

Matthew Lesson 16

Matthew Chapter 16

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Memory verses for this week: *Mat 16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.*

Introduction: In last week's lesson, Christ rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for finding fault with the disciples due to them not washing their hands before they ate bread. Christ pointed out that they broke no law in doing this, but only a tradition. He went on to point out that they made the laws of God of none effect due to their honoring the traditions more than the commandments. In the latter part of the chapter, we saw Christ healing the sick and later feeding the 4,000 with a few fish and seven loaves of bread.

The sixteenth chapter is the pivotal point of the Book of Matthew. Jesus here makes a definitive shift from offering Himself as King to preparation for Calvary. The first reference to the church of the New Testament is made. He also alludes to the cross as well. Inasmuch as official Israel had rejected Him as their Messiah, Jesus now turns His ministry to Calvary and the gospel of salvation for all.

In Matthew 16, (1) Jesus rebuffs His adversaries, (2) warns His disciples of the leavening influence of religion, (3) and reveals the coming church with its foundation. He also (4) reveals His coming crucifixion and resurrection as well as His second coming and future rewards.

I. Jesus Rebukes the Blind Pharisees and Sadducees

Mat 16:1 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.

Once again, the Lord's adversaries (the Pharisees and Sadducees) came to tempt him. The basic sense of the word translated as tempting (peirazw peirazo) is to 'test.' They wanted a sign from heaven.

To seek a sign rather than accept the Word of God is a clear token of unbelief. Even if some special sign were given, they would question it as well. Paul would later write, "the Jews require a sign" (1 Corinthians 1:22). They did so in

Matthew 12:38. Even Jesus' disciples succumbed to such sign seeking in Matthew 24:3. It evidences lack of faith.

Mat 16:2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

Mat 16:3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

In reply, Jesus noted several common signs in the weather. To this day remains the axiomatic adage, 'Red skies in the morning, sailors warning, red skies at night sailor's delight.' The religious big-wigs of that day could read the common weather patterns but they were oblivious to the Son of God in their midst.

The word translated as signs (shmeion *semeion*) is also the common word for 'miracle.' Consider the fact that Jesus had wrought all manner of miracles before them and they were oblivious to them all.

Furthermore, when they asked Jesus to show them a sign from heaven, they likely were asking Him to do another miracle for them. Jesus did not perform His miracles to entertain or impress bystanders. He did them to meet the needs of people and to authenticate Himself as the Son of God.

The religious officials of the day merely questioned the authenticity of the miracle or ascribed it to Satan. See Matthew 12:24.

Mat 12:24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils

They manifested the spiritual blindness God had imparted to Israel because of their continual rejection of His truth.

The Pharisees ask Christ for a sign from heaven. This was an insult when you think of all the wonders Christ had done in the land. They had seen countless numbers of signs from heaven, and they had ignored them all. There were so many, and they were adequate to prove beyond any shadow of doubt that Christ as the son of God and the promised Messiah that had been prophesied to come. It is hard to know what they wanted... perhaps an audible voice speaking out of the clouds. God had already spoken when Christ was baptized and said that Christ was His beloved son in whom he was well pleased.

Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the

Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

Mat 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Jesus replies that their unbelief is not due to lack of evidence, but to a lack of spiritual discernment. The difficulty was not with the character of Christ's proofs, but with the state of their hearts. (which was far from the Lord.) Jesus tells them that they were wise enough to see the indications of the weather when they looked at the sky. With all the miracles Jesus had performed, they were too stupid to see the signs of His royalty and the nearness of His kingdom.

Mat 16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

Sign seeking is the exact opposite of faith and true spirituality. Jesus said, "*A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.*"

The only sign to be given would be that of Jonah as described in Matthew 12:39. That sign was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. In other words, Jesus foretold His antagonists that the only sign they would be given would be His resurrection from the dead. Ironically, when that in fact happened, they refused to believe it. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the keystone of New Testament Christianity to this day.

The resurrection of Christ would be the final sign to this world. Remember what Christ had said about Jonah.

Mat 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The resurrection would be the final proof of the claims Christ had made. All other founders of religions are dead and in the grave today except for ours. Jesus is alive and seated at the right hand of God today. And one day very soon, He is coming again to take us to be with Him.

