

Matthew 11

One can only understand chapters 11 to 28 in light of the way the Gospel began...

Matthew 3: 1-10 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

- Its is time to turn from your sin: even small venial sins
- Put away vice
- Practice virtue
- Bear the fruit that befits repentance
 - Otherwise

Matthew 3:10 "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

The Pharisees have not borne the good fruit of repentance
So now there is a reckoning
The axe is swung and they are cut off

In response to the truth and beauty of Christ's teaching in Matthew 5-7

- The crowds were astonished...for he taught them as one who had authority...

Likewise, the people respond to the miracles of Christ in chapters 8-9 with:

- "Never was anything like this seen in Israel."

But the Pharisees reject Christ:

- "He casts out demons by the prince of demons."

In Matthew chapters 11-13, once the Pharisees have rejected Jesus, he turns away from the false Israel (represented by the Pharisees) and turns to the true Israel, the people that accept Him.

Those who accept Jesus are the True Israel, the People of God, the Qahal, the Church

Those who reject Jesus are the false-Israel

In Matthew's mind as well as St. Paul (Romans 9-11) there is only one Israel, the true Israel, which is made up of those who hear and do God's will.

That large part of the Jewish nation which did not accept Jesus broke with the true Israel of the Old Covenant

Who are the heirs of the Promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David and all the Prophets?

- The Church of Jesus Christ – the Catholic Church

Matthew 11:1-19

- John came neither eating nor drinking and you said he has a demon;
- I came eating and drinking, and you call me a drunkard
- No matter what we do
- You refuse to turn from your sin and change your life

“Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds”

- Wisdom is shown by a life of virtue

Matthew 11: 20-24

- Jesus had worked most of His miracles in Capernaum

Today, nearly two-thousand years later, the once lovely land on the shores of the Sea of Galilee lays mostly waste and silence. There is one city, Tiberius – where Jesus never went.

Of Capernaum only the ruins of the synagogue remain;
For more than 1500 years no person even knew where the city had been.
Scholars can't even find Batsaida.
Of Chorazin, nothing is known of it but its doom.

At the end of the 2nd century there was a massive earthquake that destroyed these cities.

- They were never rebuilt
- So God came to Galilee and Galilee would not accept Him
- Now the Galilee where God had been slips into the everlasting night!

Matthew 12: 1-8

Harvesting on the Sabbath was illegal

They are walking through the middle of a field and all of a sudden the Pharisees jump up.

Where do they come from?

I doubt the Pharisees have been traveling with Jesus as some of his disciples.

The Pharisees are spying!

Why? Jesus has become a major figure.

His life is now under the microscope.

He is now under ridiculous scrutiny and so were his disciples: notice that Jesus wasn't picking grain, his disciples were.

Mt 12:3 Have you not read what David did...

1 Samuel 21

Jesus compares himself to David to make a point

David is being persecuted by the lead of Israel, namely Saul.

David is running around the back country, hiding out from Saul with a band of men –

- Sounds vaguely familiar to what Jesus is doing

David is being hunted by Saul

1 Samuel 20 David finds out from Jonathon, Saul's son, that Saul is out to kill him and that Saul has charged David with treason.

David flees to Nob where he finds the High Priest Ahimelech on the Sabbath

The showbread: Twelve [cakes](#), with *two-tenths of an ephah* in each, and baked of fine [flour](#), which were arranged in two [rows](#) (or [piles](#)) on the "[pure](#)" table that stood before [Yhwh](#) and remained exposed to view for a week. A better term than "showbread" is the marginal reading of the Revised Version—"presence-bread" ([Exodus 25:30](#)), for this [offering](#) was required to be constantly before or in the presence of Yhwh. Each [Sabbath](#) fresh cakes replaced the old, which then belonged to the [priests](#), who were required to eat them in a [holy place](#), since the bread was holy.

The bread of the Presence could only be eaten by the priests

- The priests could also bake on the Sabbath
- Thus the priests were exempt from the Law on the Sabbath

Jesus is saying:

- I am the fulfillment of David: Priest, Prophet and King
- My disciples are also priests,
- They too are exempt from the Law on the Sabbath

1 Samuel 21:1 “Why are you here?”

- Why is Ahimelech so nervous?

1 Samuel 21:2 David replies: “The King has charged me with a matter and I am on an urgent mission.”

- This is rather funny because the charge is treason.

1 Samuel 21: 3-10

1 Samuel 21:7 Doeg and Edomite sees this and reports it to Saul, in 1 Samuel 22:10, “David was just supplied and armed by the High-Priest.”

- In revenge Saul wipes out all the priests

Why does Jesus cite this story?

- Jesus is teaching that He is the fulfillment of David
- Just as Saul was the anointed shepherd of the people he became evil, a slave to pride, and God stripped him of his anointing and replaced him with a man after his own heart, David
- Likewise, the Pharisees were the shepherds of Israel, yet they have become evil through pride and have rejected God
- Their authority is stripped away and replaced by The Anointed One, the Son of David.
- And just as David was hunted by the Saul
- So too, Jesus is hunted by the Pharisees.
- The Pharisees repeat the sin of Doeg and Saul
- They spy on Christ and then murder Him – and He is the High Priest

Matthew 12: 9-14 (**read Luke 6: 1-11**)

The Pharisees are watching,
They've got the bait set:
Will Jesus heal on the Sabbath?

Jesus calls the man out to the center of the room where everyone can see him,
Jesus heightens the drama,
Everyone is waiting to see what Jesus will do.

Luke 6:9 Jesus asks what sounds like a rhetorical questions – but it is not.

There was an argument that it was OK to kill on the Sabbath when it came to war.

1 Maccabees 2:29-41

- 1000 men, women, and children were massacred on one day because they would not fight on the Sabbath
- This news spread so that now the Gentiles fight on only one day of the week, the Sabbath.

