

1. This section of Matthew concerns Jesus' teaching on divorce, a subject as relevant today as it was in Jesus' time. Then, just as now, there were "hardliners," and those who were softer on the issue, as well as those in between. Malachi said, "God hates divorce." Moses said a man could divorce his wife if he found some "indecency" in her. Indecency had a broad spectrum of meanings.
2. There were two conditions under rabbinic law in which divorce was expected and perhaps even compulsory. The first was adultery, and the second sterility, since marriage was "to be fruitful and multiply."
3. Jesus shocks His listeners by saying, "What God has joined together let man not separate." The biblical principle is: no divorce. Moses allowed it, but that does not make it the norm. Jesus allowed divorce in the case of adultery.
4. There is forgiveness for every kind of sin, provided we repent and ask forgiveness, even divorce. There is no justification for the ease with which Christians and non-Christians walk away from marriage. 1 Corinthians is an important passage on the subject of marriage and divorce.
5. Today's reading also shows us how Jesus welcomed the children despite the fact that the disciples try to prevent them from bothering the Master. Jesus is never too busy for anyone.
6. Next we have the story of the rich young ruler, who is convinced he is righteous. Jesus points out to him that he is not willing to surrender all to Christ, and so he misses out on the Kingdom of Heaven.
7. Christ's explicit prediction of His death is found here. He gives them 7 details of His coming death: in Jerusalem; on this trip; the betrayal; betrayed to the chief priest and scribes; turned over to the Gentiles; tried, flogged and crucified; and He would rise from the dead in 3 days.
8. Two things are important about Christ's prediction of His death: first the incredible detail Christ gives them, which shows that this was no unexpected accident. Secondly, the disciples somehow did not understand or accept it.
9. All the following events are in the exact same order in the synoptic Gospels: Zebedee's wife's request for a special position for her two sons, Jesus' teaching on true greatness, and the story of the blind man at Jericho.
10. Next is the complaint of the wages being unfair by the workers. There are two responses to that. The first is that it was fair because both parties had agreed on the wages. The owner had kept his word. Secondly, this is to remind us that entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven is not about fairness, but about grace.
11. Many good Christian churches wrestle uncomfortably with the effect of growth. It is sometimes difficult for God's saints to accept the raw, unwashed newcomers. Christ's kingdom is all about grace.

1. This is the record of the last week of Jesus' life.
2. Sunday was the day of the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Matthew adds a detail that neither Mark nor Luke include, the prophecy from Zechariah 9:9. Jesus would come "riding on a donkey", a "Messianic" prophecy. The crowds recognized this and received Him. The religious leaders realized they would have to act.
3. Then the following day Jesus cleansed the Temple, ending His public ministry as He had started it, by demonstrating His righteous anger. At night He withdrew to Bethany to rest, probably to the home of Lazarus.
4. Tuesday He spent in the Temple with His critics, answering "trick" questions. Matthew gives us two teachings found only in this Gospel, the Parables of the Two Sons and the Wedding Banquet. Matthew would have remembered Jesus' remarks about tax collectors since that was his occupation. God is interested in people who respond to His will, not to those who pay lip service.
5. The Parable of the Wedding Banquet is also unique to Matthew. The Jews were invited to come to the wedding, but refused the invitation. So the invitation was extended first to the common people who were despised by the religious leaders and then to the Gentiles. There is also the veiled threat of the destruction of Jerusalem.
6. This Parable of the Wedding Banquet is similar to the one found in Luke 14. It is possible that either Luke took it out of chronological order, or that Jesus used a similar illustration more than once, adding more details this time.
7. An important detail not to miss is that the custom of the times would have dictated that the guests, upon their arrival, be provided with a robe, as well as food, by the host. Then no one would be proud of their clothes or ashamed of their clothes. Jesus was speaking to those proud religious leaders who would insist on appearing before God dressed in their own righteousness. We can appear only dressed in Christ's righteousness.
8. Michael Green summarized the parable by saying, "So the meaning of this parable is clear. God has provided the feast of the kingdom. It is the wedding feast for His son. The invitation goes out far and wide. If you reject it, you miss the party. If you think you can get in relying on your own fitness, you will be thrown out. Many are called, but few show, by their response, that they are chosen."
9. The Parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard and their shameful abuse of the owner's servants was the most controversial and upset the chief priests and Pharisees most of all.
10. That day they set verbal traps for Jesus by questioning Him about many things. He outsmarted them at every point and posed His own question to them. "Why does David call the Christ, Lord?" (Psalm 110:1)

1. Matthew gives us a more expanded and complete picture of Jesus' strong words. Jesus was confrontational and angry with the religious leaders. Jesus tells the people to obey the leaders, but not to emulate them. Sometimes it is necessary to be bold.

2. Jesus pronounced seven woes on the religious leaders. Seven has come to be understood as the "number of perfection" or the "number of completeness." He accuses the religious leaders of not practicing what they preach, of doing things for show. Jesus said don't let them call you "father". Don't put any Christian leader on a pedestal. Pastors are called "not to be served, but to serve" the people of God.

1) First, Jesus accuses the Pharisees of rejecting the Kingdom themselves and keeping others from coming into it.

2) Second, the Pharisees are converting people to their own set of rules and regulations, which will enslave them more. Rules will never benefit anyone's eternal condition. Legalism is not Christianity.