II. Jesus Interprets the Symbol of Leaven

Mat 16:5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

Mat 16:6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

The disciples had forgotten to bring any food with them. Jesus warned, *"Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."*

The Pharisees were the conservative orthodox Jews of the day. The Sadducees were the Jewish liberals comparable to the Reformed Jewish movement today. Leaven is the yeast used in bread making. It permeates and expands through the dough thus causing it to rise, making the bread soft. Spiritually, it is a symbol of sin in the Bible. Just as yeast will permeate and expand, so likewise does sin.

Jesus likened the influence of both the Pharisees and Sadducees to that of leaven in that it permeated. Moreover, their influence was deadening to biblical truth.

Mat 16:7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.

Mat 16:8 Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

As Jesus and the disciples cross the lake, Christ warns them to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He uses leaven as a symbol of false doctrine. The Pharisees were a leading religious group in their day. They were wrapped up in the law and could literally quote from memory many of the books of the bible. They believed in angels and the resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in either thing and were a strict sect of their own. The doctrine of both were false. The Pharisees did believe in a few truths, but most all of their doctrine was patterned after the traditions of men. The Pharisees were the formalists of the day. They wanted to be seen of men, and they had a large system of ceremonies and regarded the rituals as more important than the moral law. The disciples don't comprehend what Christ means when he says to beware of the "leaven of the Pharisees." They thought He was rebuking them for failing to bring bread to eat. Jesus had to eat to survive during this time like any other man, but eating was not a high priority in his life. Jesus reminds them of the miracles of the loaves and the feeding of the multitudes beginning in verse 9.

Mat 16:9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

Mat 16:10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

The disciples thought Jesus was talking about the literal bread of the Pharisees or Sadducees and they reasoned this among themselves. Jesus rebuked their lack of faith and discernment, recalling how He had just recently fed the 5,000 and 4,000 respectively.

Our Lord used a simple day-to-day happening of forgetting to get groceries to teach a greater spiritual lesson. As it occurred to one of them that they had not brought along anything to eat, Jesus warned of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Again, they represented the two major denominations within Judaism of that day. The disciples thought He was talking about literal bread. However, Jesus intended a far deeper lesson.

Mat 16:11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

Mat 16:12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees was the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Their teaching, philosophy, and influence is about what Jesus warned. Specifically, the leaven of the Pharisees was the legalism of keeping the external minutia of rabbinical Jewish tradition. Moreover, they lacked faith, kindness, and were hard hearted.

The leaven of the Sadducees was their spiritual liberalism. They doubted such supernatural Old Testament truths as angels, the resurrection, and life after death. Both sects went through the motions of Judaism meticulously, but both groups were spiritually blind, hard hearted, and far from God.

In short, Jesus warned His disciples of the spiritual error of the major religious sects in Israel of that day. Of interest is that modern day rabbinical Judaism is the direct descendant of Pharisaical Judaism of that day. The modern Reformed Jewish movement is similar in nature to the Sadducees.

Within the broader circles of 'Christendom;' pharisaical rabbinical Judaism of that day is very similar in principle to the modern Catholic Church. Both lay inordinate emphasis on external rites and give significant credence to the traditions they have developed over and above the Scriptures.

The liberal 'main line' denominations of Christianity are similar in principle to the Sadducee party in Judaism. Both are parallel in that they routinely deny the supernatural revealed in Scripture. While neither the Pharisees nor Sadducees exist today, Satan has continued to replicate them in modern variations with the same error he cultivated in them. Jesus' warnings therefore remain valid.

Matthew Henry said this about the disciples lack of understanding.

He reproves their distrust of his ability and readiness to supply them in this strait (v. 8); "O ye of little faith, why are ye in such perplexity because ye have taken no bread, that ye can mind nothing else, that ye think your Master is as full of it as you, and apply every thing he saith to that?" He does not chide them for their little forecast, as they expected he would. Note, Parents and masters must not be angry at the forgetfulness of their children and servants, more than is necessary to make them take more heed another time; we are all apt to be forgetful of our duty. This should serve to excuse a fault, Peradventure it was an oversight. See how easily Christ forgave his disciples' carelessness, though it was in such a material point as taking bread; and do likewise. But that which he chides them for is their little faith.

