

## The Gospel according to Matthew notes

Traditionally this Gospel was regarded as the first to be written, but this was probably because it was always the first in the list and being the longest. Also it was the first to bear the name of an Apostle.

The assumption was that the author translated the 'Sayings' from Aramaic into Greek. Also his understanding of Jewish tradition and rituals would fit with Matthew Levi being of the tribe of Levi and a tax collector.

The author employs Hebrew when quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures, rather than the Septuagint Greek. He goes to great lengths to show that Jesus fulfils the prophecies of the Old Testament. Early Christian figures and sources all accepted Matthew as the Author.

Current studies now understand that Mark's Gospel being much earlier is certainly the source for most of the structure and content of Matthew and that it's author was probably a Christian teacher and a disciple of the Apostles. It is unlikely that Matthew an eye witness of Jesus, would have used Mark, a non witness as a source for the Gospel.

As to the date of composition in the current form that comes down to us from the Greek texts; it seems to have been known to Ignatius of Antioch so not later than AD 110. the rabbinical academy of Yamnia/Yavneh seems to have been in dialogue with the author of Matthew, which would place the composition in the decades of AD 80-90.

The intended audience appears to be aimed at a community of Jewish Gentile Christians somewhere in Syria, probably Antioch or Caesarea by the Sea.

*(The rabbinical academy at Yavneh was established just after [Titus destroyed Jerusalem](#). Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai had escaped besieged Jerusalem, smuggled out in a coffin. He made an appeal to the newly appointed emperor, Vespasian, asking to set up a peaceful rabbinical academy in the nearby town of Yavneh, promising that it would be purely religious and not political or military in nature. Vespasian agreed.)*

## Theology of Matthew

the Gospel has two central focuses. 1/Jesus as the Christ, 2/and the proclamation of the Kingdom of God being near.

The title Son of God is shown as being especially important stated at crucial moments in the story. The baptism, Peter's Profession, the Transfiguration, the trial of Jesus and the Crucifixion.

The Title 'Son of Man' is seen throughout the story and the public title that Jesus calls himself.

The Kingdom of God is the main theme and promise, the goal, salvation for a redeemed creation on earth as in heaven. Justice, righteousness is the response of obedience to God. The Mosaic Law, Torah, is affirmed but not the Pharisaic development of it. It is the ethical core of the Law and the commandment of Love that is the focus of the teaching.

There is a presumption of faith in Christ and the Gospel provides guidelines for the community with authoritative leaders. There is no illusion of the frailness of the people's faith but they are called to worldwide Mission. To establish a new covenant with God and all the People, through Jesus. The old outcasts of Israel and the Gentiles as a new People of God.

The mission of Jesus is that he came not to destroy but to fulfil, the OT and God's Law.

## Outline of the Gospel

There have been several attempts to discover an outline structure of the Gospel. Unlike Mark's mathematical structure of his Gospel, the pattern here seems to follow a series of Narrative and Discourse passages. Some have tried to make it fit a new kind of Pentateuch, 5 books consisting of narrative and discourse, with a prologue and conclusion. Some try to show that there are 6 books, others have divided it into 11 or 12. But these attempts all have problems of making the Gospel fit into an intelligent structure. For the purpose of this study, I have tried to follow a 12 section outline.

### **1} Birth and Beginnings**

1:1-4:22

Genealogy and Birth 1:1-25

Magi visit 2:1-12

Egypt and return to Nazareth 2:13-23

### **2} Ministry in Galilee**

John the Baptist 3:1-12

Baptism of Jesus 3:13-17

Temptation in the Desert 4:1-11

Beginning of the Ministry  
in Galilee, call of the Disciples 4:12-22

### **3} Sermon on the Mount 4:23-7:29**

Beatitudes 4:23-5:12

Call of Discipleship 5:13-16

Fulfilment of Law 5:17-46

Almsgiving prayer and Fasting 6:1-18

Wealth and divine Providence 6:19-34

Judgement, Supplication  
and Golden Rule 7:1-12

The Narrow Way, False Prophets  
and true discipleship 7:13-23

Building of the word of Jesus 7:24-29

### **4} Authority and invitation 9 Miracles 8:1-10:4**

three Healings 8:1-15

Jesus the Servant and potential followers 8:16-22

Calming of the Sea 8:23-27

Healing the Demoniacs and a paralytic 8:28-9:1-8

Call of Matthew and question of Fasting 9:9-17

Healing a woman and a daughter 9:18-26

Healing of blind men and a Dumb Demoniac 9:27-34

Compassion of Jesus 9:35-38

### **5} Mission Discourse 10:1-42**

commission and instruction of the 12, 10:1-16

persecution and witness 10:17-33

Division and discipleship 10:34-39

Rewards for discipleship 10:35-42

### **6} Narrative and response 11:1-12:50**

John The Baptist questions Jesus 11:1-19  
 unrepentant towns 11:20-24  
 Prayer and yoke of Jesus 11:25-30  
 Sabbath 12:1-14  
 Jesus as Servant Messiah 12:15-21  
 Beelzebul and dangerous words 12:22-37  
 One greater than Soloman 12:38-42  
 Parable of the Unclean spirits 12:43-45  
 The true family of Jesus 12:46-50

### **7} Parables of the Kingdom 13:1-52**

the Sower 13:1-23  
 the darnel among the wheat 13:24-30  
 the Mustard seed and yeast 13:31-33  
 why parables 13:34-35  
 the darnel explained 13:36-43  
 Buried treasure pearl and  
 the dragnet 13:44-52

### **8} More responses to Jesus 13:53-17:27**

Rejection in Nazareth 13:53-58  
 Herod 14:1-2  
 Death of John the Baptist 14:3-12  
 1<sup>st</sup> miracle of the Loaves 14:13-21  
 Peter walks on water  
 and cures 14:22-36  
 tradition of the elders 15:1-20  
 the Canaanite woman and others 15:21-31  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Miracle of the loaves 15:32-39  
 confrontation with Pharisees  
 and Sadducees 16:1-12  
 Peter's profession of faith  
 cost of discipleship 16:13-28  
 Transfiguration and Elijah 17:1-13  
 Epileptic demoniac and  
 2<sup>nd</sup> prophesy of Passion 17:14-23  
 Temple tax 17:24-27

### **9} Sermon on Life in the Community 18:1-35**

Who is the Greatest? 18:1-5  
 Temptations to Sin 18:6-10  
 Lost Sheep 18:11-14  
 Brotherly correction 18:15-18  
 prayer in common 18:19-20  
 Forgiveness 18:21-22  
 Unforgiving debtor 18:23-35

**10} Journey to Jerusalem Entry into Jerusalem and Conflict in the Temple****21:19:1-23:39**

Marriage and divorce Children	19:1-15
The Rich young man	19:16-30
Vineyard Labourers	20:1-16
3 <sup>rd</sup> prophecy of the Passion, sons of Zebedee, leadership, Blind men of Jericho	20:17-34

Triumphal Entry and cleansing of the Temple	21:1-17
the Fig Tree Authority questioned	21:18-27
the 2 Sons	21:28-32
the wicked Tenants	21:33-46
the Wedding feast	22:1-14
Taxes tribute to Caesar	22:15-22
Resurrection Torah and David's Son	22:23-46
Against Scribes and Pharisees and Lament over Jerusalem	23:1-39

**11} End Times, Judgement and Trial of Christ 24:-26:75**

Beginning of great sorrows	24:1-25
the Coming of the Son of Man	24:26-44
the good and bad steward	24:45-51
the ten Bridesmaids	25:1-13
The Talents	25:14-30
Last Judgement	25:31-46
conspiracy against Jesus	26:1-5
anointing and betrayal	26:6-16
Passover Meal and Eucharist and denial foretold	26:17-35
Gethsemane and arrest, Sanhedrin	
Peter's denial	26:36-75

**12} Passion and Resurrection 27:-28:20**

Death of Judas Jesus before Pilate,	27:1-26
Mockery and crucifixion of Jesus	27:27-56
Burial and guarded Tomb	27:57-66
Empty Tomb, appearance of Jesus to the women	28:1-10
lies of the Chief Priests	28:11-15
Jesus appears In Galilee and the great Commission	28:16-20

**Matthew 1-25 A royal Son, Genealogy and Birth  
Gn. 5:1, Gn 22:18, 2Sam. 7:12-13, Cat. 430-440**

The Genealogy here compresses the whole of Hebrew history about 1,800 years into 17 verses.

It is the story of salvation and the people mentioned have significant roles in that story and it places Jesus into the context of this people of God.

Moreover, it shows how Jesus is grafted onto a royal line and how he is the legitimate heir to the kingdom of not only Judah, but the whole of Israel. However, it also shows that Jesus is not the biological descendent of David, rather that Joseph who is, adopts Jesus the son of Mary, as his son.

The lineage of Mary is not given here. The only hint at her lineage is given in the Gospel according to Luke, being the cousin of Elizabeth who is a descendant of Aaron. Thereby being of the tribe of Levi.

The first two words are *biblos geneleos* in Greek like the Book of Genesis and John's prologue.

The Names of Jesus is the Greek form of Hebrew Joshua, one of the most popular names of the period. Yahweh Saves or Yahweh Help. Messiah, the anointed, Christ. The expected Messiah of the time was one of the three figure of the past, Royal King, Holy High Priest or Miracle working Prophet...

Only Matt. Emphasises Jesus as the Royal Christ, son of David.

