

Matthew (with bonus gospel Q/A content below it)

Matthew 1:18-20 (NASB)

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. **19** And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. **20** But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Question: Since the Old Testament typically described Christophanies as “the Angel of the Lord” how could “an angel of the Lord” visit Joseph when Jesus is alive in His humanity on earth?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/1Theo.htm> Bible Basics: Theology “f) Cases of Christophany in the Old Testament”.

Matthew 1:23-25 (NASB)

23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” **24** And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, **25** but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Question: Why does the prophecy say “Immanuel” when Joseph named Him “Jesus”? Does our Lord have multiple names?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Old-Testament-InterpretationIV.htm> (response #16).

Matthew 2:1 (NASB)

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

Question: Since our Lord lived as a Human under self-imposed kenosis then how could He sustain the universe with His deity at the same time?

Answer: Deity is deity and can't ever stop being deity. All that the Lord did and does in carrying out the Father's plan never stopped when He became a human being as well. The kenosis applied to His humanity only.

Matthew 2:3 (NASB)

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Question: Why would “all Jerusalem” be troubled with Herod? I understand why king Herod might feel threatened, but why would “all Jerusalem” feel threatened as well? Does “all Jerusalem” represent the Sanhedrin who had gotten comfortable with their lifestyles and knew deep in their hearts that they could not stand in front of the one true King?

Answer:

Excerpt from Christology BB4A: Just as thirty three years earlier Herod had attempted to have Jesus killed on account of the threat he perceived to his own dynasty by a genuine “King of the Jews”, so also those in positions of power in Judea's political and religious establishment had long been concerned by the “threat” posed to their status by our Lord and His ministry.

Matthew 2:20-23 (NASB)

20 “Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.” **21** So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. **22** But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, **23** and came and lived in a city called Nazareth.

Question: Why would an angel direct Joseph to go to Israel when Archelaus, a potential danger, reigned? I don’t understand why an angel under the direction of the Lord would not just direct Joseph to Galilee straight away, and avoid the need for God’s direct intervention a second time.

Answer:

Excerpt from Christology BB4A: Following Herod's death, Joseph was once again told in a dream by an angel of the Lord to return to “the land of Israel”. According to his by now familiar pattern of obedience, he did so, intending to take up residence now at last in the family's new homestead in Bethlehem of Judea ([Matt.2:22](#)). En route, however, he discovered that Herod's son Archelaus was the new ruler in Judea (not at all a certainty before the fact as the popular expectation may well have been that the Romans would dispense with the Herodian dynasty entirely after Herod's demise). As a result, Joseph apparently decided on his own that it would be more prudent to head for Nazareth instead, and this spiritually laudable decision was graciously confirmed for him by a third dream ([Matt.2:19-23](#)), thus relieving him of any nagging feelings that abandoning the little they now had out of reach in Bethlehem might have been a mistake.

Matthew 3:5 (NASB)

5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan;

Question: Considering John didn’t complete any miracles or signs himself, what drew Israel’s inhabitants to him?

Answer: I'm sure that the Lord had something to do with it -- in order to prepare the way for the Messiah.

“And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Luke 1:16-17 NKJV

Matthew 3:7 (NASB)

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

Question: Why does John say, “who warned you to flee from the wrath to come” to the Pharisees and Sadducees? Who is the “who” he refers to? Is it the prophets of old?

Answer: The main point is John's exasperation at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees since they did not actually have any faith. They only came out of curiosity and/or sanctimony. We know that they did not believe him and would not accept the One he testified to as the Messiah.

Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: "The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.
Matthew 21:23-27 NKJV

So in fact they were NOT "fleeing" and therefore the question is, in my view, rhetorical, meant to highlight that fact. For while the others may indeed have had scripture in mind as part of the impetus to come, that was not true for these unbelievers.

Question 2: So, John is basically telling them to flee from the wrath to come because they do not believe in the wrath in the first place? So, in essence the true "who" is God who demonstrates His upcoming wrath through natural revelation of the Pharisee's consciences convicting them of the evil in their hearts?

Answer 2: The question is rhetorical; they were not concerned with God what so ever -- but they OUGHT to have been.

Matthew 4:2-3 (NASB)

2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. **3** And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

Luke 4:2 (NASB)

2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry.

Question: Luke's account makes it sound like the devil tested Jesus for the entire fasting period whereas Matthew's account only mentions the temptations after the 40 days and nights. Can we assume that the devil tempted Jesus in other ways as well before the three ultimate temptations recorded in scripture?

Answer: Mark 1:13 and Luke 4:2 both say that our Lord was being tested/tempted by the devil throughout the forty days; all three accounts (Matthew included) present these three tests/trials as the last ones taking place when the forty days had been completed.

Matthew 4:11 (NASB)

11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Question: What does the word "minister" mean in this context?

Answer: On Matthew 4:11, the word here (and in the parallel passage in Mark) is diakoneo, from which we get "deacon", and is a standard NT word for "serve". So, while it doesn't specify, I would imagine that they gave Him "what He needed", and that would have been food at this point.

Matthew 4:24-25 (NASB)

24 The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. **25** Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

Question: Syria and the Decapolis are Gentile areas. I thought Jesus sought to avoid Gentiles?

Answer: The point is that His fame spread so far and wide that Jews from the surrounding regions came to Him rather than the other way around.

Matthew 5:33-37 (NASB)

33 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.' **34** But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, **35** or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. **36** Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. **37** But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil.

Question: How does the vow rule apply to us today?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Gospel-QuestionsVIII.htm#vows> (response #9)

Matthew 5:43-45 (NASB)

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' **44** But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Question: How should we take joy in our Lord's punishment while also loving our enemies?

Answer: As to "taking joy in the punishment of our oppressors", I think it's possible to rejoice in all that God does, that is, to be joyful in His vindication and deliverance of us without at the same time being nasty. Oppressors get what they deserve; we should be glad of that justice. There is no contradiction between being loving and also appreciating justice. I guarantee you that we will be applauding at the Great White Throne and not feeling any remorse for those who spit in God's face and rejected His Gift.

Matthew 6:18 (NASB)

18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Question: Does Jesus mean that he will reward fasting?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Combating-LegalismVI.htm#fasting> (response #7)

Matthew 7:7-8 (NASB)

7 Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Question: Does Jesus refer to unbelievers looking for God or believers trying to learn wisdom?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-pearls.htm>

Matthew 7:22-23 (NASB)

22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

Question: Does Jesus have the charismatic movement and Catholics in mind here?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Golden-Rule.htm> (response #3)

Matthew 8:9 (NASB)

9 For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Question: Does the centurion say that Jesus has authority over all matter, time, and space and thus can heal at-will just like the centurion can command his responsive subordinates at will?

