

**Sunday School Member Quarterly**

**Winter 2021 – 2022**

# **Matthew 15 – 28**

*Toward the Cross*

**Sunday School Lessons for Adults and Youth**

**Written by John O. Yates**



*Morningside*

**B A P T I S T C H U R C H**

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Sunday School – 9:00 each Sunday Morning

# Sunday School Lessons

December 2021 through February 2022

## Matthew 15 – 28

*Toward the Cross*

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# Daily Bible Reading Guide

Read the following scripture passages each day and complete the learning activities in this book each week. This will prepare you for Sunday School class, and God will bless you as you read, study, and memorize His Word.

## Week of November 29 – December 4

**Mon:** Matthew 15; **Tues:** Matthew 16; **Wed:** Mark 8:27-38;  
**Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 16:15-16; **Fri:** Matthew 15;  
**Sat:** Matthew 16

## Week of December 6 – 11

**Mon:** Matthew 17; **Tues:** Matthew 18; **Wed:** Mark 9:1-32;  
**Thurs:** Luke 9:28-45; **Fri:** Matthew 17; **Sat:** Matthew 18

## Week of December 13 – 18

**Mon:** Luke 1; **Tues:** Luke 2; **Wed:** Matthew 1;  
**Thurs:** John 1; **Fri:** Luke 1; **Sat:** Luke 2

## Week of December 20 – 25

**Mon:** Matthew 19; **Tues:** Mark 10:1-31; **Wed:** Ephesians 2;  
**Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 19:26; **Fri:** Luke 18:15-30;  
**Sat:** Matthew 19

## Week of December 27 – January 1

**Mon:** Matthew 20; **Tues:** Mark 10:32-52;  
**Wed:** Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 26:2-4;  
**Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 20:28; **Fri:** Luke 18:31-43;  
**Sat:** Matthew 20

## Week of January 3 – 8

**Mon:** Matthew 21; **Tues:** Mark 11:1 – 12:9;  
**Wed:** Zechariah 9; **Thurs:** Psalm 118;  
**Fri:** Luke 19:29 – 20:18; **Sat:** Matthew 21

**Week of January 10 – 15**

**Mon:** Matthew 22; **Tues:** Mark 12:13-37;

**Wed:** Deuteronomy 6:1-9; **Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 22:37;

**Fri:** Luke 20:20-44; **Sat:** Matthew 22

**Week of January 17 – 22**

**Mon:** Matthew 23; **Tues:** Mark 12:38-44; **Wed:** Matthew 6;

**Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 23:12; **Fri:** Luke 11:39 – 12:3;

**Sat:** Matthew 23

**Week of January 24 – 29**

**Mon:** Matthew 24:1-31; **Tues:** Mark 13:1-27;

**Wed:** Daniel 9:20-27; **Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 24:30;

**Fri:** Luke 21:5-28; **Sat:** Matthew 24:1-31

**Week of January 31 – February 5**

**Mon:** Matthew 24:32-51; **Tues:** Matthew 25;

**Wed:** Luke 21:25-38; **Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 25:34;

**Fri:** Matthew 24:32-51; **Sat:** Matthew 25

**Week of February 7 – 12**

**Mon:** Matthew 26:1-56; **Tues:** Mark 14:1-52; **Wed:** John 13;

**Thurs:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-30; **Fri:** Luke 22:1-53;

**Sat:** Matthew 26:1-56

**Week of February 14 – 19**

**Mon:** Matthew 26:57-75; **Tues:** Matthew 27:1-44;

**Wed:** John 18; **Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 26:64;

**Fri:** Matthew 26:57-75; **Sat:** Matthew 27:1-44

**Week of February 21 – 26**

**Mon:** Matthew 27:45-66; **Tues:** Matthew 28; **Wed:** Luke 24;

**Thurs:** Memorize Matthew 28:18-20; **Fri:** Matthew 27:45-66;

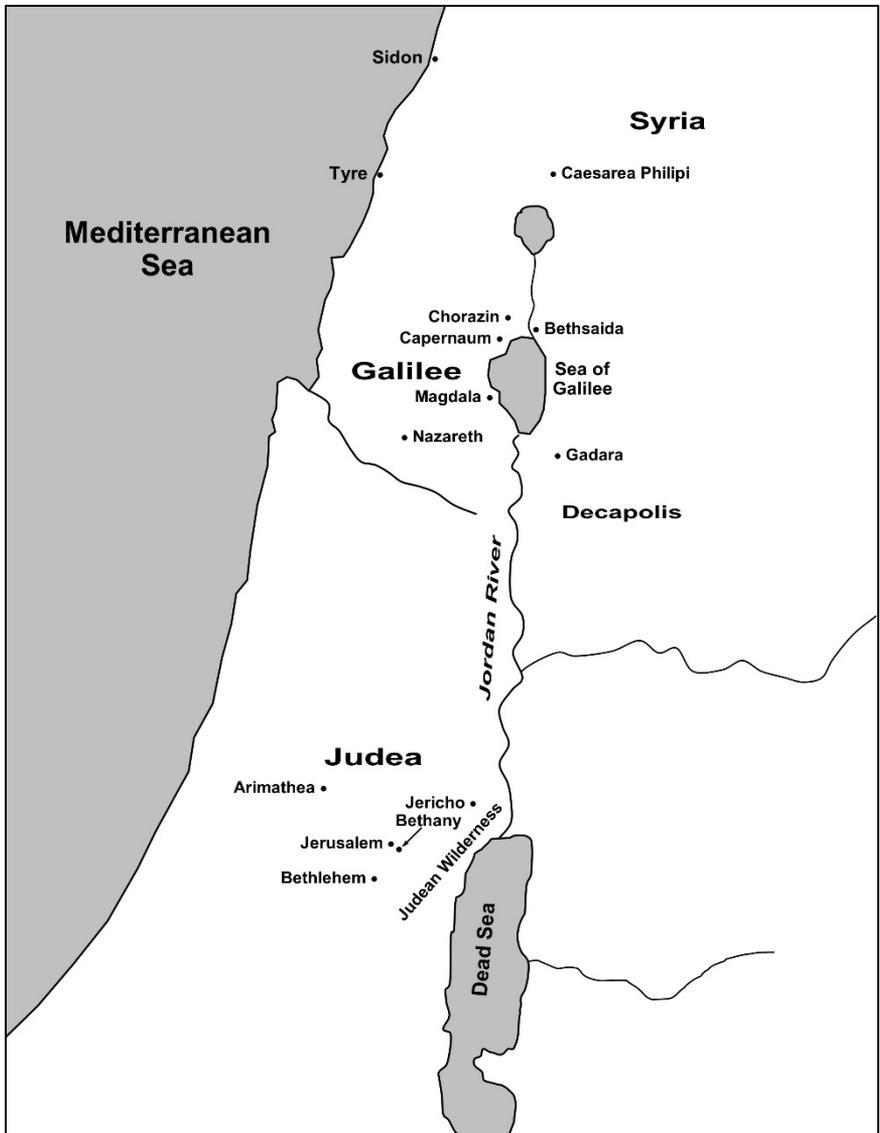
**Sat:** Matthew 28

**Coming Next Quarter**

**March – May 2022**

**Deuteronomy**

# Map of Judea and Galilee



# Introduction to Matthew 15 – 28

**Author:** The Apostle Matthew

**Date:** Approximately A.D. 50

The Apostle Matthew (also known as Levi) was a tax collector (publican). Tax collectors in ancient times were notoriously dishonest, enriching themselves by overcharging the people. Like other publicans in Judea and Galilee in the First Century, Matthew was a Jew who collected tax money for the hated Romans. Because of their dishonest work and their association with the Romans, tax collectors were hated by other Jews.

The Gospel of Matthew is a Jewish Gospel: it was written by a Jew to other Jews, and its subject is the Jewish Messiah. Jesus is presented as the Son of David and promised king. The “*kingdom of heaven*” is a common theme in Matthew. Matthew’s Gospel contains three great sermons preached by Jesus: the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5 – 7), the Sermon by the Seaside (Matt. 13), and the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24 – 25).

