

Matthew

1

Summary: *Matthew 1 opens with a genealogy tracing Jesus's lineage from Abraham through David to Joseph, establishing Jesus as heir to both the Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic throne. The genealogy is structured in three groups of fourteen generations, spanning the patriarchal era, the monarchy, and the exile-to-Messiah period. The chapter then narrates the circumstances of Jesus's birth: Joseph discovers Mary is pregnant, resolves to divorce her quietly, but an angel appears in a dream explaining that the child is from the Holy Spirit. Joseph obeys and takes Mary as his wife, and the child is named Jesus — 'for he will save his people from their sins.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Matthew's genealogy is theologically structured rather than merely historical. The three sets of fourteen generations (Abraham to David, David to exile, exile to Christ) create a deliberate pattern that may reference the numerical value of David's name in Hebrew (d-v-d = 4+6+4 = 14). Four women are included — Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba ('the wife of Uriah') — each with irregular or scandalous circumstances, preparing the reader for Mary's own unexpected pregnancy. The fulfillment quotation from Isaiah 7:14 introduces Matthew's distinctive pattern of citing Hebrew Scripture as fulfilled in Jesus. The Greek parthenos ('virgin') translates the Hebrew almah ('young woman'), a translation choice already made by the Septuagint that Matthew adopts and applies to Mary.*

Translation Friction: *The genealogy contains well-known discrepancies with Old Testament records and Luke's genealogy. We render the Greek as given without harmonizing. The name Ἰησοῦς (Jesus) is the Greek form of the Hebrew Yeshua/Yehoshua ('the LORD saves'), and the angel's explanation in verse 21 depends on this etymology. We transliterate Greek terms in key_ terms entries using standard conventions. The phrase 'before they came together' (v. 18) is a Greek euphemism for sexual union, which we render transparently.*

Connections: *The genealogy connects to Genesis 12 (Abrahamic covenant), 2 Samuel 7 (Davidic covenant), and the exile narratives of 2 Kings 24-25. The Isaiah 7:14 quotation establishes Matthew's fulfillment theology that runs through the entire Gospel. The naming of Jesus connects to the Hebrew salvation vocabulary (yeshuah) central to the Old Testament. Joseph's dream-revelation anticipates the pattern of divine dreams in chapter 2.*

¹The record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham: ²Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers. ³Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, and Hezron fathered Ram. ⁴Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, and Nahshon fathered Salmon. ⁵Salmon

fathered Boaz by Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, and Obed fathered Jesse. ⁶Jesse fathered David the king. David fathered Solomon by the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, and Abijah fathered Asaph. ⁸Asaph fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, and Joram fathered Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, and Ahaz fathered Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amos, and Amos fathered Josiah. ¹¹Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. ¹²After the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel, and Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel. ¹³Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, and Eliakim fathered Azor. ¹⁴Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, and Achim fathered Eliud. ¹⁵Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, and Matthan fathered Jacob. ¹⁶Jacob fathered Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom Jesus was born — the one called Christ. ¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David to the deportation to Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ are fourteen generations. ¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ came about in this way. His mother Mary had been pledged in marriage to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But while he was considering this, 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 what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"Look, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel" — which means, "God with us." ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary as his wife, ²⁵Recognized her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son — then he called his name JESUS.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *biblos geneleos* ('book of genesis/origin') echoes Genesis 2:4 and 5:1 in the Septuagint, signaling that Matthew views Jesus's arrival as a new act of creation. 'Generation' in the KJV is misleading in modern English; 'genealogy' captures the Greek sense of a record of origins.
1. Both 'son of David' and 'son of Abraham' are theological claims, not merely genealogical ones — Jesus is heir to David's throne and to Abraham's covenant promise.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Greek *egennesen* ('fathered, begot') is rendered consistently as 'fathered' throughout the genealogy rather than the archaic 'begat.' The name Ioudas is rendered 'Judah' (the patriarch) rather than 'Judas' (the later form), since this refers to the Old Testament figure.
3. Tamar is the first of four women named in the genealogy. Her story (Genesis 38) involves deception and a levirate-like union with Judah — an irregular beginning that Matthew includes deliberately. The mention of women in an ancient genealogy is unusual and theologically purposeful.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 38 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Nahshon was the leader of the tribe of Judah during the wilderness period (Numbers 1:7, 2:3). His inclusion reinforces the Judahite royal lineage.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 1:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Rahab and Ruth are the second and third women in the genealogy. Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute from Jericho (Joshua 2); Ruth was a Moabite widow (Ruth 1). Both are Gentile women whose inclusion foreshadows the Gospel's universal scope. The traditional identification of this Rahab with the Jericho Rahab is assumed by Matthew though not explicit in Old Testament genealogies.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ruth 1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Matthew pointedly refuses to name Bathsheba, calling her 'the wife of Uriah' — a phrase that keeps Uriah's wrongful death in view. This is the fourth woman in the genealogy, and the most politically charged. David is the only figure given the title 'the king' (*ton basilea*), marking the genealogy's structural midpoint.
7. The SBLGNT reads 'Asaph' rather than 'Asa,' which may reflect a scribal identification of the king with the psalmist Asaph, or may be a textual variant. We follow the SBLGNT reading.
8. Three kings are omitted between Joram and Uzziah: Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah (cf. 1 Chronicles 3:11-12). Matthew's genealogy is telescoped to achieve the fourteen-generation structure, a common practice in ancient Near Eastern genealogies.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Chronicles 3:11-12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. These names follow the standard English forms from the Old Testament rather than the Greek transliterations. Ahaz and Hezekiah represent a dramatic father-son contrast in the Kings narrative — Ahaz was one of Judah's worst kings, Hezekiah one of its best.
10. The SBLGNT reads 'Amos' rather than 'Amon,' which may reflect a scribal confusion with the prophet Amos, or may be an intentional variant. We follow the SBLGNT. In the Old Testament record, Amon/Amos reigned only two years before being assassinated (2 Kings 21:19-26).
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 21:19-26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek *metoikesias* ('deportation, removal, exile') refers to the Babylonian exile of 586 BC. Jeconiah (also called Jehoiachin) was the last king before the exile. Historically, Josiah was Jeconiah's grandfather, not his father — Jehoiakim is skipped, another instance of Matthew's telescoping.
12. Zerubbabel led the first return from exile and oversaw the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 3-6). His inclusion connects Jesus to the post-exilic restoration hope. The lineage from this point forward is less well attested in Old Testament records.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezra 3-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. From Abiud onward, the names in Matthew's genealogy do not appear in Old Testament records. These represent the intertestamental period for which Matthew had access to sources no longer extant.
14. The name Zadok (Sadok) recalls the famous high priest of David's era (2 Samuel 8:17), though this is a different individual. The priestly resonance may be intentional within Matthew's genealogical design.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 8:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The name Eleazar recalls Aaron's son and successor as high priest (Numbers 20:28). Matthan is a shortened form related to Mattaniah ('gift of the LORD'). These final pre-Joseph names carry priestly and theophoric resonances.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 20:28 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The grammatical shift is decisive: every previous entry uses the active 'fathered' (*egennesen*), but here the passive *egennethee* ('was born') replaces it. Joseph does not 'father' Jesus; Jesus 'was born from' Mary. The relative pronoun 'from whom' (*ex hes*) is feminine singular, referring to Mary alone. Matthew's grammar carefully preserves the virgin birth claim while maintaining Joseph's legal paternity through the Davidic line.
17. The threefold repetition of 'fourteen generations' (*dekatessares geneai*) is Matthew's structural key. The number fourteen may relate to the numerical value of David's name in Hebrew (*dalet-vav-dalet* = 4+6+4 = 14), making the entire genealogy a numerical proclamation that Jesus is David's heir. The actual count requires some flexibility — the third section has only thirteen names as listed — which confirms that the scheme is theological rather than strictly mathematical.
18. The word *genesis* here means 'birth' or 'origin,' echoing verse 1. The phrase 'pledged in marriage' (*mneesteuthesees*) indicates a formal betrothal that was legally binding in Jewish practice — more than modern engagement but prior to cohabitation. 'Before they came together' (*prin ee synelthein*) is a euphemism for sexual union. The phrase *ek pneumatou hagiou* ('from the Holy Spirit') attributes the conception directly to divine agency.
19. The Greek *dikaios* ('righteous, just') is the same word used for covenant faithfulness throughout the Septuagint. Joseph's righteousness manifests not in strict legal enforcement but in mercy — he could have exposed Mary to public shame and legal penalty, but chose discretion. The verb *apolusai* ('to release, divorce') confirms that betrothal carried the legal weight of marriage.
20. The address 'son of David' (*huios Daudid*) is significant — the angel reminds Joseph of his royal lineage precisely at the moment when he is about to sever the legal connection between that lineage and the child. The Greek *angelos kyriou* ('angel of the Lord') echoes the Hebrew *malak YHWH* of the Old Testament theophanies. Dreams as vehicles of divine revelation connect Joseph to his Old Testament namesake (Genesis 37, 40-41).
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 37 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The name *Iesous* (*ἰησοῦς*) is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Yeshua/Yehoshua*, meaning 'the LORD saves' or 'the LORD is salvation.' The angel's explanation — 'for he will save (*sosei*) his people' — is a direct etymology of the name. The command to Joseph to name the child establishes his legal paternity and thus the Davidic succession.
22. This is the first of Matthew's fulfillment formulas (a pattern repeated throughout the Gospel: 2:15, 2:17, 2:23, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 27:9). The passive *pleerothee* ('might be fulfilled') indicates divine purpose — the events did not merely happen to coincide with prophecy but occurred in order to fulfill it.
23. Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 from the Septuagint, which uses *parthenos* ('virgin') to translate the Hebrew *almah* ('young woman of marriageable age'). The Hebrew term does not inherently mean 'virgin' (the specific Hebrew word for virgin is *bethulah*), but the Septuagint translators chose *parthenos*, and Matthew adopts this reading as prophetically significant. 'Emmanuel' (Hebrew *Immanu-El*, 'God with us') becomes a theological declaration — God's presence embodied in this child. Matthew bookends his Gospel with this theme (cf. 28:20, 'I am with you always').