Answer:

<https://ichthys.com/mail-new-testament-interpretation4.htm#centurions%20faith> (response #16)

Matthew 8:16 (NASB)

16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.

Question: Why was demon possession so obvious in the ancient world, when not so today? Are today's demon possessions masked by fancy medical terms?

Answer: Direct demon interaction in the world seems less obvious today than ever before. In part this may be due to a strategic decision by the devil to concentrate on using science and technology to undermine faith for the time being. But part of the reason seems also to stem from God's sovereign decision to make it so through the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7).

Matthew 8:19-20 (NASB)

19 Then a scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." 20 Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

Question: What's your take on this verse?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-new-testament-interpretation4.htm> (response #19)

Matthew 8:32 (NASB)

32 And He said to them, "Go!" And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters.

Question: Demons like to possess bodies. Why would they sabotage their new bodies (pigs) in totality like they did here?

Answer: On Matthew 8:32, my reading is that the reaction of the swine was something the demons did not anticipate, namely, that they were not able to control them entirely (demon possession has its limits as we see from this same incident where they were not able to keep this man from coming and worshipping at our Lord's feet, even though they were able to say what they wanted to say).

Matthew 8:34 (NASB)

34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.

Question: Why do they want Him out after seeing these miracles?

Answer: They are definitely in fear, but instead of reacting to this legitimate impression of the majesty of God by prostrating themselves and seeking His truth and forgiveness, they would rather be relieved of the confrontation.

Matthew 9:13 (NASB)

13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Question: Does our Lord use the word "compassion" and in some other version's "mercy" as a synonym to "self-awareness of sinfulness"?

Jesus says he desires "compassion not sacrifice" in response to the Pharisee's accusing Jesus of eating with sinners. Yet, at the same time Jesus said that all those who wish to follow Him should take up their crosses in self-denial day after day. Does this difference originate because Jesus desires sacrifice in emulation of Him *after* we accept Him through faith? So essentially the Pharisee's should first worry about compassion and their desperate need for God's forgiveness rather than their fleshly, man-pleasing works and then worry about self-sacrificing works that are actually through the Spirit of God in God's Will? What are your thoughts?

Answer: On "I desire mercy" - that is a better translation because that is what Gr. *eleos* always means and also what the Hebrew *chesedh* it usually translates means as well (I very much dislike "loving-kindness" for *chesedh* which is often found in the versions). In the context of Matthew 9:9ff., this is addressed to the scribes and Pharisees who were finding fault that our Lord was associating with "sinners" -- when of course in fact ALL are sinners. So, He is telling them that they ought to be merciful towards these others they look down on instead of legalistically self-righteous, because the Father loves such mercy and is not in fact impressed by their fulfillment of the legalistic aspects of the Law represented in the quote by "sacrifice".

Matthew 9:38 (NASB)

38 Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Question: Should we take this particular verse as a command to pray for more workers for the Lord's kingdom, or for more personal opportunities for sharing and teaching the Word? Considering He sends the disciples out on their own right after this comment the later explanation makes more sense in context. But the way Jesus phrased the sentence at least in English the former could also work.

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-new-testament-interpretation4.htm> (response #20)

Matthew 11:3 (NASB)

3 and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?"

Question: John identified Jesus when he baptized Him in Matthew chapter 3. Why doesn't John know for certain that Jesus is the Messiah here?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Johns%20doubts.htm>

Matthew 11:7 (NASB)

7 As these men were going *away*, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft *clothing*? Those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' palaces! 9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet.

Question: Could you provide some more detail and explanation on these verses?

Answer: Our Lord had the perfect way of focusing His listeners on what was important. If they really were responding to God by being in His company -- and not just there for the healing and the other miracles -- then they would have responded to John in the proper way. So, these questions focus their attention on who John was, not just a "show" but an actual prophet, one who pointed to Jesus as the Messiah. So, while if they reject John, then they are likely to reject Jesus, if they realize and remember (based on these questions) that they did accept John as a prophet, then they will at least also realize that they ought to accept Jesus as the Messiah (which of course few did). This is analogous to our Lord's handling of the Pharisees:

Luke 20:1-8 NIV: One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. "Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?" He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me: John's baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet." So they answered, "We don't know where it was from." Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Matthew 11:15 (NASB)

15 He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Question: Does Jesus's statement mean "listen up" or "the next thing I'm about to say is important" or does it have some sort of extra spiritual significance i.e. I am about to tell a parable where only those with faith will understand and apply in their hearts?

Answer: It's one thing to listen, another thing to hear. It's one thing to be warily evaluating the truth, another thing to accept it openly and fully like an innocent child. Our Lord is talking about our manner of perception.

Matthew 11:23 (NASB)

23 And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.

Question: This is a hard verse. You have discussed it with Bartek before and I have read that discussion but I still am still stumped. Why would Sodom have repented -- our Lord knows all things and that if someone will repent and believe then He would put them in the perfect position to do so. I suspect the answer comes in the exact wording of His words -- "it would have remained to this day" does not say they would believe, simply that the city would remain. However based on earlier verses it could be argued that He is implying that they would have repented and believed. Looking forward to your insight on this as our Lord is always right, it just takes some perseverance to really "see" it.

Answer: On Matthew 11:23, it's important to remember that there is only one plan of God. There are no hypothetical what if's. Our Lord uses this way of speaking to make the point that the hardness of His generation was exceptional to a proverbial degree. That is what we are to take from this. If Jesus Christ had come to Sodom instead of to the Jews of His day, well, there would have to be a great many changes to the plan of God. Blessedly, it has been perfect and complete since the day that it was decreed.

Matthew 12:15-16 (NASB)

15 But Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. Many followed Him, and He healed them all, **16** and warned them not to tell who He was.

Question: Why did our Lord warn the crowd if they didn't know who He was, because they almost never "got" that He was the Son of God?

Answer: It's a misleading translation. Better:

And charged them that they should not make him known.
Matthew 12:16 KJV

We see from other passages as well that this celebrity was a curse and something He eschewed (Matt.8:4; 9:30-31; 14:13-14; Mk.1:43-45; 3:20; 8:26; 9:30; Lk.4:42-44; 5:15-16; 5:19). While sinful human beings crave fame, for our Lord -- the ultimate celebrity of all time -- being celebrated far and wide only made His ministry more difficult. In fact, He went to lengths to repulse those who were really not interested in the truth, using parables, for one thing, going up to the mountain tops to teach the disciples who cared enough (after being healed or fed) to still seek Him out. A good lesson there for us all. If somehow Ichthys became "famous" -- for fifteen minutes -- I would not be able to handle the load of emails, so that those genuinely interested would get lost in the shuffle. God knows what He is doing -- of course!

