acts 6 and having immoral, gnostic tendencies. But, this is post-apostolic and not in the text. I do not know what the teaching of the Nicolaitans was based on information in the Bible. They did—it was written to them. Had the Holy Spirit thought it important for later generations to know, he would have provided that information.

2. By contrast, how did the Corinthians react to false apostles? **2Co 11:1-4,13-15,20**. Note **12:12; 13:3-7**. See also **Rev 2:14,15,20**.

By contrast, Paul uses sarcastic irony to reprove the Corinthians for tolerating those who presented themselves as apostles, but were not. They should have clearly recognized the apostleship of Paul due to the "signs of a true apostle" which were performed among them, and by the fact that if he wasn't (“reprobate" KJV, "fail the test" **13:6**), they “failed the test" (were “reprobate” **13:5**), for he is the one that taught them the gospel they had received!

3. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, what did make the measure of whether a person ought to be regarded as a prophet? **1Co 14:37,38**

Whether he recognized the authority of Paul's writings as being the commandments of the Lord.

4. What did Jesus warn about false prophets? **Mt 7:15-19**

They look harmless, but are dangerous. Beware of them. You can "know them by their fruits," which, contextually, is teaching that undermines obedience to Jesus' authority and words, **vv21,23b, 24f.**

5. What did He say was their destiny and *why*? **Mt 7:21-23**

In judgment, Jesus will tell them. "I never know you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."

6. Jesus warned that before the destruction of Jerusalem "many" would be misled (or, deceived), **Mt 24:4-14** (note **vv4,5...11**).

- a. Who did He say would be responsible for much of this, **v11**? Read **vv5,6** in this light.

Evidently, false prophets would be responsible for many being led astray. One of the things they would do is to pretend to be the Christ and associate their "prophecies" with rumors of wars.

- b. Who would be saved, **v13**? Compare this with **Rev 2:2-3**.

The ones whose love did not "grow cold" but they "endured to the end." This compares with the perseverance the Ephesians are commended for in the face of false apostles and teaching.

7. What were the Thessalonians encouraged to do in regard to the prophets they heard? **1Th 5:19-22**

Examine carefully ("test" NKJV; ESV; "prove" ASV) what they heard — hold fast to what was good and abstain ("stay away from" NET; "reject" NIV) every form of evil.

8. What did Jesus *reprove* the Ephesian church for? **Rev 2:4,5**

"I have this against you, that you left your first love" **v4**. This lack of love is manifest in their not doing "the deeds you did at the first," **v5**.

Compare **Jn 14:15,21,23; 1Jn 5:3**. Here of the love for God that is manifested in obedience. If this is it, it is a good lesson that “orthodoxy,” and exposing error, is no substitute for obedience! Need for balance.

- Some commentators make this “love” the love of affection, passion, zeal. No evidence in phrase itself.
- Laodicea reproved for lack of zeal, **3:15,16,19**
- The “love” described in the passages above in gospel of John are the words of Jesus who is here speaking, and in 1John the words of John who is writing and who was there the night Jesus said what in did in Jn 14.

9. What do you learn about Jesus from this?

- Jesus is not the kind of person he is often presented to be, i.e. approving and welcoming anyone regardless of what they teach or practice. This is clearly a *misconception* of Jesus.
- Jesus appreciates those who persevere in testing, examining, and opposing what is contrary to His authority and will for mankind. Men may not like these kind of people, *but Jesus does!*
- He is aware of what churches do that is good, though trying and difficult, and what churches do *not* do that they *ought* to do. “I know your deeds...”
- Jesus does not consider the good things a church may excel in as sufficient to exempt them from responsibility in the things they may fail in.
- He loves those in churches and exhorts and reproves them in order that they may "overcome" and "eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradis of God."

Nov4 - Servants: “More Blessed to Give than to Receive”

Read **Ac 20:35**; **Mt 20:24-28**

1. Jesus statement Paul referred to in **Ac 20:35** is not found in the four gospels. See **Jn 21:25**.

- a. To whom is Paul speaking in **Ac 20:17-35**?

Elders in the church in Ephesus, **v17**

- b. Is he talking about giving things (money, food, etc.)? Consider ...

1. The context. Note “in everything I showed you...” Note **v18f**.

v18, "You yourselves know...how I was with you the whole time, serving..." with perseverance, humility, impartiality, and commitment in teaching publicly and from house to house.

2. What Jesus did in his ministry (did he go about giving out *money* and *things*?).

No, he did not go about giving out money or things. What He did was give Himself in service, even to the point of giving his own life as a ransom, **Mt 20:28**.

- c. What do elders have that they should consider it a blessing to “give”?

Their knowledge, experience, and wisdom in teaching, exhortation, encouragement. And, by their perseverance, humility, impartiality, and commitment to duty they can serve as examples to others.

How many of us have been benefitted by having been "given" teaching, exhortation, encouragement, and example by godly parents, brethren, preachers, or elders...?

2. What prompted the discussion recorded in **Mt 20:24-28**? Compare **Mk 10:35-45**.

James and John asked Jesus for the right and left hand seats in the kingdom and then the ten became indignant with them—a scenario of pride and failing to understand that their positions and the authority connected with them was for service, not personal glory.