The second half of Matthew describes Jesus’ steady and purposeful movement ***Toward the Cross***. Beginning in Matthew 16:21, Jesus repeatedly told His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, where He would suffer many things at the hands of the Jewish religious leaders. He told them He would be betrayed, crucified, buried, and then rise again the third day. In this quarter’s study you will follow along on Jesus’ journey toward Jerusalem, and witness His death, burial, and resurrection.

## Who is Jesus?

Who is Jesus? While that appears to be a very simple question, it is actually one that has been debated for nearly 2,000 years. Many in our modern world hold different opinions about the true identity and role of Jesus. Some think He was a prophet or great teacher, while others think He was just a troublemaker from Galilee.

Other questions have swirled around Jesus for centuries. What did He come to earth to do? What does it cost to follow Jesus? If following Jesus goes against our traditional beliefs, which should we obey? These and other such questions point to the central issue – **is Jesus Christ really the Son of God, or was He just a man?** How would you answer that question?

These are important questions. In fact, they will define your eternal destiny, because if you don't believe the truth about Jesus Christ you will not go to heaven. You will find answers to these important questions as you learn about Jesus' dealings with His followers and with some of His opponents.

### Tradition or Jesus – Which Should We Obey?

**Matt. 15:1** Where did these scribes and Pharisees come from?

Jesus was more than 80 miles away from Jerusalem. **Scribes** were experts in the Old Testament Law, and the **Pharisees** were a very strict and legalistic sect of the Jews. They asked Jesus a question.

**Matt. 15:2** “Why do thy \_\_\_\_\_ transgress the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_? For they wash not their \_\_\_\_\_ when they \_\_\_\_\_ bread.”

The Pharisees employed a very lengthy hand washing ritual before they ate. It was not commanded by God; it was their tradition.

**Matt. 15:3** How did Jesus answer them?

God commanded His people to honor and care for their parents. Verses 5-6 reveal that the Jews of Jesus' day had created an elaborate scheme by which they could get by with neglecting their aged parents. They created traditions that violated God's Word.

**Matt. 15:8** What did Jesus say about them?

**Matt. 15:9** Their worship was vain. What did they teach?

If man's traditions violate God's Word, we must follow His Word.

### Who Do YOU Say that Jesus Is?

**Matt. 16:13** What did Jesus ask His disciples?

**Matt. 16:14** How did they answer?

**Matt. 16:15** Next, Jesus asked a more pointed question. What did He ask?

**Matt. 16:16** "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the living \_\_\_\_\_."

**Matt. 16:17** Where did Peter get this information?

The Lord revealed the truth to Peter: Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of God. He was God in human flesh.

### What Did Jesus Come to Do?

**Matt. 16:21** The disciples had been with Jesus almost three years. They heard His teaching and saw His miracles, but now Jesus started telling them what lay ahead for Him. Where did He say He must go?

What did He say would happen there?

What did He say would happen on the third day?

Peter rebuked Jesus for saying such a thing, but Jesus insisted that His future included death and resurrection in Jerusalem.

## What Does It Cost to Follow Jesus?

**Matt. 16:24** “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny \_\_\_\_\_, and take up his \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ me.”

**Matt. 16:25** “For whosoever will save his life shall \_\_\_\_\_ it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall \_\_\_\_\_ it.”

**Matt. 16:26** “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole \_\_\_\_\_, and lose his own \_\_\_\_\_? Or what shall a man \_\_\_\_\_ in exchange for his \_\_\_\_\_?”

In order to follow Jesus we must deny ourselves. Carrying a cross means dying to self, and following Jesus means going in His path rather than our own. We must lay down our fleshly desires and live our lives wholeheartedly for Jesus Christ.

**Concluding Thoughts:** Those are four interesting questions.

Many people are held captive by man’s tradition, which makes them resistant to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They can’t believe the truth about Jesus because they have been indoctrinated by tradition-based religions that teach them to try to work their way to heaven or to worship idols.

Why did Jesus Christ come to earth? Many people think He came to show us how to love one another or to teach us about God. In reality, He came to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. That was His mission.

Who do **YOU** say that Jesus is? Is He **YOUR** Savior? If not, please read the plan of salvation printed on the back of this book, turn away from your sins, and place your faith in Jesus Christ.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 16:15-16**. Deny yourself, die to yourself, and follow Jesus every day this week.

## Seeing Jesus for Who He Really Is

Have you ever waved at someone in traffic you thought was a friend, but quickly realized you had waved to a total stranger? Or perhaps you thought you saw your friend in a sea of people across a crowded room, but when you got there the person wasn't your friend at all. Why do we make such embarrassing mistakes? Because we can't see clearly. It is easy to make mistakes when you can't see clearly.

As you learned in last week's lesson, many people have a hard time seeing Jesus for who He really is. The Bible describes it this way: "*For now we see through a glass, darkly*" (1 Cor. 13:12). In this lesson we will discover that some of Jesus' disciples got a glimpse of who He really is. Seeing Jesus for who He really is makes a change in how we relate to Him and to others.

**Matt. 17:1** Jesus went up into a high mountain. Who did He take with Him?

**Matt. 17:2** Jesus' appearance was transformed before their eyes. How did His face and clothing look?

**Matt. 17:3** Who appeared with Jesus, talking to Him?

The Jews divided their scriptures into the **Law** and the **prophets**. Moses represented the Law and Elijah represented the prophets. The coming of the Messiah was prophesied in **both** the Law and the prophets. The appearance of Moses and Elijah confirmed Jesus' identity as the promised Messiah: the Son of God.

**Matt. 17:4** What did Peter suggest?

Peter wanted to stay there on the mountain and worship Jesus.

**Matt. 17:5** What happened next?

Whose voice did they hear?

What three things did He say about Jesus?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Matt. 17:6** How did the disciples react?

The disciples knew Jesus as a man, but at the Transfiguration they got a glimpse of His glory as God. They saw Him for who He really is. Not only that, the Heavenly Father spoke to them in an audible voice. They realized that Jesus was God in human flesh.

**Matt. 17:7-8** Jesus told them to get up. Who did they see?

**Matt. 17:9** What did He tell them?

The disciples asked why the scribes said Elijah would come before the arrival of the Messiah (Mal. 4:5). Jesus explained that John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17), was the immediate fulfillment of that prophecy.

**Matt. 17:22** What did Jesus say would happen to Him?

**Matt. 17:23** What else did He tell them?

The disciples were beginning to grasp who Jesus was and what He came to do. How should that understanding impact our lives?

**Matt. 18:15** What is the first thing we should do if a fellow believer sins against us?

What is the desired outcome?

**Matt. 18:16** What should we do if this doesn't work?

**Matt. 18:17** What is the final step in this process?

The desired goal of this process is not punishment; it is to restore the sinning brother and get him back in fellowship with the church. Those who have seen Jesus for who He really is should desire this.

**Matt. 18:21** What did Peter ask?

**Matt. 18:22** How did Jesus answer?

Next, Jesus told a parable to illustrate this truth. In the story a certain servant owed the king a huge sum of money.

**Matt. 18:25** What did the king command?

**Matt. 18:26** How did the servant respond?

**Matt. 18:27** What did the king do?

**Matt. 18:28** After his debt was forgiven, what did the servant do?

**Matt. 18:29** How did the fellow servant respond?

**Matt. 18:30** What did the first servant do?

The king learned of his wicked servant's behavior.

**Matt. 18:32** What did the king remind the servant?

**Matt. 18:33** What did he ask the wicked servant?

**Matt. 18:34** What did the king do to the wicked servant?

**Matt. 18:35** "So likewise shall my heavenly \_\_\_\_\_ do also unto \_\_\_\_\_, if ye from your hearts forgive \_\_\_\_\_ every one his \_\_\_\_\_ their \_\_\_\_\_."