Jesus points out that if it was physical bread to eat that he was concerned about, he could supply that by speaking it into existence. But he was concerned about a much greater bread... the spiritual food that they were being supplied. Christ was thinking of the false teaching to which His disciples would be exposed. We need to learn from this too... we may not have Pharisees and Sadducees by name around us, but false doctrine is abounding today all over the world. If you check the total doctrine being taught, I'm afraid that there is more false doctrine being taught today than there is true doctrine. And the only way we can know this is to become students of the word of God and know what God has said about each thing. Then no one can mislead us. A few weeks ago, I met Brother Frank Johnson, the recently retired pastor of a Baptist church in Midland, Texas. He told me that in his 38 years of being a pastor at that church, he never spent one hour teaching his flock about the false sects in America. He said "I always believed that if I trained my people to know the truth of the Word of God, then no matter who tries to mislead them, they will not be tricked." How are we in our spiritual maturity? Can we spot false teachers for what they are? We should be able to do that.

Heb 5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

III. Peter's Confession

Mat 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

Mat 16:14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Jesus then journeyed north of the Galilee region to a place called Caesarea Philippi. There, Philip the Tetrarch (brother of Herod the Tetrarch) had built a city and called it Caesarea in honor of Caesar Tiberias. His name was added to distinguish it from the Caesarea on the coast which was the provincial capital of Rome of that region.

In modern geography, Caesarea Philippi would be along the border of Lebanon and Syria, just south of Mount Hermon. It essentially was gentile country.

There, Jesus asked his disciples, "*Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?*"

He sought to draw them out and to use the occasion to reveal profound, new truth to them. The disciples stated that some thought He was a prophet whether it was John the Baptist, Elijah, or Jeremiah. All had been major prophets as recent as John. Jesus knew that, but He was setting the stage for a far greater truth.

Mat 16:15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Mat 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mat 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Jesus then asked, "*But whom say ye that I am?*" Peter's reply is profound. He answered, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

He hit the nail on the head. He knew precisely who Jesus was. He acknowledged Jesus as the long awaited Messiah and the Son of God. Jesus stated the fact that Peter's understanding had been revealed to him by God the Father which is in heaven. God reveals truth and understanding to those receptive of His truth.

Though Peter certainly had His weaknesses, He also had a heart of faith and was open to God's leading. God therefore made clear to Him who Jesus really was. Jesus tells Peter that it was not some man (flesh and blood) that revealed this to him, but it was the God of heaven who had revealed it. Thank the Lord for revealing the deeper things of the Word of God to us that seek after Him.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

James 1:7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

In verse 18, major new truth is revealed. For the first time ever, the church of the New Testament is directly mentioned. The emphasis in Christ's ministry will now slowly shift from the kingdom to His work on the cross and the continuation of the already established local church.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

It has been commonly and erroneously assumed because Peter is mentioned in this verse that he is the rock of which Jesus spoke. The Roman Catholic Church builds their entire system of theology upon the premise that Peter is the rock and was therefore the first pope.

They allege he passed his papal authority to perform the mass and to forgive sin on to his successors down through the ages. Peter cannot be the rock Jesus referred to for the following reasons.

Laws of grammar preclude it. *Peter* or (petrov) *petros* in the Greek is masculine in gender. *Rock* or (petra) *petra* in the Greek is neuter in gender. A basic law of Greek grammar is that for a word to be the antecedent with another, it must agree in gender. Here it does not. Therefore, the Rock (*petra*) referred to cannot be Peter.

The word *petros* (Peter) refers to a small rock or stone. The word *petra* refers to a major rock, like the Rock of Gibraltar. The foundation of the New Testament church is the person of Jesus Christ Himself. Numerous places throughout the Bible refer to Him as the rock. See Psalm 18:2, 61:2, Acts 4:11, I Corinthians 10:4, and I Peter 2:7. There are many more scriptures that state this fact.