- a. If we let the context (**Mt 20:26-28**) interpret “lord it over them,” what kind of exercise of authority is Jesus referring to?

Using authority for personal gain and glory instead of to serve others.

Compare **1Pt 5:3** where this phrase is put in contrast with being examples: “**nor** yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, **but** proving to be examples to the flock.”

- b. When Jesus said rulers among the Gentiles “exercise authority over them” and then “it is not this way among you,” is he teaching there would no one with “authority” among Christians? How do you know? (Suggestion: compare **v28** with **Ac 2:36**; **Rom 10:9**; also see **Ac 20:28**; **1Tim 3:1,5**.)

Jesus used himself as an example of what He was teaching (“just as”) and though he was a servant (**v28**), he yet was Lord and expected men to recognize His authority (**Ac 238**; **Rom 10:9**; **Mt 28:18**).

3. Why will some be consigned to eternal punishment according **Mt 25:34-46** (note especially the last part of **v44** and see the footnote in NASB)?

Failure to serve (“take care of” NASB; “minister to” KJV, NKJV; ESV **v44**) those who are Christians because they are Christians (“these brothers of mine” **v40**). Note the “did it” and “did not do” phrases in **vv40,41,45**.

4. Sum up what Christians are encouraged to do with their abilities in **Rom 12:3-8**.

Use whatever “gifts” they have been given to serve one another (“members of one another”).

Ways we can “give” (serve) ...

- **Rom 12:6-8** ... ?
- **Rom 12:13** – cont. to “needs”
- **Rom 12:13** – hosp.
- **Rom 12:15** – rejoice/weep
- **Heb 3:12** – encour.
- **Gal 6:1-2** – restore
- **1Th 4:18** – comfort

5. For discussion: reasons (excuses ?) we have for not “giving” (serving).
Make notes.

- No need... “When did we see you...?”
- Can’t help...no ability
- Too busy
- No one does anything for me
- Don’t like to do it
- Let preacher/elders do it

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this?

- Premium He puts on selfless service ("giving" without "receiving") - note application in text to the work of elders
- Premium He puts on selfless service to His people *because they are His people* (Mt 25; Ac 20:28, "and for all the flock, among which the HS has made you overseers" —elders are specially responsible for the flock to which they are related)
- Jesus exemplified the "giving" ALL can do and should consider themselves "blessed" to do.
- Just as we know through what is recorded by the apostles and prophets what Jesus said as recorded in the gospels, that is the only way we can know *anything else* He said, e.g. Ac 20:35 as recorded by Luke. See **Eph 2:20; 3:5**.

Nov8 - Gospel Meeting

Nov11 - Immoral Woman: “She Loved Much”

Read Lk 7:36-50

1. “A woman in the city who was a sinner” — *all* women in the city were sinners. Evidently this woman had a reputation, a bad one, due to her sin. Note the NASB footnote.

NASB footnote: "I.e. an immoral woman."

- a. A Pharisee invited Jesus for a meal in his home (the woman was not invited). What do we know about the Pharisees that makes her action even more unusual and bold? See **Lk 16:14-15; 18:9-14; Mt 23:25-28**.

The fact that Pharisees viewed themselves as righteous compared to other men and wanted to project that image to others made this woman who was known to be immoral entering the Pharisee's house even more unusual and bold. Not only did they view themselves as on a different plane of righteousness than others, they did not want to associate with them, as indicated in **Mk 2:14-16**.

- b. What is implied in the Pharisee's statement in **v39** about what he thought a prophet would do relative to someone like this woman? Compare **Mk 2:14-17**.

In their view a prophet would certainly be aware of her reputation and therefore not want to be around her much less having her touching him and expressing such affinity for him.

- c. For thought: How would we feel toward one who had such a past reputation?

2. A denarius was equivalent to a laborer's wage for the day (**Mt 20:2**). Arbitrarily select a day's wage today and calculate the two debts in **v41**.

If a person made \$25 hour he would make \$200 in an 8 hour day.

$50 \times \$200 = \$10,000$; $500 \times \$200 = \$100,000$.

3. The demonstration of her great love for Jesus is not the *cause* of her forgiveness, but the evidence she *perceived* the depth of grace shown her. Likewise “he who is forgiven little is his *blind perception* due to self righteousness, and the result is he “loves little.” (**v47**) The illustration Jesus gave, **vv40-43**, confirms this is what he meant.

a. Compare **1Tim 1:12-17**.

b. For thought: What does our conduct demonstrate about our perception of our guilt and the grace shown to us?!

4. Are we not taught to forgive? Why, then, the reaction the guests at the table when Jesus told the woman her sins were forgiven? **vv48,49**

Because her sons were not against him, but God, and only God had the authority to forgive her!
Compare **Mk 2:7**, "He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"

5. What did Jesus say had saved her?

Her faith.

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- His omniscience - he knows ALL about us... whether a "Simon" or a "sinner"!
- He loves even the self-righteous like Simon and wants to help them with their attitude.
- He is not intimidated by men.
- His wonderful grace when we are "unable to repay" due to the debt of our sin!
- Though high and holy, He is willing to receive the meek and lowly.
- He is God and has authority to forgive sins.
- He grants forgiveness based on one's faith.