The application is obvious. Since Christians have been forgiven so much by God (Col. 2:13), we ought to be willing to forgive fellow believers when they trespass against us (Eph. 4:32).

**Concluding Thoughts:** Peter, James, and John experienced a very special blessing: for a brief moment they got to see Jesus for who He really is. They began to realize that Jesus Christ is God. When they did, they fell on their faces in awe and reverent worship. Later, Jesus gave them steps to follow when trying to restore a sinning brother. He also said since God had been so merciful to forgive them, they should be willing to forgive their brother who sinned against them.

Seeing Jesus for who He really is should make some changes in our lives. First, it should cause us to **worship** Him. Secondly, we should care enough about our brothers and sisters in Christ to seek to correct and **restore** them when they sin. Third, we should be willing to **forgive** fellow believers because Jesus has forgiven us.

Have you ever seen Jesus for who He really is? Have you realized and accepted the fact that He is the eternal God of the universe? Do you understand that He is the one and only Savior available to mankind? Have you accepted the fact that He is the only one who can save you from your sins and take you to heaven when you die? If you have, then you should worship Him, seek to restore fellow believers, and forgive them when they sin.

If you have never really seen or accepted Jesus Christ for who He is, please read the verses printed on the back of this book. Confess (admit) and repent of (turn away from) your sin. Abandon your misguided hope of working your way to heaven and place your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Please do it now.

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**Project:** Worship Jesus this week, both privately and at church. Forgive and try to restore your brothers and sisters in Christ.

## Jesus Christ, the Son of God

Christmas is just a few days away. Since most Americans celebrate Christmas, the name of Jesus (in the word **Christ**mas) will be prominently displayed throughout our land for the next few days. In some places you may even see a manger scene.

Regardless of these public acknowledgements of Jesus Christ, most people have never truly trusted Him as their Savior. If a skeptic were to challenge you, denying that Jesus is the Son of God, how would you answer? Is there anything in the Christmas story that proves Jesus is the Son of God? Read the following verses to discover eight facts that prove Jesus' true identity.

### **1. The angel told Zacharias that John would be the forerunner of the Messiah**

**Luke 1:12-13** What did Zacharias see while serving in the Temple?

**Luke 1:14-15** What did the angel tell Zacharias?

**Luke 1:16-17** The angel said John the Baptist would **precede** Jesus, **preach** in the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah (see Mal. 4:5-6), and **point** people to Jesus.

### **2. Gabriel announced Jesus' birth and identity to Mary**

**Luke 1:26-27** In the sixth month of the pregnancy of Elisabeth (John's mother), the angel Gabriel went to Nazareth. What does verse 27 tell us about Mary?

**Luke 1:28-30** What did the angel say to Mary?

**Luke 1:31** "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a \_\_\_\_\_, and shalt call His name \_\_\_\_\_."

**Luke 1:32-33** The angel told Mary five things about Jesus:

1. “He shall be \_\_\_\_\_”
2. He “shall be called the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_”
3. “The Lord God shall give unto Him the \_\_\_\_\_ of His father \_\_\_\_\_”
4. “He shall \_\_\_\_\_ over the house of Jacob \_\_\_\_\_”
5. “Of His kingdom there shall be no \_\_\_\_\_.”

### **3. Elisabeth called Mary’s baby “my Lord”**

**Luke 1:39-41** Mary went to visit Elisabeth. What did Elisabeth’s unborn baby (John the Baptist) do?

**Luke 1:42-43** Elisabeth blessed Mary and her unborn baby (Jesus). What did Elisabeth call Jesus?

### **4. Zacharias said Mary’s baby was the Messiah and that John would prepare the way for Him**

**Luke 1:67-70** Zacharias praised God for sending Jesus. How long had God’s prophets predicted the arrival of Christ?

**Luke 1:76-77** Zacharias said his child (John the Baptist) would be “the prophet of the \_\_\_\_\_: for thou shalt go before the face of the \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ His ways; to give knowledge of \_\_\_\_\_ unto His people by the \_\_\_\_\_ of their sins.”

### **5. The angel told the shepherds Jesus was the Savior, Christ the Lord**

**Luke 2:1-7** Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.

**Luke 2:8-10** Shepherds were in the nearby fields. What did they see?

**Luke 2:11** “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a \_\_\_\_\_, which is \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord.”

## **6. Simeon announced that Jesus is the Savior**

**Luke 2:25-28** Simeon was a righteous and devout old man. What did the Holy Spirit reveal to Simeon?

**Luke 2:29-32** What did Simeon recognize about Jesus?

**Luke 2:33** How did Joseph and Mary react to Simeon's words?

## **7. Anna confirmed Jesus' identity as the Redeemer**

**Luke 2:36-37** Anna was an 84-year-old prophetess.

**Luke 2:38** She "spoke of Him (Jesus) to all them that looked for \_\_\_\_\_ in Jerusalem."

## **8. Jesus said that God was His Father**

**Luke 2:41-42** When He was 12 years old, Jesus went with His parents to worship in Jerusalem.

**Luke 2:43-45** What did Jesus do when His parents left for home?

**Luke 2:46-48** Where did Joseph and Mary find Jesus?

What was He doing?

**Luke 2:49** What did Jesus say He was doing in the Temple?

**Concluding Thoughts:** The familiar Christmas story reveals **eight scriptural proofs** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only Savior available to mankind.

Christmas is a great time of year to tell people about Jesus Christ. Look for an opportunity this week to tell someone that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the One true and living God.

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**Project:** Tell others who Jesus really is. Read the Bible every day. You can use the Daily Bible Reading Guide on page 3.

## Questions About Divorce and Eternal Life

Questions. Why do people ask questions? The answer might seem obvious – they ask questions to gather information or increase their understanding. When you were in school you asked questions to learn what you were expected to know on the test. You might ask your employer questions to learn how to do your job more efficiently, or you might ask your doctor questions to find out about your test results or medical condition.

People don't always ask questions to gather information. They sometimes ask questions to try to put someone on the spot or trick them into saying something they will regret. People also ask questions to try to make themselves look good. Their questions show off their knowledge or goodness, in hopes of impressing others. Questions are not always sincere tools for learning.

In this lesson we will find that Jesus was asked two very important questions. The questioners weren't sincere, but Jesus used the opportunities to teach us some important truths.

**Matt. 19:1-2** Jesus left Galilee and went to the area east of the Jordan River and just north of the Dead Sea (see the **Map of Judea and Galilee** on page 5).

**Matt. 19:3** Why did the Pharisees come to Him?

What did they ask?

There were two views among the Jews concerning divorce. Some did not believe in divorce except when adultery had occurred, while others thought a man could divorce his wife for any reason at all. This was a hotly debated issue; the Pharisees knew whichever side Jesus took would place Him at odds with half of the Jews.

**Matt. 19:4** What did He ask them (see Gen. 1:27)?

**Matt. 19:5** What is God’s plan for marriage (see Gen 2:24)?

**Matt. 19:6** “Wherefore they are no more \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_ flesh. What therefore \_\_\_\_\_ hath \_\_\_\_\_ together, let not \_\_\_\_\_ put \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Matt. 19:7** What did the Pharisees ask next?

**Matt. 19:8** Why did Moses allow divorce?

**Matt. 19:9** “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away [divorce] his wife, except it be for \_\_\_\_\_, and shall \_\_\_\_\_ another, committeth \_\_\_\_\_: and whoso \_\_\_\_\_ her which is put away [divorced] doth commit \_\_\_\_\_.”

The Greek word translated **fornication** here is *porneia*, which is a broad word referring to all sorts of sexual immorality. Jesus said divorce and remarriage are only permissible for Christians when sexual infidelity has occurred (see also Matt. 5:32).

**Matt. 19:16** What did this man ask Jesus?

This man believed in “works” salvation: he wanted to **do** something to get right with God and spend eternity in heaven.