Matthew 12:43-45 (NASB)

43 “Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find it. **44** Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. **45** Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

Question 1: What does this parable mean?

Answer: Our Lord is talking in this section about the hardness of those who refuse to accept Him, and in the first part you ask about "this generation" compares unfavorably to gentile foreigners of the past who came from remote areas to hear the truth and yet our Lord's contemporaries who have the truth thrown into their laps are not interested in it. The passage about the unclean spirit makes a similar point in that our Lord has given His hearers a wonderful blessing, the truth of the gospel, but it is of no use to them if they do not respond so as to be liberated from spiritual bondage – the end will be worse than the beginning.

Question 2: How does demon exorcism factor into this?

Answer: The point is that casting a demon out of someone who has no intention of turning to the Lord thereafter is pointless because they will just go back to their old ways, only things will get worse for them as the demon returns with others (there being nothing to prevent reentry since the person is still not a believer). So even if these Jewish exorcists could do (which they cannot) what they claimed to be able to do, there would be no profit in it for the unbelieving recipient of their efforts. Exorcism is something that only our Lord could do along with those He directly commissioned to do likewise – a sign of the incipient kingdom which He will bring in.

Matthew 16:4 (NASB)

4 An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.” And He left them and went away.

Mark 8:12 (NASB)

12 Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, “Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.”

Question: Hasn't Jesus given the Jews many signs to “chew on” so to speak? Why does He say “no sign will be given”?

Answer: It is interesting that "this generation" of hardness -- which endures until this present day -- did mean something massively large (like destroying the Romans with fire and brimstone, then bringing in the kingdom so they could enjoy prosperity). After feeding the five thousand, the people following the Lord say the same thing, after all:

So they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" John 6:30-31 NIV

So, clearly, miraculously feeding 5,000 people with next to nothing was not enough for them, because it didn't accomplish what they wanted: the crown without the cross, right now and without any spiritual revival on their part. One could thus translate to capture the meaning, "no SUCH sign will be given".

Matthew 16:6 (NASB)

6 And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Mark 8:15 (NASB)

15 And He was giving orders to them, saying, “Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

Question: What is the “leaven of Herod”?

Answer: Professor Luginbill’s unique translation of the Mark verse... “And [Jesus] gave orders to [the disciples], saying, "Beware! Be on guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod (i.e., the Sadducees: cf. Matthew 16:6)”

Matthew 17:1 (NASB)

1 Six days later Jesus *took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and *led them up on a high mountain by themselves.

Luke 9:28 (NASB)

28 Some eight days after these sayings, He took along Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray.

Question: Why is there a difference between the "eight days" and the “six days” in Mark and Matthew?

Answer: This is the difference between inclusive and non-inclusive counting, neither of which corresponds to our modern thinking on the matter. We would say "seven days later" and not "on the eighth day following when counting inclusively" or "when six full days had elapsed not counting the day He said this and the one on which it happened".

Question 2: Would writers frequently use both styles of counting?

Answer: Both systems are used, analogous to English "the day after tomorrow" vs. "two days from now" -- we say, "well, those are the same things!", but the folks of the 1st century would say of their system, "well, those are the same things!"

More Info: <https://ichthys.com/mail-gospel-questions15.htm> (response #40)

Matthew 17:17 (NASB)

17 And Jesus answered and said, “You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.”

Question: Does Jesus feel righteously indignant towards his disciples or the Jewish generation in general?

Answer: The man in question did not have sufficient faith in the ability of the disciples to heal the boy and for that reason he was not healed. As such, he stands as a representative of "this generation" of hardness which refuses to put its faith in the true power of God and the ministry of His Son.

Question 2: Then why does Jesus say “your” in response to the disciples later in Matthew 17:19, “Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not drive it out?” 20 And He *said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith”?”

Answer: The main point is the man lacking faith; but it's also true that the disciples lacked sufficient faith to be able to overcome this man's lack under the difficult circumstances of this particular demon possession. For in Mark He adds that "this type" only will come out with prayer, but this will require the sort of faith in prayer sufficient to "move mountains".

Matthew 18:19-20 (NASB)

19 “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. **20** For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.”

Insight: <https://ichthys.com/mail-corporate%20prayer.htm>

Matthew 19:11-12 (NASB)

11 But He said to them, “Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. **12** For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.”

Question: What does our Lord mean when He says “to whom it has been given”?

Option I can think of:

In the same way God calls out believers to be part of the elect He also has called a select group of people (mostly men) to accept this statement in their hearts in a special way and put Jesus and teaching/evangelizing His Church over concern about marriage and family. Just like our salvation has been given to us, some of us have been given the individual spirit's that love the Lord and His church so much that they don't want to get married. Of course, free will has to be factored in, but this particular verse emphasizes God's divine grace in selecting those who can accept this verse and be happy to oblige.

Answer: Your analysis sounds reasonable to me!

Matthew 19:16-21 (NASB)

16 And someone came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?” **17** And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” **18** Then he said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; **19** Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” **20** The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?” **21** Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

Question: Why does Jesus say if you want to enter into eternal life you have to do something more than believing in His sacrifice?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Combating-LegalismIII.htm> (response #1)

Matthew 19:29 (NASB)

29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.

Question: Jesus makes this comment about self-sacrifice, heavenly priorities over the temporal, and the truth dividing families. However, I don't understand why he says "children" among the other relationships and things listed. Scripture commands us to look after our children so does Jesus mean that we should orientate God over children in our hearts not in the physical sense?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Spiritual-Growth-Church-Searching-Discipling.htm> (response #21)

Matthew 20:28 (NASB)

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Question: Why does Jesus call himself "the Son of Man"?

Answer:

BB4A Christology excerpt: <https://ichthys.com/4A-Christo.htm#30>) The Son of Man:

Matthew 20:22-23 (NASB)

22 But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to Him, "We are able." **23** He said to them, "My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father."

Question: Why does our Lord not strongly rebuke James and John for saying they can drink "the cup that I am about to drink", since the cup will be our Lord's saving work?

Answer: I believe our Lord meant that they would "[drink the cup of martyrdom](#)" which is the ultimate "[sharing of the suffering of Christ](#)" (see the links). It is not unusual, as we have seen, for things to be true in one sense and not in another, and vice versa, and for our Lord to refer to both aspects of a question in order to cover it fully.

Answer part 2: On our Lord's response to James and John at Matthew 20:22, our Lord was well aware of the limitations of understanding of His disciples and did not attempt to teach them things they were as yet incapable of receiving:

"I have yet many things to say to you, but ye are not able to bear them now; and when He may come -- the Spirit of truth -- He will guide you to all the truth . . ."