Nov15 - Four Men and a Paralytic: “Seeing their Faith”

Read **Mt 9:2-8; Mk 2:1-12; Lk 5:17-26**

1. Based on the context, what is the basis for the statement by all three writers that Jesus was "seeing their faith"? Compare **Jam 2:18,22; Gal 5:6**. For thought: Does Jesus "see our faith"?

“Seeing their faith” **Metonymy**- *Saw works evidencing their faith.* **Jam 2:18,22; Gal 5:6.**

Apply to baptism. **Ac 2:36...38; 22:16.** (“in the name of...” “calling on the name of..”) Apply to life. What does he “see” in us?

- “See our faith” in Him in the way we **worship**? (zeal, regularity)
- “See our faith” in Him in our **priorities**?
- “See our faith” in Him in the **joy of being a Christian**?
- “See our faith” in Him in our **hope**?

If “see our faith,” *He also sees our lack of it!*

2. The scribes and Pharisees said he was blaspheming when he told the paralytic his sins were forgiven. Compare the reaction in **Lk 7:48,49** (Question 4 on the Nov11 lesson). On what basis did this charge rest?

Only God can forgive sins against God. To claim the authority to do so if one is not God is blasphemy. Jesus boldly claimed the authority and nature of Deity. **Jn 5:18f; 10:30-38.**

3. What objective proof did Jesus provide to show he had the authority to forgive men's sins? How can this impact our faith and assurance of forgiveness?

Miracles were designed to be confirmation of his claims, **Jn 5:36; 10:37,38; 20:30,31.** Jesus said this man’s sins are forgiven, but he is still lying there paralyzed! “Easy to say” he had forgiven his sins! Illus.: To man deep in hospital with broken back and unrecoverable debt, “You will be rich tomorrow!” Sure, easy for you to say. “Okay, in order that you may know...Get up and do back flips!” Proof...!!! Be looking forward to tomorrow??! So with this case. **HE CAN Forgive Sins! The “gospel” is TRUE!**

4. Concerning the reliability of the reality of this event, consider ..

- a. There were three writers - are the accounts identical?

No. This evidences no collusion, but rather independent accounts.

- b. What profession was Matthew engaged in?

Tax collector. As such, he would be experienced with people attempting fraud.

c. What profession was Luke engaged in?

Physician, **Col 4:14**. He would therefore be familiar with paralysis, its debilitating effects, the time needed for recovery even if one was cured, and the questions to ask when he did his careful investigation.

d. For whom did Matthew write?

Jews. Of all people, they would be the ones that would challenge the truthfulness of this event. They did not believe Jesus to be the Son of God.

e. What preparation did Luke say he made in writing this document?

"investigated everything carefully from the beginning" having at his disposal as sources those who "were eyewitnesses and servants of the word," **Lk 1:2,3**.

f. What other document did Luke write that serves to verify his credibility as a historical writer?

Acts of the Apostles

g. When did these men write these accounts, e.g. 500 years later? 200 years later? 100 years later? Within 50 years?

Before the destruction of Jerusalem, so no more than about 40 years after the event. Since Luke wrote Acts c. 63, he wrote Luke before that. Matthew maybe written within 15-30 years of the event.

h. The unparalleled evidence pointing to the credibility of our copies of so ancient documents.

MSS for N.T. - Approx. 5,000 - Metzger, TCGNT, p. xxiv; 5,686 partial and complete, NETDV, p. 34. 5,700 CRJ, p. 82; IBTR Nearly 5,800 Geisler, 2013

Versions for N.T. - 10,000+ Latin Vulgate; 2,000+ Ethiopic; 4,101, Slavic; 2,587, Armenian; 350+ Syriac Pashetta; 245 others – Total = 19,284+ NETDV, p. 34

Quotations for N.T. - over 19,000 just of the gospels and over 30,000 of all NT before 325 AD. ETDV, p. 55.

5. What was the reaction of the people who were present? How should it impact us?

Mt 9:8, "awestruck" NASB; "marveled" NKJV; "afraid," ASV

Mk 2:12, "amazed"

Lk 5:26, "struck with astonishment ["amazed" NKJV] and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear"

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- He "sees" our faith — or lack of it! I.e., the deeds that evidence it
- His compassion
- He is God, with the authority to forgive sins!
- He knows what we are thinking (scribes; the paralytic's faith)
- Worthy of our worship

Nov18 - Blind man: He was able to “See”

Read **Jn 9:1-41**. (note **v39**)

1. Why did the disciples believe this man suffered blindness from birth? (Compare Job and his friends' views.) What was Jesus response?

Neither this man nor his parents sin was the reason for his blindness. But, the result was (“so that” *hina*) “the works of God might be displayed in him.”

