



Thoughts, Notes and Answers

Acts 10:38 ... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

HARVEST TIME

Part 1: Studies 1-5

Thoughts, Notes and Answers

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This set of studies will come out in two parts; Studies 5-10 will be published in due time.

BOOKS (a longer list)

- Blomberg, C. Matthew (The New American Commentary) (Nashville, B&H Publishing, 1992)
- Bolt, P. Matthew: A Great Light Dawns (Explore the Bible Today) (Sydney South, Aquila, 2014).
- Carson D.A. “Matthew” in Expositors Bible Commentary (Revised) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010)
- France, R.T. “Matthew” in Carson, D.A.; France, R.T.; Motyer, J.A.; Wenham, G.J. (Eds) New Bible Commentary (21st Century Edition) (Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).
- France, R.T. Matthew (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (IVP, Leicester, 1985).
- Green, Michael, The Message of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven (Bible Speaks Today) (Leicester, IVP, 2000).
- Hagner, D.A. Matthew 1-13 (Word Biblical Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000)
- Hendriksen, W. Matthew (New Testament Commentary) Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 1973).
- Morris, L. The Gospel according to Matthew (Pillar Commentaries) (Leicester, IVP, 1992)
- Osborne, G. R. Matthew (Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010).
- Schreiner, P., Matthew, Disciple and Scribe. The First Gospel and Its Portrait of Jesus (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2019).
- Seccombe, David The King of God’s Kingdom (Cumbria, Paternoster, 2002)
- Wilkins, Michael.J. Matthew (NIV Application Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2004)
- Wright, N.T. Matthew for Everyone: Part 1 Chapters 1-15 (London, SPCK, 2002)

MATTHEW 9:35-12:50

Introduction

In Matthew 13:52 *He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law (Scribe) who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."*

In his book on Matthew Patrick Schreiner[#] argues that Matthew in writing his Gospel is acting as a Scribe (teacher of the law) who is pointing people to the kingdom message of Jesus and showing his readers the new treasures of Jesus life and teachings while seeing them in the context of the 'old' treasures of God's dealings with Israel.

In these studies we delve, with Jesus (and Matthew) into the nature of kingdom ministry and the importance of right response to the gospel.

As we study these 10 sections of the scripture I trust that you see the great treasure that Jesus brings with the good news he preaches and will continue to see Jesus more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly*.

Greg Holmes,
February 2020

Matthew 11:2-6 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me."

[#] Schreiner, P., *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe*. (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2019).

* From St Richard of Chichester (13thC) or 'Godspell' depending on your generation.

Thoughts, Notes and Answers

This booklet is intended as a supplement to the studies themselves.

The material here starts life as my check on whether you can actually answer the questions that have been set and to 'explain' where there is more than one possible answer.

I also include some of my own thinking which goes beyond just the initial 'answer' to the question.

I also then include various material from the reading I have done around the passages we are studying using such resources as commentaries, talks and more general books.

Each study starts with a thought starter which is designed to get you thinking about at least one of the topics in the passage.

I put the questions into three broadly defined sections:

The first few questions are titled, **The Text**; these are intended to direct attention to what is actually written in the Bible passage.

The next few are **Connections**; these seek to widen our view with reference to the rest of scripture or the broader themes behind the passage or how the text relates to our contemporary culture.

The final two **Impact** questions seek to encourage us to look at our own lives and lifestyles and the way we live for our King, Jesus.

In this set of studies there is one 'supplementary' question which seeks to look at the influence of the old (God's working in the world before Jesus) on the way Matthew records the new (the way God is now works in the world through the coming of Jesus and beyond).

Please note that my answers below are not the only 'correct' answers or what you are trying to get to in the study. I have set them out as a guide to my thinking only and an assistance to you.

These Notes are meant to be the start of the assistance I am willing to give in regard to the studies. If you need anything further DO NOT hesitate to contact me.

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Study 1: Matthew 9:35-38

Lord of the Harvest

Before You Start

What have we learned about Jesus from our studies in Matthew so far?

For discussion.

As always the paragraph headings in our English translations will assist memory.

Remember Chapters 5-9 represent a block with Jesus giving his “Manifesto of the Kingdom” and then showing what that will look like.

Osborne (ZECNT): *“The result is a powerful section Chapter 10) in which Jesus goes way beyond the pedagogy of his day (disciples of rabbis did little but memorize the teachings of their master) by involving the disciples in his ministry and passing on to them his own authority at the very beginning of their training! Moreover, he uses the material as a preview of what is to come in the ensuing chapters,³ so that it functions as an anticipation of the later missionary activity. Finally, the discourse itself widens the perspective from the immediate mission of the Twelve (10:5–15) to the subsequent mission of the church (10:16–42), and from the Jewish mission (10:1–15) to the coming [Matt, p. 363] Gentile mission (10:16–42). The latter especially centers on the certainty of rejection, persecution, and even death as they follow Jesus on his mission.”*

Listen Carefully to Matthew 9:35-38

The Text

1. What has Jesus been accused of being in the previous passage (9:34)?

“It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons”.

Basically, being in league with Satan.

This accusation will return in chapter 12:24 and following.

2. What had he been doing in the time before that that provokes such a response?

Well ... such totally Satan-like and anti-social things as healing the sick, casting out demons, dealing with blindness, calming a storm.

This provokes the powers that be to jealousy and fear.

3. What is Jesus response to the accusation?

Here he does not respond directly to the accusation (He does in Chapter 12).

He then continues teaching, preaching, and healing (v35)

And he turns to his disciples to challenge and then instruct them as to the nature of his mission and the responses they can expect.

Note Matthew 4:23

4. What challenges does he bring before the Disciples?

The challenge is the harvest before them. Crowds and crowds of people who are harassed and helpless and need workers of the kingdom to bring them the good news, to extend Jesus' work.