John 16:12-13a NKJV

Blessedly, we now have the Spirit and so can receive all the truth we are willing to receive; sadly, most of our contemporary fellow believers are not willing to receive very much.

Matthew 21:2 (NASB)

2 saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied there and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me.

Question: What kind of adult animal did our Lord tow to the donkey colt? I have read conflicting reports. Some say an adult donkey, others a horse.

Answer: On donkey vs. horse, Zechariah 9:9 seems to make it clear that the "colt" is a donkey; however, in Greek the word *polos* is properly used of horses. Not that it's impossible that the word could be stretched in the context to mean foal of donkey instead of a horse. However, we know for certain that the symbolism here has to do with both advents, and also that while the donkey speaks of humility (1st advent) the horse speaks of majesty (2nd advent), and that our Lord will return on a horse, not a donkey (Rev.19:11). So, while it's possible that the gospels stretched the word, it's also possible that we are to understand *וְעַל-עֵיִר בְּרִי-אֶתְנָן* in Zechariah more flexibly. *note: in Matt.21:2 the donkey is feminine so it seems that there the colt is its own foal – but symbolically the above is right

Question 2: On the donkey vs. horse debate: So, to conclude we don't know 100% whether the adult animal was a horse or a donkey. Symbolically, we can make a good argument that both the Matthew 21:2 and Zechariah 9:9 quotes actually could read horse in addition to the donkey foal given the flexibility of the language.

Answer 2: That's pretty much it.

Matthew 21:44 (NASB)

44 And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.”

Question: What does this verse mean?

Answer: In my view, the former represents those who stumble over the Rock, Jesus Christ, and are ruined for failing to accept Him (true of most of His contemporaries who were unwilling to accept that the Messiah was not a conquering general); the latter represents the destruction of those who oppose Him at His return. So, this verse sums up spiritual and military opposition which correspond to the first and second advents respectively.

Matthew 22:1-13 (NASB)

1 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, **2** “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. **3** And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. **4** Again he sent out other slaves saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited, “Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.”’ **5** But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, **6** and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. **7** But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire. **8** Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. **9** Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.’ **10** Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. **11** “But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, **12** and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless. **13** Then the

king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Question: Can you provide a rundown for this parable? I have looked for answers in other places but could not find one.

Answer: Here's what I have in Q/A #11 for "Parables and their Interpretation" for the companion passage in Luke:

“Q: Could you briefly explain Luke 14:12-24? Is the big dinner the Kingdom of God? Do the first guests symbolize Pharisees, the second the poor among the Israelites and the third (from the 'highways and along the hedges) the Gentiles? What is the meaning of the invitation to this dinner?”

A: Yes, I take the "king's banquet" parable to be the celebration in the Kingdom from which most of Jesus' contemporaries will be shut out. They all have their excuses why they will not accept God's will and receive His Messiah who is right there in front of them. This trend to hardness in Israel will continue until our Lord's return (Rom.11:25), and the mystery of the Church is that the gentiles are now flooding into God's family (the people compelled to come in from the highways and byways). I also think you make a good point in identifying the "poor/lame/crippled etc." as those in Israel who were not of the privileged religious caste (cf. Matt.21:31). Thanks!”

You might also look at "Matthew Questions" in loc. where I say pretty much the same thing for the Matthew passage.

Matthew 22:7 (NASB)

7 But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

Question: “But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire”. -- Does this verse refer to the Armageddon campaign or is it the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD or something different?

Answer: As verse as a response: Revelation 20:7-9 NKJV

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. **And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them** [Professor Luginbills' bold emphasis]

Question 2: But this wouldn't make sense considering this parable is in reference to the hardened generation of Israelites who have rejected the Messiah and during the Millennium they will have accepted him thus not needing any judgement of fire. I thought that those killing the slaves were the Israelites who were persecuting God's messengers at the start of the Church age. This is a confusing parable I have to say.

Answer 2: I have no problem applying this part of the parable (which is a bit different in the rendering in Luke) also to a) [the baptism of fire](#) (from CT 6 on that subject: "The enemies of the King who did not want Him to rule over them who are killed in His presence at His return (Lk.19:27; quoted above)."), and also to b) [the purging of Israel](#) during the regathering at the beginning of the Millennium (I quote the Luke passage there as well).

The parable(s) present the return of the King and His disposition of all matters as of one piece (meaning not only all of the things mentioned but also the end of the earthly and transition into the eternal kingdom with all the echelons of resurrection and judgments included), so that we are right to (and in fact must) include all these aspects.

The point of the parable is that opposing the King is insane and will be punished, whether that opposition is willful and violent (the rebels) or passive (the man without the wedding garment), and just because a person considers himself "a citizen of the kingdom" (as our Lord's contemporaries did on the basis of their genealogy), will count for nothing compared to one's actual attitude of heart towards the King. In the end, the King will come and all rebels and resisters will be disposed of, so that only the righteous enter into the eternal kingdom.

Matthew 23:4 (NASB)

4 They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

Question: What exactly does our Lord mean by this?

Options I can think of:

- a) A lack of mercy upon the Pharisees in willingness to teach the Law but failing to give the gospel of forgiveness from the Law.
- b) They impose regulations upon others that they are not willing to touch themselves.

Answer: Here's what I read in scripture:

"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:
'These people draw near to Me with their mouth,
And honor Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
And in vain they worship Me,
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "
Matthew 15:7-9 NKJV

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."
Matthew 23:23 NIV

There are many other passages of this sort besides as you know. The Pharisees, "sat in the seat of Moses", so our Lord told the Jews of His day to "do what they say" (because of their God-given authority, even if being mal-used), but not to "do what they do", which was rank hypocrisy (Matt.23:2).

So while I wouldn't disagree that they did "a" -- and it is a good application what motivated them -- I think this verse is all about "b" in terms of literal interpretation.

Matthew 24:1-2 (NASB)

1 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. **2** And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."

Question: When exactly will the Tribulation temple be torn down? Moses and Elijah will build the third temple, the beast will take his seat in it, then when his northern kingdom goes dark the orthodox Jews will cleanse it, and then they will have control over it until Jesus comes back to save at the second advent. So, I'm assuming that the temple will be destroyed at the final siege by the antichrist?

Answer: As to Matthew 24:1-2, that verse has been fulfilled. It doesn't apply to the temple of the Tribulation the building of which Moses and Elijah will oversee. That is the basis of the millennial temple -- which will be "built up" and embellished by the Lord on His return (see the link: ["Will the Temple be Rebuilt?"](#)).