1 Mc 2:41 Mattathias learns of this and they make a decision, “Let us fight against every man who comes to attack us on the Sabbath day; let us not all die as our brothers died.”

Jesus, referring to this precedent; asks the question:
If it is lawful to kill on the Sabbath to save life,
Why is it not lawful to heal on the Sabbath?

If you can kill on the Sabbath; why not restore life?

Jesus raises the question: Nothing but silence: They have no response

Luke 6:10 “Stretch out your hand.” And it was restored!

Matthew 12: 14 But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him.

How Ironic, healing was illegal on the Sabbath but you can hold a council on how to kill someone and that was legal.

Matthew 12: 22- 28

- Jesus heals a blind and dumb demoniac
 - The Pharisees for the second time accuse Jesus of being the devil
 - The Pharisees formal reject Christ for the 2nd time

Matthew 12: 30-32 “The Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit”

Jesus confronts them with the truth about themselves:

- They refuse to repent and turn from a lifestyle of sin.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit

CCC 1864 “There are no limits to the mercy of God, but anyone who deliberately refuses to accept His mercy by repenting, rejects the forgiveness of his sins and the salvation offered by the Holy Spirit. Such hardness of heart can lead to final impenitence and eternal loss. CCC 1864

Matthew 3:7-9 John calls the Pharisees a Brood of vipers because they did not bear fruits that befit repentance.

Matthew 12:31-32 speaks of sin that will be forgiven in the age to come.

St. Gregory the Great says, “As for lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor the age to come. From this sentence we understood that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.”

Purgatory

All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned

1030-1031

Matthew 12:33-37

St. Bernard, “An idle word is one of which we can give no reasonable account, one which is without reason. Let none of us, brethren, think lightly of the time we spend in idle words. For now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. The word flies, and cannot be recalled. Time flies, and cannot be recovered; nor does foolish man consider what he loses. Let us chat, they say, to pass away the time. O meanwhile the hour, the time is passing away, which the mercy of thy Maker is giving you to repent, to obtain pardon, to acquire grace, to gain eternal glory. The time is passing in which you ought to appease the Divine mercy, to hasten to the society of the angels, to sigh for your lost inheritance, to breathe after the promised happiness, to stir up your weak will, to weep for the sins you have committed.”

Read Matthew 12: 38-50

Mt 12: 46-50 Who is in the family of God?

“For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

- The true Israel, the Qahal of God, the Church, is made up of those who hear the word of God and do it!

The “brothers” of Jesus

S Jerome, “The Lord’s brethren were not children of Joseph, but cousins of the Savior, and children of Mary, the maternal aunt of Jesus, who is called the mother of James and Joseph and Jude.”

- James and Joseph, “brothers of Jesus,” are the sons of Mary the wife of the wife of Clopas.
- Clopas was the brother of St. Joseph thus making James and Joseph the cousins of Jesus.

Matthew 13, Jesus gives 7 parables on the Kingdom of God.

Jesus uses parables here for the first time,

- Not because they are simply a good teaching tool.
- They are that. But there is a deeper meaning.
- The Pharisees and many of the people have refused to repent, to turn away from lifestyles of sin and in this rejected Christ.
- **From this point on He teaches in parables that they cannot understand.**

Matthew 7:6 “Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”

Venerable Bede: Do not through the pearl of the Gospel message before those who have rejected it. Thus Christ speaks in parables to the Jews.

Matthew 13: 1-9 Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:10-15

The disciples come to Christ and ask Him:

- **“Why do you speak to them in parables?”**

Jesus answers,

“To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.”

Why?

- 13:15 They refuse to turn to me to heal them.
- They refuse to repent and turn away from sin.

13:1-35 Outside the house Parables are given with no explanation

13:36-52 Inside the house Jesus explains the parables to those inside the house, those who are inside the Kingdom, the Household of God, those who not only hear but also do the will of the Father **12:46**

S. John Chrysostom, says that Christ did not totally cut the Jews off by preaching in parables. To all the Scribes and Pharisees, unworthy and obstinate as they were, Christ spoke in parables with this intention--that He might instil into them a sincere desire of searching and believing in Christ, and that having suffered a temporary obscurity in parables which they did not comprehend, they might more eagerly desire Christ and ask Him to explain the parables.

This is hinted at in Mark 4:33, “With many such parables he spoke the Word to them...”

Matthew 13: 34- 43

- He who has ears let him hear!
- Hear means also to do!
- **Example** of a father who says, “Mow the lawn.” And later sees the son playing ball. “Didn’t you hear me?” “Yah, dad I heard you.” “We’ll then, do what I commanded.”
- To hear means to obey – obedience to the will of God.

We all want to know and do the will of God, but how? What Jesus want?

1. To have the concrete and real desire to follow Jesus and avoid evil
2. Learn the moral teachings of Christ that have been handed down through the Church in the CCC, Documents of Vat II, encyclicals, etc.
 - Then be obedient to these teachings
3. Do not be ruled by feelings
 - Acknowledge the feelings or temptations
 - You do not need to deny them
 - You are not a bad person if you have a bad feeling
 - The point is: how am I going to respond to this?
 - Use your intellect to know what is right and then choose what is best and this makes you feel good because you are acting like a human rather than an animal that follows instincts.

4. Live a life of balance

Put together a rule of life and a schedule that reflects a balanced life and then live by your rule so that life does not rule you.

5. Obedience to the Present moment

- A. Live in the present moment (God is only present in the present)
- B. Accept the will of God as it is presented to you through the duties, responsibilities and circumstances of life
- C. Then practice the virtue the duty or circumstance calls for

Example:

If trial, sickness or suffering comes your way: practice fortitude, patience and love of God