Connections

1. Why is Jesus' motivation for his actions (note v36)?

Jesus has compassion on the people.

Wilkins (NIVAC): *"The verb 'have compassion' is splanchnizomai ('to be moved in the inward parts'), which usually indicates deep feelings in the heart and affections. Elsewhere this word describes Jesus' motivation to heal and feed the crowd (14:14; 15:32) and heal the blind (20:34; cf. 18:27)."*

2. What does 'sheep without a shepherd' imply about Israel? (Note Ezekiel 34:1-15.)

The relationship between God and his people is often presented in the Old Testament as the sheep/shepherd relationship.

(Remember this is not the relationship of the guy on the 250cc motorcycle and the 5000 sheep he is herding, with the help of a couple of dogs, down the dusty road. 1st Century Palestine was more like 1 man perhaps a hundred sheep that he knows by name. (see John 10))

Jesus is saying that the leadership of Israel are leading them astray, using them rather than feeding them.

Osborne (ZECNT): *"The idea of 'sheep without a shepherd' is frequent in the OT (esp. Ezek 34:5-6, but also Num 27:17; 1 Kgs 22:17; 2 Chr 18:16; Zech 10:2; cf. Jdt 11:19), always concerning the failure of Israel's leaders. In Ezek 34 God had to rescue the nation because the false shepherds, the leaders, had failed them. So the people here have no one to guide them and are 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (10:6; 15:24) so that Jesus feels great pity for their helpless state. This picture fits the crowds closely, for they flock after Jesus but have no purpose or direction. They are enamored with him but unwilling to make a commitment. They have been 'beaten up' by the leaders but are helpless to do anything about it. The answer is found in 2:6, in the prophecy of Mic 5:2 that from Bethlehem would come 'a ruler who will shepherd ... Israel.' That answer is standing before them, but they do not realize it."*

“Wilkins (NIVAC): “The metaphor of sheep and shepherd was well known in Israel’s history, ranging from the sacrificial lamb of the Day of Atonement and the Passover (Ex. 12:1–4; 29:35–42) to the relationship that God as shepherd has with Israel his sheep (Isa. 40:10–11) and the psalmist’s utter dependence on God as his shepherd (Ps. 23). The Davidic Messiah will establish the everlasting covenant with Israel as a shepherd (Ezek. 37:24).”

3. A plentiful harvest, harassed and helpless people in need of a shepherd, few workers: Is this what we see today?

Certainly true today.

Wright: “Where are the fields today ready for harvest? What should our prayer then be? When we can answer that, we may discover, too, how we ourselves might be part of God’s answer.”

4. What is a right 21stC response?

Get involved in mission.

Wilkins: Jesus’ “compassion provides us with an important object lesson. As we see the needs of people all around us, we must allow our hearts to feel deeply with them. But we cannot stop there. We must get close enough to them to see how we can bring the healing touch of the gospel of the kingdom to their deepest needs. For Jesus, the message of the kingdom’s saving power was primarily a ministry of spiritual healing. But this is not license for the church to neglect the role of ministering to the whole person. We should do all we can to alleviate suffering. Caring for the physical, emotional, or psychological needs of an individual can be vital to displaying Jesus’ compassion for individuals and is often instrumental in creating a responsive attitude to the message of the gospel. This is the approach of a mission that reaches out to the inner city homeless. The message of the gospel will likely fall on deaf ears if the immediate physical needs are not addressed. It is hard to convince an individual that God cares if he is dying of AIDS or if she is suffering emotional and physical abuse from an alcoholic husband.”

Impact

1. To whom should we turn for the first answer to this situation?

Note very carefully what Jesus tell the disciples to do first: ‘Ask the Lord of the harvest ...’.

We should pray.

2. Commit yourself to praying for the harvest in Kiama every day next week!

How to encourage each other to do this is worth of discussion.

To Think About.

If Matthew is the ‘teacher of the law’ who brings out ‘new treasures as well as old’ (Matthew 13:52), what here is new and what references to the ‘old’ can you see?

Matthew 13:52 He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

Patrick Schreiner in his book “Matthew: Disciple and Scribe” maintains that Matthew is the ‘scribe’ – that is ‘teacher of the law’ who in writing his Gospel is illustrating that Jesus the Messiah is the promised one who brings the ‘old’ (the Old Testament) to fulfillment by fulfilling it in new and exciting ways. He does this by showing that Jesus is the new Abraham, the new Moses, the new David and a new and exciting prophet.

This question will be here in each study with a view to getting you to think through what is new here and what reflects the ‘old’

Or as Osborne puts it: *“In other words, the disciples will understand and teach both the truths of the old covenant (cf. 5:17–20) and the new covenant teachings of Jesus.”*

So the old in this one is the reference to the Sheep/Shepherd relationship and the new is the new way that Jesus is the Shepherd – eventually laying down his life for them.

Study 2: Matthew 10:1-23

Workers in the Harvest

Before You Start

Discuss what part you are playing in the 'harvest'?

Wilkins NIVAC) on Chapter 10: *"Jesus will send them (the Twelve) first to his people Israel because of their salvation-historical primacy (10:5–15). But he will also prepare them for a worldwide mission among the Gentiles (10:16–23). Jesus' training will address directly the characteristics that his disciples will need to embody as they carry out the mission (10:24–42)."*

Listen Carefully to Matthew 10:1-23

The Text

1. Why list the 12 apostles here? Which ones get a comment? Why?

To start with the topic is 'workers' so it seemed good to Matthew to record these workers name here.

Note there are 12 of them which seems to be representative of the 12 tribes of Israel (though they are not personally of each tribe). These are the new 'shepherds' (or under-shepherds) of Israel.

Comments are made on some of them.