23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 7:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. Joseph's immediate obedience upon waking mirrors the pattern of Old Testament figures who respond to divine commands without argument (cf. Abraham in Genesis 22:3). The verb *prosetaxen* ('commanded') is stronger than the KJV's 'bidden' — this was a directive, not a suggestion.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 22:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The Greek *ouk eginōsken autēn* ('he did not know her') uses the biblical euphemism for sexual intercourse, corresponding to the Hebrew *yada*. We render the meaning transparently rather than preserving the euphemism. The word *heos* ('until') has been debated for centuries: it clearly states abstinence before the birth but does not grammatically require or exclude relations afterward. The SBLGNT does not include 'firstborn' (*prōtotokon*), which appears in some manuscripts — we follow the critical text.

2

Summary: *Matthew 2 narrates four episodes from Jesus's infancy: the visit of the Magi from the East who follow a star to find the newborn king, Herod's duplicitous scheme to locate the child, the holy family's flight to Egypt, and the massacre of infants in Bethlehem followed by the family's eventual settlement in Nazareth. Each episode is anchored by a fulfillment quotation from the Hebrew prophets, establishing Matthew's theological framework that Jesus's life recapitulates Israel's story.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The chapter contains four fulfillment quotations (Micah 5:2, Hosea 11:1, Jeremiah 31:15, and a composite prophetic reference to Nazareth) — more than any other chapter in Matthew. The Magi are Gentile astrologers, and their worship of Jesus anticipates the universal scope of the Gospel. Herod's massacre echoes Pharaoh's slaughter of Hebrew infants in Exodus 1, casting Jesus as a new Moses. The flight to Egypt and return deliberately mirrors Israel's own journey — Jesus embodies Israel's story in his own person.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'out of Egypt I called my son' (v. 15) originally referred to Israel as a nation in Hosea 11:1, not to an individual Messiah. Matthew's typological reading is not a prediction-fulfillment in the modern sense but a theological claim that Jesus recapitulates Israel's experience. We render the quotations as Matthew presents them without editorializing on the hermeneutical method. The 'star' (aster) in the Magi narrative has been variously interpreted as astronomical, astrological, or miraculous — the Greek text does not resolve the question, and we preserve the ambiguity.*

Connections: *The Magi narrative connects to Numbers 24:17 (the star of Jacob), Isaiah 60:1-6 (nations bringing gifts), and Psalm 72:10-11 (kings offering tribute). The flight to Egypt connects to the Exodus narrative and Hosea 11:1. Rachel weeping connects to Jeremiah 31:15 and the exile. The Nazareth reference may connect to Isaiah 11:1 (netser, 'branch') through wordplay.*

¹After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod, wise men from the East arrived in Jerusalem, ² Declaring, Where is he that is born to be king of the Jews? since we have seen his star appear when it rose, and are traveled here to honor him. ³When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴He assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what has been written through the prophet: ⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and determined from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too may go and pay him homage." ⁹After hearing the king, they set out, and there — the star they had seen at its rising went ahead of them until it came and stood over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling down, they worshiped him. Then, opening their treasure chests, they presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their own country by another route. ¹³After they had departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you,