**Matt. 19:17** How did Jesus answer the man?

**Matt. 19:18** What did the man ask next?

Jesus quoted six commandments about how to relate to others.

**Matt. 19:20** What did the young man say to this?

What did he ask?

**Matt. 19:21** What did Jesus tell him to do?

**Matt. 19:22** Why did the man go away sorrowful?

**Matt. 19:23** What did Jesus say about rich men?

**Matt. 19:24** “And again I say unto you, It is easier for a \_\_\_\_\_ to go through the eye of a \_\_\_\_\_, than for a rich man to enter into the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.”

**Matt. 19:25** The disciples were amazed. What did they ask?

**Matt. 19:26** “With \_\_\_\_\_ this is impossible; but with God \_\_\_\_\_ things are \_\_\_\_\_.”

The rich young man wanted to achieve salvation by doing good works. Jesus made it clear this is **impossible**. Salvation is **only** possible through God’s gracious work upon a man’s heart.

**Concluding Thoughts:** Jesus was asked two important questions. What do His answers teach us about divorce and eternal life?

His answer to the first question shows that God places a very high value on human marriage. God created marriage as a lifelong union between a man and woman. Christians should not violate God’s plan by living together outside of marriage or casually trading marriage partners through unnecessary divorces. Divorce and remarriage are permitted (not required) when adultery has occurred.

Jesus’ answer to the second question shows that it is impossible to do enough good works to get right with God and earn eternal life. The young man said he wanted eternal life, but he didn’t want it as much as he wanted to hold onto his riches. Because he trusted in himself and the good things he could do, he did not trust Jesus Christ for salvation. No one can have eternal life without abandoning their self-sufficiency and trusting completely in Jesus.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 19:26**. Do you know someone who needs to learn God’s truths about marriage or eternal life? Make plans to talk to that person this week.

## Journeying Toward Jerusalem

When was the last time you took a trip? Trips can be exciting; there is the planning, the packing, the actual travel time, and then the arrival at your destination. Most people enjoy traveling when the destination is a favorite vacation spot or the welcoming home of beloved family members. Traveling is not always fun, however. Sometimes we must travel to a distant town for a family funeral, to seek treatment from a medical specialist, or on a business trip.

Jesus and His disciples were on a journey. They spent nearly three years in and around Galilee, but now they were headed to Jerusalem (see the **Map of Judea and Galilee** on page 5). Why were they going there? Jesus explained in Matthew 16:21, *“From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”*

Jesus was on His way to the cross, but as He and His disciples traveled He continued teaching them and helping people in need.

**Matt. 20:1** To what did He compare the kingdom of heaven?

**Matt. 20:2** What did the man do?

The word **penny** here refers to a denarius, the standard daily wage for common laborers. These men began work about 6:00 a.m.

**Matt. 20:3-4** What did the man do at the third hour (9:00 a.m.)?

What did he say he would pay them?

The man hired more laborers at Noon, 3:00 p.m., and 5:00 p.m.

**Matt. 20:8** What did the man do when evening (6:00 p.m.) came?

Which workers did he call for first?

**Matt. 20:9** The last men hired had only worked for about an hour. How much did he pay them?

**Matt. 20:10** What did those hired first think they would receive?

The man continued paying all the workers. Those who had worked 3 hours, 6 hours, 9 hours, and 12 hours all received the same pay. How do you think you'd feel if you had been working 12 hours?

**Matt. 20:11** How did those who worked all day feel about this?

**Matt. 20:12** What did they say?

**Matt. 20:13** The man answered one of the grumbling workers: "Friend, I do thee no \_\_\_\_\_: didst not thou \_\_\_\_\_ with me for a \_\_\_\_\_?"

The man told the workers to take their money and go. He paid the first workers the wage they had agreed upon. He said he was free to do as he pleased with his money.

**Matt. 20:16** "So the last shall be \_\_\_\_\_, and the first \_\_\_\_\_: for many be \_\_\_\_\_, but few \_\_\_\_\_."

Everyone who is saved will inherit eternal life, whether they were saved as children or in the latter years of life. There are no degrees of salvation in heaven. God calls all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30) and believe in Jesus (1 John 3:23), but relatively few actually come to faith in Jesus Christ (Matt. 7:14).

**Matt. 20:17** Where was Jesus heading?

**Matt. 20:18** "Behold, we go up to \_\_\_\_\_; and the Son of man shall be \_\_\_\_\_ unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall \_\_\_\_\_ him to \_\_\_\_\_."

**Matt. 20:19** To whom will they deliver Him?

They will \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_  
Him. What will happen on the third day?

The mother of James and John came and asked for special treatment for her sons. Jesus explained that greatness in the kingdom of heaven is not achieved the same way it is on earth.

**Matt. 20:27** Who did He say would be chief?

**Matt. 20:28** “Even as the Son of man came \_\_\_\_\_ to be ministered \_\_\_\_\_, but to \_\_\_\_\_, and to give his \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_ for many.”

Jesus and His disciples passed through Jericho on their way to Jerusalem. Even though He was on His way to the cross, Jesus took time to heal two blind men (verses 30-34).

**Concluding Thoughts:** Jesus was on a journey. He was passing through the land on His way to death on the cross, but He still took time to teach His disciples and minister to the needs of others. He was very focused on His mission in life, but He didn’t let that focus on the future prevent Him from teaching and ministering to those around Him.

You and I are on a journey, too. While we are not on our way to a cross, we are on a path leading toward our deaths. Life’s journey is sometimes discouraging and challenging, but we must not focus so much on our struggles that we don’t see the needs of those around us. Like Jesus, we need to take time to teach and minister to the physical needs of others. God has placed us on this journey to be a blessing to those with whom we interact.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 20:28**. Ask God to give you opportunities to teach and minister to others. Follow His leading.

**Welcome! Or ... Maybe Not**

Imagine that you have been invited to a friend’s house for dinner. You get in your car and drive to the house, where you are greeted in the driveway, helped out of the car, and escorted up the walkway to the front door. When you enter the house you are met with a loud shout of “Welcome!” and a round of applause. Your host praises you and thanks you for coming.

Soon, however, things change dramatically. Someone asks, “What are you doing here? Who invited you? What right do you have to come into our house and eat our food? I think you should leave right now!” Wouldn’t that be strange! Welcomed as an honored guest one moment, but then questioned, insulted, and thrown out a short while later. How would that make you feel?

This is much like the experience Jesus had in today’s lesson. Remember that He was on His way to the cross. He had traveled more than 60 miles on foot from Galilee. In this lesson He entered Jerusalem. Let’s see how He was welcomed.

**Matt. 21:8** Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey, in direct fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy (Zech. 9:9). What did the multitude do as an act of homage?

**Matt. 21:9** The people said, “\_\_\_\_\_ to the Son of \_\_\_\_\_: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the \_\_\_\_\_; Hosanna in the \_\_\_\_\_.”

“**Son of David**” was a messianic title, and the people quoted Psalm 118:26, a messianic Psalm. They welcomed Jesus as their Messiah.

**Matt. 21:10** Jesus entered Jerusalem. What did the people ask?

**Matt. 21:11** How did the multitude answer?

**Matt. 21:12** Jesus went into the \_\_\_\_\_.  
What did He do there?

**Matt. 21:13** Why did He do this?

**Matt. 21:14** What did He do next?

Picture the scene. The people welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem as their Messiah. Next, Jesus disrupted all the normal trade in the Temple courts, casting out the merchants and moneychangers. Finally, He healed blind and lame people in the Temple, in plain sight of the people and religious leaders.

**Matt. 21:15** Who saw all these things?

What were the children saying?

The children praised Jesus as the Messiah. The Jewish religious leaders were very displeased, angry, and resentful.

**Matt. 21:16** They wanted Jesus to silence the children. How did Jesus answer them (see Ps. 8:2)?

**Matt. 21:23** The next day Jesus was teaching in the Temple. The chief priests and elders asked Him two questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Matt. 21:24** How did Jesus respond?