1 Cor 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver,

precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

1 Cor 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

1 Cor 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

1 Cor 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

1 Pet 2:3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

1 Pet 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

1 Pet 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1 Pet 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

1 Pet 2:7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

1 Pet 2:8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

1 Pet 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1 Pet 2:10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

I liked what J. Vernon McGee said about verse 18.

Let us look at this verse carefully. On what rock did Jesus build His church? There are those who say that it was built on Simon Peter. Well, obviously it was not, because there is a play upon words here. In the original Greek it is, "Thou art *Petros* [a little piece of rock], and upon this *petra* [bedrock] I will build my church." There are others who hold that Christ is building His church upon the confession that Simon Peter made. I don't agree with that at all. Who is the Rock? The Rock is Christ. The church is built upon Christ. We

have Simon Peter's own explanation of this. In 1 Peter 2:4, referring to Christ, he writes, "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious." And he remembers Isaiah 28:16, "... Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded" (1 Pet. 2:6). The church is built upon Christ; He is the foundation. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Christ is the stone, and He says on this rock He will build His church.

Mat 16:19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Mat 16:20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

The "keys of the kingdom of heaven" likely is a reference to how Peter and the apostles had the authority under the direction of the Holy Spirit to unlock the door to various regions with the gospel.

Recall how that Paul sought to go to Bithynia but the Holy Spirit would not allow him to go. Rather, he went into Europe. In so doing, and for reasons we do not understand, he left a region bound and another loosed by the gospel.

The preaching of the gospel releases souls bound by sin and its condemnation. Where the gospel does not go, men remain bound in their sin. They are either bound from going to heaven or they are loosed from sin to go thereto.

There is no mystical power or other hidden meaning in the keys to the kingdom of heaven. They were not mysteriously passed on from Peter to his supposed successors through the Catholic Church. The keys to the kingdom of heaven coincide with the gospel itself. Where it is preached, people are loosed from sin and its condemnation. Where it is not preached, people remain bound in their sin.

In verse 20, Jesus charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. The reason is simple. No longer was the primary thrust of His ministry to present Himself as the King and Messiah of Israel.

He now was headed to Calvary to be crucified unto death, to be buried and to resurrect from the grave according to the scriptures. Israel had already rejected Him as King. Though His formal rejection was yet to take place at Jerusalem about six months later, it already was clear that Israel as a whole had rejected Him as Messiah and King.

The time of His official presentation to Israel was still not at hand. That would be accomplished at His triumphal entry. Matthew in the next verse would also note

Jesus' clear foretelling of His death and resurrection. Israel to this day, in the main, has rejected the resurrection of Christ. However, gentiles the world around have believed.

IV. Christ Foretells His Death and Resurrection

Mat 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Mat 16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

Mat 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

The watershed of Matthew occurs in verse 21. The whole scope and perspective shifts toward what lay ahead. The remainder of Christ's life not only physically but also spiritually is herein outlined. He explained to perhaps incredulous ears how that He would ultimately go to Jerusalem, be killed, and raised again the third day. It summarized the main purpose of rest of His ministry. Though the kingdom concept would still be a part of Jesus' ministry over the final months thereof, His focus was now upon the cross. This truly is the turning point of His earthly ministry.

Here is the beginning of several occasions wherein Jesus clearly foretold His disciples of not only His impending death, but more importantly of His coming resurrection. Although He had hinted thereto earlier, now He openly will speak of being raised from the dead. Unfortunately, most of it went right over the heads of the disciples.

Peter in unbelief rebuked Jesus. Jesus in turn sternly corrected his action. As far as Peter was concerned, he would not let Jesus be taken or killed. The matter of Him being resurrected seemed to escape Peter altogether. Jesus responded sharply to Peter's rebuke. He refers to him as Satan. Peter's perspective was through human eyes. Jesus' knew God's plan.

Peter may have been taken back by Jesus' sharp rebuttal. However, what Peter did not realize is that God's perfect plan of redemption was coming to pass.