for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him." ¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and withdrew to Egypt, ¹⁵Was there until the passing of Herod — that it could be fulfilled which had been spoken of the Lord by the prophet of old and stated, Out of Egypt have I called my son. ¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, he flew into a rage and sent soldiers to kill all the male children in Bethlehem and its surrounding region who were two years old and under, based on the time he had determined from the wise men. ¹⁷Then what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ¹⁸"A voice was heard in Ramah — weeping and great mourning — Rachel weeping for her children, and she refused to be comforted, because they are no more." ¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰Declaring, Arise, and take the little child and his mother, and go into Israel's territory — since those who threatened who were seeking the little child's life. ²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee, ²³He arrived and dwelt in a city called Nazareth — that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He will be known as a Nazarene.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *magoi* ('magi, wise men') refers to Persian-origin astrologer-priests, not kings. The traditional 'three wise men' is not in the text — the number three is inferred from the three gifts. 'From the East' (*apo anatolon*) literally means 'from the rising [of the sun],' indicating Persia, Babylon, or Arabia. The genitive absolute construction 'Jesus having been born' (*tou Iesou genneethentos*) indicates the birth has already occurred — the Magi do not arrive at the manger.
2. The phrase 'king of the Jews' (*basileus ton Ioudaion*) will reappear at Jesus's trial and crucifixion (27:11, 37), forming a bitter *inclusio* across the Gospel. The Greek *proskynesai* can mean 'worship' (of God) or 'pay homage' (to a king) — the Magi may intend political respect, but Matthew's readers would hear deeper significance. 'At its rising' (*en tee anatolee*, singular) is better than 'in the east,' which would be the plural form — it refers to the star's heliacal rising.
3. The verb *etarachthee* ('was troubled, disturbed, agitated') is strong — the same word describes the disciples' terror at seeing Jesus walk on water (14:26). Herod's disturbance is political paranoia: he was not the legitimate Davidic heir and was fiercely protective of his throne. That 'all Jerusalem' shared his alarm reflects either the population's fear of Herod's violent reactions or their own unease at messianic claims that could provoke Roman intervention.
4. Herod consults the Jewish religious establishment — the chief priests (*archieeis*) and scribes (*grammateis*), the recognized experts in Torah interpretation. The imperfect tense *epynthaneto* ('was inquiring') may suggest repeated or persistent questioning. 'The Christ' (*ho Christos*) with the definite article indicates the expected Messiah as a known concept.
5. The perfect tense *gegraptai* ('it has been written and stands written') indicates the enduring authority of the prophetic text. The religious leaders know the scriptural answer immediately but show no inclination to act on it — a tragic irony that Matthew develops throughout the Gospel.
6. Matthew's quotation combines Micah 5:2 with 2 Samuel 5:2, modifying the original. Micah's Hebrew reads 'too small to be among the clans of Judah,' but Matthew reverses it to 'by no means least' — an interpretive rendering that emphasizes Bethlehem's dignity rather than its smallness. The verb *poimanei* ('will shepherd') draws on the ancient Near Eastern image of the king as shepherd, connecting Jesus to David, who was literally a shepherd from Bethlehem before becoming king.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 5:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Samuel 5:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The adverb *lathra* ('secretly') reveals Herod's duplicity — he does not want the religious leaders or the public to know he is tracking this. The verb *ekribosen* ('determined precisely, ascertained exactly') shows calculated intent; he is establishing a timeline that will later determine the age range for the massacre (v. 16).
8. Herod's claim that he wishes to 'pay homage' (*proskyneso*) uses the same word the Magi used in verse 2. The dramatic irony is sharp — the reader knows Herod intends to destroy the child, not honor him. The word *paidion* ('young child') rather than *brephos* ('infant') may suggest the child is no longer a newborn.
9. The star's behavior — going ahead and then standing over a specific location — goes beyond normal astronomical phenomena. The Greek *proegen* ('went ahead, led the way') and *estathee* ('stood, came to rest') describe purposeful guidance. Matthew presents this without rationalization, and we render it straightforwardly.
10. The Greek is emphatic to the point of redundancy: *echaraesan charan megaleen sphodra* — literally 'they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.' This cognate accusative construction (rejoiced a rejoicing) intensifies the emotion. We condense this into 'overwhelmed with joy' to capture the force

without the awkward literalism.

11. The setting is a house (oikian), not a manger — consistent with the passage of time since the birth. Joseph is notably absent from the scene; only 'Mary his mother' is mentioned. The verb prosekyneesan ('worshiped') is the strongest form of homage. The three gifts — gold (royalty), frankincense (divinity/priesthood), and myrrh (burial/suffering) — have been read typologically since early Christianity, though Matthew does not allegorize them.
12. The verb chrematisthentes ('having been warned, having received a divine message') specifically denotes an oracular communication — this is not an ordinary dream but a divine directive. The Magi's obedience to the dream over Herod's command places divine authority above political authority, a theme Matthew develops throughout the Gospel.
13. The urgency is conveyed by three rapid imperatives: 'get up' (egertheis), 'take' (paralabe), 'flee' (pheuge). Egypt — Israel's ancient place of bondage — now becomes a place of refuge. The phrase 'the child and his mother' (repeated in vv. 14, 20, 21) consistently places Jesus first and omits Joseph's name, emphasizing the child's primacy and the fact that Joseph is the guardian, not the biological father.
14. Joseph's response is immediate — he departs that same night (nyktos, 'by night'). The word anechoresen ('withdrew') carries connotations of strategic retreat, the same verb used for Jesus's own tactical withdrawals later in the Gospel (4:12, 12:15, 14:13).
15. The quotation is from Hosea 11:1, where 'my son' originally referred to Israel as a nation being called out of Egyptian slavery at the Exodus. Matthew reads this typologically — Jesus recapitulates Israel's journey. As Israel was God's 'son' called from Egypt, so Jesus, God's Son, is called from Egypt. This is not prediction-fulfillment in the strict sense but typological correspondence: the pattern of Israel's story finds its ultimate expression in Jesus.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 11:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The verb enepaichthee ('was outwitted, mocked, tricked') is the same word used for the mocking of Jesus before his crucifixion (27:29, 31), creating a grim verbal connection between Herod's rage and Jesus's passion. The phrase ethymothee lian ('was exceedingly angry') describes murderous fury. The age threshold of two years (dietous) is based on Herod's calculation from verse 7, suggesting the star appeared up to two years before the Magi's arrival. 'Soldiers' is implied by the verb apostellas ('having sent') — Herod dispatched agents to carry out the order.
17. This fulfillment formula uses a different construction than verse 15 — 'then was fulfilled' (tote epleerothee) rather than 'in order that it might be fulfilled' (hina pleerothee). The shift may indicate that this event fulfilled prophecy as a tragic echo rather than as a divinely intended purpose — Matthew is careful in his language about the massacre.
18. The quotation is from Jeremiah 31:15. In its original context, Rachel (the matriarch buried near Bethlehem, Genesis 35:19) weeps for her descendants being taken into exile. Matthew applies the image to the murdered children — Rachel's weeping continues across the centuries. The phrase 'because they are no more' (hoti ouk eisin) is devastating in its simplicity. Ramah was a staging ground for the Babylonian deportation (Jeremiah 40:1), and Rachel's tomb was associated with the Bethlehem area.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 31:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 35:19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 40:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Herod the Great died in 4 BC by conventional chronology. The angelic appearance follows the same pattern as 1:20 and 2:13 — divine guidance through dreams. The historical present phainetai ('appears') adds narrative vividness.
20. The plural 'those who were seeking' (hoi zetountes) when only Herod has been mentioned echoes Exodus 4:19, where God tells Moses 'all those who sought your life have died' — another Moses-Jesus parallel. The phrase 'seeking the life' (zetountes teen psychen) is a Septuagintal idiom for murderous intent.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 4:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The phrase 'entered the land of Israel' (eiselthen eis gen Israel) echoes the conquest narratives — Joshua 'entering' the promised land. Jesus's return from Egypt to Israel recapitulates the Exodus-to-Canaan journey.
22. Archelaus inherited Judea and was notoriously brutal — he was eventually deposed by Rome in AD 6 for excessive cruelty. Joseph's fear is historically well-grounded. Galilee was under the rule of Herod Antipas, who was comparatively less dangerous. The divine warning in a dream (chrematistheis) is the fourth dream-revelation in chapters 1-2, establishing dreams as Matthew's primary channel for divine guidance in the infancy narrative.
23. This is the most puzzling of Matthew's fulfillment quotations — no extant Old Testament passage says 'He will be called a Nazarene.' Three explanations are commonly offered: (1) a wordplay on netser ('branch') from Isaiah 11:1, connecting the Messiah to the 'branch of Jesse'; (2) a connection to nazir ('Nazirite, consecrated one'); (3) a reference to the general contempt associated with Nazareth (cf. John 1:46, 'Can anything good come from Nazareth?'). Matthew uniquely says 'prophets' (plural), suggesting a composite theme rather than a single text. The name Nazoraioi became a primary designation for Jesus and his followers.