2443 (*hina*) often means purpose, aim, but it is also used in the sense of result: Gal 5:17; 1Co 5:2; 2Co 1:17; 1Th 5:4; 1Jn 1:9 (“that He may forgive” YLT); Rev 9:20; 13:13. Under definition II, 2, “as a substitute for the inf. of result ... In many cases purpose and result cannot be clearly differentiated, and hence ἵνα is used for the result which follows according to the purpose of the subj. or of God.” AGB. “According to a very ancient tenet of the grammarians, accepted by Kühner, § 563, 2 Anm. 3; (T. S. Green, N. T. Gram., p. 172f), and not utterly rejected by Alex. Alexander Buttmann (1873) N. T. Gr., p. 238f (206), ἵνα is alleged to be used not only τελικῶς, i. e. of design and end, but also frequently ἐκβατικῶς, i. e. of the result, signifying with the issue, that; with the result, that; so that (equivalent to ὥστε).” TH

Note the previous verse, John 9:2, “that [*hina*] he would be born blind” is clearly result—the disciples were not asking whether this man or his parents sinned with the purpose or aim of this being born blind.

2. The miracle itself

- a. What did Jesus do and tell the man to do in order to receive his sight (**vv6-7,11,15**)?

Spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, and applied it to the blind man's eyes, then told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. Obviously, there is nothing in these events or the elements used that is sufficient cause within themselves for the effect (see 2d).

- b. What was unique about this miracle (**v32**)?

“Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.”

- c. On what basis did the credibility of this miracle rest? (**9:8.9a; 9:9b,15; 9:18-21; 9:16,24,26,10:21**).

Testimony ...

- Neighbors - vv8-10
- Parents - vv20-21

No one could have known better whether the man was blind, and no one would have more disappointed other than the man himself had there been fraud.

- **The Jewish leaders - vv16,18,24,26; 10:21**

After thorough investigation, *they did not deny the event took place!* No one ever wanted more to prove Jesus a fraud than these men. And they had the power to perform whatever investigations they deemed necessary, and even to exert pressure by excommunication upon those who they felt were lying.

- **The man himself - vv10-11,15,17,25,27,30-33,38**

Note: the man told the same story every time, to different parties, at different times, under threat of persecution, under examination and cross-examination. Also observe he was a man of clear logic (vv30-33) and simply honesty (vv12,17,25,27,36).

Whether Jesus performed miracles is a *historical issue that can only be established by testimony*. Yet, we can be as certain of the truthfulness of matters established by testimony as those evidenced by demonstration or sense. E.g.,

We are just as certain that the Declaration of Independence was signed July 4, 1776, as that a geometric proposition is true, yet the credibility of one is a matter of demonstration, and the other of *testimony*.

We can be just as sure that cyanide is poisonous as that food is nutritious, yet one is believed upon *testimony* only, and the other upon sense.

NOTE: We ACT UPON (July 4th celebrations; avoid cyanide) the two matters established only by testimony *with the same assurance* we do upon those evidenced by demonstration or experience (sense).

Possible means of deception

- **The “blind” man an accomplice.**

But if so, and attempting to bring fame or wealth to Jesus, he was a poor accomplice, for when asked, “Where is he?” he said, “I do not know!” (v12). Moreover, if he was an accomplice and had any previous connections with Jesus, neither his closest companions (v2), nor the man’s parents, nor his enemies (see pt #1) aware of it. The parents were afraid in confessing a miracle had indeed took place and the Jews sought every reason to expose it, thus both would have had motivation to expose a conspiracy between the man and Jesus.

- **A delusion. He not really made to see.**

But, again see the testimony, and by whom.

- **Others?**

d. Since there was not sufficient natural power in the physical acts Jesus or the man did to cause such an effect, what did it prove? **vv30-33, vv35-38. Compare Jn 3:2. Compare Jn 5:36, 10:37,38 with 9:3-5.**

God was with him, approving of what He did and said. He claimed to be “the Son of Man” - a Messianic term (**Dan 7:13,14**), and one He used often in relationship to His authority as

God (Mt 9:6, forgive sins; Mt 12:8, Lord of the Sabbath; Mt 16:27, judge men according to their deeds; 18:11, save the lost; 24:30, bring judgment on Jerusalem; 25:31, judge the world; 26:64, sitting on the right hand of God). How much this man knew about the Messiah we do not know, but clearly Jesus is saying he is more than "a prophet" which the man had already concluded (v17). If prophets are "sons of men," but this one is claiming to be "the Son of Man," and the blind man believed the miracle to be sufficient proof of His claim.

Some say, "Miracles are impossible"—they are "contrary to the laws of nature."

It depends on what is meant. If one means the *unalterable* laws of nature, this begs the question, for **if there be a Supreme Being**, the laws of nature *can be altered*, or used in uncommon and unusual ways, and that with *purpose*. If one means *contrary to the present and ordinary course of nature*, yes, and that, again, *with purpose*, as "**signs**," and to accomplish plans that cannot be accomplished with the present and ordinary means. The point is, where is sufficient CAUSE for such an EFFECT? ONCE BELIEVE THERE IS A GOD, AND MIRACLES ARE NOT IMPOSSIBLE!

3. What did this man "see" that Jesus commended him for? (vv39-41)

He saw that Jesus was the Messiah, "the Son of Man" (vv35,36), and that His miracles were proof of His identity. The Pharisees did not "see" Jesus as the Messiah nor their need for a suffering Messiah—they were indeed spiritually blind, but did not realize it. Compare **Lk 4:18; Mt 9:12,13; Jn 8:31-33**.

4. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- He does not subscribe to the view that suffering is necessarily the punishment for past sins. Compare Job and his friends.
- He can differentiate between believers with good hearts and unbelievers whose hearts are blinded (v39).
- He is not intimidated by the powerful and not afraid to tell them what they need to hear in order to try to open their eyes even though they may not like it.
- He is indeed "the Son of Man" as evidenced by this undeniable miracle!
- He wants men to believe in Him, and is willing to give them evidence for that faith. Note vv4,5.

Nov22 - Zaccheus: “A Son of Abraham”

Read Lk 19:1-10.

1. What kind of man was Zaccheus? (profession, financially, stature, etc.)

“Zaccheus” was a Hebrew name and indicates he was a Jew. (Cambridge on v9; Meyer, Lange)

Chief tax collector and he was rich, v2.

- As “chief” tax collector, he had others under him, and thus was in a position of authority. Yet, recognized Jesus as someone greater and willing even to climb a tree to see him.
- Whether he was rich due to remuneration from his job or otherwise (inheritance, investments), the text does not say.

Hospitable? At least in this case he was willing to receive Jesus as a guest — unexpected, poor, not in social circle of Zaccheus.

Small in stature. Climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus as he passed that way, vv3,4

2. How did the people view Zaccheus?

“A sinner,” v7. The Jews did not have a good view of tax collectors generally (Lk 5:30). Whether their view of Zaccheus falls in that general grouping or whether he is singled out for criticism, I do not know. The fact that Luke mentions he was “chief tax collector” AND “rich” may give the background for their charge — people *assume* ...

Beware our *assumptions* about those who are rich (Zaccheus - lawyers, businessmen, etc) OR poor (Lazarus - people who may be poor due to health, family obligations, uncontrollable financial reversals, etc). And, even IF they are “sinners,” it does not mean they cannot repent and trust in the Savior.

3. What did Jesus mean by saying “he, too, is a son of Abraham”? Compare Lk 3:8,9; Jn 8:32-47; Rom 4:9-25; 9:6-8; Gal 3:6-9,29.

Salvation is not based on physical lineage to Abraham, but on faith. Jesus was evidently saying he was a “son of Abraham” by “following in the steps of the faith” and thus, like Abraham, inheriting the blessing of justification by faith—“Today salvation has come to this house” v9.

4. IF (and it is uncertain) Zaccheus was indeed as bad as the people pictured him (v7), and was actually guilty of the things mentioned in v8, what does v8 indicate about his attitude now?

He is penitent, willing not only to turn from any selfishness and fraud, but to make amends as he can.

Was Zaccheus admitting he had indeed defrauded people?

- “A most significant admission and confession. It is a condition of the first class (ei and the aorist active indicative) that assumes it to be true. His own conscience was at work.” RWP
- Hendriksen said he had and bases it on the grammar: “is a first class or simple conditional sentence (statement assumed to be true).” pp. 856,864.
- Lenski: “This ‘if’ does not express doubt, for it is a condition of reality... To what extent Zaccheus was guilty cannot be determined.”
- Meyer: “The εἰ is not to make the matter uncertain, as though he were conscious to himself of no such extortion, but εἰ . . . τι is the milder expression of self-confession instead of ο,τι.”
- “First class condition *affirms* the reality of the condition. It is expressed by ei with the indicative mood in the protasis (if clause) and almost any mood or tense in the apodosis. ... ‘If we are disciples of the Lord, we shall be saved.’ This construction confirms the condition and is best translated ‘since we are, etc.’” Summers, *Essentials of NT Greek*, pp. 108,109.
- “This condition was used when one wished to *assume* or *seem to assume* the reality of his premise.” [bold & italics mine, srf] Examples: “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. Gal. 5:18. See also: Mk. 4:23...” Dana & Mantey, *A Manual Grammar...*, p. 289
- A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek NT*, p. 1008, “This condition, therefore, taken at its face value, assumes the condition to be true. ***The context or other light must determine the actual situation.***” Then Robertson gives an example: “Thus in Mt. 12:27 ... This is a good example (cf. also Gal. 5:11) to begin with, ***since the assumption is untrue in fact, though assumed to be true by Jesus for the sake of argument.***” [bold & italics mine, srf]
“And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges.” Mt. 12:27.
“But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.” Gal. 5:11.
- Burton, *Moods & Tenses*, p. 103, in discussing conditional sentences says, “...Conditional clauses of the first class may be used of what is regarded by the speaker as an ***unfulfilled*** condition. But this is not expressed or implied by the form of the sentence, which is in itself wholly colorless, ***suggesting nothing as to the fulfilment of the condition.***” [bold and italics mine]. Examples he gives under this paragraph: Jn. 18:23; Rom. 4:11; Gal. 5:11 (see above - one of the same Robertson gives)
“Jesus answered him, ‘If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?’” Jn. 18:23.
“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God.” Rom. 4:2.

Therefore, it does not seem the grammar demands this to be taken as an admission of guilt. Rather, it can be “assumed for the sake of argument” and actually an “unfulfilled” condition.