The genealogy is composed as three parts, from Abraham to David, from David to exile, from exile to Jesus. Each part is supposed to have 14 generations. This is not supposed to be an accurate historical list since there are at least five names omitted in the second part and some added that do not appear to be blood related. The mention of women, significant in that they had a special role in the history of Israel. All had either an irregular Marriage, or they had some extra-ordinary character and all of non-Israeli origin. Gentiles are part of Salvation History.

The Birth of Jesus 1:18-25 *Deut.22:13-24*

Betrothal a legal first stage of Jewish marriage before witnesses the bride stays with parents for a while before the coming together and consummation of the marriage.

Mary was found to be with child before the coming together. Joseph an upright man.

Has a dream of angels, the annunciation is to him. He is to name the child Jesus, yet the prophesy says he will be called Emmanuel, 'God with us'. To name a child is to accept it as one's own.

The angel tells Joseph to name the child Jesus, 'Yahweh saves' but then says that the child is the one who saves his people.

The fulfilment of prophesy Isa. 7:14. Matt. Has about 60 quotations from the OT.

**2:1-23 Magi and flight to Egypt Nm. 24;17, Mi. 5;1. Ps.2**

In this chapter Matt. Contrasts two different responses to the Birth of Jesus.

1. The Magi who seek him out to make homage.

2 Herod and the court seek him out to destroy him.

Here right at the start of the Gospel we have the tone and the plot, the so called people of God reject and want to destroy the Son of God, while the gentiles accept and worship.

It is a kind of mirror image of Israel's suffering and hopes under the tyranny of kings of old.

Herod assembles the court a phrase that is repeated again at the end of the story.

Bethlehem, the humble home of Ruth, David's ancestor. Matt. Changes the Clans of Judah to the Rulers of Judah. The Magi enter the house to see the child and his Mother.

The flight into Egypt and the massacre of the innocents 2:13-23

Ex. 4:19, Isa.11:9-11, Hos. 11:1.

Egypt was the traditional place of refuge for the Israelite in times of trouble and at this time it was under the rule of Rome but out side Herod's domain. There was also a large Jewish population there especially in Alexandria.

This episode links Jesus to the exodus and the origin of the Israeli people.

After the death of Herod, an angel comes to Joseph again to instruct him to return to Israel. They settle in the town of Nazareth. He will be called a Nazarene. Is this a play on words in Hebrew Netzer means branch, and branch is used throughout the OT as a symbol of the Royal Messiah. Jer. 23:5-6, 33:14, Zech.3:8, 6:11-13.

Parallels in this and the story of Joseph in Genesis.

Joseph the man of dreams son of Jacob, goes to Egypt where he saves his people.

Ex. 4:19 'Those who sought you life are dead' Matt. 2:21, 'those who sought the child's life are dead'

## **John The Baptist and Jesus**

### **Mtt. 3:1-17**

OT. 2Kings 1:8; Sir.48:10; Isa. 40:1-11; Ezek. 36:25-27; Mal. 3:23

After the return from Egypt, the text leaps forward years, narrating the key events that lay the foundation for the public ministry of Jesus.

At the Jordan river as it flowed by the Judean desert, just before it enters the Dead Sea, John preached. It was about 20 miles from Jerusalem. Why would John choose this place? The Jordan is a symbol for the Jews, of hope and new life, many powerful events happened there. The climax of the Exodus, here they became a covenant people. It is here that the prophets said that God would renew the covenant and liberate them from their oppressors.

This Baptism was a powerful symbolic action, calling the people into the desert and into the river and emerge into the promised land again. A re-enactment of the Exodus story. John preached repentance a change of heart, a change of attitude, thought and action. But here John's message unlike the prophets of old was an urgent call, a proclamation that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (Isa.40:3) John is the voice in the wilderness, preparing the way for the Lord, God. John probably comes out of the Priestly Essene sect and would be respected by the ordinary people as very special.

The people were expecting the return of Elijah and the appearance of John, his clothing was a sign of Elijah and all the implications of his return. But Matt. Is hinting that John is pointing to someone greater and as Elijah passed on his ministry to Elisha, John will pass on his job to Jesus.

At that time there were many water rituals to do with ritual purification, ceremonial impurity, But John is doing something more it is a decisive act of repentance, as though they were gentile converts being made ready to become new Jews.

Matt. Introduces the two groups of influential people that will be prominent in the life of Jesus. The Sadducees and Pharisees. They were there to investigate what John was doing. They are warned of the coming of the day of Wrath. Zeph.1:15; 2:2-3. Salvation is not hereditary. Membership of the people of God is not Ethnic lineage, but rather through repentance and faith. Think of the genealogy.

Brood of vipers,= children of the devil.

The axe at the root of the tree is not just pruning but radical killing of the tree.

Not worthy to take of his sandals. He will baptise with fire. The fire of the Holy Spirit. Christian baptism, what makes it so powerful? Unites the soul with Christ's death and resurrection, filling one with divine life.

### **Jesus is baptised. 3:13-17**

Isa.42:1, Ps.2:7, Mk.1:9-11

Only in Matt. Do we see John and Jesus' exchange. John protests that he needs to be baptised by Jesus. It is fitting to fulfil all righteousness. Matt. Does not mention that this is for the forgiveness of sins as in Mark. 1:4.

The heavens were opened to him and saw the Spirit of God descended Like a dove. A voice from Heaven this is my Son with whom I am well pleased. {A little Pentecost}. Was this scene only for Jesus? Mk. 1:10, Lk. 3:21-22. Ezek.1:1,2:1-2.

### **Temptation in the desert 4:1-11**

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

The temptations are all attempts to divert Jesus from the path of human suffering and obedience to God. The focus of the tests are on the identity of Jesus as the Son of God.

The identity of Jesus as the expected Messiah, in the form of Priest, Prophet or King. Challenging Jesus to use his divine power for his own personal benefit and taking what appears to be the easy road.

But Jesus chooses the identity of the suffering servant, obedient to the will of God the Father.

The defeat of the devil in the desert is through his human will, it is not only a personal victory, but one for all of humanity. While Jesus is always the Son of God, he is always also the Son of Man.

This story represents the testing of Israel in the wilderness. It is a re-living of the 40 year journey of the Exodus people. It shows us that we too can overcome the devil with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry. 4:12-17**

Isa. 8:23-9:1

After John is arrested, Jesus returns to Nazareth but then settles in Capernaum, a busy fishing town near a major Roman road. Matt. Sees this move as a fulfilment of prophecy. Given the history of this place, these people who were the first to experience the darkness of conquest and exile, will be the first to experience the light of God in the Messiah. This prophecy also links Galilee with the gentiles.

In the days of Jesus Galilee had a large non Jewish population, at least half. And Greek culture and language was dominant in commerce and political power over the local Aramaic.

Jesus takes up the same message as John, in this multi-ethnic land, repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is near.

The concept of the kingdom of Heaven is the core of the belief that God is establishing his reign over the world through his Messiah, the word of heaven. (Note Matt. Tries to Avoid the use of 'God').

### **The call of the disciples 4:18-25 Jer. 16:16**

Matt. Closely follows the text of Mk.

The term *fishers of people*/ missionary/ *shepherds*, pastoral two terms used often.

The call of the two sets of brothers forms the inner circle of Jesus' companions. Leaving thier nets and followed. Breaking of family ties, and yet Jesus opposes the neglect duty to parents. This scene is not the usual for Jewish Rabbis don't usually choose their disciples. Immediately they follow.

Now the ministry starts to travel throughout Galilee, teaching and proclaiming the Good News, healing all the sick, making a profound impression, great crowds followed him from far and wide.

According to Matt. The first miracle is the calling of the disciples. Why else would these young men drop everything and follow Jesus. Just what was the power of the call?

## **The Sermon on the Mount** Matt. 5:1-7:29

### **The Message of the Kingdom 5:1-48**

Ex. 33:11, Ps. 37:8-11, Isa. 60:1-3, Bar. 4:2

The Sermon on the Mount is regarded as Matt's masterpiece, it is in a way the thesis of the whole Gospel. It is ethical, legal wisdom, instruction and eschatological. The dominant theme is Justice and the Kingdom of Heaven. It is Jesus' plan of living under God's reign. He sets out the new relationship to God as their Father, to Jesus as their Lord and to each other as Brothers and sisters even towards their enemies. It is a new standard, nothing less than being perfect.

Jesus presents himself as the new authority and interpreter of the Law, which no scribe of Rabbi dare do.

Jesus went up the mountain, sat down assuming the posture of a teacher of the Law. His disciples came to him. Seemingly this instruction was intended just for the disciples, but the place was filled with a crowd from all Israel and beyond. Matt. Uses phrases from the OT; '*he went up the Mountain*', Ex.3:1 and the same in many other stories. It is a phrase that indicates that there is going to be a divine revelation.

The word we have as Happy or Blessed, in Hebrew is *as're*, in Greek *Makarios*. Meaning *fortunate, or being in a privileged, enviable, or blessed situation.*

The character of a disciple is one of being truly happy and joyful even when being treated unjustly, since God will console them. However, there are kinds of makarios, theirs **is** the Kingdom of Heaven, present tense, they **will**... future tense. They are and will be in the presence of the Lord.

The beatitudes are a reversal of worldly values and standards. It is a challenge to see the life from God's standard. They portray Jesus' own life and call us into communion with him.

The poor, not just economical, but the oppressed, the powerless and those who recognise their need of God. Those who mourn, over wickedness, Tob. 13:14, Isa. 61:2.

There are 45 beatitudes in the OT. Most are in the present tense, Matt. puts most of his in the future, pointing to the end times and the final judgement. The differences between Luke and Matt. Are easily explained since it is certain that Jesus used this form of teaching more than once and in different locations.