23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 11:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

3

Summary: *Matthew 3 introduces John the Baptist as a wilderness prophet calling Israel to repentance in preparation for the coming kingdom of heaven. John's preaching, dress, and diet deliberately evoke the prophet Elijah. He confronts the Pharisees and Sadducees, warns that Abrahamic descent alone guarantees nothing, and baptizes the people in the Jordan. The chapter climaxes with Jesus's baptism, where the heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and a voice from heaven declares Jesus to be God's beloved Son.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *John the Baptist bridges the Old and New Testaments — his message, dress (camel hair, leather belt), and wilderness setting deliberately mirror Elijah (2 Kings 1:8), and he quotes Isaiah 40:3 as his own mission statement. The baptism scene is one of the few passages where Father, Son, and Spirit appear simultaneously. The heavenly voice combines Psalm 2:7 ('You are my Son') with Isaiah 42:1 ('in whom I delight'), fusing royal and servant identities in a single declaration. John's insistence that 'I need to be baptized by you' reveals an awareness of Jesus's superior status that creates theological tension with Jesus's submission to the baptism.*

Translation Friction: *John's phrase 'brood of vipers' (genneemata echidnon) is shockingly hostile for a prophet addressing fellow Jews. We preserve the confrontational force. The phrase 'kingdom of heaven' (basileia ton ouranon) is Matthew's distinctive circumlocution for 'kingdom of God' — we preserve Matthew's form. Jesus's reason for being baptized ('to fulfill all righteousness') is theologically dense and deliberately left somewhat unexplained by the text. The phrase 'Spirit of God descending like a dove' (v. 16) is ambiguous about whether the dove is a visual form or a simile for the manner of descent.*

Connections: *Isaiah 40:3 (the voice in the wilderness) is the foundational text. Elijah typology connects to 2 Kings 1:8 and Malachi 4:5. The baptism connects to Israel's Red Sea crossing and Jordan crossing under Joshua. The heavenly voice draws on Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. The Spirit descending connects to Isaiah 11:2 (the Spirit resting on the Messiah) and Genesis 1:2 (the Spirit hovering over the waters at creation).*

1In those days, John the Baptist appeared, proclaiming in the wilderness of Judea, 2"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near!" 3This is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said: "A voice crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" 4Now John wore clothing made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5Then Jerusalem and all Judea and the entire region around the Jordan went out to him, 6Received baptism by him in the Jordan, openly admitting their sins. 7But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance, 9And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. 10Already the axe is laid at the root of the trees. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am — I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." 13Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him. 14But John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?" 15But Jesus answered him, "Allow it for now, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 16After Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water, and suddenly the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. 17And just then a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, and I am completely delighted with him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The historical present *paraginetai* ('appears, arrives') creates narrative immediacy — John bursts onto the scene. The title *ho baptistes* ('the Baptist, the one who baptizes') identifies John by his distinctive practice. The wilderness (*eremos*) of Judea is the barren region west of the Dead Sea, a place associated with divine encounter and prophetic calling throughout Israel's history.
2. The verb *metanoieite* ('repent') means a radical change of mind and direction, corresponding to the Hebrew *teshuvah* ('return'). The perfect tense *eggiken* ('has drawn near, has come close') indicates that the kingdom's approach has already begun — it is not merely future but pressing into the present. 'Kingdom of heaven' (*basileia ton ouranon*) is Matthew's distinctive phrase, using 'heaven' as a reverential circumlocution for 'God,' reflecting Jewish practice of avoiding direct use of the divine name.
3. The quotation from Isaiah 40:3 is foundational to all four Gospels' presentation of John. In its original context, the voice calls for a highway through the desert for God's return to Zion after the exile. Matthew applies this to John preparing the way for Jesus. The phrase 'in the wilderness' modifies 'crying out' (as in the Septuagint and the Gospels), though in the Hebrew of Isaiah 40:3 it modifies 'prepare' — 'in the wilderness prepare the way.' This difference in punctuation shifts the emphasis from the location of the preparation to the location of the prophet.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 40:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. John's appearance deliberately mirrors Elijah's description in 2 Kings 1:8 — a hairy garment with a leather belt. This visual allusion would be immediately recognized by Matthew's audience. Locusts were permitted food under Jewish dietary law (Leviticus 11:22). The wilderness diet emphasizes John's ascetic separation from settled society and his prophetic identity.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 1:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 11:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The imperfect tense *exeporeueto* ('were going out') describes a continuous stream of people, not a single event. The hyperbolic 'all Judea' and 'the entire region' (*pasa*, repeated) conveys the scale of John's popular impact. The Jordan River region was associated with Israel's entry into the promised land under Joshua.
6. The verb *ebaptizonto* ('were being baptized') is imperfect passive, indicating an ongoing process. The Greek *baptizo* means 'to immerse, dip, submerge.' Confession of sins (*exomologoumenoi*) accompanied the immersion, making it a public act of repentance, not merely a ritual washing. Jewish purification rites involved water, but John's baptism was distinctive in linking immersion to moral repentance and eschatological preparation.
7. The phrase *genneemata echidnon* ('brood of vipers') is devastatingly hostile — they are not merely compared to snakes but identified as the offspring of venomous serpents. The rhetorical question implies that their appearance at the baptism is insincere — they are seeking to escape judgment without genuine repentance. The 'coming wrath' (*mellouses orgees*) refers to eschatological judgment. The Pharisees and Sadducees rarely appear together; their joint presence may indicate that both wings of the religious establishment are under indictment.
8. The singular *karpon* ('fruit') in the SBLGNT (versus the KJV's plural 'fruits') treats repentance as producing a unified result — a transformed life, not merely individual good deeds. The adjective *axion* ('worthy, fitting, corresponding to') demands that the fruit match the claim. John requires evidence, not merely words.
9. John strikes at the core of Jewish ethnic confidence — descent from Abraham was considered a guarantee of covenant standing. John insists that biological lineage without moral transformation is worthless. The reference to 'these stones' (*ton lithon touton*) may involve a wordplay in Aramaic (the spoken language): 'stones' (*avanim*) and 'children' (*banim*) sound alike. God's ability to create children from stones also evokes the creation of Adam from earth.
10. The present tense *keitai* ('is laid, is lying') indicates that judgment is not approaching — it has arrived. The axe is already positioned. The tree-and-fruit metaphor recurs throughout Matthew (7:16-20, 12:33, 21:19) as a standard image for the moral evaluation of people. Fire (*pyr*) represents eschatological judgment.
11. John contrasts his water baptism with the coming one's baptism 'with the Holy Spirit and fire' (*en pneumati hagio kai pyri*). Whether 'Spirit and fire' describes one baptism (the Spirit as purifying fire) or two (blessing for the repentant, judgment for the unrepentant) is debated. The sandal-carrying metaphor indicates slave-level service — John considers himself unworthy even of the lowest task for the one who follows him. The Greek *ischyroteros* ('more powerful, stronger') emphasizes raw divine authority.
12. The agricultural metaphor of winnowing — tossing grain into the air so the wind separates wheat from chaff — depicts divine judgment as a sorting process. The Greek *ptyon* ('winnowing fork/shovel') is a large fork used to throw grain. 'Unquenchable fire' (*pyri asbesto*) intensifies the judgment beyond ordinary burning — this fire cannot be extinguished. The imagery connects to Malachi 3:2-3, where the messenger's coming involves refining fire.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 3:2-3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The historical present *paraginetai* ('arrives') mirrors the same verb used for John's appearance in verse 1, creating a structural parallel. Jesus comes specifically for baptism (*tou baptisthenai*, a purpose infinitive), making this a deliberate, intentional act rather than a chance encounter.

