

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH
Week 10 – Rejection of Jesus, the Messiah/King, by the Nation of Israel
March 29, 2022

Are you understanding more of the flow in the book of Matthew? OBSERVATIONS:

Why was Jesus among the multitudes extending mercy through healing all disease and sickness and casting out demons? When would God triumph?

In Matt. 11:6 we read that Jesus pronounced a blessing (divine favor) on those who would NOT be offended (would not stumble, would not doubt, would not distrust)... by the apparent delay in fulfilling prophecies of divine judgment...by the lack of understanding God's thoughts and ways as He carries us through times we didn't anticipate. FAITH!

Blessed is he who is NOT offended because of Me!

A difficult verse...Matt. 11:12 - *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* Perhaps it speaks to the future triumph of God's kingdom is not until the future. Both John and Jesus were to suffer at the hands of wicked men and die.

Jesus extended a personal invitation to individuals to find REST in Him – REST of heart and soul. Matt. 11:28-30 – *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

THE REJECTION OF THE KING

The opposition to Jesus which intensified in Matthew 10 & 11, erupts in Matthew 12. Matthew 12 is the turning point in Jesus' first coming. Jesus is accused by the Pharisees!

Sabbath Accusations

Matt. 12:1-21 - Jesus is accused of breaking the Mosaic Law.

- He defended His disciples who plucked a few ears of grain (permitted by Deut. 23:25) on the Sabbath. Jewish tradition declared that this action was forbidden on the Sabbath: Rabbinically interpreted, plucking grain was reaping and thus was work.
 - Jesus' reply recalls David and the shewbread (I Sam. 21:1-6). Though the Mosaic Law restricted the shewbread to the priests (Lev. 24:9), extreme human need overruled this regulation and the Rabbis understood that to be so.
 - Jesus reminded the Pharisees that the priests were required by the law to work on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9-10). If priests could be seen as guiltless in working on the Sabbath for furthering temple worship, how much more are the disciples guiltless in using the Sabbath for the work of the Messiah who is the reality to which the Temple pointed!

○ Jesus declared Himself to the religious leadership, saying, *For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath* (Matt. 12:8). If Jesus did not condemn His disciples, why should the Pharisees be so critical?

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○ Further Jesus analyzed the basic problem of the Pharisees by quoting Hosea 6:6 – *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*. The problem was not what the disciples had done but the merciless hearts of the Pharisees. God desires the right heart attitude not external actions with no heart!

• Jesus was accused of violating the Sabbath by healing the man with the paralyzed hand. If a sheep would fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, would the owner not lift it out? Was a man not better than a sheep? *Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath* (Matt. 12:12). With this introduction, Jesus asked the man to stretch forth his hand, and he was healed. The Pharisees were infuriated!

Matt. 12:14 - *Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.*

• Matt. 12:15-21 – Additional healings (on the same Sabbath?) - *But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. ¹⁶ Yet He warned them not to make Him known, (Perhaps Jesus spoke these words to prevent the masses from thinking of Him as the warrior Messiah) ¹⁷ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: ¹⁸ ‘Behold! My Servant (Isa. 42:1-4) whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles (LOOK at My Servant - He will not arrive with political agendas, military campaigns, and great fanfare, but with gentleness and meekness... declaring righteousness even to the Gentiles). ¹⁹ He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets (The Messiah would not try to stir up a revolution or force His way into power). ²⁰ A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, (The reed was used by shepherds to fashion a small musical instrument. A cracked or worn reed was useless. A smoldering wick was also useless for giving light. The broken reed and the smoldering wick represented people who were seen as useless by the world. Jesus’ work was to restore and rekindle – not to “break” them or “quench” them) till He sends forth justice to victory; ²¹ And in His name Gentiles will trust.’ (The Messiah would display tender compassion toward the lowest of the low. He came not to gather the strong for a revolution but to show mercy to the weak)*

Lack of recognition of the Second Messianic Miracle: the healing of the blind and mute man possessed by a demon (Matt. 12:22-37)

Matt. 12:22 - *Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.*

Why was this miracle considered a Messianic miracle? The act of casting out demons was not all that unusual in the Jewish world of that day. The Pharisees, Rabbis,

and their followers had the ability to cast out demons. The ancient world believed that sickness was caused by spirits that entered the body; therefore, removal of the spirits was thought of as a cure. According to Jewish thinking, exorcism required following a specific ritual. Firstly, the one performing the exorcism needed to establish communication with the demon. After establishing communication with the demon, the exorcist would then have to find out the demon's name. By the use of that name, he could then cast out the demon. However, Judaism's methodology was powerless

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regarding exorcising one kind of demon: the demon who caused the controlled person to be mute/dumb – to not be able to speak. Therefore, no communication could be established. The Rabbis had taught that when the Messiah came, He would be able to cast out this type of demon.