The meek, who rely on God, not on their own power. Hunger for Righteousness. Ethical conduct faithfully obedient to God's Law. Merciful as is God, Matt. Will develop this more. The pure in heart, undivided love of God. Deut. 6:4, Ps. 24:3-5, they will see God. Face to Face in Heaven.

The peacemakers, peace is not just the absence of evil or violence, but a state of security, happiness and an intimacy with and of the presence and protection of God. In the biblical Hebrew understanding of shalom, there is a point at which you have so much shalom that it spills out from you, and is repaid or rendered to others. And so, as you make others peaceful and inwardly complete, that makes you a peacemaker. Jesus said these peacemakers will be called sons of God. Jesus was called the Son of God. By sharing God's uncontainable peace with others, we become just like Jesus.

When **you** are persecuted for the sake of righteousness. The tradition of the prophets, Wisdom 5. 2Macc, 6-7.

You are Salt of the earth, light of the world 5:13-16

Salt a preservative and seasoning, a healing element for wounds and in hot climates vital for life. So a great symbol for a disciple.

A light of the world, Isa. 60:1-3, Bar. 4:2 show your good deeds for the glory of the Father.

To fulfil the Law. 5:17-20

to carry out the Law in his life, death and resurrection.

'Amen I say to you.' this is used 31 times as a means of showing a new interpretation of the Law with new and powerful authority. A new understanding above and beyond traditional teaching. The law is not abolished but the role and meaning is deepened surpassing that of the Scribes and Pharisees. No longer just external observance, but a radical internal change of heart and trust in God's love for the world.

5:21-32 three examples.

Anger, Adultery and Divorce. Traditional understanding and I Say To You.

5:33-48 Three more examples,

taking an oath, revenge, love your enemy.

God does not want people to avoid hurting one another but to grow in love. This is through development of an interior attitude transforming the heart to go beyond the external conformity to the Law and to imitate the perfect love of the heavenly Father.

### **The Treasures of Heaven 6:1-34**

Almsgiving, prayer, and Fasting Ex. 4:22, Deut. 8:2, 15:7-11, Tob. 12:8-10, Ps. 30:4, Isa. 40:9-11.

These are the 3 pillars of Jewish piety. This is taken for granted that everyone especially his disciples do these. But it is the motive not the act that Jesus is concerned about. Is this a contradiction to being the light of the world? Good deeds are for the glory of God. Alms were the only form of charity the poor could rely on. Prayer, public and private.

Community and personal. The Our Father. The centre of the sermon on the Mount.

Real Treasure 1Sam. 12:11, 1Kngs. 3:13, 10:14-27, Sir. 23:19,29:21

confidence in the providence of God and an attitude of worship of God before all other things. The kingdom of God should be the priority not the accumulation of possessions that could become the object of worship or be possessed by.

### **The House Built of Rock 7:1-29**

Judgement and discernment. Sir. 16:14, 28:1-7, bar. 4:3

Jesus addresses the breakdown of personal relationships, through criticism, unmerciful spirit. Your brother (in Faith). Jesus forbids judgement and condemnation of another's heart. As you judge you will be judged. Do we have perfect vision in seeing others mistakes? We must first look at ourselves before we are able to help others.

What is holy and what are pearls? Dogs and swine unclean and despised. It probably best to understand this text as related to evangelism. The Gospel is so sacred and valuable that it should not be wasted on those who have no respect or interest in the Sacred.

Good Gifts the Golden Rule. Tob. 4:15, Sir. 31:15, Jer.29:11-14.

Ask, seek and knock. We must trust in the Generosity and Providence of the Father, but by asking for what we need we show our dependence and humility.

Do unto others... Lev. 19:18. the narrow gate, false prophets, good fruit.

Scripture often describes life as a choice between 2 ways, good or bad, to obey or reject, choose life or death. Deut. 30:15-20, Josh. 24:14

Christ is the Lord and Judge. Ps.6:8, Prov. 12:7, 14:11. the parable of the two builders stresses that the foundation of our lives must be on Jesus. It is a call to action.

They were astonished at his authority.

### **Authority and invitation, 10 Miracles Matt. 8:1-10:4**

Jesus Heals 8:1-9:34 Ex. 34:29, Lev. 14:2-32, Isa. 53:4

Matthew narrates 10 Miracles presented in 3 sets of 3 or 4 stories separated by short passages on discipleship.

The opening phrase reminds us of Exodus 34:, where Moses went up the mountain to receive the old Law and then came down the mountain to deliver the 10 commandments. Jesus goes up the mountain to deliver the new Law (the Beatitudes) and came down to show the nature of the Kingdom through healing. These are often likened to the 10 plagues of Egypt and seen as a condition of liberation from bondage. Some may say miracles are not necessary for faith, but they are useful in showing that reality is open to the transforming power of God, crossing the boundaries of Social Reality.

The leper shows great faith, courage and humility, he calls Jesus Lord and did him homage. He already believes in the power of Jesus, but says *If you Will*. Jesus Challenges the social norm and touches the leper. This risked him becoming unclean and unable to worship God. But the holiness of Jesus transforms everything and makes everyone clean. Returning to his base in Capernaum this power is again recognised by another outcast A Roman Centurion, whose faith and sensitivity to Jewish Law is praised by Jesus. This story is found in Luke, in John a similar story of a court official's son, but not in Mark. The point of the story is that many will come from the east and west to the heavenly banquet, including the officer of the oppressors army rather than many in Israel who will be excluded.

Jesus enters Peter's house and cures his mother in law by touching her. She immediately gets up to serve Jesus. The word spreads and many come to be healed and have demons cast out. The Authority and power are demonstrated in the spiritual and social healing and restoration of the human dignity.

As Jesus leaves the town to cross the lake, a scribe calls him teacher and wants to follow and another want to go first to bury his father. But following Jesus demands unconditional commitment.

**The calming of the storm** (Jonah 1:) the Violent Storm/ earthquake controlled by demonic powers. Why were the disciples afraid, the pagans recognised Jesus as Lord, with power over creation, they are just amazed.

The Demoniacs of Gadarenes, also recognise Jesus as Son of God. Jesus takes the disciples to this unclean land and makes clean what was considered to be under the power of Satan. After they are restored to humanity the towns people out of fear, beg Jesus to leave them.

### **9:1-17. Healing a paralytic/sins forgiven**

Here Matt. Has a briefer version of the story than Mark. The scribes correctly see that forgiveness of sin {against God} is a divine power. Whoever controls the channels of forgiveness in a society, controls that society. (i.e. Temple Sacrifice) And so the charge of Blasphemy. But proof of the power to forgive is in the visible effect of a cure. Matt. Differs from Mark here he concentrates on the authority of Jesus rather than the astonishment of the crowds then the statement that God has given such authority to humans.

**The call of Matthew** 9:9-17 Jer. 31:31-34, Hos. 6:6

Tax collectors working for Herod Antipas were regarded as traitors. Jesus courts scandal by identifying himself with tax collectors and sinners, and welcomes these covenant outcasts into his kingdom. Hos. 6:6 I desire mercy not sacrifice. Greek *eleos*=hebrew *Hesed*, meaning loyal steadfast covenant love.

Fasting, for the disciples are portrayed as wedding guests who should be joyful for the new family of Jesus.

**9:18-34 more healing**

another very briefer version of Mark's story of the ruler's daughter, with the healing of the woman with the haemorrhage sandwiched in between. Two women in a permanent state of unclean. The father of one pleads in faith, because she is under age and dead, the other bleeding, on her own initiative and courage seeks help from Jesus. (The acts of Pilate, name the woman Bernice.)

**the healing of 2 Blind men.** 9:27-31 blindness was economically and socially challenging and often seen as punishment for sin. They call Jesus the Son of David the first time someone uses the royal title. In response to their faith their eyes are opened.

**The dumb Démoniac** 9:32-34, the climax of the 10 miracles the crowd says Nothing like this has been seen in Israel.

The Pharisees cannot deny that Jesus has access to supernatural powers, but since he associates with the unclean and sinners he must have his power from Satan.

**the Compassion of Jesus, 9:35-38**

this passage ends the section that demonstrates that Jesus is Messiah, in word and deed. And introduces the work of the Disciples. Felt compassion, Gut wrenching emotion. *Splanchnizein*.

He sees the need for spiritual leadership of the people. Only a community that nourishes its faith through prayer will be granted more pastoral workers.

**The Mission of the 12 Disciples. 10:1-42** Num. 1:1-16,

Ezek. 34:5 speaks of God coming as a shepherd for his people himself. Uniting them under one shepherd a Davidic King.

This image is also a strong criticism of the leadership of the day, who instead of shepherding the people towards the Messiah, accuse him of blasphemy.

In response to this Jesus appoints the disciples/apostles, recalling the 12 tribes of Israel, the new leaders of a new Israel, and gives them authority to do what he has done.

An apostle participates in the authority of the one who sends.

Go to the lost sheep of Israel. This includes the so called lost tribes, and those who are marginalised by the religious leadership, through ritual impurity, the *'am ha'ares*. avoid the gentiles their turn will come later.

12 men of different background, personality and culture personifies the world wide church. Instruction for the Mission. Urgent task, Rush, Take nothing, depend on God and the generosity of others. Be a prophetic sign, seek out someone worthy, bless with Peace, [a *physical force/entity*.] If rejected treat them as pagans.

Persecution 10:16-33, Ex.4:11-12, 1Sam. 14:45, Jer. 1:6-10.