**Matt. 21:25** What did He ask them?

The Jewish religious leaders weighed their options, realizing that neither answer was “politically correct.”

**Matt. 21:27** How did they answer?

What did Jesus say?

Next, Jesus told two parables illustrating the spiritual condition of the Jewish religious leaders. The first (verses 28-32) was about a man who told his two sons to go work in the vineyard. The first son refused, but later repented and did the work. The second son said he would go but never did. Jesus said the publicans and harlots were like the first son, while the religious leaders were like the second – they said they would obey God but never did.

The second parable was about a man who built a vineyard and leased it out to husbandmen (tenant farmers). At harvest time he sent servants to collect the rent, but the tenant farmers killed them. He sent more servants, but the same thing happened.

**Matt. 21:37** Who did he send last of all?

**Matt. 21:38-39** What did the husbandmen do to the son?

**Matt. 21:42** Jesus quoted Psalm 118:22. He was rejected by the Jews but became the foundation of the church.

**Matt. 21:43** What did Jesus say God would do?

**Matt. 21:45** What did the chief priests and Pharisees realize?

**Matt. 21:46** They wanted to arrest Jesus. Why didn't they do it?

**Concluding Thoughts:** The people welcomed Jesus as their Messiah, but the Jewish religious leaders rebuked Him, rejected Him, and wanted to arrest them. Jesus said God would take the kingdom of God away from them and give it to another nation (the Gentiles) who would bring forth the fruits of changed lives.

Have you welcomed Jesus Christ into your life or rejected Him? Is Jesus welcome in all your day-to-day activities? Do you obey Him or just give Him lip service? Make Jesus welcome in your life.

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**Project:** Welcome Jesus into your heart and your life today.

## Trick Questions

- (1) Some months of the year have 30 days and others have 31. How many months have 28 days?
- (2) On a very windy day a rooster lays an egg on top of a roof. Which side of the roof does the egg roll down?
- (3) How long did it rain after Moses entered the ark?

(Answers at the end of this lesson.)

Some trick questions, like the ones above, can be fun. Others, like the ones a teacher might put on a test, are not fun at all. Still other trick questions are asked to try to trap you into saying something that will incriminate you. As you study this lesson from Matthew 22 you will discover that three different groups of Jews tried to entangle and trap Jesus with trick questions.

In verses 1-14 Jesus told a parable about a king who made a great wedding feast for his son. Through that parable Jesus taught that since the Jews rejected Him, He would reach out to the Gentiles.

**Matt. 22:15** What did the Pharisees want to do?

**Matt. 22:16** Who did they send to Jesus?

The Herodians were a political party of Jews who favored Roman rule through the dynasty of the Herod family. They tried to butter Jesus up with insincere compliments.

**Matt. 22:17** Here's their trick question: "Is it lawful to give \_\_\_\_\_ unto \_\_\_\_\_, or not?"

The Herodians favored paying Roman taxes (tribute), while the Pharisees and most other Jews did not. If He said "no" He could be accused of treason against Rome, but if He said "yes" most of the Jews would hate and reject Him.

**Matt. 22:18** Jesus asked, “Why \_\_\_\_\_ ye me, ye \_\_\_\_\_?” He asked them to show him a piece of money.

**Matt. 22:20** What did He ask?

**Matt. 22:21** How did Jesus answer their trick question?

**Matt. 22:22** What did the Herodians do?

**Matt. 22:23** Who came to Jesus next?

The Sadducees were theological liberals who did not believe in the supernatural, such as miracles, angels, or the resurrection of the dead. In verses 24-27 they presented a hypothetical question based on the Old Testament law of levirate marriage (see Deut. 25:5-10).

**Matt. 22:28** What was their trick question?

Their ridiculous question was designed to make Jesus look foolish.

**Matt. 22:29** Jesus said, “Ye do \_\_\_\_\_, not knowing the \_\_\_\_\_, nor the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.”

**Matt. 22:30** What did Jesus say about resurrected people?

Jesus reminded them that God often referred to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Jewish patriarchs who died centuries ago physically but whose spirits were still living).

**Matt. 22:32** Jesus said, “God is not the God of the \_\_\_\_\_, but of the \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Matt. 22:33** How did the multitude react to Jesus’ answer?

Next, it was the Pharisees’ turn. An expert in the Law spoke up.

**Matt. 22:36** What was his trick question?

Whichever law Jesus chose as greatest, the lawyer could twist His words to make it appear He did not respect the other laws.

**Matt. 22:37** Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:5, “Thou shalt \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ thy \_\_\_\_\_ with all thy \_\_\_\_\_, and with all thy \_\_\_\_\_, and with all thy \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Matt. 22:39** What did He say was the second great commandment?

All the Law and the prophets (the Old Testament) hang upon those two great commandments. Next, Jesus asked them a question.

**Matt. 22:42** What did He ask?

How did they answer?

Jesus then asked another question revealing that Christ is both David’s son (fleshly descendant) and Lord (because He is God).

**Matt. 22:46** How did Jesus’ questioners respond?

**Concluding Thoughts:** The Jewish religious leaders asked Jesus cleverly crafted questions designed to entangle and entrap Him. They wanted to discredit Him and get Him to say something for which He could be arrested. Jesus successfully handled each question, leaving His questioners dumbfounded and astonished. After this experience they didn’t ask Him any more questions.

Some people today use trick questions to try to make Christians look foolish. Ask Jesus to give you discernment to recognize trick questions, and wisdom to know how to answer them.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 22:37**. Read your Bible every day.

Answers: (1) All 12 months have 28 days, but 11 of them have <u>more</u> than 28. (2) Roosters don’t lay eggs. (3) Noah, not Moses, was on the ark.
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## Jesus Rebuked Hypocritical Religious Leaders

The last half of the Gospel of Matthew is about Jesus' journey toward His date with destiny on the cross. Last quarter you learned that Jesus spent most of His earthly ministry teaching, preaching, and healing in Galilee. His teaching and miracles attracted huge crowds. The Jewish religious leaders didn't appreciate Jesus' popularity or His message, so they plotted to kill Him: *"Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him"* (Matt. 12:14).

Soon, Jesus told His disciples about His future mission: *"From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day"* (Matt. 16:21). Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem, but as soon as they arrived the Jewish religious leaders began questioning Jesus' authority. In last week's lesson they tried to trap Jesus with trick questions. They wanted to kill Him, but they failed to trap Him in His words. Now it was time for the Lord to turn the tables and rebuke the Jewish leaders for their hypocrisy.

**Matt. 23:1** To whom was Jesus speaking?

Like Moses, the scribes and Pharisees held positions of spiritual authority over the people (verse 2).

**Matt. 23:3** Jesus told the people to obey the teaching of the religious leaders, "but do not ye after their \_\_\_\_\_: for they \_\_\_\_\_, and do \_\_\_\_\_."

They were hypocrites: teaching the Bible but not obeying it.

**Matt. 23:5** Why did they do their works?

**Matt. 23:6** What did they love?

They sought lofty titles and loved the praise of men.

**Matt. 23:12** What did Jesus say about those who exalt themselves?

**Matt. 23:13** “But \_\_\_\_\_ unto you, scribes and Pharisees, \_\_\_\_\_!” What did He say they did?

“**Woe**” is a harsh exclamation of warning and rebuke. Jesus said it seven more times in this chapter. He was pulling no punches.

**Matt. 23:14** What else did they do?

What will they receive for this?

They taught converts to Judaism their false, hypocritical doctrines.

**Matt. 23:16** What did Jesus call them?

They believed they could swear by the Temple and then break that vow, but had to keep a vow if they swore by the gold on the Temple. They made up the same kind of ridiculous rules about swearing by the altar or by heaven. Jesus rebuked them for this.

**Matt. 23:17** What did Jesus call them (see also verse 19)?

**Matt. 23:23** He rebuked them for meticulously tithing on household herbs while omitting other things. What did they omit?