Note France (TNTC): *"Apostles occurs only here in Matthew; elsewhere he speaks of 'the twelve (disciples)': 11:1; 20:17; 26:14, 20, 47. While Luke (like Paul) uses 'apostle' of an office, the other Gospels use it, as Matthew does here, only in a context of mission. It means one who is 'sent' ('sent out' in v. 5 is the verb from the same root). For Simon and Andrew (and for Philip, v. 3), see on 4:18. First would be unnecessary simply to mark the beginning of a list, and indicates Peter's prominence in the group, which will be spelt out more explicitly in 16:16–19; all four Gospels agree in presenting Peter as the leader of the disciples; he and the two sons of Zebedee formed a specially trusted inner group (17:1; 26:37; cf. Mark 5:37; 13:3). Little is known of the remaining members of the twelve, except Judas Iscariot. Bartholomew is traditionally identified with Nathanael, who appears only in John, but Nathanael is nowhere said to be one of the twelve. Matthew's occupation is mentioned to identify him as the one whose call was previously described (see on 9:9), and James' father and Simon's nickname to distinguish them from their better-known namesakes in v. 2. Thaddaeus is mentioned nowhere outside the lists of Matthew and Mark.... For Cananaean (RSV) Luke has 'Zealot' (as does the NIV), and the name probably represents the Aramaic term for a Zealot, qan'ana'. This was not yet at the time of Jesus a technical term for the revolutionary*

political party, but Matthew and Luke would have known it as such. Probably Simon's nickname originated from a 'zeal' for the law (cf. Paul's use of 'Zealot' in this sense, Acts 22:3–5; Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:6), but this would be likely to make him sympathetic to the ideals of the later Zealot party. The inclusion of this man together with the government employee Matthew is evidence of the breadth of Jesus' appeal. Iscariot is usually thought to mean 'man of Kerioth' (a city in southern Judea), but has also been explained as meaning 'traitor', 'assassin', 'carrier of the leather bag', or 'redhead'!"

Note that they are listed two by two which is the way they are sent out in Mark 6:7 and Luke 10:1

Wilkiins (NIVAC): *"The Twelve display a remarkable personal diversity, which may have been part of the reason for their effectiveness in reaching Israel (see Contemporary Significance).¹⁵ Peter, Andrew, James, and John were partners in a successful business in the fishing industry on the Sea of Galilee (see 4:18–22). Matthew was a hated tax collector (see comments on 9:9). Simon the Zealot had been a zealous revolutionary, willing to die for his cause of liberating Israel from Rome by guerilla warfare tactics. At any other occasion these men might have been ready to stick a knife into each other, but here they are all part of one group around Jesus."*

**2. What authority are the apostles given? What is their task?
(Note v1 and v7-8)**

They are given authority from Jesus.

Note the parallel to Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus authority to send is based in His own authority which is given by the Father.

Their task is to *"drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness"* (v1) and *"preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'"* 8 *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons."*

Wilkins (NIVAC): *"The same authority that characterized Jesus' ministry in chapters 8–9 is now given to the Twelve. Like Jesus, this authority enables them to drive out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and sickness (10:1; cf. 4:23; 9:35). All that the Twelve will accomplish is based on their having received Jesus' authority. Disciples of every era will find their own authority only by submitting to Jesus."*

**3. What preparations are they to make? What difficulties will they face?
What is to be their attitude to the difficulties?**

Minimal preparation.

XXX

As regard to difficulties ... How long have you got?

Note

hand you over to the local councils

flog you in their synagogues

brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles

arrest you

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child;

children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death.

All men will hate you because of me.”

persecuted

Quite a list.

They are to press on but not always to remain – they should move on when the opposition is stiff.

4. What is the message they take?

“The Kingdom of Heaven is near”

This is the way Jesus describes his message 4:17. (As did John the Baptist 3:2).

France (NBC): *“In Jesus’ preaching the kingdom of heaven was to be a central theme: God is King, and his rule was now being made effective.”*

Connections

1. V6 “Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel” Why them and not the gentiles or Samaritans (v5)? Note also Matthew 28:18-20.

Consistently Jesus sees His earthly ministry during his life as being to Israel. As we will see, and have seen (XXX) this is not exclusively so. There are also plenty of hints through the Gospel that God is going to extend fulfill his purpose to bless the whole earth.

But for now the 12 are to go to ‘the lost sheep of Israel.’”

2. What are they to do when they are opposed? When brought before rulers? When betrayed?

There is a mixture of responses

Note:

If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.

do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say,

When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another.

Osborne (ZECNT): *““Will be given” (δοθήσεται) is a divine passive, meaning “God will give” the words to say. Moreover, the disciples will be given the proper defense “at that time,” when they need it. This does not mean they should not prepare their defense,¹⁴ as if it will be a spur-of-the-moment revelation. Rather, it means that “every time” they need to defend themselves or the gospel, God will guide them. For OT parallels, see Exod 4:12 (Moses); Ps 119:41–46 (when taunted, even by kings); Isa 50:4 (the Servant); Jer 1:9 (Jeremiah).”*

3. Sheep, Wolves, Snakes, Doves!!! What does verse 16 mean?

I take that this verse is about discernment.

France (NBC): *“Disciples in a hostile society are as vulnerable as sheep among wolves. To survive and to fulfil their mission they need to be shrewd without being harmful; innocent without being gullible.”*

Blomberg: *“With incisive, proverbial language, Jesus calls the Twelve to exhibit great acumen without sinful compromise.”*

4. What do you think Jesus is referring to in v23?

This is a controversial verse.

(Don Carson lists at least 7 different possibilities)

I am inclined to agree with France (NBC): *“Language about the ‘coming’ of the Son of Man derives from Dn. 7:13-14, where he ‘comes’ to God to receive sovereign power; it does not there refer to a coming to earth, still less to the specific ‘second coming’ of Jesus. Here, then, such language looks forward to the enthronement of the Son of Man in power (which we find already fulfilled through the resurrection in 28:18); the disciples’ mission to Israel would not be completed before that.”*

Impact

1. As you witness for Jesus what assurance do you gain from v19-20?

We really have nothing to fear.