Like sheep among wolves, shrewd as serpents innocent as doves. The spirit will speak through you. This is supposing a wider and later situation than the mission of the 12, preparing all the disciples for the future persecutions that will inevitably come. Not to worry about what to say, doesn't mean don't prepare, it means to listen to the spirit of God all the time, so when the emergency happens the spirit will speak through the disciple. Have faith in God and fear will not take hold. Soul and body a Hellenistic psychology, for the Hebrew, annihilation was the great fear.

**Facing Future Persecutions 10:16-33** Ex.4:11-12, 1Sam. 14:45, Jer. 1:6-10

The apostles will face hostility as they are being sent like sheep among wolves. This is to show an image of being vulnerable and helpless. But they are not to be just passive, they are to be shrewd, and gentle. An attitude of single mindedness and not to compromise integrity.

Hated because of Jesus, family members betray each other. Salvation is for those who endure. Run to different places to escape persecution since the disciple will be treated like the Master. Dan. 7:13.

Preaching the kingdom of heaven is frightening, but faith will overcome the fear. Do not fear. God is aware of and cares for everyone and every creature.

Not peace but a sword. 10:34-39 not a weapon, or an uprising, a metaphor of the final conflict at the end of the age. A sad effect of uncompromising dedication to the way and misunderstanding of others who seek a different way. Hate = love more than me.

Through the power of Satan Jesus casts out demons.? Beelzebub = Ruler of the House. || 12:29. the strong man's house.

Reward and welcome for the righteous. 10:40-42

the apostles do not preach on their own behalf but on the authority of Jesus. To reject them is to reject Jesus.

**Messengers of John the Baptist. 11:2-19** Isa. 26:19, 29:18,35:5-6

Who is this Jesus/ see hear what he does. Chapter 11 starts to look at Jesus' identity.

John is not sure that Jesus is doing what he thought the Messiah would be doing. The answer is to recognise that the scriptures are being fulfilled. Do not be scandalised by this image of the Messiah.

11:7-15 John more than a prophet. His appearance, identity, points to something special. He was the fulfilment of prophecy. The messenger who prepared the way for the Lord. Elijah. One who bridges the OT and NT. The violent taking the kingdom by force. The attempt to destroy the believers during the persecutions to come.

Deut. 1:35,21:20,32:5 this generation fails to accept and repent, so denied entrance to the promised land.

Galilean towns condemned. 11:20-24 they had the gift of seeing and being present to the signs and wonders but refuse to accept and so will be judged. A warning to us who have the gift of the Church and the gift of the scriptures and its teachings.

**The divine Son and source of rest. 11:25-30** Sir.6:25-31

the first of only 3 times Jesus prays intimately with the father in Matt. Here he identifies himself as the son. All things have been given to me. *All power and authority.*

Take on the yoke, to be a disciple.

**The Lord of the Sabbath. 12:1-50** Lev. 24:5-9, Num. 28:9-10, 1Sam. 21:2-7**Hos.6:6**

Picking Grain 12:1-14

The Sabbath rest was one of the main symbols of Jewish identity. It is covenant loyalty with God. Failure to observe it brought judgement and the destruction of the temple.

586BC. So national security depended on observance. But Sabbath rest was also a reminder of being once a slave in Egypt and a warning not to allow oneself become a slave to work. Jesus doesn't argue with the Pharisees, rather he reminds them of a story of the Lord's anointed being hunted and threatened with death by King Saul. Jesus compares himself with David and his companions and is saying that the messianic mission is more important than the demands of the Law. Something greater here. The son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

Continuing this idea the healing of the man with the withered hand is more to do with the traditional development of the law than the Law itself. Healing had become only

permissible in an emergency not for non life threatening cases. So the Pharisees conspire how to destroy Jesus. What about for us? Should we observe the Sabbath rest?

**God's Chosen Servant. 12:15-21 Isa.42:1-4**

Jesus withdrew from that place. He avoids confrontation, meanwhile the crowds follow and he continues to heal but warns the people not to make him known. The withdrawal is not a set back but part of the plan fulfilling Isa.42. And a hope for the gentiles. Note the same words as at the baptism.

**Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit 12:22-37**

another healing and another charge of being in league with the devil. They cannot deny Jesus has supernatural power, but where from? Jesus has invaded the stronghold of the Devil and taken his property = those enslaved by evil. And those who are denying the Holy Spirit has the power to heal and forgive blaspheme. It is the people who oppose the Spirit cut themselves off from the healing of the Spirit claiming that it is the Spirit of evil. And so Jesus calls them children of Vipers= Satan, resisting the kingdom of Heaven.

**Sign of Jonah 12:38-50**

Only those opposed to Jesus call him teacher. The sign of Jonah being 3days in the sea creature a symbol of dying and being resurrected. Something greater than Jonah and Soloman. Those who do the will of My Heavenly Father are my family.

**Parables of the kingdom 13:1-58**

Matt. Now changes style and relates 8 parables to explain the Kingdom of Heaven.

This surprises the disciples and ask why. A parable a cryptic story intended to stimulate thought or sometimes to condemn the sins of the people. The mysteries of the kingdom have been given to the disciples but not to those who will not follow. Those open to the teaching will get more but those closed to it will lose more. Some will look but not see, hear but not listen or try to understand, they will end up blind and deaf.

The parable of the sower, very familiar story, punch line **yield a crop of a hundred fold**. Impossible at that time!

Those who will not try to understand have become deaf and blind, with hearts grown dull.

The parable of **the darnel in the wheat**. An enemy has done this. Punch line, Do not weed it out wait until the harvest. Wheat and Darnel are similar but the latter poison, to wait until the harvest to separate them means very painstaking patience.

The mustard seed, and the yeast. Great things with small beginnings. Explanation to the disciples, is eschatological, relating to the end times. The righteous will shine like the sun.

**Three Parables 13:44-53** the treasure hidden in a field, the precious pearl, the dragnet. The first 2 seem to be encouraging dishonesty and greed. But rather points to the priceless treasure of the kingdom of Heaven that not everyone can see or appreciate and that one must be willing to spend everything, give everything up to be part of it. The dragnet and the sorting of the fish is another reference to the end times. Understand? The scribe trained in the kingdom new and old things. Sir.39:2-3. The disciples are now the new scribes of the kingdom. The old things the prophesies, the new, the fulfilment of them.

**13:54-58 The rejection of Jesus by the people of Nazareth his home town**

while Jesus astonished the people in his home synagogue by his teaching. Now there is suspicion and anger, who does he think he is? We know him and his family. Why was there offence and lack of faith? Was it fear of being banned from the synagogue and temple by accepting his teaching?

**Killing of John and the continuing Mission of Jesus.** Mtt.14:1-12, Lev.18:16, 20:21. Why was John killed? The birthday party of Herod. The Jewish tradition saw Birthday celebrations as a pagan practice. The complicated marriage of Herod and Herodias was unlawful according to the Torah. John was not afraid of condemning this union, for which he was arrested, but spared death out of fear of an uprising. The dance of Herodias' daughter. Perhaps because of the oath and fear of being condemned of perjury Herod had John beheaded without a trial according to law. The life and death of John a forerunner of Jesus.

**Feeding of the 5 Thousand.** 14-13-21, Ex. 16;4-21, 1Kgs. 17:8-16, 2Kgs. 4;1-7, 42:44. Hearing of the death of John, Jesus, prudently left the area by boat. The crowds followed on foot. The compassion of Jesus is displayed again, curing the sick (no teaching) and feeding them. Blessed Broke and gave. The Jewish meal ritual. The disciples act as mediators. All ate, the crowds represent all of Israel. The 12 baskets, the 12 disciples. Besides women and children. Total could be as many as 20-30 thousand. When the total Jewish population at the time estimated to be about half a million in Palestine, Jesus fed a 10<sup>th</sup> of the people. A social miracle. A messianic banquet of the kingdom.

**Jesus walks on the Water.** 14:22-33. Job 9:8, Ps.18:17,69:2-3, 107:28-30, 144:7, Hab.3:15.

Jesus stays to pray, while the disciples cross over to the gentile country. The wind was against them. Hostile forces of the world. And Jesus walks towards them in the morning, I AM (Ps. 77:19) He overcomes the waves of death. And shares his power with Peter, who in impulsive love and faith, walks on the water until he notices the power of the elements and cries for help. Why did you doubt? Not condemnation but correction. *'Truly you are the Son of God'*. The first of 3 declarations of divinity in Matt.(16:16 and 27:54) They now see Jesus doing what only God can do according to the scriptures. In times of storm and conflict call on Jesus to save. He is God with us, Emmanuel. Those who touch the tassel are healed.

**15:1-20 Traditional Purity and vows** Ex.20:12,21:17,Lev.20:9, Deut. 5:16, Isa.29:13. Matthews Church had broke with the Pharisaic traditions, but remained faithful to the Torah. Jesus makes a crucial distinction between the Torah and Pharisaic Tradition. Kosha Laws are less important that Moral conduct. (Corban=sacrifice). Real Defilement is a result of what is internally conceived not consumed from outside. Jesus reminder of the weeds among the wheat.

**The faith of the Canaanite Woman and the crowds.** 15:21-31. Gen. 10;15-19 Deut.14:1.

The lost sheep of Israel, Children of God and children of Canaan. She did homage and called Lord help me. She is confident of Jesus' divine power. House dogs! They are given the scraps and part of the family. She had faith, humility and perseverance and wit. The healings that follow are probably gentiles and so become part of the restored Israel.

**The feeding of the 4 thousand.** 15:32-39.

this story is almost the same as the earlier feeding of the 5 thousand. The difference is that the crowds are gentiles. The location suggests the Decapolis region, the gentiles are given a smaller share of the bread of the children of Israel. Canaan was originally the land of 7 nations, 7 baskets. Deut. 7:1.