It was planned from the foundation of the world for Jesus to die and arise again. Satan, of course, was in complete opposition. By opposing, even with an offhand remark, God's redemptive plan; to that degree, Peter had through ignorance and emotions allied himself with Satan. Peter saw things from human perspective. Jesus spoke from a heavenly one. His rebuke to Peter no

doubt hurt him. But the truth Peter had unwittingly sought to block superseded hurt feelings. It was God's perfect plan.

Mat 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Mat 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

Jesus began to set forth the requirement for future discipleship. 'Coming after Jesus' bespeaks being a disciple. There were twelve present, but Jesus actually had many more which followed Him. With the shadow of the cross already coming into view, future discipleship would be entirely different than it had been. Though there had been moderate opposition to Jesus' ministry; in the days coming, following Him openly would become a matter of life and death. Because of the pervasive Roman presence in the land, the Jews were well aware of the practice of crucifixion. Rome accomplished it openly and frequently as a means to intimidate their conquered territories.

It was Roman practice (exemplified in Jesus's crucifixion) for the condemned to drag his cross to the place of execution. The metaphor of taking up one's cross was a clear analogy of impending death. Jesus warned His disciples that in the days ahead, if one would follow Him, He would have to take up his own cross and follow Him.

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ, there must be denial of self as well as a willingness to suffer even unto death. Though crucifixion is no longer a part of the landscape, the principle remains. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ requires total dedication and self denial.

The word translated as deny (*aparneomai aparneomai*) means to 'forget one's self,' or to 'lose sight of one's self and one's own interests.' Self is the essence of sin and the flesh. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ requires no less than the self discipline to deny self and its interests.

Discipleship certainly includes spiritual discipline. It is the disciplining of the flesh. There are many believers; Few and far between are they who are true disciples.

Jesus sets forth one of the great paradoxes of Christianity. Jesus spoke of one saving his life. Spiritual salvation is not in view. Rather, our Lord spoke of the self interest mentioned above. If the focus of one's life is on preserving his own interests, he will lose both it and them.

The word translated as lose (*apollumi apollumi*) is the common word for 'perish.'

To focus upon self interests and one's own will is to miss God's will. The ultimate end thereof is to perish. In contrast, those willing to lose themselves for Christ's sake will find fullness of life now and on into eternity.

Jesus is touching upon total surrender of our will, our lives, and our self interests. As we surrender ourselves entirely to Him, He gives the fullness of life which will redound not only in this life, but on into eternity.

Mat 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Mat 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Jesus asked one of the profound questions of all time. *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"*

With the perspective of eternity in view, to lose one's soul is to be a fool. To gain the whole world implies great power, fame, and wealth, as the world counts it. Down through the ages, there have been many who have become rich, powerful, and famous. However, in most cases those same rich and famous people died and went directly to Hell.

All the wealth and fame was left behind. It will avail them nothing in that day. The old story remains. Two commoners watched the funeral procession of a rich man. One asked the other, 'I wonder how much he left?' He replied, 'All of it.'

Though one might gain if it were possible all the wealth and power in the world; when he passes this life, he will take nothing with him to hell. There, he will be no different than any other sinner. The remaining question found here asked by the Lord remains. *"what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

The answer is obvious. There is nothing man has to give or can give in exchange for his soul. Only one life, twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last!

In verse 27, more new revelations are made. Jesus Christ will someday return in great glory. Then, *"he shall reward every man according to his works."* The rewards referred to have nothing to do with being saved. Rather, they are rewards for faithful service to Christ after one's salvation.

Salvation is by grace through faith. Rewards in glory someday are by the work we have done for Jesus Christ since being saved. See Revelation 22:12.

Two, major, end-time truths are set forth.

(1) Jesus is coming again.

(2) He will reward His servants based upon their work for Him.

Mat 16:28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

To truly follow Christ, we must learn to deny ourselves and die to the physical man each day. When we do that, we can be true disciples of the Lord. Taking up the cross speaks of death, and that is what we need to do to the old man. We need to let the new man (Spiritual man) take control of our lives. I am looking forward to that morning (or night) when Christ splits that eastern sky.

1 Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1 Th 4:17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

1 Th 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

This will be developed more fully at the beginning of the next chapter. However, Jesus clearly noted that *some* of them would see the Son of Man (Jesus Christ) in His glory in His coming kingdom.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.