Note on the mystery age and the "mystery age":

You do have a point and I have mentioned and discussed these exceptions before. The destruction of Jerusalem and our Lord's prophecies on that score is, in my view, "the exception that proves the rule". The temple was in God's eyes no longer carrying on a legitimate function from the point of the cross and resurrection forward -- and doubly so not from the day of Pentecost onward. But it took even the apostles some time to climb that "learning curve". As I discuss and explain at great length in BB 6B, the apostolic era was a time of transition, and the Romans destroyed Jerusalem at the end of that functional overlap. So I would say that these prophecies, while technically taking place in the Age of the Church are really associated with the Age of Israel, because they put an end to that age in all functional terms. We have a similar overlap during the Tribulation which shares the end of the Church Age with the prophesied final seven years of the Age of Israel.

Matthew 24:33 (NASB)

33 so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.

Revelation 3:20 (NASB)

20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Question: Is it fair to make the supposition that our Lord's "right at the door" comment in Matthew 24:33 supports the interpretation that Laodicea is the last era preceding the tribulation because of its own respective "stand at the door" reference?

Answer: Matthew 24:33 is different from Revelation 3:20; in terms of the former, our Lord being "right at the door" refers to the imminence of the 2nd Advent once the Tribulation has begun.

Matthew 24:36-37 (NASB)

36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. **37** For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.

Question: Confused question

Answer: The way I read it, I do think you are correct that there is a parallel: like Noah, we "know it's coming", but also like Noah, we don't have a calendar date given to us. Like him, we may have indications of how close it is just from the circumstances. Things were so bad in Noah's day, that it was clear that God wasn't going to put up with the status quo much longer (Gen.6:5) -- just the situation we are looking at today as well.

However, I'm sure Noah, who was a righteous man (Ezek.14:14; 2Pet.2:5; cf. Heb.11:7), was working as hard as he reasonably could to get ready, so that until the ark was close to completion, he would have had faith that it wasn't time "just yet". By contrast here, God is NOT going to wait until we personally are ready for the Tribulation. Noah's ark was a means of deliverance for him and his family from the flood that came; but the flood of the Tribulation will come at it's ordained time whether or not the "ark" of truth and spiritual resilience we are building in our hearts is completed or not.

We do not, in fact, know precisely how much time is left. I stand by the interpretation posted at Ichthys for all the reasons mentioned, but I have always made a point of emphasizing that it is just that, an interpretation -- because scripture does not give a date. Even if it is correct (as I believe it to be), the Bible's silence on this point is salutary because it is GOOD that we don't know for sure the exact time -- because if we did we might be sore tempted not to get out the hammers and saws until it was getting very close. Procrastination is a natural human tendency, and in spiritual matters that seems to be even more pronounced (the large number of death-bed conversions being one measure of that).

Not many people are like Noah who, when warned, got cracking immediately and never slacked off. We might have six years left (I do think so), but that will go by in a flash -- as anyone over sixty can tell you with authority. Now if it turns out we only have a few weeks . . . when the seventh seal is broken and Lord announces the Tribulation's commencement, none of us who've been laboring in the Word as teachers or students will regret a single hour we've invested. The Tribulation will tell the tale as to whether or not what we've constructed in our hearts will "hold water".

Matthew 26:29 (NASB)

29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Matthew 27:48 (NASB)

48 Immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink.

Question: What does Matthew 26:29 mean? Doesn't Jesus drink wine at the end of His punishment for us all while still on earth in Matthew 27:48?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-gospel-kingdom.htm> (response #3)

Matthew 24:38-39 (NASB)

38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, **39** and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Question: Our Lord's wording through me off a bit. He says the words "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage". This sounds almost a bit merry. During the massive judgements and death during the Tribulation it's a bit hard for me to imagine people living cheerfully like this, and does if indoctrinated with the false teaching sound a bit like what would be the case before the Tribulation.

Answer: It is a very interesting passage, one I've commented on before in this vein (but that reference would be hard to find no doubt). Yes, that is true -- life goes on, even in the Tribulation. Despite all of the horrible things that will happen on the earthward side, and the intensification of evil due to the removal of the Holy Spirit's restraining of lawlessness (the mystery of which, of course, is already at work but not fully unencumbered), and despite the judgments coming from the heavenward side, people will still be functioning. That would have to be the case for any of the "history" described in the biblical texts about the end times to be possible, after all. Antichrist's mustering of the largest army in the history of the world for Armageddon and his transporting it to Israel from all over the world means that basic systems will still be in operation. There is much historical precedent for that. Just consider how completely devastated Germany and Japan were by allied bombing campaigns, and yet both societies continued to function without anything close to a break-down all the way until the end. After Dresden and after Hiroshima, there were still people left who "cleaned up" and went on with their daily lives as best they could. Understand: there was plenty of suffering and plenty of death. But life went on.

The present "double unpleasantness" (on the verge of tripling?) is a good example of this phenomenon of human resilience. Everyone seems to be somewhat miserable as a result of "all this" -- and yet life is going on. The same will be true of the Tribulation. But in terms of being "a bit merry", I don't think we should infer that. Soldiers on the line have always had to "eat and drink", and there are plenty of marriages in wartime -- even though things are very much less than "merry". This prophecy is literally true, but these activities are meant to represent life continuing, even if it's anything but "normal" -- like today, only on a vastly more miserable scale. Here's the picture Isaiah paints of the situation just prior to the second advent:

Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt. Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up, and very few are left.

The new wine dries up and the vine withers; all the merry-makers groan.

The joyful timbrels are stilled, the noise of the revelers has stopped, the joyful harp is silent.

No longer do they drink wine with a song; the beer is bitter to its drinkers.

The ruined city lies desolate; the entrance to every house is barred.

In the streets they cry out for wine; all joy turns to gloom, all joyful sounds are banished from the earth.

The city is left in ruins, its gate is battered to pieces.

Isaiah 24:6-12 NIV

But very soon thereafter for us who belong to Jesus Christ . . .

They raise their voices, they shout for joy; from the west they acclaim the LORD's majesty.

Therefore in the east give glory to the LORD; exalt the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the islands of the sea.

From the ends of the earth we hear singing: "Glory to the Righteous One."

Isaiah 24:14-16a NIV

And . . .

The moon will be dismayed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders—with great glory.

Isaiah 24:23 NIV

Matthew 25:1-13 (NASB)

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. 5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Be on the alert then [stay awake], for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Question: You teach that the sleeping of the 10 virgins is to just further the story since we all need to sleep and because the virgins are not faulted for sleeping. However, it is peculiar to me that Jesus says "stay awake" in the last verse of this parable. This could mean that there is some spiritual significance to the virgins sleeping. Could it be that the Tribulation doesn't start until "midnight" and that the "delay" is before the Tribulation even begins? I was wondering if the "delaying" in the Parable has to do with the last era of Laodicea. In that this parable explains the drowsiness of the church before the Tribulation. And then the "midnight" is the start of the Tribulation. Those who have enough oil despite their sleepiness survive, while the others do not?