**The Demand for a Sign** 16:1-28. Deut. 1:35, 32:5, Jon. 2:1-11

Pharisees and Sadducees are sent to question him, they want evidence of authority for his mission from God. Jesus points out that they are adept at worldly signs and predictions but are blind to the spiritual signs of the times. He calls them an evil and unfaithful generation, recalling the exodus times. Despite being witness to many miracles of Moses they rebelled against God. Now at the beginning of the messianic age history is repeating. The sign of Jonah, another reference to Jonah and the resurrection. Jesus left them and went away.

**The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.** Their teaching and traditions. The disciples still have not got it. It is not forgetting food, but forgetting the teaching of Jesus. How could they be worried about the next meal when the Messiah was sitting with them. The yeast. The potential of the conflicting doctrines of the Pharisaic and Sadducees corrupting the teaching of Jesus. These sects were still influential at the time Matthew was written.

**Peter's profession of faith.** 16:13-20. 2Sam. 7:8-17, 1Chron. 17:3-15, Ps. 2:7, Isa. 22:22. This is the climax of the first half of the Gospel.

Leaving the sea of Galilee, they walk about 20 miles north to Caesarea Philippi. This is a Hellenistic City, mostly gentile and the home of a popular shrine to Pan.

Who do people say the Son of Man is? Popular perception was that he is a prophet. But who do you say I am. The Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Peter's statement makes it clear that the Son of the Living God is more profound than any title of any Israelite King before. By adding these words Matthew is removing any idea of a military Messiah for Jesus. On this rock. A pun on Peter's name Kepha, (Aramaic=boulder) Petros, (Greek). Authority to bind and loose, the devil given to all the disciples but to Peter the Keys of the kingdom, the Church=ekklesia, from the OT meaning of assembly of the people of God. The symbol of the chief steward of the king. The gates of Hades, the cave of Pan that leads down to the underworld. Tell no one, lest they misunderstand.

**Prediction of the Passion** 16:21-23. Isa.52:13-53:12. Dan. 9:26, Hos. 6:2.

Going towards Jerusalem begins a chain of events that will mean suffer greatly and death, but a glimmer of hope of resurrection. Peter refuses to listen to such talk of what he thinks as defeat. Get behind Me Satan! Now Peter is a stumbling rock. When Peter is open to and listens to the revelation of God, he is a foundation Rock but when he thinks as a weak human, he is the obstacle.

**The demands of Discipleship** 16;24-28.Ps. 49:8-9

as a follower of Christ one must be willing to embrace the will of God and do whatever Christ does and be treated in the same way. To lose one's life in order to find it. Total surrender to the will of God. Some standing here will see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom? A puzzle with many possible answers.

The transfiguration, resurrection, the final coming in Glory =Parousia?

**The Transfiguration 17:1-8**, Ex.24:13-16, Deut. 16:13-15, Dan. 7:9.

this event is narrated from the disciples' perspective. The 6<sup>th</sup> day after the profession of Peter and the prediction of the passion in Jerusalem.

A high mountain is a symbol of revelation in the OT. The location, Carmel, Tabor, or Hermon? He was transfigured. The theme of physical change is common in classical pagan theology, so much so that Luke avoids the term in his account of the event. Jesus becomes a being of Light, his nature becomes transparent to his inner circle. Like Moses but someone greater. Where Moses received a divine revelation, Jesus is revealed to the disciples as the son of God. Unlike Moses' transfiguration which was a reflection of Glory, Jesus' is his own Glory.

The symbolic meaning of Moses and Elijah, the law giver and the prophet. Both encountered God on the holy Mountain, both figures were part of the expected end times. The cloud cast a shadow, Ex.13:21-22, 40:23-28, 1Kgs. 8:10-11. the voice repeated what was said at the Baptism with the added Listen to Him. See the contrast with the crucifixion scene. The tents dwellings of God.

**John and Elijah 17:9-13**

coming down the mountain, tell no one. Keep the secret of the messianic identity.

The scribes were right to expect Elijah but they missed him in John.

**17:14-23 Jesus cures a boy possessed.**

The Sinai parallel continues, he comes down the mountain to be greeted with his disciples lack of faith. A man with great reverence knelt before Jesus and calls him Lord. Jesus is annoyed at the faithless followers. He rebuked the demon which immediately came out. The mustard seed a metaphor for anything is possible with faith. Another prediction of the passion.

**17:24-27 the Temple Tax.** Ex. 30:13-16, Neh. 10:32-33

Back in Peter's house, the collector asks for the 2Drachma tax. There was some question as to the origin of this tax, post-exilic or from the time of Moses. The claim was that the Pharisees invented it. To pay it would side with the Pharisees. Who pays the tax foreigners or the king's own sons? The sons of the King are exempt= God's son. However Jesus pays so as to avoid more tension. Giving to the temple is not going to violate moral principles, but may help to build bridges.

**18:1-35 true Greatness.**

**Humility 18:1-9** Ezek. 34: Jer.23:1-4, Tob. 12:12-15.

who is the greatest? Could this question be related to Peter and the inner circle who seem to be getting all the attention. The child as a visual aid. Turn away from worldly attitudes in viewing the kingdom. Or will not enter. Num.20:24, Judges 18:9. follows of Jesus=one such child as this. One who causes them to sin, recalling the demons who were drowned. Woe to the world that becomes a stumbling block. Sin causes the world to suffer. Cut off the causes of sin. The hand, foot or eye doesn't cause sin one's mind, will and attitude does.

**The Lost Sheep** 18:10-14,

the little ones. (humble child like disciples?) all have their angel in Heaven. They look on the face of God and care for the little ones. Christ's followers should do the same for each other with respect. The parable of the lost sheep unlike Luke's version here the sheep is not lost but strayed away. What is the punch line? Would a shepherd **risk** leaving the 99 alone to search for one? Go Does! Each individual is worth the risk. In the hope that the 99 look after each other.

**18:15-20 Fraternal Correction** Lev. 19:17, Deut. 19:15, Sir. 19:13. 28:4

Three stages of disciplining a wayward Brother or someone with a dispute with the community. 1<sup>st</sup> talk it over in private, 2<sup>nd</sup> take another or two as witness, 3<sup>rd</sup> tell the church community and if still unrepentant treat as an outsider. What ever you bind... the same gift for all as Peter, but not the Keys. When 2 or 3 agree in my name I am there. Rabbinical

tradition, that when 2 Jews sit and discuss the Law, then God is present with them. Now when disciples gather in Jesus' Name rather than the Torah, Jesus is in the midst of them.

**18:21-35 Forgiveness** Gen. 4:25, Sir. 28:4

this passage deals with how to deal with someone who sins against us personally. Rabbinic tradition suggested that 3 times was enough, Peter suggests a very generous 7 times. Jesus responds 77 times. Not a limit but boundless willingness to forgive. Gen 4:24, just as Cain's descendants treated their enemies with boundless vengeance, Christians should respond with limitless forgiveness. The example Jesus gives is the parable of the unforgiving servant. The punch line disciples should forgive limitlessly just as the heavenly King showed unimaginable mercy. But the reception of mercy depends of how one forgives. The Lord's Prayer.

**19:1-30 the Way to Jerusalem**

19:1-12 Marriage and Divorce Gen. 1:27, 2:24, Duet. 24:1-4, Mal. 2:14-16

Jesus leaves Galilee and heads towards Jerusalem via the eastern side of the Jordan to avoid the Samaritan lands. Among the pilgrims some Pharisees try to trap him with a question about divorce. There were 2 schools of thought, one that divorce was only allowed for the serious misconduct, while the other was allowed for the most trivial reasons. The test was to see if Jesus rejected the Torah, as Jesus had taken a radical stance on remarriage after divorce (Mk.5:32). No one who contradicted the Torah could be the Messiah. To avoid the trap Jesus quotes from Genesis which was regarded as written by Moses. Marriage is a bond made by God with the consent of the couple. Moses allowed divorce with conditions of no remarriage, to control the abuse of adultery of a stubborn people.

The disciples are stunned, Jesus seems to have made a new Law tougher than even Moses'. It is countercultural. Not all can accept it. Celibacy or being a eunuch, (eunuchs were not allowed into the temple) was not seen as a religious ideal. But for those who can accept it for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

**19:13-15 Little Children Blessed.** Gen.27:30, 48:14-16, Ps. 127:3-5

this event comes significantly immediately after declaring Marriage a lifelong commitment. There is no mention of the need for cure of the children only that the parents want them to be blessed by Jesus. As a patriarch would his children. The disciples rebuke the parents for wasting his time with insignificant minors. For Jesus the kingdom has no age restrictions. And no one is insignificant. This passage is often used to claim infant baptism as needed.

**19:16-22 the rich young Man.** Ex. 20:12-16, Lev.19:18, Deut. 5:16-20, 30:15-20

the question what good works must do to gain eternal Life? Jewish tradition held the belief that personal salvation was one's own responsibility to follow the Torah. The young man knows there is a connection between moral good and his destiny and senses that Jesus has the answer to life eternal. Jesus accepts this but adds that it is impossible by human effort alone. Only one is good. What is good work? Follow me. All points to Jesus as divine and the way to salvation. Jesus challenges him to go beyond what the law demands.

**19:23-30 the danger of wealth.** Gen.18:14, Ps.49:6-21, 122:3-5, Jer. 32:27.

how hard for the rich to enter heaven. The disciples are astonished. What will there be for us? 12 thrones and for those who have left everything, a hundred fold return and eternal life.