14. The imperfect tense *diekolyen* ('was trying to prevent, kept preventing') indicates ongoing resistance, not a single objection. John recognizes the incongruity — the greater should baptize the lesser, not the reverse. This exchange is unique to Matthew and addresses the theological puzzle of why the sinless one submitted to a baptism of repentance.
15. Jesus's reply is his first spoken words in Matthew's Gospel. The phrase 'fulfill all righteousness' (*plerosai pasan dikaiosynen*) is theologically dense — it connects to Matthew's theme of fulfillment and to the concept of *dikaosyne* ('righteousness') that will dominate the Sermon on the Mount. The 'us' (*heemin*) includes both John and Jesus in a shared mission. 'Righteousness' here likely means conformity to God's will and purposes rather than personal moral achievement.
16. The opening of the heavens (*aneochtheesan hoi ouranoi*) echoes Ezekiel 1:1 and Isaiah 64:1 — moments when the barrier between heaven and earth is breached. The phrase 'like a dove' (*hosei peristeran*) is ambiguous: it may describe the Spirit's visual form or the gentle manner of descent. The verb *erchomenon* ('coming') combined with *ep' auton* ('upon him') echoes Isaiah 11:2, where the Spirit 'rests upon' the messianic branch. This is a royal anointing scene — the Spirit's descent constitutes Jesus's commissioning.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 64:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 11:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The heavenly voice combines two Old Testament texts: Psalm 2:7 ('You are my Son') — a royal enthronement psalm — and Isaiah 42:1 ('my chosen one in whom my soul delights') — the first Servant Song. The fusion declares Jesus simultaneously as Davidic king and Suffering Servant. Matthew has 'This is' (*houtos estin*, third person, a public declaration) where Mark has 'You are' (*sy ei*, second person, addressed to Jesus). The verb *eudokesa* ('I am well pleased, I have delighted') is aorist, possibly indicating a timeless or pre-temporal delight rather than a response to the baptism alone.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 2:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 42:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

4

Summary: *Matthew 4 opens with Jesus being led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. Three temptations probe whether Jesus will misuse his identity as God's Son — for personal comfort, for spectacle, or for political power. Jesus responds to each with quotations from Deuteronomy, reliving Israel's wilderness testing and succeeding where Israel failed. After the temptation, Jesus withdraws to Galilee, settles in Capernaum, and begins his public ministry with the proclamation: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' He calls his first four disciples — Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John — from their fishing nets, and begins a widespread ministry of teaching, proclaiming, and healing throughout Galilee.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The three temptations form a literary triptych, each answered with a quotation from Deuteronomy 6-8 — the section where Moses recounts Israel's wilderness failures. Jesus is presented as the true Israel who passes the test that the nation failed. The move to Capernaum fulfills Isaiah 9:1-2, connecting Jesus's ministry to the territories of Zebulun and Naphtali — the first regions lost to Assyrian conquest, now the first to see messianic light. The phrase 'kingdom of heaven' (*basileia ton ouranon*) is unique to Matthew among the Gospels; the other Synoptics use 'kingdom of God.' Matthew's Jewish audience would have understood 'heaven' as a reverential circumlocution for the divine name.*

Translation Friction: *The nature of the temptation narrative — whether visionary, literal, or theological — is debated. We render the Greek text as given without imposing a framework. The phrase 'the devil' (*ho diabolos*) translates a Greek term meaning 'slanderer' or 'accuser,' corresponding to the Hebrew *satan* ('adversary'). The quotation from Isaiah 9:1-2 in verses 15-16 follows the Septuagint rather than the Masoretic Text in some details.*

Connections: The temptation narrative connects to Israel's wilderness testing (Deuteronomy 6-8), the baptism of chapter 3, and the Sermon on the Mount that follows in chapters 5-7. The calling of the first disciples echoes prophetic call narratives (1 Kings 19:19-21, Elijah calling Elisha). The summary of Jesus's ministry in verse 23 sets up the Sermon on the Mount by establishing his authority as teacher and healer.

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written: 'A person does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the highest point of the temple, ⁶Says to him, If you be the Son of God, cast thyself down — for it is written, He will give his angels charge concerning you: and in their hands they will bear you up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said to him, "Again it is written: 'You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor, ⁹Says to him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" ¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended to him. ¹²When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet and stated, ¹⁵"Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations — ¹⁶The those present which sat in darkness noticed remarkable light. And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. ¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ¹⁸As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers — Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew — casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹He said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers — James the son of Zebedee and his brother John — in a boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, ²²They immediately departed the ship and their Father, and followed him. ²³Jesus traveled throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴News about him spread throughout all of Syria, and people brought to him all who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, the demon-possessed, epileptics, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. ²⁵Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *peirasthēnai* can mean 'to test' or 'to tempt.' We render it 'tested' because the initiative comes from God's Spirit — this is a divine proving, not merely a satanic enticement. The passive *anēchthē* ('was led up') indicates Jesus did not go on his own initiative but was directed by the Spirit, connecting this directly to the Spirit's descent at his baptism (3:16).
1. The Greek *diabolos* ('slanderer, accuser') corresponds to the Hebrew *satan*. Matthew uses *diabolos* rather than *satanas* here, though both terms appear in the New Testament.
2. The 'forty days and forty nights' echoes Moses on Sinai (Exodus 34:28) and Elijah's journey to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). The number forty is a standard biblical period of testing and preparation — Israel wandered forty years, the flood lasted forty days. The Greek *epeinasen* is simply 'he was hungry,' a masterful understatement after forty days without food.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 34:28. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 19:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The Greek *ei* ('if') with the indicative does not express doubt but assumes the condition is true: 'Since you are the Son of God' or 'Given that you are.' The temptation is not about proving identity but about misusing it. The tempter attacks at the point of legitimate physical need — hunger after forty days of fasting.
4. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, which recounts how God fed Israel with manna to teach them dependence on his word. The Greek *anthrōpos* ('person, human being') is gender-neutral; 'person' captures this better than the KJV's 'man.' The phrase *gegraptai* ('it is written,' perfect tense) indicates permanent, authoritative force — what was written remains in effect.