2. How do you think the disciples felt?

For discussion.

Up till now Jesus has been the ‘missioner’ now they have to go out. I imagine they felt the same mixture of trepidation, fear, excitement and anticipation as

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we do as we seek to share the Gospel.

To Think About.

If Matthew is the ‘teacher of the law’ who brings out ‘new treasures as well as old’ (Matthew 13:52), what here is new and what references to the ‘old’ can you see?

The sending out of the twelve reflects, eventually, the promise to Moses that through his descendant(s) all the peoples of the earth will be blessed.

The difficulties faced by the ‘sent ones’ reflects the opposition given to the OT prophets.

What is new is that the Kingdom is here now. (v7)

Study 3: Matthew 10:24-42

Harvest Priorities.

Before You Start

What is it that keeps you from witnessing for Jesus?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 10:24-42

The Text

1. Review the sort of reception Jesus says his disciples will get in v5-23.

Not always a positive one – more often than not, hostile, or even violent.

2. What warnings does Jesus give to his disciples in this passage?

What happens to Him (the teacher) may well happen to the student (disciple).

They will be blasphemed.

Their own families will turn against them.

There are those who can kill the body.

Don't fall away – don't be tempted to disown Jesus.

3. What encouragements?

DO NOT BE AFRAID. More on this later.

They are being like Jesus.

They are worth more than many sparrows.

Jesus will acknowledge his faithful servants before the Father.

If they lose their life for Jesus they will indeed find it.

There is a righteous man's reward.

Note OSBORNE (ZECNT) on v30: *“The idea of God caring for the very hairs of the head was a frequent emphasis (1 Sam 14:45; 2 Sam 14:11; 1 Kgs 1:52; Luke 21:18; Acts 27:34). The theme is God's loving providence over his people. He knows and watches over every detail of our lives. The God who is sovereign over history is in control of every aspect of the life and ministry of his “sent ones.”*

4. From v34-36 what has Jesus come to bring? If Jesus really is the prince of peace what does this mean?

France (TNTC): *“Anyone who recognised Jesus' mission as Messianic might properly think ‘that I have come to bring peace on earth’, on the basis of*

Isaiah 9:5–7; Zechariah 9:9–10; etc. That was his mission, as Luke 2:14 declares, and his disciples' message, as v. 13 has shown. But the peace the Messiah brings is much more than the absence of fighting, which men dignify with the name of 'peace', it is a restored relationship with God. And in the bringing of such 'peace', paradoxically, conflict is inevitable, as not all will accept it. The sword Jesus brings is not here military conflict, but, as vv. 35–36 show, a sharp social division which even severs the closest family ties. ... Jewish Messianic expectation often included a period of conflict before the Messiah's triumph, but Jesus speaks here, as in the preceding and following verses, more of a division in men's personal response to him. As long as some men refuse the Lordship of God, to follow the Prince of peace will always be a way of conflict."

In regard to v35-36 note Micah 7:6

Osborne (ZECNT): "Peace is the result of the salvation he is bringing, but the mission to the lost world will not result in peace for those who take the gospel to the world. In other words, peace will not be experienced by the missionaries, but it will come to those who respond to their message. Also, peace is absent in the mission 'upon the earth' (ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν), but a heavenly peace is present for those converted."

Connections

1. Read 10:24-26 and note 9v34. What is Jesus saying about the nature of the task that He has sent them out with?

Jesus is saying that their task is an extension of his task. They are his 'apostles' (sent-out ones) they are to do what he has been doing.

And they can expect the same sort of opposition.

Wilkins (NIVAC): "Matthew has emphasized that there is an incontrovertible solidarity between Jesus and his disciples, including authority (10:1), message (10:1), activity (10:7, 8), mission (10:18), suffering (10:18, 24–25, 38), confession (10:32), and reception (10:40). Since the Twelve represent the relationship that disciples throughout the ages will enjoy with Jesus (see 28:16–20), the open-ended historical nature of this discourse posits specific examples for our own mission."

Osborne (ZECNT): "Not only are disciples/slaves not greater than their teacher/master, but it is also their goal and privilege to act like and perhaps to attain a status like their rabbi/lord. This is at the heart of discipleship, seen in the frequent use of μιμητής ("imitate") for the discipleship process (1 Cor 4:16, 11:1; Eph 5:1; 1 Thess 1:6; cf. Phil 3:17). Jesus' disciples have been included in his ministry (Matt 4:18–22) and been given authority over the demonic realm

(10:1) and over human illness (10:8). Christ had indeed made them “like their master.””

2. How do we heed the warning of 10:32-33? Remember our God is a God of forgiveness and grace?

France (TNTC): *“So the disciple must choose which solidarity he prefers, that with men in this life, or that with Jesus before my Father who is in heaven. The inevitability of this choice dominates the rest of the chapter up to v. 39.”*

In the pressures of life and the business and stress it may be that we fail at this point and do not acknowledge Jesus before those around us.

But when we fall we remember we have a gracious God and press on.

3. What do verses 37-39 say to us about our allegiances?

Basically, Jesus demands absolute priority.

Not to be our only allegiance but to be first. This is not an excuse to deny family responsibilities or social needs but to put Jesus first.

Even as far as seeking to preserve our own lives.