Many who are first will last and the last will be first.

**20:1-16 Workers for the Vineyard** Ps. 80:9-17, Isa.5:1-7, Jer.12:10-11, Ezek.18:21-23, Hos. 10:1.

another aspect of the kingdom of Heaven. Several different ideas of the meaning of this parable. For some this is about the end times and final judgement where expectations are reversed. For some it is about salvation history, where Israel is supposed to serve the Lord and through their failure the Gentiles are offered Faith in the Messianic age. Still others see it as how conversion can happen at different stages of life. The punch line here is that the generosity of God gives the gentiles equal status as people of God. (Israel). This is not through the labour provided by the worker but the gift of God's contract.

Envy is the sin of being upset at the other's good fortune. (Wis.2:24)

**20:17-19 3<sup>rd</sup> Prediction of the passion.**

Jesus takes his disciples aside to warn them in detail of the what to expect and at who's hands. And to be handed over to gentiles. And again the prediction ends in triumphant resurrection.

**20:20-28 the ambition of James and John** 1Kgs. 22:19, Ps.122:5, Isa. 53:11-12, Dan. 7:9-14.

the Mother of the brothers boldly request the highest rank for her sons. Misunderstanding what the kingdom means. The Cup of Christ= judgement, = suffering & death. Leadership in the Kingdom of Heaven means humble service, not like the rulers of Gentile nations.

**20:29-34 two Blind Beggars.** Isa. 29:18, 35:5

3 times they call on Jesus as Lord to have mercy. Disregarding the reprimands of the crowds who probably think they are asking for money, the persist until Jesus speaks to them. Jesus is moved with pity, Let our eyes be opened. They show that they recognise Jesus as Lord, Son of David the Messiah. He touches them. On getting their sight the follow Jesus.

**21:1-11 The Entry into Jerusalem.** Ps. 118:25\_27, Zech. 9:9-10, Gen. 39:10-11, 2Kgs. 9:13, Isa. 62:11.

Bethphage, = house of unripe figs on the mount of Olives. Zech. 14:4-9 the Day of the Lord. David left Jerusalem for the Mount of Olives in tears, Jesus son of David leaves the Mount of Olives for Jerusalem in Jubilation. Hozanna=help I pray, save. Pilgrims normally entered Jerusalem on foot, Jesus rides a donkey Zech. 9:9-10. This scene is full of symbolic actions and biblical references.

The crowds recognise this and start to honour Jesus as a king. But the whole city was shaken! They saw a threat to the Roman rule. The people of the city ask who is this? The crowds, Galileans, answer the prophet from Nazareth.

**21:12-17 The King and his Temple.** Ps. 8:3, Isa.56:7, Jer.7:11.

Purification of the temple 2Kgs. 18:23, Zech.14:21 evicting the merchants from the House of God. The Temple had become the centre of National identity, not only for worship and sacrifice, but for Law, commerce and government. The actions of Jesus would have outraged the authorities, since he acts as the purifying king the symbolic acts are seen as judgement. My house shall be a house of prayer, (for all peoples Isa.56:7)

now the Chief Priests and the Scribes witness in the temple the healing of the blind and the lame. Out of the mouth of infants...Jesus uses Ps. 8 to refer to himself. The Priests and Scribes rulers of the Temple of the tribe of Levi, are challenged by this outsider from Nazareth claiming to be the master of the Temple, in their eyes not of the tribe of Levi and so not a priest able to claim the right to it.

**21:18-22 the Fig Tree.** Jer. 8:13, Hos. 2:12, 9:10

the cursing of the fig tree is a symbol of judgement against the temple leadership for failing to produce the fruit, faithfulness to God. The Fig tree in OT scripture is symbolic of the people and the expected fruit. This episode is the middle of a sandwich of two passages of opposition to Jesus. This is also a judgement on the temple and the nation of faithless people. The disciples are amazed. This mountain into the sea. Perhaps a reference to the temple mount? see Zech. 4:6-9. if this is so the Jesus is the new Zerubbabel, a new son of David who will build the New Temple. And encouragement to the disciples to overcome the opposition.

**21:23-27 the Authority of Jesus questioned.**

The Chief Priests and Elders= the Sanhedrin members. The trap they set in the question, if he claims from God then they could charge him with blasphemy. Jesus typically of Pharisaic style he answers with a question. One that implies continuity with John and to deny that John's authority was from God, would shame them.

**21:28-32 the parable of the 2 Sons.** Sir. 3:1-16, Isa. 5:1-7

the obvious message of one who initially refused but changes to obey and the one who said Lord and yes but does not. And the stunning statement that tax collectors and prostitutes getting into the kingdom Heaven before them. Sinners repented, but the so called virtuous did not.

**21:33-46 the wicked tenants.** Ps.118:22-23, Isa.5:1-7, 8:14-15, Dan.2:35, 44-45

the parable again uses the vineyard symbol as the house of Israel, the tenants= the Chief Priests, who should be taking care of the people. The owner=God sent prophets. The Son is thrown outside and killed= Pagan Romans . What will be done, the vineyard will be given to others. The son should have been respected and revered. The stone that was rejected.

**22:1-14 Parable of the marriage feast.** Proverbs 9:1-6, Isa. 25:6, Zeph. 1:7-8

this invitation by the King is a free act of kindness to celebrate the Son's wedding, there is no obligation to invite. 2 stages of the invite, first to ask the guests to prepare to be called and then when all is ready to come with out delay since the food is hot. Some declined the first and second call making light of it, while others became violent with the servants for disturbing their occupations, in effect a rebellion against the king. The destruction of their city, an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem. Judgement will be hard on those who reject the call of the gospel and of the messengers. Since those who were first invited were not worthy, all the outcasts of society are called, Good and Bad. This new call is also seen as an invitation to the gentiles. But there is an expectation of repentance =the wedding garment. The one who was without a suitable dress, (lack of good deeds or unwilling) is silent and thrown out. Eternally cast out of the heavenly banquet.

The call can be a threat to those who feel comfortable and content with life.

**22:15-22 the tax coin,** gen. 1:26-27, Exod. 20:2-6, 1Macc. 2:68.

the Pharisees team up with the Herodians, political supporters of the Herod Dynasty and hence Rome. This is a very strange union, they were bitter opponents in every way except in their dislike of Jesus. The gushing compliments try to hide the trap. Is it lawful to pay tax to Caesar or not? A serious trap, if yes then he approves of Roman rule, if no, he could be accused of a tax revolt to the Romans. By producing the coin, the Pharisees are publicly exposed as hypocrites. They may be patriots in principle, but they pay the tax. The coin with the image of Tiberius Caesar, with the inscription 'Son of the divine Augustus, great High Priest.' totally offensive to devout Jews. Jesus immediately makes the claim of Caesar is subordinate to God. What belongs to God is the human person, the true image of God.

**22:23-33 Sadducees and Resurrection.** Gen.38:8, Exod. 3:6, Deut.25:5-6

The Sadducees were a kind of aristocratic ruling class and conservative party, they only accepted the Pentateuch and revealed scripture. They had no belief in the immortality of the soul, nor in Angels or spirit. The OT has almost no explicit reference to life after death, except in the later books influenced by Greek philosophy, Dualism and Babylonian ideas of a spiritual world. They were annihilationists, who believed that the person perishes at death and that God's judgements are made in this life. It seems that they were at odds with the belief of ordinary Jews and Jesus. They were convinced that Moses disproves resurrection by the Law of Levirate marriage. Their challenge to Jesus is a silly example of 7 brothers dying before leaving off-spring. The reference is Tobit 3:7-9. Jesus says they do not know the scriptures or the power of God. They do not understand that resurrection is not just a return to this life but to be like the angels and then quotes from Exod.3:6. To God all are alive and immortal. The Torah affirms the very thing that the Sadducees deny.

**22:34-40 The Greatest Commandment** Lev.19:18, Deut. 6:5

Now the Pharisees challenge Jesus, it is not a trap but a test to see if Jesus is orthodox. They were interested in popular summaries of the core of the Law. The answer is part of the creed of Israel the Shema! Hear O Israel... 'you shall Love...' the love here is covenant fidelity. Heart here means will, soul means life. And Mind is added here meaning intelligence. Strength as in Mark 12:30, is dropped. A new moral development is the right form of self-love and of neighbour. The whole of the Law and the prophets are contained in this statement. The rabbis taught that the world hangs on the Torah, Temple service and deeds of loving kindness= truth, judgement and peace. Here Matthew makes the Torah depend on deeds of Love. The whole purpose of divine scripture is to bring us out of ourselves to love serve God and our fellow Human beings.

**22:41-46 Davidic Messiah and Divine Lord.** 2Sam. 7:8-17, 23:2, Ps. 110:1.

now it is the the turn of Jesus to ask the questions.

The riddles he poses cannot be answered, but point to the deepest mystery of the identity of Jesus. The first part whose son is the Messiah? They answer the popular belief that it is David's Son. This is a 1000 year old expectation that the kingship of David was a covenant with God, and a promise to raise up a new King from his house, Ps.89. This gospel stresses that Jesus is son of David. The next question challenges this idea by David's own words. Ps. 110. how can David's son be his Lord? This is the mystery of the incarnation, to be both human and divine.