4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 8:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The Greek pterygion ('little wing') refers to the highest point or parapet of the temple complex. Josephus describes the southeastern corner of the temple platform as having a dizzying drop into the Kidron Valley. 'The holy city' (tēn hagian polin) is Jerusalem, identified by its theological title rather than its name.
6. The devil now quotes Scripture — Psalm 91:11-12 — but omits the phrase 'to guard you in all your ways,' subtly distorting the promise from general providential care to a demand for spectacular intervention. The temptation is to force God's hand through presumptuous action rather than trusting his timing.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 91:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, which references Israel's testing of God at Massah (Exodus 17:1-7). The verb ekpeiraseis ('put to the test') is an intensified form of peirazō — it means to test in a demanding, presumptuous way. The word palin ('again') indicates Jesus is not countering Scripture with Scripture but completing its meaning — both passages stand together.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 6:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 17:1-7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek doxan ('glory, splendor') here refers to the visible magnificence of earthly power — wealth, armies, architecture. The offer of 'all the kingdoms' is the most audacious temptation: political power without the cross. No literal mountain provides a vantage point to see all earthly kingdoms; the scene is visionary or symbolic.
9. The Greek proskynesēs ('worship, bow down before') implies full prostration — the posture of total submission reserved for deity. The temptation strips away all pretense: the devil offers a shortcut to universal dominion that bypasses suffering and the cross, but the price is idolatry. The conditional ean ('if') with the subjunctive presents this as a genuine offer.
10. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13. The word Satana is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew satan ('adversary') — Jesus uses the name directly for the first time, dropping the circumlocution 'tempter' and 'devil.' The verb latreuō ('serve, render religious service') denotes devoted worship-service, not mere obedience. The command hypage ('go away') is sharp and authoritative.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek diēkonoun ('ministered, served, attended') is the imperfect tense, indicating ongoing service — the angels continued to care for him. This verb is the root of 'deacon' (diakonos). The angelic ministry recalls Elijah being fed by an angel after his own wilderness ordeal (1 Kings 19:5-8). The irony is deliberate: the provision Jesus refused to seize by miracle is now given to him by the Father.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 19:5-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek paredothē ('was handed over, delivered up') is the same verb later used for Jesus's own betrayal and arrest (10:4, 17:22, 26:2). Matthew's use of this word for John foreshadows Jesus's fate — the forerunner's path prefigures the Messiah's. 'Withdrew' (anechōrēsen) suggests a deliberate strategic move, not flight.
13. Capernaum (Kfar Nachum, 'village of Nahum') on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee becomes Jesus's base of operations. The Greek parathalassian ('by the sea') identifies the town's lakeside location. Matthew specifies the tribal territories of Zebulun and Naphtali to set up the Isaiah quotation that follows.
14. This is Matthew's second fulfillment formula (cf. 1:22). The move to Capernaum is presented not as a retreat from danger but as a prophetic fulfillment — geography itself serves God's redemptive plan.
15. Matthew quotes Isaiah 9:1-2 (8:23-9:1 in the Hebrew numbering). 'Galilee of the nations' (Galilaia tōn ethnōn) reflects the mixed Jewish-Gentile population of the northern region. The phrase hints at the universal scope of Jesus's mission — he begins not in Jerusalem but in a border region where Jew and Gentile mingle. 'The way of the sea' (hodon thalassēs) refers to the ancient trade route Via Maris.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 9:1-2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The Greek kathēmenoīs can mean 'sitting' or 'dwelling, living' — the sense is of a settled condition, not a momentary posture. 'Shadow of death' (skia thanatou) echoes the Hebrew tsalmaveth of Psalm 23:4 and Isaiah 9:2. The verb aneteilen ('has risen, dawned') is used of sunrise — the light that breaks upon Galilee is described in the language of a new dawn.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 9:1-2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 23:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Jesus's opening proclamation is identical to John the Baptist's in 3:2, establishing continuity between the forerunner and the Messiah. The Greek *metanoieite* ('repent') means a fundamental change of mind and direction — not merely feeling sorry but reorienting one's entire life. The perfect tense *ēngiken* ('has come near, has drawn close') indicates that the kingdom has already begun to arrive, not merely that it will come someday.
17. Matthew's 'kingdom of heaven' (*basileia tōn ouranōn*) is equivalent to Mark's and Luke's 'kingdom of God.' Matthew uses 'heaven' as a reverential circumlocution for God's name, following Jewish convention.
18. The Greek *amphiblēstron* refers to a circular casting net thrown from shore or from a shallow-water position, distinct from the dragnet (*sagēnē*) of 13:47. The parenthetical 'who is called Peter' (*ton legomenon Petron*) introduces the name by which readers will know him. The Sea of Galilee is technically a freshwater lake (approximately 13 miles long by 8 miles wide), but the Greek *thalassa* ('sea') follows the Hebrew convention of calling any large body of water *yam*.
19. The call *deute opisō mou* ('come after me') uses the language of rabbinic discipleship — following a teacher physically implied intellectual and moral formation. 'Fishers of people' (*halieis anthrōpōn*) is a metaphor drawn from their actual trade. The Greek *anthrōpōn* is gender-inclusive ('people'), not restricted to males.
20. The adverb *euthēs* ('immediately, at once') emphasizes the radical, unhesitating nature of their response. The Greek *diktya* ('nets') represents their entire livelihood. Matthew narrates the call with dramatic compression — there is no negotiation, no request for time, no farewell.
21. The Greek *katartizontas* ('mending, preparing, putting in order') suggests the brothers were repairing nets after a fishing expedition. The detail that they are with their father Zebedee heightens the cost of their response — they leave not only their trade but their family. The Greek *ploion* is a fishing boat, not a large vessel.
22. The cost escalates from the first calling: Simon and Andrew left nets (equipment), but James and John leave both the boat (a more substantial capital asset) and their father (family obligation). Matthew highlights what discipleship requires — not merely adding Jesus to one's life but reordering all other loyalties.
23. This summary verse presents Jesus's ministry in a threefold pattern: teaching (*didaskōn*), proclaiming (*kēryssōn*), and healing (*therapeuōn*). This triad recurs in 9:35, forming an inclusio around the Sermon on the Mount and the miracle collection. The 'good news of the kingdom' (*to euangelion tēs basileias*) is Matthew's phrase for the content of Jesus's preaching — the announcement that God's reign is arriving. The Greek *malakian* refers to weakness or infirmity as distinct from *nosos* (disease).
24. The Greek *selēniāzomenous* (literally 'moon-struck') refers to those suffering from what was associated with lunar cycles — likely epilepsy. The KJV's 'lunatic' comes from the same etymology but is no longer a medical term. The list moves from general ('various diseases and pains') to specific conditions, demonstrating the comprehensive scope of Jesus's healing power. Syria (the Roman province encompassing the region north of Galilee) indicates that Jesus's reputation extended beyond Jewish territory.
25. The five regions listed encompass a wide geographic sweep — from Galilee in the north, through the Decapolis (a league of ten Greco-Roman cities east of the Jordan), to Jerusalem and Judea in the south, and the Transjordan region. This crowd becomes the audience for the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7. The inclusion of the Decapolis (heavily Gentile) again hints at the universal scope of Jesus's ministry.