**Matt. 23:24** They strain at a \_\_\_\_\_ but swallow a \_\_\_\_\_.

**Matt. 23:25** What did He rebuke them for next?

**Matt. 23:26** What did Jesus tell them to do?

**Matt. 23:27** What did He call them?

What did He say they were full of?

Jesus rebuked them for decorating the tombs of the prophets whom their own ancestors had rejected and killed.

**Matt. 23:34** What did He say they would do to the prophets, wise men, and scribes He would send to them?

**Matt. 23:37** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, and stonest them which are \_\_\_\_\_ unto thee, how often would I have \_\_\_\_\_ thy \_\_\_\_\_ together, even as a \_\_\_\_\_ gathereth her chickens under her \_\_\_\_\_, and ye would \_\_\_\_\_!”

**Matt. 23:38** What did He say about their **house** (the Temple)?

**Matt. 23:39** When did He say they would see Him again?

**Concluding Thoughts:** Most of the Jews refused to believe in Jesus or accept Him for who He really was: the promised Messiah and Son of God (John 1:11). The religious leaders openly opposed Him and secretly plotted to kill Him. Their system of worship, which God established in the Old Testament, had become nothing more than empty ritual. Their religious leaders and teachers were hypocrites who desired the praise of men. They looked righteous and holy on the outside, but on the inside they were corrupt and wicked. Their Temple, which had once been filled with the presence and blessing of Almighty God, was now nothing more than an empty shell.

Do we still have religious hypocrites today? Yes, indeed. Many who sit in our pews on Sunday are there simply to impress others. They act righteous in public, but inside they are lost, corrupt sinners. Their religion is just as desolate and empty as the Jews' Temple.

Are you a religious hypocrite? Do you try to impress others with your religious behavior? If you've never truly trusted Jesus Christ for salvation please read the verses printed on the back of this book, turn away from your sin, and turn to Jesus.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 23:12**. Don't be a hypocrite.

**When Will Jesus Come Back?**

That question has been debated for almost 2,000 years. Jesus' disciples thought He would return in their lifetime. Others looked for His return by the end of the First Century. There was a great deal of excitement near the close of the first millennium because many Christians thought Jesus would return by A.D. 1,000. Modern believers are not exempt from this speculation; some have suggested specific dates for Christ's return. For 2,000 years we have wondered, "When will Jesus come back?"

Jesus' disciples asked Him that very question just days before He went to the cross. In this lesson from Matthew 24 you will find His answer to their inquiry. When will Jesus come back?

**Matt. 24:1** Where did Jesus and His disciples go?

What did the disciples show Him?

Remember that Jesus had just rebuked the Jewish religious leaders (Matt. 23) and announced that their Temple was desolate: empty and meaningless. Next, He made another startling announcement.

**Matt. 24:2** What did He say would happen to the Temple?

Jesus and His disciples crossed the Kidron Valley and sat down on the Mount of Olives, just opposite the Temple.

**Matt. 24:3** The disciples privately asked Jesus three questions:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew did not record His answer to the first question, but you will find it in Luke 21:20-24. The Temple was utterly destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70, less than forty years after Jesus made this

prediction. The remainder of chapters 24 and 25 contain the Lord's answers to the disciples' second and third questions.

### The "Beginning of Sorrows" – the First Half of the Tribulation

**Matt. 24:5** Who will come and what will they do?

**Matt. 24:6** What did Jesus say His followers would hear?

In spite of this, Jesus said, "the \_\_\_\_\_ is not yet."

**Matt. 24:7** "For \_\_\_\_\_ shall rise against \_\_\_\_\_, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, in divers places."

**Matt. 24:8** How did Jesus describe these things?

The Greek word translated **sorrows** literally refers to labor pains. Just as certainly as labor pains are the beginning of the process of giving birth, these things are the beginning of the Tribulation.

**Matt. 24:9** What will happen to Christians?

**Matt. 24:11** Who will rise and what with they do?

**Matt. 24:14** What else will happen?

These verses describe the first half of the seven-year Tribulation period (also described in Rev. 6 – 9). A new and powerful leader, the Antichrist, will rise to rule the entire world.

### The Abomination of Desolation – the Middle of the Tribulation

**Matt. 24:15** "When ye therefore shall see the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, spoken of by \_\_\_\_\_ the prophet, stand in the \_\_\_\_\_ place."

Almost 2,600 years ago the prophet Daniel described the Antichrist (Dan. 7:7-8, 19-26; 9:26-27). At the mid-point of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will go into the Temple in Jerusalem, proclaim

himself to be god, and demand the worship of the entire world (see 2 Thess. 2:4). That will be the abomination of desolation.

**Matt. 24:16** What did Jesus tell the Jews to do?

**Matt. 24:17-20** He said they should flee with great haste.

### The Last 3½ Years – the Great Tribulation

**Matt. 24:21** “For then shall be \_\_\_\_\_.”  
What did Jesus say about that terrible time?

**Matt. 24:22** Why will that time be limited to 3½ years?

**Matt. 24:23** What did He tell them not to believe?

**Matt. 24:24** What will the false christs and false prophets do?

**Matt. 24:26** What reports did He tell them not to believe?

**Matt. 24:27** Describe the coming of Christ:

### The Return of Jesus Christ

**Matt. 24:29** What will happen immediately after the Tribulation:

- Sun \_\_\_\_\_
- Moon \_\_\_\_\_
- Stars \_\_\_\_\_
- Powers of the heavens \_\_\_\_\_

**Matt. 24:30** What will appear?

How will the lost people on earth react?

What will they see?

Describe His coming:

**Matt. 24:31** Jesus will send His angels to gather all the surviving Christians and glorified saints to Him at Jerusalem.

## **Concluding Thoughts:** When will Jesus come back?

He will come back **after** His sign in the heavens is visible to the entire world and the lost people on earth mourn (v. 30). This will be **after** the terrible cosmic upheaval that will occur **after** the Great Tribulation (v. 21-29). Those things will not occur until **after** the abomination of desolation at the mid-point of the Tribulation (v. 15-20), and that won't happen until **after** the first half of the Tribulation, which will be marked by false christs, wars, famines, diseases, and widespread persecution of Christians. If people claim that Jesus has returned to a secluded desert or some secret place, we should not believe it. His bodily return to earth will be visible to all. When will Jesus come back? We can answer that question with certainty: **after** all the things described above.

Jesus was answering His disciples' questions about the signs that would indicate He was about to return bodily to rule and reign on planet earth. The Bible tells of another time, known as the Rapture, when Jesus will call all true believers away from the earth to meet Him in the air (see 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-53). The Rapture will be sudden, unexpected, and Jesus will not be seen by the lost world. As far as we can tell, it could occur at any moment.

Jesus **IS** coming back. He has promised to return (John 14:3; see also Acts 1:11) and He always keeps His promises.

Are you ready to meet Jesus? The only way to be sure is to confess and turn away from every known sin, abandon all hope of getting right with God through your own efforts, and place your trust for eternity in Jesus Christ alone. Read the verses printed on the back of this book. If you've never accepted Jesus as your Savior, please turn to Him in faith today.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 24:30**. Tell someone this week about the certainty of Christ's return. Offer to tell them how they can be ready to meet Jesus.

## How Should We Live Until He Comes?

“*When the cat’s away the mice will play.*” Have you ever heard that old saying? It expresses the natural human tendency to stray from our tasks and abandon our work when the supervisor isn’t watching. This is often true for children when their parents are away, for students when the teacher leaves the room, and for employees when the boss is out of town.

Jesus Christ is coming back. That fact was established in last week’s lesson. What difference, if any, should the future return of Jesus make in the way we live right now? How should we live until Christ returns? In this lesson we will discover answers to those questions. In fact, to tell us how we should live until He comes, Jesus told four parables, used an Old Testament illustration, and revealed the types of behavior that will be rewarded in a future time of judgment.