3) The third woe is that the Pharisees sought ways to circumvent and break their own rules. Jesus said, "Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay!"

4) The fourth woe is directed against the mentality that carries external rules to the extreme while ignoring basic inner attitudes and the actions that would come from them.

5) The number five woe was that the Pharisees took care of the self that they presented to the world - 'it only matters what others see' - but what really counts is whether or not God see us as righteous since He looks on the inside.

6) Sixth, these men looked good on the outside but inside they were dead men. There is nothing as repulsive as a dead religion.

7) Lastly, the Pharisees were what Michael Green calls "monument keepers." Jesus said the Pharisees were the not legitimate heirs of the prophets but of the ones who murdered the prophets. He called them snakes and a brood of vipers.

3. Jesus expects they will soon prove if they are on the side of the prophets or their killers by the way they treat Him and His apostles.

4. Jesus made one last plea to Jerusalem and its people to repent. He then left the Temple with His disciples and would not enter again. Then Christ began to talk to His disciples about the end of the Temple and the end of the age.

1. Matthew parallels what Mark and Luke give us, but then he relates additional material in the last portion of chapter 24 and chapter 25. It begins with an inquiry about when the destruction of the Temple will take place. The Christians were able to flee when the destruction of the Temple took place in 70 A.D. because of this warning. Although there are others who disagree with me, it seems clear to me that the end of this chapter refers to the return of Christ at the end of the age.

2. There are some people, called “preterists”, who will say that everything in the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled in 70 A.D. As horrible as the destruction of Israel was in 70 A.D., it seems to me that Jesus is talking about His victorious return.

3. The “futurists” relegate these chapters to the future. According to them, all of these things will happen in the future during the tribulation. The events will lead up to the tribulation, Christ’s return, and the rapture of the church before the time of the tribulation. I see, along with most students of the Bible, this as being partly fulfilled in 70 A.D. and partly to be fulfilled at the end of the age.

4. “Dispensationalists”, people who believe in a “pre-tribulation rapture” of the church, appeal to the 24th chapter of Matthew for their view. They believe that Christ will “secretly” return and rapture His church. The dead in Christ will rise, but the dead who did not believe in Christ will be left on earth with those still living who have not trusted Christ. Then there will be a period of 7 years when the unevangelized will have another chance while Christ deals with the Jewish nation.

5. Matthew 24:8 is less than explicit about these matters. Jesus tells us His return will catch people by surprise. Therefore, we should keep watch and be ready.

6. The passage teaches that Christ’s return will be sudden. It does not place the Second Coming either before or after a tribulation period. A simple reading of the Discourse would place it after the tribulation. The idea of His return being secret is absent from the text. It says “the Son of Man will come on clouds of glory.”

7. Every New Testament passage dealing with the Second Coming warns against date setting. No one knows the date or time.

8. The parables of chapter 25 are unique to Matthew. Remember that parables are meant to make one point and only one point. The main point of this parable is very clear - ‘since you don’t know when the bridegroom is coming you’d better be prepared for Him’.

9. The Parable of the Talents occurs in a different form in Luke 19. God has entrusted each of us with a certain treasure and one day He will demand an accounting of what we have done with that treasure.

10. The Parable of the Sheep and Goats appears only in Matthew. Some have read this passage and concluded there is a kind of “works salvation.” That is totally inconsistent with the whole teaching of the New Testament. This parable teaches us that there will be a separation at the end of the age. The sheep will spend eternity with Christ and the goats will be cast out.

11. The Son of Man will return in glory and as Judge. Are you prepared?

1. After the confrontation with the religious leaders, Jesus left and gave His disciples the Olivet Discourse. He then went to Bethany. It was here that He was anointed by the woman who showed her love for Him by anointing Him with precious ointment before His death. Sometime after this, Judas agreed with the religious leaders to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

2. Thursday, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Jesus celebrated the Passover. Alone with the disciples He instituted “The Lord’s Supper – the Communion Service.”

3. The Passover meal had been celebrated for years by the Jews to point toward the coming of the Christ. Jesus changed the meal and gave it a whole new meaning. To the Jew to ‘eat the flesh and drink the blood’ would be an abomination. Jesus said to them, “Take and eat. This is my body. Drink all of you. This is my blood of the New Covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

4. Michael Green writes, “The separation of the body from the blood point to death and a violent death at that. The disciples are to be nourished continually by depending on the death of Jesus. That seems to be the thrust of the words.” Catholics understand Jesus’ words to mean it was literally His body and blood; Protestants believe that it represented His body and blood.

5. We need to come with the utmost reverence to the feast Jesus instituted. It brings the promise of the future table of fellowship with Jesus in the Kingdom.

6. The blood points us back to Jeremiah 31. There are all kinds of covenants in the Bible, but there could be no covenant without the shedding of blood. The New Covenant was not sealed with the blood of an animal, but with Christ’s own blood for the forgiveness of sin.

7. The Old Testament sacrificial system did not forgive sin, it only covered it. Christ’s death changed that and grants forgiveness of sin.

8. Matthew’s Gospel parallels closely the other synoptic Gospels, but again Matthew hits the theme of fulfillment of prophecy. He again quoted from Zechariah. “I will strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”