5

Summary: *Matthew 5 opens the Sermon on the Mount, the first of five major teaching discourses in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus ascends a mountain (echoing Moses on Sinai), sits (the posture of authoritative teaching), and addresses his disciples while the crowds listen. The chapter contains the Beatitudes (5:3-12), the salt and light sayings (5:13-16), Jesus's declaration that he has come not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (5:17-20), and six 'antitheses' in which Jesus deepens the Torah's demands — addressing anger (5:21-26), lust (5:27-30), divorce (5:31-32), oaths (5:33-37), retaliation (5:38-42), and love of enemies (5:43-48). The chapter culminates in the command to 'be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Sermon on the Mount is structured as a new Sinai revelation. Just as Moses ascended the mountain to receive the Torah, Jesus ascends to deliver its definitive interpretation. The Beatitudes reverse worldly valuations — the poor in spirit, the grieving, the meek, and the persecuted are declared blessed. The antitheses ('You have heard... but I say to you') do not contradict the Torah but radicalize it, moving from external behavior to internal disposition. Jesus claims an authority that surpasses Moses: not 'Thus says the LORD' but 'I say to you.' The Greek *teleios* ('perfect') in verse 48 means 'complete, mature, whole' — not sinless perfection but wholehearted devotion.*

*Translation Friction: The relationship between Jesus and the Torah in 5:17-20 is one of the most debated passages in the New Testament. We render the Greek as given without resolving the tension between 'not one iota will pass from the Law' and the apparent modifications that follow. The antitheses vary in structure — some quote the Torah directly, others cite popular interpretations ('You have heard it was said'). We preserve these distinctions. The teaching on divorce (5:31-32) involves the contested term *porneia*, which we render transparently with a note on the semantic range.*

Connections: The mountain setting connects to Sinai (Exodus 19-20), the Beatitudes echo the Psalms (especially Psalm 37) and Isaiah 61, the Law-fulfillment passage connects to Matthew's ongoing concern with the Torah's continuing validity, and the antitheses prepare for the conflicts with religious leaders in later chapters. The command to love enemies (5:44) will be tested in the Passion narrative.

¹When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²He opened his mouth and began to teach them, saying: ³Blessed are the poor in spirit — because heaven's kingdom belongs to them. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek — for they will receive the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart — since they will see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who came before you. ¹³You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its flavor, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. ¹⁷Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one iota or one stroke of a letter will pass from the Law until everything has been accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ²¹You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder,' and 'Whoever murders will be subject to judgment.' ²²But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Whoever says to his brother, 'Raka!' will be answerable to the council. And whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the fire of Gehenna. ²³So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴Leave there your gift prior to the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. ²⁷You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into Gehenna. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into Gehenna. ³¹It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. ³³Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall fulfill your oaths to the Lord.' ³⁴But I say to you, do not swear at all — not by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵Nor by the earth. Since it is his footstool — neither by Jerusalem. Since it is the city of the remarkable King. ³⁶Neither shalt you swear by your own head, because you canst not turn a single hair white or black. ³⁷Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No.' Anything beyond this comes from the evil one. ³⁸You have heard that

it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹But I say to you, do not resist the evildoer. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well. ⁴⁰If someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. ⁴³You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵So you can become true children of your Father which is in heaven — since he makes his sun rise on both evil people and good people, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The definite article to oros ('the mountain') suggests a specific location, though Matthew does not name it. The Sinai typology is deliberate — Moses went up the mountain to receive the Law, Jesus goes up to interpret it with final authority. Sitting (kathisantos) was the standard posture for an authoritative Jewish teacher; standing indicated informal conversation.
2. The phrase 'opened his mouth' (anoixas to stoma autou) is a Semitic idiom signaling the beginning of a solemn, formal discourse — not merely casual speech. It appears in the Septuagint for prophetic and wisdom utterances (Job 3:1, Daniel 10:16). The imperfect edidasken ('was teaching, began to teach') suggests an extended teaching session.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Job 3:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 10:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The Greek makarioi ('blessed, fortunate, happy') does not merely describe an emotion but declares a state of divine favor. The 'poor in spirit' (ptōchoi tō pneumati) does not mean lacking in spiritual vitality but recognizing one's spiritual poverty and dependence on God. The Hebrew background is anawim — the humble poor who depend entirely on God. Luke's parallel (6:20) simply has 'the poor,' but Matthew's 'in spirit' clarifies the inner disposition.
4. The Greek penthountes ('those who mourn, grieve') refers to deep grief — the kind associated with death or catastrophic loss. The passive paraklēthēsontai ('will be comforted') is a divine passive: God himself will be the one who comforts. This echoes Isaiah 61:2-3, where the Messiah comes 'to comfort all who mourn.'
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 61:2-3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. This Beatitude quotes Psalm 37:11 almost verbatim. The Greek praeis ('meek, gentle, humble') does not mean weak but describes power under control — strength expressed with gentleness. Moses is called the meekest man on earth (Numbers 12:3), yet he was a formidable leader. The Greek gēn can mean 'earth' or 'land' — in the Psalm 37 context it referred to the promised land, but Jesus universalizes the promise.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 37:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 12:3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The Greek chortasthēsontai ('will be satisfied, filled') originally described the feeding of animals — it means filled to capacity, fully satiated. The metaphor of hunger and thirst for righteousness (dikaiosynēn) implies a desperate, survival-level craving, not casual interest. Matthew's 'righteousness' (dikaiosynē) encompasses both right relationship with God and just conduct — the Hebrew tsedeq/tsedaqah.
7. The Greek eleēmōnes ('merciful, compassionate') and eleēthēsontai ('will be shown mercy') share the same root (eleos), creating a wordplay: mercy given is mercy received. The principle of reciprocity runs throughout the Sermon (cf. 6:12, 6:14-15, 7:1-2). The divine passive again indicates God as the source of mercy.
8. The Greek katharoi tē kardia ('pure in heart') echoes Psalm 24:4 — 'the one with clean hands and a pure heart.' The heart (kardia) in biblical thought is the center of will, thought, and moral decision, not merely emotion. Purity here means undivided loyalty, sincerity, and integrity. The promise 'they will see God' (ton theon opsontai) is extraordinary — in the Old Testament, seeing God was considered fatal (Exodus 33:20).
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 24:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 33:20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The Greek eirēnopoioi ('peacemakers') is a compound word appearing only here in the New Testament. It describes those who actively create peace, not merely those who avoid conflict. The designation 'sons of God' (huiōi theou) means they share the character of God, who is the ultimate peacemaker. In the ancient world, the Roman emperor was called a 'peacemaker' — Jesus quietly reassigns the title.