**Matt. 24:32** What do we know when we see the trees putting on new leaves?

**Matt. 24:33** What should people realize when they see all the signs Jesus described in Matthew 24:5-29?

**Matt. 24:35** “Heaven and earth shall \_\_\_\_\_, but my \_\_\_\_\_ shall \_\_\_\_\_ pass away.”

**Matt. 24:36** Who knows the exact day and hour of Christ’s return?

In the days of Noah (Noe), people thought judgment would never come. They were eating, drinking, and getting married as they had always done; but suddenly the rain began, and they all died in the Flood. He said that’s the way it will be when He comes back.

**Matt. 24:42** “\_\_\_\_\_ therefore: for ye know not what \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ doth \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Matt. 24:44** When is Jesus coming back?

**Matt. 24:45-47** What will happen to the servant who is faithfully working when his master returns?

**Matt. 24:48-51** What will happen to the evil servant who doesn't expect his master to return?

Jesus told two more parables to encourage His followers to stay ready, watchful, and busy serving Him until He comes back.

**Matt. 25:3** What did the foolish virgins neglect?

**Matt. 25:4** What did the wise virgins take with them?

**Matt. 25:6-7** The bridegroom came unexpectedly at midnight. What did the foolish virgins ask?

**Matt. 25:9-10** The wise virgins told them to go buy their own oil. What happened while they were away?

The foolish virgins missed the wedding feast.

**Matt. 25:13** What lesson did Jesus teach from that parable?

Next, Jesus compared the kingdom to a man who entrusted some of his wealth to three of his servants while he went away on a trip.

**Matt. 25:16** What did the one who received five talents do?

**Matt. 25:17** What did the one who received two talents do?

**Matt. 25:18** What did the one who received one talent do?

The man rewarded the wise servants who traded and doubled the money he had entrusted to them. What about the third servant?

**Matt. 25:26** "His lord answered and said unto him, Thou \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ servant."

**Matt. 25:27** What did he say the servant should have done?

**Matt. 25:28-30** What did he do to the unprofitable servant?

**Matt. 25:31** What will Jesus do when He comes in glory?

**Matt. 25:32** Who will be gathered before Him?

The **sheep** represent saved people and the **goats** represent the lost.

**Matt. 25:34** What will He say to the saved people?

**Matt. 25:35-40** What things will He praise them for?

**Matt. 25:41** What will He say to the lost people?

**Matt. 25:42-45** What things will He rebuke them for?

**Matt. 25:46** What will happen to the lost people?

**Concluding Thoughts:** Jesus Christ **IS** coming back. How should we live until He returns?

In the parable of the fig tree (24:32-35) and the illustration from the time of Noah (24:36-44) Jesus taught that we should be **watchful**. In the parable of the servants (24:45-51) He taught that we should **stay busy**, faithfully working until the day our Lord returns. He used the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13) to teach us to **be ready and prepared** for His coming. In the parable of the talents (25:14-30) He taught us to **be good stewards** of the resources He has entrusted to us. The description of the “sheep and goat” judgment (25:31-46) teaches that we should **compassionately minister** to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

That’s how we should live until Jesus returns. Make a commitment to the Lord right now to do those things until He comes.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 25:34**. Live for the Lord’s rewards.

## Jesus' Betrayal and Arrest

Say the word “**betray**” out loud. Say it again. Did you notice that the very word itself sounds like the callous, uncaring, disloyal, and self-serving action that it represents? Betrayal is a terrible thing.

Have you ever been betrayed? Has someone you thought to be a friend actually turned out to be an enemy? Has anyone ever betrayed your trust or confidence? Has someone taken your private words or actions and twisted them in public to make you look bad? Actions such as those hurt very badly.

The main focus of the last half of the Gospel of Matthew is the cross. Jesus told His disciples on several occasions that He was going to Jerusalem to die on a cross. You have learned about Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem and His activities during the last week of His life. Now it is time to get to the central issue – Jesus must go to the cross. Before the cross, however, comes betrayal.

**Matt. 26:1-2** After the Olivet Discourse, Jesus said something else to His disciples. What did He tell them?

**Matt. 26:3** Who assembled at the high priest's palace?

**Matt. 26:4** What did they plot to do?

**Matt. 26:5** Why couldn't they arrest Jesus on the feast day?

**Matt. 26:6-7** Jesus was eating with some friends in Bethany when a woman came to Him. What did she do?

The disciples were upset about the “waste” of the ointment.

**Matt. 26:12** Why did Jesus say she anointed His body?

**Matt. 26:14** To whom did Judas Iscariot go?

**Matt. 26:15** What did he ask them?

What amount did they agree upon?

This was the price of a common slave (it was also prophesied in Zech. 11:12). The deal was done.

**Matt. 26:16** What did Judas do from then on?

Jesus and His disciples gathered for the Passover meal.

**Matt. 26:21** What did Jesus announce to the group?

**Matt. 26:22** How did they react to this news?

**Matt. 26:24** “The Son of man \_\_\_\_\_ as it is written of Him: but \_\_\_\_\_ unto that \_\_\_\_\_ by whom the Son of man is \_\_\_\_\_! It had been good for that man if he had not been \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Matt. 26:25** How did Jesus answer Judas’ insincere question?

Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, which we still observe today. Afterward, He and His disciples went out to the Mount of Olives.

**Matt. 26:31** What did Jesus say would happen (see Zech. 13:7)?

**Matt. 26:33** What did Peter promise?

**Matt. 26:34** How did Jesus respond to Peter’s promise?

Jesus took His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He agonized in prayer. He asked them to pray, but they fell asleep.

**Matt. 26:46** Who did He say was at hand?

**Matt. 26:47** Who came into the garden?

Who was with him?

**Matt. 26:48** How was Judas going to betray Jesus?

**Matt. 26:49** What did Judas do?

**Matt. 26:50** What did the armed guards do to Jesus?

**Matt. 26:53** What did Jesus say He could do?

**Matt. 26:54** Why did He allow Himself to be arrested?

**Matt. 26:55** What did Jesus ask?

**Matt. 26:56** Why did all these things happen?

What did the disciples do when Jesus was arrested?

**Concluding Thoughts:** Jesus was betrayed and arrested, just as He had predicted (Matt. 17:22; 20:18; 26:2). Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' own disciples, betrayed Him so the Jewish religious leaders could arrest Him. Judas heard Jesus' teaching and witnessed His miracles, but he still betrayed the Lord. He walked and talked with Jesus and knew Him better than most, but he betrayed Jesus.

Why did all these things happen? Remember Jesus' own words: "*The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him*" (Matt. 26:24). The book of Acts says Jesus was "*delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*" (Acts 2:23). Everything on the night of His betrayal and arrest was part of God's plan. Jesus was arrested because He had an appointment with the cross.

Aren't you thankful Jesus didn't run away from that responsibility? If Christ hadn't died on the cross **you** could not be saved. Thank Jesus right now for enduring the hurt of betrayed by a close friend so you could be saved.

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**Project:** Thank Jesus every day for going to the cross for you.

## Jesus' Trials and Crucifixion

Have you ever witnessed a courtroom trial, either in person or on TV? They can be very interesting. There are often numerous motions and counter-motions presented. Many people are present: lawyers, court reporters, other officers of the court, and even observers. If it is a jury trial, much time will be devoted to selecting the jury, giving them instructions, and allowing them to deliberate. Since most trials on TV shows only last about 15 minutes, a real trial can seem very slow, long, and tedious.

At the end of last week's lesson Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. This lesson is about the trials and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Our text will reveal that Jesus had two official trials, plus another "trial" in the court of public opinion.

### Jesus' Trial Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin

**Matt. 26:57** Where did they take Jesus after He was arrested?

**Matt. 26:58** What did Peter do?

**Matt. 26:59-60** What did the Jews seek, but have trouble finding?

**Matt. 26:61** What charge did they finally bring against Jesus?

**Matt. 26:63** The high priest said, "I adjure thee by the living \_\_\_\_\_, that thou \_\_\_\_\_ us whether thou be the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_."