Robert L. Whiteside, *The Interwoven Gospels*, p. 450, comments: “Zaccheus does not really confess that he had wrongfully exacted aught of any man; his statement seems rather an indication that he thought he might have done so. He might honestly collect more from a man than he should, and later someone might convince him that he had done so. In such cases he would restore fourfold.”

Interestingly, though Lenski and Hendriksen say he was guilty, they then say he couldn’t have been exceedingly guilty, for he could not have made fourfold restitution after giving away half his wealth.

5. What was Jesus’ response, regardless of Zaccheus’ past life? Compare also **1Tim 1:12-16**.

“Today salvation has come to this house”

Not that the Savior (“salvation” by metonymy for the one bringing salvation) had come to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt 15:24), for if so, salvation had come to all the Jews of Jericho, yet Jesus singled out “this house.” Moreover, all Zaccheus did would be superfluous to this statement if all is meant that Jesus came to the Jews, yet Luke records the actions of and attitude of Zaccheus as a prelude to Jesus’ statement. Note also that “Jesus went on to tell a parable” indicting those who “did not want him to reign over them” (Lk 19:11...27), and if taken in connection with the event concerning Zaccheus (“While they were listening...”), it sets Zaccheus apart for he was willing to accept his reign, something most Jews were not.

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- Again, we see Jesus being able to “see” men’s faith, even though not vocalized. He sees what we *do* and knows *why* we do it—is it a matter of faith or for example, curiosity (Jesus is coming to town... let me see what he looks like)?
- He cares about those others may condemn. Tax collectors and sinners were people the Jews would not even eat with, yet Jesus not only was willing to eat with him but to lodge at his house, and to extend salvation to him based on his faith. Do not lose sleep worrying about what others think—let what Jesus thinks of you be your concern!
- Once again, we see his mission—to save the lost. NOT to rescue people from taxes or other social burdens.
- He invited and welcomed cooperation in His ministry—“today I must stay at your house.” Compare **Lk 5:1-3; 8:2-3; 10:38; 22:11; Jn 12:1-2**.

Nov25 - Poor widow: “Put in All that She Had”

Read **Mk 12:41-44; Lk 21:1-4**

These were His last words in the temple (**Mk 12:41...13:1**) and followed his scathing rebuke of the Pharisees (**Mt 23:1-39; Mk 12:38-40; Lk 20:45-47**).

1. What was Jesus “observing”? **Mk 12:41**

“how the people were putting money into the treasury” - “observing” = imperfect, act. indic, “continued watching and observing” Cambridge.

"two small copper coins, which amount to a cent." NASB

"twoG1417 mites,G3016 which make G3603 a farthing.G2835" KJV

"two mites, which make a quadrans." NKJV

"two mites, which make a farthing." ASV

"two small copper coins, which make a penny." ESV

NASB footnotes:

- "small copper coins" = "Gr *lepta*"
- "cent" = "Gr *quadrans*; i.e. 1/64 of a denarius"

If correct, and since a denarius was sometimes considered a day's pay for a laborer (Mt 20:2), if a day laborer today made \$10 an hour and worked 12 hours he would make \$120. 1/64 of that would be about \$1.88.

Since there are several assumptions here, we cannot be sure about a comparable amount today. But, clearly, it was little, and very little in comparison with the “large sums” others were putting in the treasury.

a. Apply this to our giving — what should he be “observing” in us?

2Co 8:1-6; 9:6-14

Macedonians giving was an **act of “grace,” sincerity** ("liberality"), and **reflected commitment to the Lord** ("first gave themselves to the Lord and to us"), **2Co 8:1-5**. Our giving should be with **purpose to "bless"** ("bountiful") and done **cheerfully**. If done so, it will reflect our **genuine obedience to the gospel and concern for those receiving the funds, 2Co 9:13,14**.

b. Why were Ananias and Sapphira struck dead? **Ac 5:1-5**

Lying about the amount they gave

2. Jesus commended the widow when he observed that she contributed “all she owned.”

a. Does Jesus expect us to contribute all we own? **1Tim 6:17-19;**

Ac 4:34,36-37; 5:4; Phm 16,18,22

Obviously not, for their rich Christians in the church in Ephesus (**1Tim 6:17-19**), the owners of lands and houses had the right to not give up those possessions (**Ac 4:34-5:4**), and Philemon was owner of a house (**Phm 22**), some kind of possessions (**Phm 18**) and a slave (**Phm 16**).

b. What was Jesus commending about this woman? Note: How could Jesus say she put in "more" when in fact she put in *less*?

Obviously, her gift was not "more" in *amount*.