Answer: On the parable, I hear what you're saying. The thing about parables, not every piece of "furniture" has important symbolic meaning. For example, I can imagine someone making a thing out of the fact that these are "virgins", but I wouldn't press that too far. Same goes for the "falling asleep". What you say is true about staying awake, but the point of the parable is that there is a right way and a wrong way to go about this and we should do it the right way. If in the parable some were awake, then they wouldn't have had to "re-trim" their lamps in the first place. The way things are stated offers the clearest contrast: those who have enough oil (cf. the truth used by the Spirit whose anointing is compared to oil) and those who do not; lesson: have enough oil in your lamp / have enough truth in your heart. THAT -- in this parable -- is how you "stay awake / stay alert". Because it's not about literal wakefulness but spiritual alertness which is a function of how close we are to the Lord through His truth.

Matthew 25:31 (NASB)

31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

Question: I have a question on the parable of the sheep and the goats. This parable has a lot of information that indicates it is speaking of the Great White Throne judgement.

However, the first half of this phrase makes it seem like it is speaking of the second advent. Why do you think that initial part of the verse is in there?

Answer: On Matthew 25:31, I understand it in the following way: "when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him (second advent) - [Millennium interpolated here] , then (i.e., at the Millennium's end) He will sit on His glorious throne . . .". This sort of expression of eschatology, wherein future events are telescoped, is common throughout the Bible, especially prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit after which the Church Age commences and it is then explained in the epistles. Our Lord's contemporaries didn't even know about the Church Age (except to understand that there were things to come which didn't fit their model; cf. 1Pet.1:10-11). When teaching it is often not the best approach to

try and teach everything at once and start putting in verbal footnotes (such as, "of course you know that the Millennium will come in between, and also the judgment of Israel on her regathering, not to mention also . . .).

Question 2: Ok that makes sense.

2 Peter 3:10 (NASB) 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

Does this verse here present a similar phenomenon to Matthew 25:31 in that the "day of the Lord coming like a thief" (second advent) - [Millennium interpolated here] , then (i.e., at the Millennium's end) the heavens will pass away with a roar ...".

Answer 2: That's exactly right. Here's my translation:

For the Day of the Lord (i.e., the end times starting with the Tribulation and ending in the eternal state) will come like a thief, a day in which (i.e., over the course of which, i.e., the thousand years plus) the heavens will depart with a roar, the very elements will ignite and dissolve, and the earth and everything which has been done upon it will be laid bare [for the Lord's inspection (i.e., the final Great White Throne judgment)].

2nd Peter 3:10

Matthew 26:48-49 (NASB)

48 Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the one; seize Him." **49** Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

Question: Why does Judas even need to kiss the one he is going to betray? I would think that he could simply point Jesus out especially since most of the Jewish leaders had already seen Him. Is this an indication of his sick perversity – that he wants to kiss whom he is going to betray?

Answer: I don't think we need to worry too much about the finer points of Judas' mind-set; given that He betrayed the Lord, this detail and its motivation is the least of his problems. I suppose one could point out that in the dark and in a confused situation where there were multiple people who all looked pretty much alike in the torchlight, this would be a way of making sure that they 'got the right one'. It does serve to highlight the load that this betrayal must have placed on our Lord, since He had been nothing but good to this man -- and was about to die for his sins (to not particular avail in his individual case). One more indication that none of us could have possibly endured what our Lord endured even getting TO the point of the darkness on the cross, let alone once it fell.

Matthew 27:3 (NASB)

3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Question: Can you provide some insight on Judas's thinking? I would think someone with such a hardened heart couldn't feel guilt of any kind, let alone enough guilt to kill himself from it.

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-gospel%20of%20Judas.htm> (response #1)

Bonus Gospel Content:

Mark

Question: You wrote, “It ought to be mentioned, however, that John Mark wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His authority to do so was derived from Peter (just as Luke's was from Paul). It should also be said that Mark, unlike Luke (who had to do research, as he tells us), was an eyewitness (e.g., he's no doubt the young man who escaped at Mark 14:51-52”

So, did Peter tell John Mark what to write word for word under the power of the Spirit. Or did Peter give the ok for John Mark to write in the power of the Spirit? How do we know that John Mark was the guy who escaped when Jesus was arrested by running away naked by slipping away from his cloak?

Answer: I'm sure that Mark got information from Peter, but Mark was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write what he wrote -- in the same way as all who've been charged to write scripture.

Mark 7:33 (NASB)

33 Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva;

Question: Jesus also spits in His healing in Mark 8:23. Why does He spit in order to heal?

Answer: What our Lord did in healing the sick took effort. It was tiring. And oftentimes it was "hands on". The difficulty level sometimes had to do with the problem in question or the demonic opposition too, after all (cf. Matthew 17:21 "this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting"). We are not privy to know why some things could be done at a distance, some things only in person, and some things took more effort.

Mark 8:24-26 (NASB)

24 And he looked up and said, “I see men, for I see them like trees, walking around.” **25** Then again He laid His hands on his eyes; and he looked intently and was restored, and began to see everything clearly. **26** And He sent him to his home, saying, “Do not even enter the village.”

Question: Why didn't our Lord heal the man all the way the first time?

Answer: Apparently, sight is not just a matter of physiology but also of perceptive acuity. On those rare occasions when sight is restored by modern medicine, I am told, the individuals in question sometimes have to be taught "how to see". That seems to be the case with this person. The result is that our Lord performed a double miracle: 1) restoring the man's eyes; 2) giving him the ability to process the information so as to see accurately. My own interpretation of this on the spiritual side of things is that without the Spirit – or without believing the truth we receive – the gospel / Bible truth may be "clear" to us and yet make no practical sense whatsoever. That important distinction – between *gnosis*, mere knowledge (akin to the man after only the first half of the miracle), and *epignosis*, truth understood through faith (akin to the man after only the second half of the miracle), is in many ways the key to the Christian life. We have to believe the truth in order for it to be of any real use to us; otherwise, there is not much different between that kind of fatally flawed "sight" and being truly blind.

Addition insight: <https://ichthys.com/mail-blindness-disease-medicine.htm> (response #2)

Mark 9:15 (NASB)

15 Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him.

Question: Why was the crowd “amazed” after our Lord returned from the mount of transfiguration? Should we take this to mean that He had some of the glow from the change of appearance like Moses did (Exodus 34:29-35)?