Blomberg: *“Devotion to family is a cardinal Christian duty (Eph 6:1-4; 1 Tim 5:8) but must never become absolute to the extent that devotion to God is compromised.”*

Wilkins (NIVAC): *“Giving rightful place to family presumes giving obedience first to God, which will then enable a person to honor appropriately one’s father and mother, sons and daughters. The strength of attachment to family in Israel had a tendency at times to supplant commitment to God (see 8:21–22). Jesus’ statement here is in line with the call there to give priority to Jesus as God above all else, even one’s dearest loved ones.”*

Osborne (ZECNT): *“Here again we are at the heart of discipleship (see further 16:24–26). As Plummer says, “In general, those whose sole aim is to win material prosperity, lose the only life which is worth living; and those who sacrifice material prosperity in Christ’s service, secure the higher life.”²⁰ There is a distinct movement from physical life to eternal life; to live for the present is to lose the future!”*

4. What encouragement for our Mission are the words v40-42?

Behind this is the message that God is in control, and God knows.

God will reward his faithful servants.

Here acceptance, assistance and hospitality to those who preach the gospel and those who follow Jesus is enjoined on all who would be part of God’s family.

Impact

1. **Tom Wright maintains that “Don’t be afraid” is the most repeated command in the Bible. (Here in v26,28 and 31 and Matthew 1:20; 28:5; 28:10) What should that mean to us?**

My Bible program (Accordance) lists 65 occurrences of the phrase and nearly all of them are God or Jesus encouraging individuals to serve him and trust him.

Discuss

Osborne (ZECNT): *“The aorist (a Greek verb tense) “be afraid” (φοβηθητε) is global, meaning a lack of fear is to characterize their lives. This imperative introduces and dominates the passage (see also vv. 28, 31). Christ’s purpose is to encourage them that in the midst of the opposition and hatred, there is no need to fear. The sovereign God, not they, is in charge.”*

2. **Read Matthew 28:16-20. How does this command relate to us?**

This is the one that hands the disciples baton on, down through the centuries and across the entire world.

We are now the bearers of Jesus’ message, the students and servants of vs24.

These commands and warnings now apply to us.

If Matthew is the ‘teacher of the law’ who brings out ‘new treasures as well as old (Matthew 13:52), what here is new and what references to the ‘old’ can you see?

We have noted that ‘Peace’ (true peace) is the goal of what God is doing in the world in the OT and the new.

In Jesus the new is that the barrier that prevented peace between God and man has been broken down. Sin is defeated.

The command to not be afraid when God’s servants are doing his will is certainly old.

Note:

Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram.

 I am your shield,
 your very great reward.”

Exodus 14:13 Moses answered the people, **“Do not be afraid.** Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again.

MATTHEW 10-12: HARVEST TIME

Deuteronomy 1:21 See, the LORD your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your fathers, told you. **Do not be afraid**; do not be discouraged.”

1Samuel 12:20 **“Do not be afraid,”** Samuel replied. “You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.

Isaiah 44:8 Do not tremble, **do not be afraid.**

Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?

You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?

No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”

I have the full list and would be only too happy to send it to you.

Study 4: Matthew 11:1-19

Harvest Doubts

Osborne (ZECNR) *“Matthew 11:2 indicates a turning point in Matthew. There has been sporadic opposition (mainly 9:3–4, 11, 14, 34), but primarily a positive atmosphere as Jesus showed his authority and called for faith. The success of his ministry caused astonishment (7:28; 8:27; 9:8, 33), and the news went everywhere (4:24–25; 8:34; 9:26, 31). In the Mission Discourse he prophesied great trouble for future missions (10:14, 17–22, 25, 28, 35–36), and that begins here as the opposition intensifies in chs. 11–12. Of the nine pericopae in 11:1–12:50, six deal with rejection and judgment (11:2–19, 20–24; 12:1–8, 9–14, 22–37, 38–42), and the section begins with the doubt even of John the Baptist (11:3). ... At the same time, this is a christological section, as Jesus is the coming Messiah (11:2–6), eschatological Judge (11:20–24; 12:39–42; 13:12–15, 30, 41–43), one with the Father (11:25–27), Wisdom drawing the weary to herself (11:28–30), Lord of the Sabbath (12:1–8), suffering Servant (12:15–21), the strong binder of Satan who brings the kingdom (12:28–29), and the revealer of heavenly mysteries (13:11, 35). So the two themes of rejection and christological glory develop side by side.”*

Before You Start

Is it OK to have doubts about who Jesus is and what he has done?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 11:1-19

The Text

1. What does Jesus do after finishing his instructions to the disciples? Where does he do this?

Verse 1 - Jesus continues with his task – his mission.

To preach and teach.

In Galilee

Wilkins (NIVAC): *“Although Jesus gave authority to his disciples to go to Israel (10:1–7) and later to all nations (10:16–23; 28:18–20), he has not yet transferred his work to them completely. He now himself goes to Israel to teach and preach.*

2. Who sends to Jesus to ask if he is the ‘one’? What is Jesus answer?

John the Baptist who at this stage is John the Prisoner of Herod.

He is asking about the ‘one’ to come.

The question seems a little veiled but not to John – who has preached that ‘one’ will come after him (3:11) nor to Jesus who knows exactly who that

'one' is.

Jesus reply in v4 is look at what is happening – read the signs.

Osborne (ZECNT): *“The key (to understanding why John is expressing his doubts) is probably John’s radical call to repentance (3:2, 11) and his proclamation of judgment on the nation (3:7–10), concluding with his prophecy that the Messiah would bring the final harvest of sinners to “unquenchable fire” (3:12). Jesus did not center on such a message (though he did include that emphasis, see 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28) but rather proclaimed the age of salvation and healed the sick. So John’s doubts are real and he wonders if he “should look for someone else?”*

Note that earlier John’s disciples had quizzed Jesus about the matter of fasting (9:14-17).

3. What does Jesus say about John the Baptist? Note Matthew 3:1-12.

He is not of the ruling class.

He is not 'smooth and easy to get on with'.

