

The Gospel of Matthew

An open Bible is shown from a high angle, resting on a wooden surface. The pages are yellowed with age and contain dense text. A warm, golden light illuminates the center of the book, creating a soft glow. The background is dark, making the illuminated book stand out. The title 'The Gospel of Matthew' is overlaid in a large, white, serif font across the top half of the image. A thin red vertical line is on the left, and a thin red horizontal line is at the bottom of the image area.

Chapters 14 and 15

A close-up view of a wooden floor with vertical planks, showing natural wood grain and knots. The floor is light brown and occupies the bottom portion of the overall image.

2 A QUICK REVIEW OF PREVIOUS LESSONS

In earlier lessons, Jesus spoke about the great burdens that the Pharisees placed on the people. This included both traditions and Laws that were burdens to the people.

Jesus said “Come to me all you who toil and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take *my* yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (11:25-30)



3 LOOKING BACK

- Then in chapter 12 we see that Jesus says that “all those who does the will of the Father are His brothers and sisters.” (12:50)
- We also read the “a prophet is not without honor except in his own town or and in his own home”. (13:57)
- Matthew began his third discourse, chapter 13 with an explanation as to why not everyone who hears his words believes. Some have hardened hearts and cannot hear or see. The parable of the sower gives the explanation. (13:1-23)



4 LOOKING FORWARD CHAPTERS 14 AND 15

14:1-12 contains a flashback to the time when John was beheaded.

It also reveals what Herod really believed about who Jesus was.

14:13-21 we see a miracle that is repeated in 15:32-39. Jesus feeds the people with life giving bread. We see the power of Jesus and the compassion of Jesus. How curious that the feeding of the 5000 follows the story of Herod and the death of John the Baptist after a great royal banquet.

5 LOOKING AHEAD- POWER AND COMPASSION

- More acts of power follow. Jesus walks on water (14:22-33) and Jesus heals the sick in Gennesaret (14:34-36) and heals others at the sea of Galilee. (15:29-31).
- The Canaanite Woman's Faith shows us again the compassion of Jesus. He heals a Gentile woman's daughter (15:21-28).

6 LESSONS IN BETWEEN THE ACTS OF POWER

- Jesus criticizes traditions of the elders that are hypocritical and undermine the Law. (15-1-20)
- We also read about what it is that really defiles a person. (15:10-20)

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST 14:1-12



In this pericope, Herod hears the stories of Jesus' power. His guilt over having killed a prophet (John the Baptist) leads him to believe that Jesus is indeed John risen from the dead. While John was not known to have such powers during his life, somehow Herod believes he was given them after death. What follows is a flashback about how John was killed.

8 THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST – 28 AD

- Herod Antipas married Herodias and **John loudly proclaimed** that it is evil for a Jew to divorce and remarry and that it was an incestuous relationship as Herodias was his niece. It is reported that Antipas did not want to execute John, but reluctantly did so after he promised his step daughter, Salome, that she could have anything she wanted after dancing for him at his birthday celebration. Herodias wanted John dead. She prompts her daughter to ask for John's head.

9 FAMILY TIES?

A first century historian, Josephus, wrote in his book *Antiquities*, John was indeed a good man who encouraged Jews to lead righteous lives and to be baptized. Josephus also reported that Herod was disturbed by the fame of John and that he had him brought to Machaerus to be put to death.

Josephus also wrote that Herodius had been married not to Philip, but to another of Herod's relatives, an uncle, and that Salome wound up marrying Philip, her uncle.

10 THE LAWS THAT APPLY

Lev 18:16 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; she is your brother's nakedness

Leviticus 20:21 If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless. Again, Josephus says that Salome later married her uncle Phillip the Tetrarch.

In the Gospel of Mark, 6:23 Herod says he will give Salome up to half of his kingdom as a reward for her dance.

II MORE FROM LEVITICUS



- **In ancient Israel, sexual intercourse was marriage.** Exodus 22:16, reads: “If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife.
- Leviticus 18:6 None of you shall approach a close relative to have sexual intercourse. I am the LORD.
- Leviticus 18:14 You shall not disgrace your father’s brother by having sexual relations with his wife, since she, too, is your aunt.