- *Proportionally?* (McGarvey and others) She put in 100% where they put in 10%, etc. Yes, it was more proportionally, but is this all Jesus has in mind? If "put in more" refers not simply to the act itself, but to the attitude behind it (metonymy of the adjunct), it was "more" if measured by ...
- *Faith, trust* - she now had to completely depend on God for her life! Cmpr **Mt 6:33**
- *Spirit of self-sacrifice* - Others gave of their "surplus," and there is nothing wrong with that, it cannot be compared to the sacrifice of "all that she owned." Cmpr **2Co 8:2-4**

Interestingly, notice the "great crowd" ("common people" KJV, NKJV, ASV), **v37** (Mk 12:37), "enjoyed listening to Him" versus the scribes. Also, note that the writers note following how men are impressed with the external, **Mk 13:1**, "what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings" (**Lk 21:5**, "some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts")

3. The rich put in out of their "surplus" or "abundance." Most of us give out of our "surplus" or "abundance." For thought and discussion: What are some of the dangers associated with this? Scriptures to consider ...

a. **Mal 1:14** (see context by reading the chapter)

Instead of a worshipful act reflecting our respect for God, it becomes a rote practice without the heart and with little devotion and priority.

b. **Isa 1:10-17**

It can soothe the conscience while the giver is living in disobedience to God, engaging in things they ought not, and neglecting duties they should be fulfilling.

c. **Mt 23:23,24**

It can be used as a measure of righteousness thus ignoring matters such as justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

d. **Php 4:18** (is giving worship?)

It *should* be, and when given out of the proper heart is so regarded by God—“a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.”

4. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- He "observes" and cares about the *attitude* behind our giving more than the amount. He knows and appreciates those who have little to give materially, but give what they do in a spirit of faith and self-sacrifice.
- He wants his disciples to think about their giving (“calling His disciples to Him, He said to them...” —he had a lesson on it).
- He knows our financial situation! (“poverty" or “surplus”)

Nov29 - Pergamum: “Hold Fast my Name, and did Not Deny My Faith”

Read **Rev 2:12-17**

1. Pergamum was the political capital of Asia and a religious center. A large library there was second only to the one in Alexandria and there was a university for medical study. There were temples to Zeus, Athena, Dionysos. It was the first city with a temple for worship of Augustus Caesar. The Roman governors were divided into two classes of people: one class was allowed to carry swords; the other was not. Those who carried swords could execute people at will. Data from Barclay DSB, RWP.

2. Note Christ' description of himself in **v12**.

a. This is the sword of *judgment* - compare **v16; 19:15,21**.

b. Christ' commendation was in connection with the circumstances in Pergamum. What were those circumstances? **v13**

Satan evidently had a powerful influence there (“where Satan’s throne is...where Satan dwells”) even to the point of having saints killed “Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you”).

c. How would Christ’ description of Himself bring comfort to these Christians?

He knew the trials they faced because of Satan’s strong influence there (“where Satan’s throne is ... Antipas ... killed”) and He would bring judgment (“sharp two-edged sword”) on their adversaries (“sword” of judgment, **v19; 19:15,21**). See **6:9-10**.

3. Although Christ commended them, he also reprovved them—“I have a few things against you...” What are they? **vv14,15**

They had some there who held the teaching of Balaam and the teaching of the Nicolaitans, and evidently had not done what they could about it. What could they do? One thing they could do was to reprove and rebuke (**Tit 1:11,13; 2:15; 3:10**), and then, if unrepentant, “remove them from your midst” (**1Co 5; Tit 3:10-11**).

“teaching of Balaam” - “kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality”

- **Num 25:1-3...31:16** (Balaam behind it)

- **Num 25:4-8** - Contrast the attitude of Phinehas with that of those in Pergamum. *Which correct...tolerance or INTolerance?*
- Was money involved as with Balaam? (**2Pt 2:15; Num 22**) In Pergamum—Jobs? Promotions?

“teaching of the Nicolaitans” - do not what it was.

According to ISBE post-apostolic literature has the sect deriving from Nicolas of Acts 6 and having immoral, gnostic tendencies. But, this is **b**.

I do not know what the teaching of the Nicolaitans was **based on information in the Bible**. They did—it was written to them. Had the Holy Spirit thought it important for later generations to know, he would have provided that information.

Note: **Beware of accepting what commentaries, dictionaries, etc. say** as matters of fact.

Q: Does the text support it? Tools are useful, but one can hurt himself with a tool used carelessly!

4. What are they exhorted to do?

- v16** repent...or else
- v17** hear what the Spirit says

5. What promise did He make to them? **v17**

“To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.”

- “white” used frequently in Revelation - 1:17-hair; 3:4,5,18; 4:4;7:9,13;19:14-garments, robes; 6:2; 19:11-horse; 14:14-cloud
- “new” used extensively in Revelation - 3:12; 21:2-Jerusalem; 5:9; 14:3-song; 21:1-heaven and earth; 21:5-all things
- Numerous possible allusions, but a **sure and definite meaning cannot be ascertained**. Fact we do not know significance of “hidden manna” and “white stone” *confirms the letter not to us — this must be considered in interpretation.*

6. What do you learn about Jesus from this incident?

- He is not only a God of grace and mercy, but one of *judgment!*
- He expects His disciples to “judge” the impenitent!
- He is concerned about *doctrine*, not only about loving one another and perseverance in trial. He will not allow us to substitute one for the other.
- His omniscience is again clearly demonstrated - He knew all about those in Pergamum, the good and the bad, the faithful and the unfaithful.
- He promises to judge the ungodly and will avenge the faithful.