Rather he is a “v9 ...A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written:

‘I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

Further he is the 'Elijah who was to come.'

Note that this section is ended with the important attention drawing phrase “He who has ears, let him hear.” (France (TNTC): *“This formula is used by Jesus after sayings which require special insight (see 13:9, 43; Mark 4:23; Luke 14:35). It is a call for more than superficial understanding, an invitation to explore the implications of what has been said.”*)

4. What are verses 16-19 saying about Jesus and the reactions to him?

He is saying that 'this generation', in effect does not have ears to hear – they only want what they expect and desire – not necessarily the truth.

Osborne (ZECNT): *“Whenever Jesus uses “generation” (γενεά), it is always describing his contemporaries (the nation, not just the leaders) in a context of wickedness, unbelief, and rejection (cf. also 12:39, 41–42, 45; 16:4; 17:17; 23:36; 24:34). He uses an analogy of children playing in a marketplace, a common occurrence. But this time the children are dissatisfied and complaining, unhappy with whatever game is played. “The others” (τοῖς ἑτέροις) would be another group of children playing the games with them.*

“Wilkins (NIVAC): “Likewise, this generation rejects the invitation to the kingdom of heaven because John and Jesus don’t play the game that they want. They rejected John because he did not dance when they wanted to be merry, and they are rejecting Jesus because he does not mourn when they want to fast (e.g., 9:14–17). Like hardhearted sinners, the generation of Jesus’ day expected John and Jesus to conform to their expectations and refused to allow God’s agenda to alter their own.”

Connections

1. In verse 5 what does Jesus refer John’s disciples to? Where should they look for further information?

Jesus is saying you will understand me by my actions – by seeing what I can do and in fact am doing.

Wilkins (NIVAC): “In Jesus’ ministry are fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecies that described the coming messianic ministry in these very terms: The blind receive sight (9:27–32; Isa. 29:18; 35:5), the lame walk (Matt. 15:30–31; cf. Isa. 35:6), those who have leprosy are cured (Matt. 8:1–4; cf. Isa. 53:4), the deaf hear (Mark 7:32–37; cf. Isa. 29:18–19; 35:5), the dead are raised (Matt. 10:8; cf. Isa. 26:18–19), and the good news is preached to the poor (Matt. 5:3; cf. Isa. 61:1).”

They look to Jesus ministry and to their Old Testaments

2. What is the importance of John the Baptist? Again note 3:1-12 and 4:12 and 14:3-12.

John is the forerunner – he announces to Israel (and the world) that Jesus is coming.

In one sense he has a foot in both testaments – he is much like an Old Testament prophet but is embedded in the story of the Messiah who has come.

Wilkins (NIVAC): “John is a transitional figure who has prepared the way for the Coming One, but Jesus implies here that John will not live to see the full arrival of the kingdom. Jesus’ institution of the new covenant in his blood is a dividing line. The complex of events including the cross, resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Spirit at Pentecost brings the arrival of the kingdom’s redemptive life, by which time John was executed. John is the greatest of those born during the Old Testament era because of his crucial role in preparing the way for the Messiah and his kingdom. His mission was great because of the greatness of the One he introduced. But those in the kingdom are greater because of their privilege actually to have entered it.”

Osborne (ZECNT): *“John was a prophet, as everyone knew. Yet he was far more than a prophet, for he was privileged to prepare the way for the Messiah. He performed no miracles as Elijah did, but he did have the same hard-hitting message, i.e., that of calling an apostate nation back to God. He transcended the prophetic office not through either of these but through his relationship to the Christ as the messianic forerunner.”*

3. Verse 15 tells us to listen very carefully, so what is Jesus saying in v11-14?

Very basically, that John the Baptist was a true preacher and prophet of the kingdom who was opposed and the preaching of the kingdom will always provoke reaction both negative and positive.

France (TNTC): *“More commonly Jesus is understood to refer to the violent opposition encountered by ‘the kingdom of heaven’, already seen in the arrest and imprisonment of its herald, and more ominously foreshadowed in the growing official opposition to Jesus himself. In the context of John’s question from prison this seems the more relevant sense. So while John was the last of the old order, his fate was the foretaste of the conflicts which are already beginning to affect the new order. Here again God’s kingdom is clearly seen as already present, as a force sufficiently dynamic to provoke violent reaction.”*

Blomberg on v12: *“Despite the many blessings of the arriving kingdom, from the early days of John’s ministry to the present moment in Jesus life, God’s reign has nevertheless received increasing opposition. John has been arrested by Herod. The Jewish teachers are increasingly opposing Jesus, and people are growing more and more discontent with Jesus’ refusal to promote rebellion.”*

4. What is Jesus using this discussion about John to Baptist to say about himself?

First Jesus is THE ONE.

He emphasizes that he is one greater than John – indeed the least in the kingdom is greater than John.

Osborne (ZECNT): *“John was the herald and initiator of the new covenant, he was not fully a part of “the kingdom of heaven.” He consummated the old, and therefore even the “least” of the citizens in the kingdom Christ is establishing is greater because they are part of the new order.”*

Impact

1. How do we cultivate ‘ears to hear?’

I take it that we listen very carefully to what Jesus, ‘clothed in his word’, has to say.

For serious discussion and ongoing application.

Osborne (ZECNT): *“This call to both willingness to hear and the importance of listening carefully is frequent in Jesus’ teaching and the rest of Scripture (Matt 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; Luke 14:35; Rev 2:7, 11; et al.). It always points to a particularly critical truth and the importance of paying close heed to it, with the present tenses stressing the ongoing response that Jesus demands. Jesus is calling for both a willingness to hear his teaching and an appropriate response to it, best paraphrased, “you had better listen.””*

2. Does the description: “here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners” sit well with you as a description of the Lord Jesus? Why? Why Not?

I have to admit in some ways it bothers me.