**23:1-12 Scribe and Pharisee are denounced.** Exod. 13:9, 16, Num.15:38-39, Deut.

6:8-18. this is the conclusion of the conflict between Jesus and the authorities. The condemnation is for the corruption and wrong teaching in the name of religion and a warning to future Christian leaders to avoid failure in pastoral ministry and the love of titles. Jesus recognises the teaching of the Pharisees but condemns their practice of no compassion when imposing strict rules of purity and other rituals. And that they make their observance of faith a show rather than service. What Jesus' criticism is about the wanting of honour and praise from people rather than approval of God. The title Rabbi= Hebrew for My Great One. The disciples of Jesus are all brothers, humility is essential for ministry.

**23:13-36 the great woes.** Gen.4:8, Lev. 11:4-41, Num. 19:16, Zech. 11:17

There are 3 pairs of common themes and a seventh climax.

The language against the scribes and Pharisees is severe as in nowhere else.

Woe= Alas, =grief, Ah! A declaration of doom, preceding a curse of God's judgement. They have distorted God's intention for the Torah and inoculate their followers against the true Messiah. They are denounced for failing to discern the importance of spiritual matters, blind for confusing lesser things with more important observance of obligations of moral and spiritual life. They have reversed the sacredness of temple and altar with the gifts of

offering. Tithing priority out of proportion to the neglect of Mercy and faithmaking trivial things more important than the core and essence of faith. The focus on outward ritual purity rather than inner purity. The final curse is for them being the children of those who killed the prophets and are about to do the same to the Messiah. Fill up the measure of your ancestors= their plot to kill Jesus, the murder of Jesus will spill the cup of wrath of God. The Pharisees are totally unaware of their dire condition of spiritual blindness. This chapter is the basis of spiritual discernment and self examine.

- 1/ do I practice what I preach,
- 2/ do I help others to live by God's standards.
- 3/ Is my piety for others approval or God's
- 4/ Is my desire for honour and praise
- 5/ do I welcome people to be part of the kingdom
- 6/ do I evade responsibility by legalistic logic
- 7/ do I make ritual and pop piety more important than justice and mercy
- 8/ do I focus on external trivia more than internal attitudes.

**23:37-39 Lament over Jerusalem.** Ps.118:26, Isa.31:5, Jer. 12:7

Jesus widens his condemnation to include the City but is saddened by its lack of faith. He feels like a mother Hen wanting to protect the chicks. Ruth 2:12, Ps.36;7, 57:1-2. there is hope for the city when it will say blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. If the city will accept him as Messiah, he will reveal himself and grant the salvation they desire.

**24:25 Judgement end times.**

These chapters deal with the end times, but there is some dispute as to what exactly this means for Jesus. The Language Jesus uses is highly symbolic and full of OT references. Does he refer to the near future of the destruction of Jerusalem or the end of the world? Or are these sayings valid for both?

**24:1-14 the destruction of the Temple.** 1Kgs. 9:6-8, Dan.9:26, Mic. 3:12.

Jesus has left the temple. See Ezek.10:18-23. The Lord's presence leaves the temple and rests on the mount of Olives. Prelude to the destruction by Babylon.

When will this happen? No easy answer given. For Jews the Temple and the world was a conceptual and spiritual unity. They believed that it and the sacred ministries helped to sustain the world, as it was supposed to be a model of the cosmos. Here we get the word *Parousia*= *presence-coming*.

Birth pains, coming chaos imposters, wars, famine, earthquakes. Must Happen, Must Return to Jerusalem. Must Suffer at the hands of both Jew and Gentile. Those who endure and preach the Gospel will be saved.

**24:15-28 The Desolating Sacrilege.** Gen. 19:17, 1Macc. 1:5, Job 39:30, Dan. 9:27, 12:1, Joel 2:2.

According to Daniel the prophet, the desecration of the Temple ended lawful sacrifice, Antiochus 4 Epiphanes 167BC erected an Idol of Zeus on the High altar. And suppressed Jewish religion. Jesus used this as a warning of a future event. The disciples should be aware of the signs and run to the Mountains without delay. . Lot and family. False Prophets with great signs will tempt people to go astray.

**Coming of the Son of Man** 24:29-31 Isa. 13:10, 27:13, 34:2, Ezek. 32:7, Dan. 7:13, Zech. 2:10

Immediately after the time of tribulation of those days... this refers to the question of 24:3 when will the day come. Suffering will give way to heavenly signs. Jesus is using images from the old scriptures to illustrate the power of God's intervention throughout the world. Most scholars today think this refers to the end of the world scene, not just about the end of Jerusalem's Temple. And the image is literal passing of heaven and earth.

But with the worldwide blackout the sign of the Son of man will illuminate the world. The sign could be 'The Cross of Christ' or be Jesus Himself...coming in Kingly power and glory from heaven. For those who believe Joy, for those who don't mourning. The angels will be sent to gather the chosen and bring them home.

**24:32-35 the lesson of the Fig tree.**

This is a difficult passage 'this generation... ' but see this in light of v.33-34 'all these things,' will take place before the coming of the Son of Man. So could be soon for the contemporary disciples. Heaven and earth will pass but not the word.

**24:36-44 the need for Watchfulness** Gen. 6-8, Dan 7:13.

the exact day of the Lord is a mystery kept by the Father. Those who are not aware will miss the signs. The end will be sudden and a surprise. One is taken one is left... recent evangelical sects see this passage as the *rapture*, in that those taken are the saints while those left are to endure the tribulation. This view is backwards in eschatology. Using the image of the prophets we have mentioned above, those taken are the ones captured and judged, Isa. 8:13, Jer. 6:11, Zech. 14:2. those left are the spared surviving remnant, Isa. 1:9, 4:3, Jer.40:11, Ezeck. 14:22.

**24:45-51 Who is faithful** 1Sam. 15:33, Jer. 24:18.

The parable is the first of three contrasting responses to be ready for the Lord's Day. No one knows the time of the master's return. The word here is *Kyrios=Lord*. The parable has two endings one good the other bad. The punch-line of the first ending is that the lord will give his servant all of his possessions. The second is that the servant is cut off with the hypocrites. Watchfulness is doing the work of the Lord. A person's true character is revealed when no one is looking.

**25:1-13 the Ten Virgins,** 1Macc. 9:37-41, Isa. 54:5-8, Hos. 2:16-22

the girls must prepare for the coming of the bridegroom. Those with enough oil refuse to share. If they did, there may not be enough for any of them to complete the procession and leave the groom in the dark. The door is locked and the others are late. Better late than never? The punch line, The groom renounces former ties and cuts them off. Neglecting one's responsibilities or lack of endurance is failure to provide the oil of good deeds to do the will of the Father and the good deeds are not transferable, then to hear I never knew you.

**25:14-30 the Parable of the Talents.**

The common understanding of this story is not being prepared to work at and use one's gifts and show a profit at the Lord's return. It could also be a condemnation of the Sadducees failure to develop Religious tradition. The punch-line is obvious with this interpretation, the lazy servant is cut off and his talent given to the one with ten. However, there is another way to see this story. It concerns the sin of usury and exploitation. Ex. 22:24-27, Lev. 25:36-37, Deut. 23:20-21. the master has amassed a fortune, one must ask how? The last servant tells us how, in that he is a harsh man who exploits others for gain. The master loans his his servants talents that he expects to have an increase by them using the same illicit means he does. The Last servant could be understood as a righteous man not willing to sin but obeys the Mosaic Law. And so is punished and cut off from the people for not conforming to common practice.

**25:31-46 Judgement on the nations.** Prov. 19:17, Isa. 58:7, Ezek. 34:17-22, Dan. 7:13-14, 12:2.

the arrival of the Son of Man with his angels. He assumes the role of the shepherd people will be judged and repaid according to their conduct and placed on his left or right. The least of the children of my family. Every human who suffers and is in need of compassion. What you did for these you did for me. At the moment of death every human created by the love of God, shall stand in the presence of God and judged according to how we treated the least of the Little ones. The greatest crimes are those of neglect and careless disregard. Punishment is to be separated from the source of life.

**26:1-5 The plot** Deut. 16:1-8, Ps.2:2, Jer. 38:4.

Jesus has finished his teaching and the Passion begins. Jesus predicts his being handed over to be crucified.

The Chief Priests and elders plot to have him killed, Pharisees are not included here. Fear of a riot prompts them to not do it during the feast.

**26:6-13 The Anointing at Bethany** Lev. 8:12, Deut. 15:11, 1Sam. 10:1, Ps. 23:5.

in the house of Simon the Leper, on the eastern side of the mount of Olives.

The symbolism of the anointing is lost on the disciples. As they complain at the wasteful action of the woman. Jesus had been stressing the need to care for the poor. Jesus defends the action of the woman for the act of devotion. She recognises the value of the recipient. The whole world will remember her and the Gospel. Matt. Has omitted when you wish you can do good to the poor. And so has left an opening to those who would be indifferent to the poor.

**26:14-16 betrayal** Exod. 12:1-27,21:32, Zech. 11:7-13.

There is a contrast of the generosity of the unnamed woman and the greed of Judas. What happened to Judas to make him Betray Jesus? 30 pieces of Silver .

**26:17-30 the Passover with the disciples.** Exod. 24:8, Ps.41:10, Isa. 53:12, Jer. 31:34.

Jesus shocks the Disciples saying one of them will betray him, hand him over. When each in turn asks surely not I Lord? There is a sense of realism taking hold that each is a failure and weak willed. Maybe they are pleading for assurance that it is someone else. The fact that it is the one who dipped into the dish with him doesn't help since all would have done so. Judas is not a puppet. He has free will it is his choice to betray. All except Judas calls Jesus Lord, submitting to him. Judas says Rabbi, recognising him as teacher but not necessarily as loyal to him.