Answer: I don't see anything in the context to suggest it. If anything, the context of them coming down the mountain and the sudden end to the miracle and Jesus seeming as He was before suggests the opposite to me. I think the "amazement" comes from the fact that they are all arguing -- which must have had to do with the Lord and His ministry and how it related to healing of the sort that was "not working" -- and now here He is.

Mark 9:31-32 (NASB)

31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.” **32** But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.

Question: Why were the disciples “afraid to ask” our Lord about this? They were usually more than comfortable asking Him about His teachings.

Answer: Probably because 1) they had heard this before and were embarrassed to admit that they didn't understand yet AND didn't accept it; and 2) they were no doubt also afraid to get more details about something they hoped wouldn't happen.

Mark 10:29-30 (NASB)

29 Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, **30** but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

Question: Is this “hundredfold” a reference to our new big family as a family in Christ. We give up our blood family but we come into the family of believers?

Answer: Excerpt from <https://ichthys.com/mail-all-things-charismatic.htm> (response #3)

“The "hundred-fold" is defined in terms of "brothers, mothers, sisters, children". Clearly, we only have one mother. What can this 100-fold family we will have be then except our family in Jesus, the Church? The more we grow and help the Church of Christ grow, the more we see this harvest of blessing accelerate. It doesn't pay in Caesar's coin, but it pays a spiritual reward that cannot compare to gold.”

Mark 10:18 (NASB)

18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

Question: Jesus is God. So why does our Lord make it sound like He is rejecting the label “good” with his rhetorical question?

Answer: Excerpt from <https://ichthys.com/mail-gospel-questions12.htm> (response #8)

“In that regard, the statement that no one is good except God (Matthew 19:17, Luke 18:19) would be entirely understandable because no human being can be truly good . . . except of course our Lord Jesus. And that was entirely the point. This ruler our Lord was addressing along with the legalistic generation he represented might be willing to acknowledge our Lord as a teacher (as this man did: "good teacher": Matthew 19:16), but certainly *not* as God. Our Lord with brilliant irony demonstrates in just a few words that the logic of calling Him "good" – which *was* correct – had to mean that He was also God – which of course He was and is.”

Mark 12:17 (NASB)

17 And Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were amazed at Him.

Question: Where is the line when we should break the law because Caesar’s commands are encroaching onto God’s “things”?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Culture-and-ChristianityV.htm#Should%20Christians%20ever%20oppose%20state%20authority> (response #5)

Additional insight: <https://ichthys.com/mail-gospel-questions13.htm> (response #2)

Mark 12:25 (NASB)

25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Question: What does Jesus mean by this in respect to procreation?

Answer: There will be no procreation in eternity. In its final form, the family of God, composed half of believing human beings and half of elect angels, will constitute a perfect number which will never change for all eternity. There is therefore no need of a marriage relationship for human beings whose primary purpose in the plan of God is/was to "be fruitful and multiply" and "to produce godly offspring". We will be "like the angels" in respect of being eternal and complete in our number from the point of the resurrection forward.

Mark 13:22 (NASB)

22 for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Question: Does this mean that there will be more evil people (prophets) than just the false prophet with the power to produce evil miracles designed to lead astray during the tribulation?

Answer: Antichrist's false religion will coopt every other religion, including non-believing "Christianity", and you can bet there will be all manner of spokespeople for that, "prophets" though not of a divine or genuine nature. They won't have the powers or the position of THE false prophet, however.

Luke

Luke 2:34-35 (NASB)

34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— **35** and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

Question: Can you explain Simeon’s quotation here. Specifically, the “sword”?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Gospel-QuestionsVII.htm> (response #11)

Luke 4:23 (NASB)

23 And He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’”

Question: Why would these people say “Physician, heal yourself?”. They wanted the healings, so why would they say for Him to heal Himself?

Answer: Pretty ungrateful attitude on the part of His townfolk in this context, isn't it?

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
John 1:11 NKJV

And of course, the good folk of Nazareth later in this discussion tried to kill Him (Lk.4:28-30).

This was a proverb in the words expressed and fit that bad attitude as our Lord Himself explains: "do here in your hometown as well!". So, this proverb brings out what is really in their hearts, namely, a very selfish attitude that blames our Lord for not doing more. "Heal thyself" is nasty. That's why they were thinking it

Luke 4:34-35 (NASB)

34 “Let us alone! What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” **35** But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm

Question: Why does Jesus let the demon say this considering He wants to maintain free will among the crowds? Considering Jesus is all-powerful He could have stopped the demon from saying this true statement before the demon even began to utter it.

Answer: It happened the way it happened, and part of that is no doubt for our benefit: we are blessed to have this description of events. Yes, God could have prevented the demons for speaking automatically, but we see our Lord having to push through such opposition being "put to the test in all things just as [we are], [only] without sin" (Heb.4:15). We can safely conclude that these occasional outbursts didn't negatively affect the salvation of anyone or the principle of free will -- because we know that the plan of God is absolutely perfect.

Luke 6:30 (NASB)

30 Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.

Question: Does Jesus tell us to give someone our coat if they steal from us and to go above and beyond an unreasonable request? Or do these instructions direct our conduct towards our fellow believers? If someone wants to sue us for money and we give it to him, knowing that he will never pay us back isn't that foolish and allowing ourselves to be taken advantage of?

Answer: <https://ichthys.com/mail-Gospel-QuestionsVIII.htm> (response #5)

Luke 12:40 (NASB)

You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.”

Question: Confused question

Answer: As to Luke 12:40, I think this is apropos of the above (the answer for the “days of Noah from Matthew 24:36). If a person is really devoted to His Master, then he/she will want to do all that the Master requires and knowing the exact time will merely give him/her the ability to plan out doing all that will need to be done so as to have it done in plenty of time. But that mind-set is rare, even among believers. Most people need a little uncertainty -- or else they have a tendency to procrastinate. If I tell you that the surprise quiz will come "on the last day of the week", in my experience as a teacher, only the one or two really outstanding students I'm likely to have in any class will do much studying before Thursday night (or Friday morning); but if I tell that "any time next week", that is an incentive to be ready for Monday just as much as for Friday.

Luke 12:43-46 NKJV: "Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Luke 13:32 (NASB)

32 And He said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.’”

Question: Is there a millennial day evidence with this verse? It could possibly be that our Lord is referring to spiritual warfare during the Church age and then our Lord reaches His "goal" (i.e the fulfillment of the bride). The thing that wouldn't "fit" is the demon comment. We know that after the apostleship that this power left the Church.

<https://ichthys.com/mail-Communion-Spiritual-Death-of-Christ.htm> (response #9)

In the linked post you said, "So I take the third day to refer to the cross and His completion of His work, with the preceding days indicating the time between these words and that event." I'm not sure what you are saying here with your interpretation. Can you provide some additional color on this one?