Matt. 12:23 - *And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"* Messianic title; the Messiah would come from the lineage of David. The masses wondered if this Jesus was the Messiah. He was performing the miracles that only the Messiah could perform as they had been taught from childhood. However, the Jewish religious leadership accused Jesus of casting out the demon by the power of Beelzebub (the ruler of the demons).

Rabbinic Response

Matt. 12:24 – *"Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons." The Pharisees rejected Jesus' Messianic claims. And, the Pharisees claimed that Jesus Himself was possessed by "Beelzebub the prince of/the ruler of demons."*

Jesus' Response

- Matt. 12:25-30 - This would be a kingdom divided against itself. It would be Satan casting out Satan. Why would Satan cast out a demon? If the casting out of demons is by Beelzebub, then by whom did the Pharisees, who were exorcists, cast out demons?
- If demons have been cast out, it must have been by the Spirit of God. And then, in the person of Jesus/the Messiah, the kingdom of God had come unto them (Zech. 13:2 – no unclean spirit will be in the kingdom!)
- Matt. 12:30-37 – Condemnation. Jesus accused this generation of being guilty of the "unpardonable sin." This miracle authenticated Jesus' claims and His message – and the Jewish leadership knew it! (John 11:48)
 - Matt. 12:31-32 - *Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.*
 - John 16:8 - *And when He (the Holy Spirit) has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment....*

- Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit - deliberate rejection of what they knew to be of God (John 11:48; [Acts 4:16]). The Jewish leadership attributed a work to Satan which they knew was of God!
- Ultimate unbelief - rejecting the convicting work of the Holy Spirit
- Matt. 12:37 - *For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*

Jewish Response

Matt. 12:38 – *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’* They asked another sign of Jesus, as if Jesus had done nothing to authenticate His Messiahship.

Matt. 12:39-42 - *But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet*

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Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

The Ninevites having received Jonah and his message following his miraculous deliverance, repented! Their action places Israel in worse light for the nation of Israel has remained unrepentant, both before and after the resurrection,

⁴² The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

The interest in Solomon’s wisdom (divinely given) by the Queen of Sheba (I Kings 10:1-13) will condemn the nation of Israel for not responding to Jesus, the greater King!

NOTE: the men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba were Gentiles who had a lot less light or revelation from God; however, to the light they had, they responded.

Jesus told them they would receive no more signs except one – “the sign of Jonah the prophet,” which was the sign of His resurrection. And this sign levied judgment upon them. They rejected Jesus; they brought upon themselves condemnation. Jesus’ resurrection proves once and for all that He is the Messiah.

The Emptiness of Religion without the Power of God

Matt. 12:43-45 – Jesus pointed out the emptiness of religion without the power of God by telling of a man who was delivered of a demon and proceeded to set his life in order religiously. His house, which was swept and orderly, was empty. The demon, upon returning, brought seven other demons and they all resided in the man. The man’s last state was worse than his first.

Jesus pronounced, ... *So shall it also be with this wicked generation.* Israel’s house was “empty.” Jesus was not invited to occupy it. The wicked generation of the

Pharisees will experience the emptiness of their religion which will lead to greater spiritual bondage.

Forty years after these words were spoken by Jesus, the legions of Rome invaded the land. Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple was torn down until not one stone stood upon another.

His Mother and Brothers

Matt. 12:46-50 - *While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. ⁴⁷ Then one said to Him, 'Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.' ⁴⁸ But He answered and said to the one who told Him, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' ⁴⁹ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.'*

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Upon what is Jesus focusing? Doing the will of God! This “doing” is not works-righteousness. It is man’s response to Jesus’ invitation.

John 6:29 - *This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.*

The Change in Jesus’ Ministry

Following the rejection of Jesus by the leadership, Jesus began to speak in parables for the purpose of hiding the truth from the masses – and to concentrate on teaching the disciples.

Questions

What grabbed you in Matthew 12?

What was new to you?

What do you not understand? What are your questions?

Into what do you need to dig deeper?

Has this chapter answered some of your past questions?

How do you better understand/grasp/love JESUS?

Suggested Homework

Read the parables in Matthew 13. Make observations.

What timeframe is Jesus covering through the parables?

Write a first draft of their meaning.

Read Week 11’s handout when you receive it.