Dec2 - Review

Include appropriate scriptures with your answers.

1. Why is it important to know who Jesus commends?

Jn 1:1-3, 47-49; 2:25; Mt 9:4 (Mk 2:8); 12:25; Lk 6:8; 9:47; Rev 2:2,9,13,19; 3:1,8,15.
Compare **Heb 4:11-13**.

Being God, He **knows man perfectly**. Nothing we think or do is hidden from his sight. There what He thinks about us is completely correct even if we cannot see ourselves and will not be objective about ourselves.

Mt 25:31...34...41; Lk 12:35-48; Jn 12:47-50; 14:6; 2Co 5:9,10

Not only does He know man perfectly, but **He will be our Judge!** There is no way to be right with God without Him, and His word will be the standard of judgment.

Jn 3:16; 10:11; 15:13; 1Jn 3:16; 2Co 5:14,15; Tit 2:14

He loves man so much He gave His life for us. To fail to be interested in being the kind of people He died to make of us is the height of ingratitude and selfishness!

2. What is the only way to know for certain the kind of people Jesus commends?

Through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, the NT. **Mk 1:1; Lk 1:1-4; Jn 20:31; Eph 3:3,4.**
NOT by feelings, personal experiences (good things or bad things that happen in life), scholars, Facebook, etc.

3. The world has misconceptions about Jesus and the kind of people He would approve. Give some examples. Support your answers with examples from our studies in this series.

- He is all loving and therefore does not denounce people for sin, therefore it is not manifesting a “Christlike” spirit to reprove people for their error
- He will not forgive and receive me - I am too wicked. **Lk 7:36-50** - immoral woman
- He may not save all, but he would not allow someone to suffer in torment. **Lk 16:1-31** - the rich man
- He is not concerned about doctrine, but only about love. **Rev 2:1-7** - Ephesus, testing false apostles
- He doesn't concern himself with our giving. Poor widow, **Mk 12:41f**

- He doesn't know what I think or what I am doing, nor does He care. Over and over we have seen his omniscience, demonstrating his knowledge of men's lives and thoughts, both in the present and in the past. Ephesus (**Rev 2:1f**), Pergamum (**Rev 2:12f**) and Thyatira (**Rev 2:18f**) - "I know ..." **Mk 2:1f**, the men "reasoning in their hearts" he was blaspheming. Etc.
- He would not approve of speaking harshly to anyone. He said John the baptist was a great prophet, yet John showed courage to sharply rebuke publicly the leading Jews and even king Herod for his unlawful marriage, **Mt 11:1-5**.
- He did not believe or portray himself as the Son of God. **Lk 23:39f** - the repentant thief, "today you will be with me in Paradise"; **Jn 5:45f**, Moses wrote about me; **Mk 2:1f**, four men and paralytic, authority and power to forgive sins; **Jn 9**, blind man "the Son of Man"; graphic descriptions in **Rev 2** in letters to the churches.

4. Does the world always concur with Jesus evaluations? Support your answers with examples from our studies in this series.

- He made it clear that men are *responsible* for their attitude toward what they hear - **Mt 13:10-23**. "I don't like it" will not exempt. "I'm a pretty good person and I'm not interested" will not excuse. Laziness toward what one hears, materialism robbing of time and interest in hearing, or the difficulties obedience may bring—none of these make closing one's eyes to truth OK.
- Being a servant of God will make you wealthy. Poor widow, **Mk 12:41-44**; Lazarus, **Lk 16:19-31**.
- He made understanding and belief in Him as the Son of God fundamental to being in His church, **Mt 16:13f**
- He commended Ephesus for *not* tolerating false apostles, and *reproved* both Pergamum and Thyatira for tolerating immorality and idolatry, **Rev 2**. Today, "toleration" is supposed to be a mark of maturity and enlightenment.

5. What are some of the areas of our character and life Jesus knows and cares about (e.g. faith, priorities, ...). Support your answers with examples from our studies in this series.

- **Faith** - Centurion, **Mt 8:5f**; Canaanite woman, **Mt 15:21f**; Immoral woman, **Lk 7:36f**; Peter's confession versus the varying views of the people, **Mt 16:13f**
- **Priorities** - Mary for choosing the good part, **Lk 10:38f**
- **Thankfulness** - the leper, **Lk 17:11f**
- **Service** - More blessed to give than to receive, **Ac 10:35**

- **Attitude toward fellow man** - good Samaritan, **Lk 10:25f**
- **Doctrine** - Ephesus, testing false apostles, **Rev 2:1f**

6. Are Jesus' commendations limited based on gender, race, wealth, or renown? Support your answers with examples from our studies in this series.

He taught we ought to love *all men*, **regardless of race** (**Lk 10:25f**, Samaritan), **wealth** (Lazarus-poor, **Lk 16:19-31**; Zaccheus-rich, **Lk 19:1-10**), **moral background** (immoral woman, **Lk 7:36-50**), **shame** (thief on the cross, **Lk 23:39-43**), **lack of ability and opportunity hampering knowledge** (blind man, **Jn 9**)

7. Are you a person Jesus commends?

Discuss ... See **Haggai 1:5,7**; **Jam 1:19-25**