The symbolic passover bread of the Seder, which was called the bread of affliction, is now identified with the body of Christ broken on the Cross and a new sign of the passion and death of Jesus. The pascal Lamb was the focal point of the Seder, now it is the Body of Jesus the disciples are told to eat. The Messiah is the true Pascal Lamb. The wine, this is my blood... of the covenant. Now we understand the death of Jesus as a cultic sacrifice, 1<sup>st</sup> for the remission of Sins.

2<sup>nd</sup> a freely given sacrifice to the father for those he represents.

3<sup>rd</sup> a covenant sacrifice, a new foundation bond between humanity and God, united in love.

After the singing of a hymn they return to the mount of Olives.

**26:31-35 Prediction of Peter's denial of Jesus** Zech. 13:7.

on the way the disciples are told that they will all desert Jesus, But he will go ahead of them to Galilee. Again they ignore the mention of being raised up from death. Peter impetuous as always boasts that he will not fail Jesus. But then is told he will and 3 times.

**26:36-46 Jesus prays in Gethsemane.** Ps. 42:6-12. 43:5

Gethsemane =oil press. Jesus prays in the garden taking with him his little group to watch over him. Here the frail mortal humanity of Jesus is revealed. Matt. Tells us how Jesus feels, the full human emotions of knowing that he is to be tortured and killed slowly. He has followed the Father's plan up to this moment. And has the weight of the whole world of sin focussed on him. His faith and love overcomes all temptations. The companions are failing him. Maybe they do not understand the gravity of Jesus' distress. 3Times they are asked to watch and pray, for Jesus or for themselves? To pray in order to be able to withstand the ordeals to come?

The whole gospel of Matthew shows that Jesus teaches by word and example through action. Consider the Lord's Prayer, Thy will be done... Jesus addresses God as My Father.

**26:47-56 Jesus arrested,** Isa. 52:12, Dan. 9:26, Zech. 13:7.

Matt. doesn't say when Judas left the disciples. Here surrounded by an armed mob, Jesus is betrayed by Judas' kiss of greeting. It is dark and the mob would not have recognised Jesus. At least one of the disciples was armed and strikes out to defend Jesus, who rebukes him for using violence. {See Lk. 22:50-51} Jesus' confidence is now fully restored and offers no resistance against his enemies. Making the religious authorities use of armed men to arrest Jesus look ridiculous. The word robber/ bandit could also mean revolutionary. The disciples scatter.

**26:57-68 the trial at the Sanhedrin.** Lev. 24:16, Ps. 110:1, Isa. 50:6, 53:7, Dan.7:13

Jesus is taken to the residence of the High Priest where the Scribes and Elders, the whole council, had gathered. Peter having ran away now follows at a distance. The Sanhedrin should only assemble in daylight in the temple. Instead of searching for truth, they try to get false testimony. The only evidence they can get is the claim that Jesus would destroy the temple and rebuild it. Jesus remains silent until he is put under oath before God. You have said so! Implying that the answer is in the question. He then predicts that they will in turn be judged by the Son of Man. Caiaphas tears his clothes in horror of the blasphemy which deserves death.

Now Jesus is humiliated, mocked and slapped.

**26:69-75 The Denials of Peter.** Ps.51:1-19, Jer. 31:19.

Peter takes a risk in entering the courtyard but being challenged as being with the Galilean, he denies it. Again another girl says he was with Jesus of Nazareth and again denies knowing him. Another points out that his accent gives him away, and again as he denies and curses, the cock crows, he leaves crying bitterly.

**27:1-10 Jesus taken to Pilate, Judas Kills himself.** Deut. 23:18-19, Jer. 18-19 Zech. 11:13.

Having decide that Jesus should be executed, the Sanhedrin know that they are not permitted to execute anyone without Roman approval. They send Jesus to Pilate for conviction. **Judas seeing this repented,** (*some translations do not use the word for repent, but remorse*) took the 30 Coins back to the chief priests and elders. He confesses that he has sinned, betrayed innocent blood. Then in remorse and despair hangs himself. The Potters Field, Field of Blood, scruples over blood money, but non over condemnation of the innocent. See differing accounts of Judas' death in Acts.

**27:11-26 Pilate questions Jesus.** Exod. 4:22, Lev.20:9, Deut. 19:10, 21:1-8, Ps.26:6, Jer. 38:10.

Knowing that Pilate would not judge on a religious matter the Sanhedrin charge Jesus as King of the Jews, a political threat to Rome. You say so! Is a way of saying correct! Jesus not willing to deny the truth of his kingship remains silent to the charges. Roman law considered silence as an admission of guilt. Pilate is amazed at Jesus not willing to defend himself.

Barabbas, a rebel and murderer Mk.15:7, (Bar-Abbas= son of the father) someone well known. The crowd have to choose between 2 sons of the father. One who was fighting against Roman oppression by violence, one calling Jews to repent and love their enemies. Pilate realises that the Jews want Jesus dead out of jealousy. Pilates wife warns him that by a dream she knows Jesus is a righteous man. The Jewish leaders persuade the crowds to choose Barabbas. Why did the crowd reject Jesus? Is it the same crowd that welcomed him a couple of days earlier, or is it another? Or the fact that the elders accused Jesus of Blasphemy and that Pilate wanted to release him made them lose trust? This early morning crowd outside the palace of Pilate were possibly followers of Barabbas and his rebels and waiting for the verdict on them. Whoever they were, it is the Chief Priests and Elders who persuaded them to demand Crucifixion. Pilate says *look to it yourselves*, and washes his hands of the matter a gesture of his innocence of the Blood. The crowd respond saying they and their children take responsibility.

**27:27-32 Mockery and the way of the Cross.** Isa 50:6

the cohort is gathered about 600 men. Who flog him and make fun and physically abuse him before leading him out for crucifixion. Simon of Cyrene is made to carry the cross.

**27:33-56 Execution and death.** Job. 20:14, Ps. 22, 31:6-7, 69:21-22, Dan. 12:1-3, Amos 8:8-10.

Golgotha= Greek transliteration of Aramiac Skull, = Latin Calvaria.

Wine mixed with gall. Wine may be offered to dull the pain, but mixed with Gall would be further insult and injury as it could be a bitter poison. Ps. 22:19 cast lots for his clothes. A tablet fixed over his head with the charge King of the Jews. A further insult he is crucified between 2 revolutionaries.

Three groups now ridicule Jesus for claiming to be the Son of God. Those who pass by shaking their heads, the scribes, chief Priests and elders, he cannot save himself, the Rebels on the crosses with him taunted him.

Darkness covered the whole land from noon to 3pm. Amos 8:9. Jesus cries out Eli, Eli, Lema Sabachthani. Aramaic quote from Ps.22:1 a cry of abandonment, but the Psalm continues to show God rescues the suffering righteous one. So a cry of hope and faith. They gave sour wine, Ps.69:22. With a cry he breathed his last. The Curtain of the temple is torn and earthquake and many of the bodies of the saints raised to life (after the Resurrection). Terrified the Centurion declared this man was son of God. He sees the earthquake as divine vindication of Jesus and his confession is the same as the disciples made 14:33. the Roman soldiers represent the many gentiles who will come from east and west to be part of God's Kingdom. The women followers of Jesus stood at a distance Mary the Mother of Jesus is not mentioned.

**27:57-66 Burial** Joseph of Aramethea, (Mk. 15:42) a disciple and member of the Sanhedrin asked for the body to be buried. And laid it in a new tomb. Mary of Magdalene and the other Mary stayed behind after the tomb was sealed, the Jewish custom of mourning. Matthew goes into more detail of the Burial than Mark noting that it was new and with a great stone cover.

On the Sabbath the Jewish leaders, Sadducees and Pharisees, ask Pilate to place a guard on the tomb to prevent the body being stolen. They seal the stone and leave the guard. How did they know about Jesus' prediction of a resurrection after 3 days?

**28:1-20 The Messiah is Risen.** Ps.16:9-11, Isa. 26:19, Hos. 6:2.

Early morning after the Sabbath the same women go to the Tomb to carry out the burial rites that were incomplete on the Friday, and witness the angels open the tomb with another earthquake, the guards became like dead men out of fear. The angel tells them not to fear as Jesus is no longer there but has been raised from the dead. They see the place where he was laid. They are to go and tell the disciples. Then the Lord appears in the flesh to the women and greets them telling them to tell the brothers to go to Galilee.

Jesus says almost exactly the same as the angel, but not to the disciples but to my Brothers, indicating that he has forgiven them.

**28:11-15 the Guards are bribed.** The guards recovering from their terror return to the city and report what had happened. But the Priests assembled with the elders and decide to bribe the guards to lie about the resurrection, and say the disciples stole him away while they slept. But how would a fearful demoralised group of men manage to get past a squad of Roman soldiers with out being seen.? Or how could they know what happened if they were asleep? What seems to be evident is that when this gospel was written this story of the guards was still in circulation, ironically their hoax confirms that the tomb was found empty.

**28:16-20 The Mission of the Disciples** Isa. 49:6, Dan. 7:13-14, Hag. 1:13.

the story comes full circle as the disciples return to their starting place of Galilee. Where it all began.

On the mountain they saw him and worshipped him. But some doubted. Jesus declares his authority over all creation and commissions them to make disciples of all nations through baptism. His divinity is now revealed in his risen human form.

The commission is to go through all the world no longer restricted by nation or ethnic lines. By saying disciples, he is not saying converts, he want people to become listeners and learners in a new way of life. The trinity formula is sometimes disputed as it was not really defined until 4<sup>th</sup> century but it is implicit in the baptism of Jesus and at the transfiguration. Remember that I am with you always to the end of time. Emmanuel.