**Matt. 26:64** How did Jesus answer?

Jesus clearly said He was the Son of God, so the high priest summarily pronounced Him guilty of blasphemy.

**Matt. 26:66** What did the Sanhedrin decide?

The respected leaders of Judaism then spit in Jesus' face, hit Him with their fists, and slapped Him with the palms of their hands.

**Matt. 26:69-75** What did Peter do – three times – when bystanders said he was one of Jesus' disciples?

**Matt. 27:1-2** – According to Jewish law it was illegal to hold a trial at night, so they hastily assembled the Sanhedrin in the morning to officially condemn Jesus to death. Under Roman rule the Jews were not allowed to execute criminals, so they had to get the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to sentence Jesus to death.

**Matt. 27:3** What did Judas do when he saw what happened?

**Matt. 27:4** What did the chief priests and elders do to help him?

**Matt. 27:5** What did Judas do?

### **Jesus' Trial Before Pilate**

**Matt. 27:11** What did the governor (Pilate) ask Jesus?

How did Jesus answer?

**Matt. 27:12** Who brought charges against Jesus?

Did He answer their charges or defend Himself?

**Matt. 27:13-14** What amazed Pilate?

Pilate was convinced Jesus was innocent (Luke 23:4, 14, 22; John 18:38; 19:4, 6), but he feared releasing Him would stir up trouble.

### **Jesus' "Trial" Before the People**

**Matt. 27:15** What did the governor customarily do at that feast?

Who made the choice?

**Matt. 27:17** What choice did Pilate give the people?

**Matt. 27:20** Why did the multitude ask for Barabbas?

**Matt. 27:21** “Whether of the \_\_\_\_\_ will ye that I \_\_\_\_\_ unto you? They said, \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Matt. 27:22** “What shall I do then with \_\_\_\_\_ which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Matt. 27:23** What did Pilate ask?

**Matt. 27:24** What did Pilate say after washing his hands?

**Matt. 27:25** How did all the people answer?

**Matt. 27:26-30** Describe the abuse Jesus suffered:

**Matt. 27:33** Where did they take Him?

**Matt. 27:35** “And they \_\_\_\_\_ Him, and parted His \_\_\_\_\_, casting lots” (see Psalm 22:18).

The soldiers stripped Jesus, laid Him on the ground on top of the cross beam, and nailed His hands or wrists to the beam. They then hoisted the cross beam (and Jesus) up and secured it to the upright beam of the cross, after which they nailed His feet to that upright beam. Crucifixion was a slow and agonizing death (our word for extreme pain – **excruciating** – comes from this form of execution). The victim hung in such a way that he could not breathe unless he pushed down on the nail in his feet and pulled up on the nails in his hands. This painful exercise freed the lungs to take in air.

**Matt. 27:37** What did they place over His head?

**Matt. 27:40** What did the people say to Jesus?

**Matt. 27:42** What did the chief priests, scribes, and elders say?

**Matt. 27:43** What else did they say about Jesus?

**Matt. 27:44** Who also hurled insults and verbal abuse at Him?

**Concluding Thoughts:** Jesus went through three trials during that fateful night and early morning. The Jewish religious leaders had already decided that Jesus must die (Matt. 26:3-4), but they had to hold a trial to make their wishes legal. At the trial they condemned Him to death, but they didn't have the authority under Roman occupation to execute Him. They took Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, wanting him to rubber-stamp their decision and sentence Jesus to death. When Jesus stood trial before Pilate, however, the governor determined that Jesus was innocent. He didn't want to cause a riot while Jerusalem was filled with Passover pilgrims, so Pilate deferred to the wishes of the crowd. The chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas' freedom, so Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified.

Why didn't Jesus speak up for Himself? Why didn't He get a good lawyer or seek a plea bargain to save His life? Why did the all-powerful Son of God allow Himself to be nailed to a cross? Because His ultimate mission on earth was to **die on that cross to pay the sin penalty** for those who come to Him by faith. Jesus didn't try to escape the cross because His mission on earth **was** the cross.

Throughout this quarter you have learned about Jesus' journey toward the cross. At this point in our study of Matthew's Gospel He has finally arrived at that destination.

If you are a Christian, thank Jesus right now for dying on the cross for you. If you are not yet a believer but would like to be, read the verses printed on the back of this book, turn away from your sins, and place your faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 26:64**. Thank Jesus every day for His willingness to go to the cross for you.

## Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection

What is the Gospel? Write a one or two sentence definition in the space below:

There are many things that can be included in what we might call “the Gospel.” You may have written the plan of salvation, such as the one printed on the back of this book. Or, you might have written something about Jesus’ miraculous birth and wonderful earthly ministry. You may have included something about His sacrificial death on the cross. We sometimes lump all of those things under the general term “Gospel.”

The Bible defines the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, which says, “*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel ... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*” The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the Gospel in a nutshell. They are the subjects of this lesson.

### JESUS' DEATH

**Matt. 27:45** What happened from Noon to 3:00 p.m.?

**Matt. 27:46** What did Jesus cry out?

Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1. This marked the moment when Jesus became sin (2 Cor. 5:21), which separated Him from His Father.

**Matt. 27:50** How did Jesus die?

**Matt. 27:51** What happened when He died?

**Matt. 27:52** What else happened?

**Matt. 27:54** What did the centurion realize about Jesus?

### **JESUS' BURIAL**

**Matt. 27:57-58** Who asked for and received the body of Jesus?

**Matt. 27:59** What did he do with Jesus' body?

**Matt. 27:60** Where did he place the body?

How was the tomb sealed?

**Matt. 27:61** Who saw where the tomb was located?

**Matt. 27:62-63** The next day the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate. What did they tell him?

**Matt. 27:64** What did they ask for? Why?

**Matt. 27:66** How was the tomb protected?

### **JESUS' RESURRECTION**

**Matt. 28:1** They couldn't finish anointing Jesus' body until after the Sabbath. Who came to the tomb?

**Matt. 28:2** What happened?

**Matt. 28:3** Describe the angel:

**Matt. 28:4** What happened to the guards?

**Matt. 28:5** What did the angel tell the women?

**Matt. 28:6** "He is \_\_\_\_\_ here: for He is \_\_\_\_\_, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord \_\_\_\_\_."

**Matt. 28:7** What did the angel tell them to do?

**Matt. 28:9** Who did they meet on the way?

**Matt. 28:10** What did He tell them?

The guards came into the city and told what happened. The chief priests and elders paid them a large amount of money to say that Jesus' disciples stole His body while they slept at their posts.

**Matt. 28:16-17** The disciples met Jesus in Galilee. How did they feel about this post-resurrection appearance?

**Matt. 28:18** Jesus said, "All \_\_\_\_\_ is given unto me in \_\_\_\_\_ and in \_\_\_\_\_."

**Matt. 28:19** "\_\_\_\_\_ ye therefore, and \_\_\_\_\_ all nations, \_\_\_\_\_ them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

**Matt. 28:20** "Teaching them to \_\_\_\_\_ all things whatsoever I have \_\_\_\_\_ you: and, lo, I am \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_, even unto the end of the \_\_\_\_\_. Amen."

**Concluding Thoughts:** The Gospel message includes the **death**, **burial**, and **resurrection** of Jesus Christ. Lots of people have died, but no one else died as a sinless substitute to pay the price for our sins. Many have been buried, but only Jesus escaped alive and unseen from a heavily guarded tomb. God raised a few other people back to life after they died, but no one else conquered death to never die again. Jesus **died**, He was **buried**, and He **rose again**.

Jesus Christ went to the cross to fulfill His Father's plan so that we could be saved. Thank Him right now for dying on the cross to save your soul. Live like a redeemed saint every day.

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**Project:** Memorize **Matthew 28:18-20**. Be sure to pick up a new *Sunday School Member Quarterly* and begin the Daily Bible Reading Guide on Monday.