12 A DANCE AND A DEATH.....

- It might have been unusual for a step-daughter to dance at such a banquet. Noted biblical scholar Daniel Harrington says we should consider the morals of this incestuous group. Salome is depicted as a “Jezebel or temptress”.
- John’s head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. **His disciples came and took away the corpse and buried him; and they went and told Jesus. (14:11-12)** These verses should remind us of Jesus’ death as well.

THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

13 MATTHEW 14:13-21

Contrast this banquet with the banquet of Herod!

Symbolism in this pericope: 1. Jesus went away to a **deserted place.**

The language should remind the hearer of the wandering in the desert and the blessing of the manna from Heaven. The story is reminiscent of a miracle that **Elisha** performed only on a much larger scale.

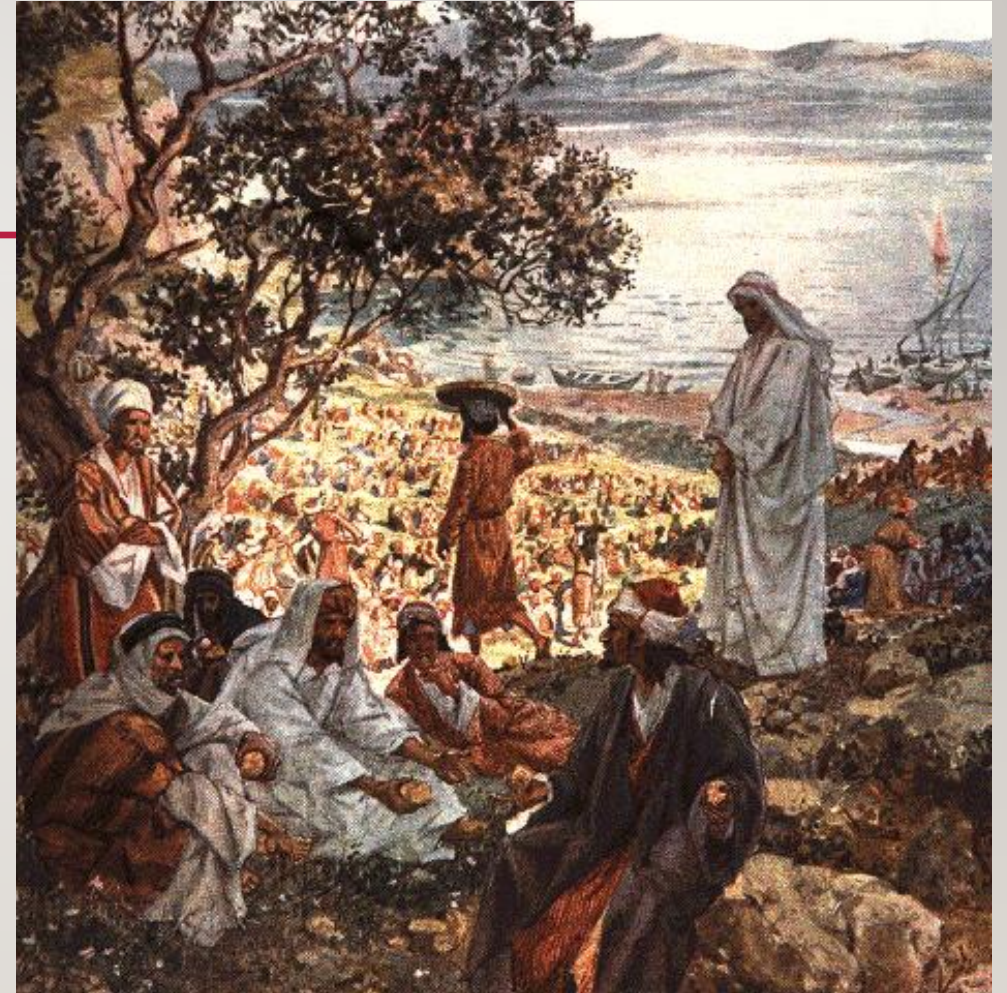
2. Language used here reminds one of the Last Supper and Eucharist.

3. 12 baskets are left over. 12 tribes of Israel, 12 Apostles.