First note that it is a description given by his opponents and in the political sphere at least these descriptions are always stretched to the limits that can be got away with.

But in ‘upright’ Jewish society of the time Jesus was a bit off centre – he did drink and eat (not necessarily to excess) with the outcasts of society.

Matthew’s comment on Jesus lips: ‘But wisdom is proved right by her actions.’ Is significant

Note - Osborne (ZECNT): *“God’s messengers should never seek popularity and acceptance. We need the boldness of John and Jesus and must allow God to justify our ministry; we must refuse to play the numbers game of worldly popularity. John and Jesus did not worry about what people thought or even how people reacted. They proclaimed truth the way God led them, and so must we. Will our vindication come from the world (even from members of our church) or from God? We need more fearless proclaimers and fewer shallow popularizers!”*

If Matthew is the ‘teacher of the law’ who brings out ‘new treasures as well as old (Matthew 13:52), what here is new and what references to the ‘old’ can you see?

Most obviously here is Jesus’ answer to John. Jesus is telling John that his ministry does fulfill expectations but it is new (different to expectations) in that it is not done with political power and might but in compassion and humility.

It is important to see here, to have ‘ears to hear’ that Jesus is the new – this is the next and final step in God’s salvation plan and the John is the herald of that.

Study 5: Matthew 11:20-30

Harvest Consequences

Before You Start

What do you say to people who maintain all religions lead to God?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 11:20-30

The Text

- 1. In 11:20-24 what does Jesus say about those who reject him? What does he compare them to?**

He says 'Woe' to them.

He compares them to Tyre, Sidon and even Sodom.

Osborne (ZECNT): *"Note that Jesus never sought fame or attention but only repentance (4:17). He wanted the people to get right with God. When they would not change their ways, he had to denounce them, with ὀνειδίζω meaning ... "reproach" in a proclamation context"*

- 2. Read verses 25-26. Who can truly appreciate Jesus mission and what he offers them?**

"Little Children"

What does he mean by this?

France (TNTC): *"This is Jesus' response (declared is literally 'answered') to his rejection especially by the religious leadership, the wise and understanding, those who, if they had lived up to their reputation and responsibility, should have been the first to recognize these things, i.e. the significance of Jesus' mission. Instead, it was the babes, the humble, unlearned, simple people, who understood (cf. 21:15-16). Jesus uses children, as elsewhere, as the paradigm of those whom the world regards as insignificant; but in this context they also represent those who are free from false preconceptions and so are open to the new light now being revealed to them. It was such people, rather than the theologians, who became Jesus' disciples. But this was not the product of some natural law; it was the gracious will of the Father, who has hidden and revealed, and it is this revealing will of God (not just the incomprehension of the wise) which calls forth Jesus' formal thanksgiving, expressing his dependence on and delight in his Father's will."*

3. In verse 27 who is the one who knows (and communicates) the hidden things?

Jesus is the one who knows and communicates the hidden things.

He has the understanding of them from the Father and chooses to reveal them to those who commit to Him.

4. What does Jesus promise, instead of woes, in verses 28-30?

REST, in case you missed it “Rest”!

An easy yoke and light burden – note that there is still a yoke and a burden.

Wilkins (NIVAC): *“His easy yoke is neither cheap nor convenient. The surprising promise of the easy yoke was meant to free us from a self-serving, meritorious, performance-based religion. It is easy in that it frees us from the burden of self-centeredness; liberates us from the load of self-righteousness; and frees us to live in the way that God intended us to live... The easy yoke sounds like an oxymoron. Plowing a field or pulling a load is hard work! And nowhere does Jesus promise soft ground for tilling or level paths for bearing the load. What he does promise is a relationship with himself. The demands are great but the relationship with Jesus makes the burden light.”*

Connections

1. What cities does Jesus speak his ‘woes’ on? Where are they? What do we know about Sodom, Tyre and Sidon? Why does Jesus choose these towns?

The cities (towns) are Korazin, Bethsaida and later Capernaum.

One of the commentaries calls this the ‘evangelical triangle’ of Galilee.

Osborne (ZECNT): *“There is no mention of either Chorazin or Bethsaida anywhere else in Matthew. Chorazin was a medium-sized town noted for its wheat production and identified with modern Khirbet Karazeh about two miles north of Capernaum.⁵ Bethsaida was on the northern tip of the lake just on the western side of the Jordan River in Gaulanitis (but geographically part of Galilee)⁶ and was the original home of Simon and Andrew as well as Philip (John 1:44, 12:21). Jesus had two mission trips through Galilee in Matthew (4:23; 9:35), walked on the water on the way there in Mark 6:45, and healed a blind man there in Mark 8:22 and many others in Luke 9:10.”*

France (TNTC): *“Tyre and Sidon were attacked by the Old Testament prophets for their rejection of God and his will (Isa. 23; Ezek. 26-28; Amos 1:9–10; etc.) and symbolized the arrogance of the pagan world. But the failure of the Galilean towns to respond to the direct evidence and appeal of Jesus and his mighty works was worse even than the paganism of Tyre and Sidon. They had not the excuse of ignorance. Cf. on 10:15, where the day of judgment has been*

mentioned in a similar context. Jesus puts even Sodom (see on 10:15) on a level above the people of his own town (Capernaum). Arrogance and immorality will be punished, but not so severely as the rejection of God's direct appeal. 'Only the rejection of forgiveness is unforgivable.'"