Answer: This is talking about Christ, so I don't find millennial days as part of the interpretation; if someone teaching the passage wanted to bring that in as an analogy, I wouldn't have a problem with that.

This passage is about Christ's "end", His "goal", and that clearly is the cross and resurrection thereafter. This incident happened just before the final journey to Jerusalem, so this seems to me to be a valid way to lay out the future: 1) today; 3) the cross; 2) the relatively short time in between.

Luke 5:35 (NASB)

35 But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days.”

Question: Is our Lord saying that it is good for the disciples to fast? That could be inferred, but it is not stated. From the text, He simply says that they "will" fast, without proclaiming it good or bad. Thus, we should not take this as a directive from our Lord to fast.

Answer: The Lord doesn't say that they or we should fast but that they (we?) will fast. It did happen (Acts 10:30; 13:2-3; 14:33), and was contemplated as happening (1Cor.7:5). But nowhere in the New Testament is it 1) commanded or 2) recommended. Our Lord does tell us the "rule" is someone feels the need to do it (i.e., don't let anyone know you're doing it / have done it). In a nutshell, legitimate fasting is generally associated with an intense seeking of God's will and/or help in some particularly difficult situation.

Luke 19:11-27 (NASB)

11 While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. 12 So He said, “A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. 13 And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, ‘Do business with this until I come back.’ 14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ 15 When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. 16 The first appeared, saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’ 17 And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.’ 18 The second came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’ 19 And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’ 20 Another came, saying, ‘Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.’ 22 He *said to him, ‘By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?’ 24 Then he said to the bystanders, ‘Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’ 25 And they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas already.’ 26 I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 27 But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.”

Question: The parable of the minas and talents are parables addressing Jesus Christ's evaluation of believers at His second advent. Why then is there an unbeliever being addressed here (the third slave who puts his mina into a handkerchief). I do not see an opportunity for this kind of dialogue between Lord Jesus and an unbeliever at the second advent except for the purging of the Jews, which this parable is not discussing. Definitely would appreciate some clarification on this.

Answer: It's not unusual in the Old Testament and also in the gospels -- before the Church Age interpolation was explained (cf. "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6) --

for all of eschatology to be rolled into one. I call it "Prophetic Foreshortening". Nothing in the parable is untrue; and the only adjustment needed for complete understanding is just what you mention, namely, that the evaluation of the unbelievers comes later, but it does come on the heels of a believer only judgment; put together, these are the sheep and the goats. So you can understand this as being the same as the sheep and goats judgment -- which comes immediately after this parable in Matthew chapter twenty-five . . . and which has the same issue, namely, it's all about the end of the age with the Church Age not yet being visible. That would require the completion of our Lord's mission and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 21:18 (NASB)

18 Yet not a hair of your head will perish.

Question: In this quote discussing Luke 21:18 about not a hair on our head being harmed, do you mean we won't be touched at all by anything severe if God has written us in to survive until that great Day? I was under the impression that if we're to survive to the end we could still very well face torture, beatings, etc... In this quote the impression I got was that those who do survive all the way won't be touched at all besides imprisonment. ("protection from harm")

Answer: This all depends on what the Lord has for us (Rev.13:10). If it is His will for us to survive the Tribulation we will do so, "none the worse for wear". Anyone who has come through a difficult time of testing (especially one lasting multiple years) and is then restored by the Lord can appreciate this verse. Think of Job. He did suffer. But on the other side things were even better than before. Nothing is impossible for God. However, of course, there are some who will not make it through, whose divinely set destiny is to be martyred to honor Jesus Christ. They will be kept safe and intact to offer their finally testimony -- given to them by the Spirit -- without the evil one being able to prevent it (Lk.12:11-12). And I am confident that whatever death is decreed that God will make sure that it is bearable (Ps.116:15). All these too will be brought safe into the kingdom, but through martyrdom rather than the living resurrection (as was the case with Paul, e.g.).

At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

2nd Timothy 4:16-18 NKJV

John

John 3:8 (NASB)

8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, **but do not know where it comes from and where it is going**; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Question: Why does our Lord say that believers do not know where the Spirit comes from or where it is going since we know that the Spirit came from Jesus and that He goes in the direction of God's will -- a will communicated by Scripture. So, in that sense we both know where He comes from and where He is

going. Is this because Jesus is talking about each individual future and that we don't know where or what God will lead us to?

Answer: This is our Lord speaking to an unbeliever, and the first thing an unbeliever needs is the gospel. Unbelievers are materialists -- unless and until they convert -- so the wind is a perfect example: just because you can't see the truth doesn't mean it's not true. And the whole point is to commit to the truth by trusting God -- faith -- so of course you can't see it. Nicodemus was a "teacher of Israel" so he was supposed to know about the things of God but he didn't yet know the very first entry-level thing for all those who live on earth: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

John 7:17

(NASB) 17 If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.

Question: Does Jesus allude to the power of the Spirit empowering acts within God's will, and the satisfaction in the heart for doing what God wants us to do?

Answer: What I get from this verse is that anyone who was / is willing to accept Jesus as Christ -- God and man who died for the sins of the world -- they will come to understand fully that His words were / are the Word of God. This the unbelieving generation of His day -- which continues until today -- was not willing to do.

John 7:18 (NASB)

18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Question: You wrote this: "Correct motivations always flow from humility, from obedience to God and to His truth, and from a desire for His glory, not our own... The Pharisees did all that they did not out of a desire to glorify God but instead to glorify themselves."

However, this still does not make a lot of sense for me, because aren't we seeking our own glory by wanting approbation, reward, and honor from Jesus? Is it that we are seeking Jesus's glory here on earth because we know He will glorify us in heaven. So, we shift our innate desire for honor and respect into the heavenly realm instead of the earthly realm?

Answer: The two things are perfectly complementary and you can't really do one without the other. The Pharisees sought glory *from people*; we seek to be found acceptable to the Lord in every way as long as we are here (e.g., 2Cor.5:9).

John 8:15 (NASB)

15 You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone.

John 7:24 (NASB)

24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Question: What does Jesus mean by judging by the flesh and appearance?

Answer: Judging via human viewpoint / materially, rather than with godly divine viewpoint / spiritually.

John 15:20 (NASB)

20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Question: Does "keeping My word" have a positive or negative meaning? I could take this verse as keeping My word as in a believer holding it fast to his heart or keeping My word with a negative connotation of remembering it and thus persecuting because of it. I believe Curt interprets the verse with the first meaning.

Answer: As to your voice, yes, it means to hold fast to and remember this important truth: we can't expect to be treated better than our Lord, not if we are following in His footsteps.