14 A FEW INSIGHTS

- This story is used as an example of social justice and what is expected of us as followers of Jesus. What does Jesus tell his concerned disciples when they wish to send away the hungry?
- You feed them!



ELISHA FEEDS 100

15 2 KINGS 4:42-44

-
- A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. “Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said.
 - ⁴³ “How can I set this before a hundred men?” his servant asked.
 - But **Elisha** answered, “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat and have some left over.’” ⁴⁴ Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.

16 JESUS LOOKED UP TO HEAVEN AND BLESSED THE BREAD AND FISH.

- This is the role of the father of a family.
- The typical blessing before a meal would be “Blessed are you, O Lord God, king of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.” This prayer would be followed by breaking of the bread.



Miracles start with a prayer.

17 FEW ADDITIONAL NOTES

- How many were there? Was it really 5000?
- Women and children were not counted but they were present.
- It may have been 10,000!

For the Essenes, the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls, banquets were anticipations of heavenly banquets in God's Kingdom.

18 JESUS HEALS THE SICK IN GENNESARET

14:34-36 (AFTER WALKING ON THE WATER)

After making the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret. When the men of that place recognized him, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought to him all those who were sick and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak, and as many as touched it were healed. (Jewish men wore tassels or fringe, to remind them to keep God's commandments)

19 THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS

15:1-9

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They do not wash [their] hands when they eat a meal.” He said to them in reply, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and ‘Whoever curses father or mother shall die.’ But you say, ‘Whoever says to father or mother, “Any support you might have had from me is dedicated to God,” need not honor his father.’ You have nullified the word of God for the sake of your tradition. Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy about you when he said:

‘This people honors me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me;

in vain do they worship me,

teaching as doctrines human precepts.’”



20



FIRST CHARGE OF THE PHARISEES AGAINST THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS

They do not wash [their] hands when they eat a meal.

This practice is not a matter of personal hygiene. It is a ritual to of purification to remove defilement caused by contact with unclean things, including Gentiles.

The basis for hand washing in Judaism was originally related to the Temple service and sacrifices, and it comes from the Torah in Exodus 17-21.

21 JESUS' CHARGE AGAINST THE PHARISEES: HYPOCRISY

Jesus answer's the question with a question and his own charge.

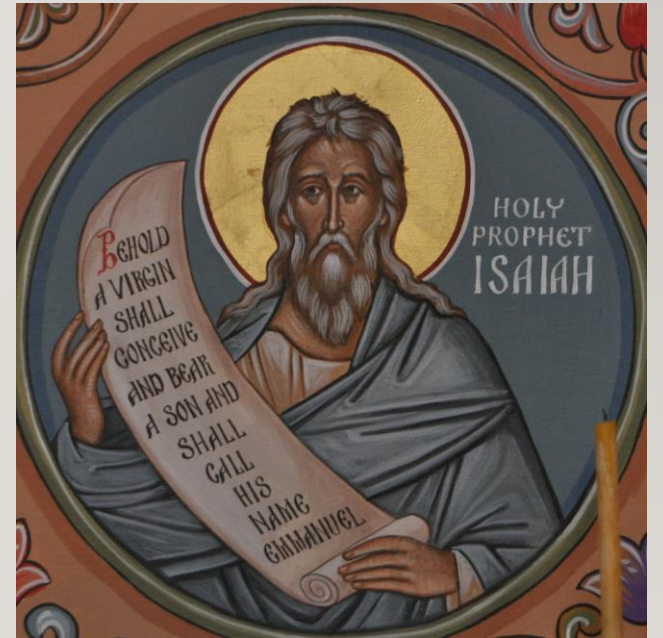
Traditions of the elders are supplemental to the Law of the Torah. They are not supposed to replace the Law.

A tradition had developed that allowed people to dedicate their property or valuables to the Temple as a gift to God. Doing so, meant that no one could make a claim against those items. Hypocrites used this practice to avoid caring for their parents in their old age. The practice is known as korban.



22 JESUS QUOTES ISAIAH 29:13

Hypocrites,
well did Isaiah prophesy about you when he said:
‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines human precepts.’”