2. Note v27 and then look at John 13:6, 8-11. What are these saying about Jesus?

Osborne (ZECNT): *"This verse has been called the "Johannine thunderbolt" because it so closely resembles the emphases of John on the Father – Son relationship and the deity of Christ.¹⁵ The emphatic position of "all things" (πάντα) must be recognized at the outset. The one "sovereign over heaven and earth" has given "all" authority over to the Son (see also 28:18). Here it is closely related to the sonship of Jesus and to the "passing on" of authority from the Father."*

France (TNTC): *"This verse stands out as a more explicit statement of Jesus' relationship with the Father than any other in the Synoptic Gospels. ... In particular, the description of Jesus as simply the Son is paralleled in 24:36, and the idea of Jesus as Son of God is, of course, central to this Gospel (2:15; 3:17; 4:3; 6: 8:29; 14:33; 16:16–17; 17:5; 21:37; etc.), while the address to God as 'Abba', Father, agreed to be a unique characteristic of Jesus, attests that this relationship was central in his own consciousness."*

Wilkins (NIVAC): *"Jesus has a profound divine self-consciousness. He was validated at the baptism as the Son (3:17), tested as the Son of God (4:2–10), worshiped as the Son of God (14:33), confessed as the Son of the living God (16:16), validated at the Transfiguration as the Son (17:5), alludes to himself as the Son in the parables of the landowner and wedding banquet (21:23–46; 22:1–14), refers to himself as the Son of the Father (24:36), emphasized as Son of God strongly in the trial and crucifixion (cf. 26:39, 63; 27:43, 54), and associated [Matt., p. 422] with the Father and Holy Spirit in the baptism of new disciples (28:18–20). The Son theme is one of the high points of Matthew's Christology as well as Synoptic Christology generally."*

3. How do verses 28-30 relate to the previous paragraphs we have been looking at?

If we go back into Chapter 10 and note the opposition and even violence done to those involved in Jesus' mission we see the reason for being weary and heavy laden – but the alleviation and in the end the solution is in Jesus himself.

4. Jesus and then the epistles speak fairly often of hidden things. Look at Deuteronomy 29:29; 1 Corinthians 4:12:6-10; Ephesians 1:9; 3:1-6. Where do we find the revelation of these things?

The hidden things and the mystery are revealed in the person and work of Jesus the Christ. We find the revelation of these things in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (JESUS clothed in his Word).

Impact

1. Does the harshness of Jesus words in v20-24 surprise you? Why? What do these verses say to our society?

They are harsh but true – True LOVE points out the truth.

Judgement is to come on those who reject Jesus' free offer of salvation.

Our Society needs to take heed.

Osborne (ZECNT): *"There are many judgment passages in Matthew (e.g., 3:7–12; 7:21–23; 8:10–12; 11:2–19, 20–24; 12:1–8, 9–14, 22–37, 38–42; 13:24–30, 36–43, 47–52; 19:28–29; 21:33–22:14; chs. 24–25), so we will be visiting this issue several more times. There is a place for fear in this life, and Jesus was not afraid to let people know the implications of unbelief. As Hauerwas says, "Jesus' pronouncement of judgment on the cities in which he performed deeds of power makes us, contemporary Christians, profoundly uncomfortable. We want a gospel of love that insures when everything is said and done that everyone and everything is going to be okay... But the gospel is judgment because otherwise it would not be good news."*

2. Do you find Jesus' yoke to be easy and the burden of serving him light? What is the paradox here?

Osborne (ZECNT): *"Since a yoke connected two oxen in tandem, the idea of taking Jesus' yoke means joining him in God's work."*

Wilkins (NIVAC): *"Jesus does not need to strut his authority. He has come gently, preaching and teaching the good news of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven, and in humble human form he has brought healing to sin-sick humanity. This is the true eschatological rest for which Israel has long hoped, "a realization of a deep existential peace, a shalom, or sense of ultimate well-being with regard to one's relationship to God and his commandments." Jesus' teaching is the true fulfillment of the Law, and those who come to him will enter into a discipleship that produces rest for the soul (cf. Jer. 6:16)."*

For discussion.

MATTHEW 10-12: HARVEST TIME

Note France (TNTC): *“The yoke was sometimes in the Old Testament a symbol of oppression (Isa. 9:4; 58:6; Jer. 27-28), but was also used in a good sense of the service of God (Jer. 2:20; Lam. 3:27). Later it came to be used commonly in Jewish writings for obedience to the law – the ‘yoke of the law’ is one every Jew should be proud to carry^o Such a yoke should not be oppressive, for after all the function of a yoke (the sort worn by humans) is to make a burden easier to carry. But through ‘the arbitrary demands of Pharisaic legalism and the uncertainties of ever-proliferating case law’ (AB, p. 146) the law had itself become a burden, and a new yoke was needed to lighten the load. Jesus’ yoke is easy (chrēstos normally means ‘good’, ‘kind’), not because it makes lighter demands, but because it represents entering into a disciple-relationship (learn from me) with one who is gentle and lowly in heart (cf. 2 Cor. 10:1 for these as recognized qualities of Jesus). The words echo the description of God’s servant in Isaiah 42:2–3; 53:1–2, and specially the words of Zechariah 9:9 which Matthew will pick up again at 21:4–5; it is also the character Jesus expects, and creates, in his disciples (5:3ff.) This attractive aspect of Jesus is a vital counterbalance to the sterner side seen in 7:13–27; 10:34–39; etc. To emphasize either to the exclusion of the other is to miss the real Jesus. You will find rest for your souls is an echo of the Hebrew text of Jeremiah 6:16, where it is the offer of God to those who follow his way; Jesus now issues the invitation in his own name!”*

If Matthew is the ‘teacher of the law’ who brings out ‘new treasures as well as old’ (Matthew 13:52), what here is new and what references to the ‘old’ can you see?

The idea of ‘rest’ is an integral part of the OT revelation – the goal of creation is the 7th day rest – the Promised land is, ideally, a land of rest. Indeed the whole idea of Shalom (peace) is true rest (not idleness). The prophets picture God’s place as one of rest.

The newness is that Jesus brings that ‘rest’ with him. Serving Jesus is true rest and true peace.