23 **THINGS THAT DEFILE**

15:10-20

Jesus continues with a discussion of “clean” and “unclean”. This is a discussion about kosher practices, and hand washing. The statements were scandalous to the Pharisees as because kosher practices are a part of the Law, or Torah.

“It is not what enters one’s mouth that defiles that person; but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one.” 15:11

24 PETER DOES NOT UNDERSTAND AND THE PHARISEES ARE OFFENDED BY THE MESSAGE.

Jesus explains “Do you not realize that everything that enters the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled into the latrine? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and ***they defile***. For from the heart come **evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy**. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.” 15:17-20



25 IT IS ALL ABOUT THE HEART-

The question about kosher practices comes up in other places in the New Testament. It is important when Gentiles do become a part of the community. Just how Jewish do they have to become?

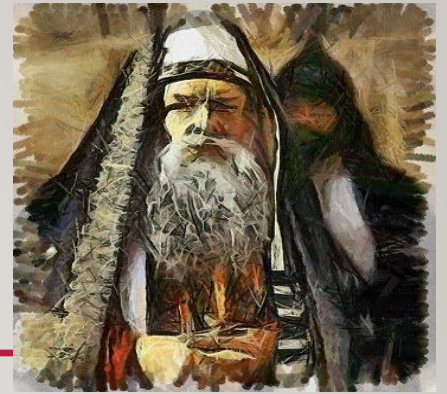
In Acts 10 Peter has a vision about this issue: He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. ¹³ Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” Acts 10:11-13

After protesting going against Jewish practices Peter hears the voice of God say:

“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”



26 THE PHARISEES ARE OFFENDED



Kosher practices are a part of the Law or the Torah. It is scandal to suggest that the laws are obsolete. The laws about clean and unclean food appear in Leviticus 11.

So how do we get to the point where Gentile Christians do not have to follow the Laws in the Torah?

Gentiles were not born under the Covenant of Moses. Jesus is the New Covenant. Paul wrote extensively about this.

THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

ACTS 15

27

After the Resurrection of Jesus when Peter and Paul went out into the world to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ, there was great concern about how many of the Mosaic laws that the Gentiles would have to follow in order to follow Jesus. A council was called with the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. They decided the following:

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.” Acts 15:28



28

PATIENCE IS CALLED FOR WHEN DEALING WITH THE PHARISEES

- Jesus says of the Pharisees:
- Every plant that my heavenly Father *has not* planted will be uprooted.
- Let them alone; they are blind guides [of the blind]. If a blind person leads a blind person, both will fall into a pit.” 15:13-14



29 THE CANAANITE WOMAN'S FAITH 15:21-28

Then Jesus went from that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman of that district came and called out, "Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon."

Tyre and Sidon were famous in the ancient Near East. They are also important cities in the Old and New Testaments. Both are now located in Lebanon. Tyre was the capital of Phoenicia. It was a center of the Canaanite religion and culture. **Ezekiel** repeated pronouncements of God's wrath against Tyre.

30

AN EXAMPLE OF GREAT FAITH AND AN EXAMPLE OF GENTILES SEEKING OUT JESUS.

The woman calls Jesus “LORD” and “Son of David”.

At first he ignores this Gentile woman.

She asks for this healing three times, she does him homage, she says “Lord help me.”

She then argues her case. “Yes Lord, for even dogs eat from the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”



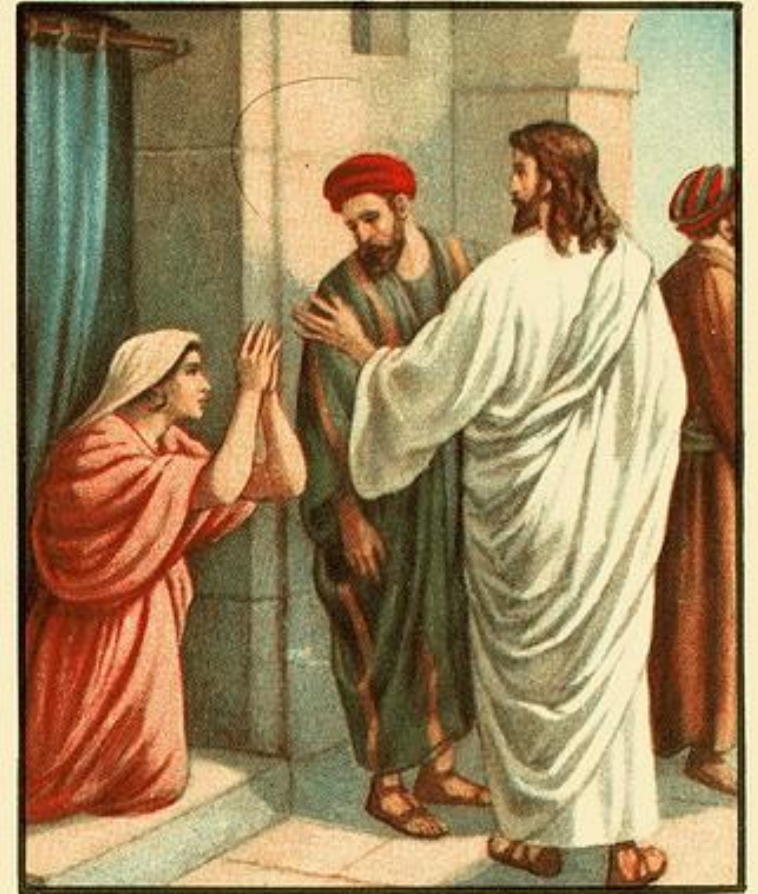
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DOGS AND CHILDREN?

In the Gospel of Matthew the message of Jesus is to go to the “lost sheep of Israel”. It is not until after the Resurrection that the message is actively sent to the entire world.

Here Israel is referred to as children and the Gentiles are referred to as dogs.

The Jewish approach to salvation history is that the Jews come first. Gentiles approach the God of Israel through Israel.



22. THE WOMAN OF CANAAN

MARK 7: 24-30.

O woman, great is thy faith.—Matt. 15: 28.

32 PRAYER AND FAITH

The woman is a model of prayer.

Prayer comes before a miracle, and so does faith.

33 HEALINGS AND FEEDING THE 4000

Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. ³⁰ Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. ³¹ The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel. Jesus summoned his disciples and said, “My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, for they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, for fear they may collapse on the way.” (15:29-32)



34 MIRACLES OF FAITH AND THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST

Here we see the faith of the people and many healing miracles.

The people have followed Jesus for ***three days*** to hear the Word and receive his blessings.

We see the compassion of Christ for this large crowd. “Those who ate were four thousand men, not counting women and children.”

15:38



35 FEEDING OF THE 4000

While all four Gospels have the earlier story of the feeding of the 5000, only Mark and Matthew have this second account of the feeding of the 4000.

Some scholars have suggested it might be the same story retold, but the details are slightly different.

In this periscope, 7 loaves of bread and a few fish were available and seven baskets were left over. Compare this to the 5 loaves and 2 fish

12 baskets left over from the feeding of the 5000.

36 PRAYER BEFORE A MIRACLE

- Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, **who in turn gave them to the crowds.** They all ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over—seven baskets full.
- A theme of ministry arises from these passages. Again the Eucharist, the manna in the desert and the miracle of Elisha can be seen here. God's provision of food for the people, the Last Supper and the promise of a Messianic banquet are all themes that arise from these passages.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

37

Prayer and faith come before miracles.

Jesus can control nature as seen when he walked on water or calmed the wind.

Simple prayers such as “help me” from the Canaanite woman or “save me” from Peter when he failed to have faith enough to walk on water can be effective.

Jesus had compassion for Jew and Gentile alike as he healed them physically and spiritually.

Jesus calls us to feed the hungry.

When you seek Jesus for help he will reach out to you. Persistence in prayer is helpful.



38

Let us pray

My dear loving Father, Thank you for leading us through the bible study today, thank you for the Holy Spirit that has lead us to the truth that is in Jesus Christ. Heavenly Father, we want to ask you that you fill us with the knowledge of truth and give us the wisdom and understanding that you have promised. May the truth in Jesus be revealed in us so that we can be fruitful in all that we do. Thank you for hearing and answering our prayer through the name of our Lord Jesus we pray and believe. Amen