10. The perfect participle *dediōgmenoi* ('those who have been persecuted') indicates an ongoing state resulting from past action — these are people who live under persecution as a condition of their lives. The return to 'kingdom of heaven' creates an *inclusio* with verse 3, framing the eight Beatitudes as a unified whole. Persecution for righteousness — not for foolishness or stubbornness — is the qualifying condition.
11. The shift from third person ('blessed are those') to second person ('blessed are you') makes this final Beatitude directly personal and marks the transition from the formal blessings to direct address. The three verbs — insult (*oneidisōsin*), persecute (*diōxōsin*), say evil (*eipōsin pan ponēron*) — escalate from verbal abuse to active pursuit to character assassination. The qualifying phrase *pseudomenoi* ('falsely, lying') is critical: the blessing applies only to false accusations.
12. The two imperatives *chairete* ('rejoice') and *agalliasathe* ('be overjoyed, leap for joy') intensify one another. The word *misthos* ('reward, wages') does not imply merit-based earning but God's generous response to faithfulness. By linking the disciples with the persecuted prophets, Jesus places them in the prophetic succession — they are heirs to the same tradition of faithful witness that was met with hostility.
13. The Greek *mōranthē* (from *mōrainō*, 'to become foolish, to become tasteless') creates a double meaning — salt that loses its taste has become 'foolish.' In the ancient world, salt preserved food from decay, flavored meals, and was used in covenant rituals (Leviticus 2:13, Numbers 18:19). If the preserving agent itself fails, nothing can restore it. The rhetorical question 'how can it be made salty again?' expects the answer 'it cannot.'
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 2:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 18:19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. In the Old Testament, Israel was called to be 'a light to the nations' (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6). Jesus transfers this vocation to his disciples. The image of a city on a hill (*polis epanō orous keimenē*) may evoke Jerusalem, built on Mount Zion, visible from great distances. The claim is stunning — Jesus's followers are now assigned the role that Israel was given through the prophets.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Greek *modion* ('measuring basket,' about 8.75 liters) was a common household item. The *lychnos* ('oil lamp') was a small clay vessel with a wick — the primary source of indoor light in first-century homes. The *lychnia* ('lampstand') elevated the lamp to maximize its reach. The image is purely practical — hiding a light source defeats its purpose.
16. The purpose of visible good works is not self-promotion but theocentric: the goal is that observers glorify 'your Father in heaven' (*ton patera hymōn ton en tois ouranois*). This phrase — 'your Father in heaven' — is distinctive to Matthew and occurs repeatedly in the Sermon on the Mount. The Greek *kala erga* ('good works, beautiful deeds') denotes works that are both morally good and visibly attractive.
17. The Greek *katalysai* ('to destroy, demolish, abolish') is a strong term — literally 'to loosen down, dismantle.' Jesus denies any intent to dismantle the Torah. The verb *plērōsai* ('to fulfill, to fill up, to bring to completion') is debated: does it mean 'to obey perfectly,' 'to bring to its intended goal,' 'to fill with deeper meaning,' or 'to bring about what it prophesied'? The ambiguity may be intentional — Jesus fulfills the Law in all these senses. 'The Law and the Prophets' (*ton nomon ē tous prophētas*) is a standard designation for the entire Hebrew Scriptures.
18. The Greek *amēn legō hymin* ('truly I tell you') is Jesus's characteristic formula for solemn pronouncements — it is unprecedented in Jewish teaching, where *amēn* typically concludes a statement rather than introducing one. The *iōta* is the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet (corresponding to the Hebrew *yod*, the smallest Hebrew letter), and *keraiia* ('horn, serif, stroke') refers to the tiny decorative strokes that distinguish similar Hebrew letters. The double negative *ou mē* ('not at all, by no means') is the strongest form of negation in Greek.
19. The Greek *lysē* ('loosens, sets aside, annuls') echoes the *katalysai* of verse 17 — whoever 'loosens' even the smallest commandment participates in the very abolition Jesus has rejected. The pairing of 'practices and teaches' (*poiēsē kai didaxē*) insists on integrity: teaching without practice is worthless. Being 'called least' may mean having the lowest status in the kingdom, not necessarily exclusion from it.
20. This verse functions as the thesis statement for the six antitheses that follow (5:21-48). The scribes and Pharisees were considered the most meticulous observers of the Law — to exceed their righteousness seemed impossible. The Greek *perisseusē* ('exceed, overflow, surpass') implies not more of the same kind but a different quality of righteousness — one that penetrates from external observance to internal transformation. The double negative *ou mē* ('never, by no means') makes the warning absolute.
21. This introduces the first antithesis. The formula 'You have heard that it was said' (*ēkousate hoti errethē*) refers to the synagogue reading of Torah. The commandment quotes the sixth commandment (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17). The Greek *phoneuseis* ('murder') is more specific than 'kill' — it refers to unlawful killing, not all forms of taking life. The addition 'whoever murders will be subject to judgment' reflects the established legal tradition surrounding the commandment.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 20:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 5:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The emphatic *egō de legō hymin* ('but I say to you') claims an authority that transcends even Moses — Jesus does not cite another authority but speaks on his own. The three-step escalation moves from internal anger to verbal contempt (*Raka*, an Aramaic term of derision meaning

'empty-head' or 'worthless') to outright denunciation (Mōre, 'fool,' which in Hebrew carries the connotation of moral and spiritual bankruptcy — cf. Psalm 14:1, 'The fool says in his heart'). Gehenna (geennan) refers to the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, associated with child sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10) and later used as a metaphor for divine judgment.

22. The SBLGNT does not include 'without a cause' (eikē), which appears in some later manuscripts. We follow the critical text.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 14:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 23:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The scenario assumes a functioning temple with its sacrificial system — Jesus addresses people who actually bring offerings to the altar. The Greek *thysiaστήριον* ('altar') specifically refers to the temple altar in Jerusalem. The point is radical: reconciliation with a fellow human being takes priority over worship of God.
24. The command is startling in its priorities: leave the sacrifice mid-act to restore a broken relationship. The Greek *diállagēthi* ('be reconciled') is an aorist passive imperative — do whatever it takes to restore the relationship, taking responsibility for your part. The word *prōton* ('first') makes the sequence absolute: reconciliation before worship, not after.
25. The Greek *antidikos* ('adversary, accuser, opponent at law') is a legal term for the opposing party in a lawsuit. The illustration shifts from the temple to the courtroom, but the principle is the same: resolve conflicts urgently, before they escalate beyond your control. The chain of custody — accuser to judge to officer to prison — describes the inexorable progression of unresolved conflict.
26. The Greek *kodrantēn* (Latin *quadrans*) was the smallest Roman coin, worth about 1/64 of a denarius (a day's wage). The point is totality — every last fraction must be repaid. The shift to singular 'you' (*soi*) makes this personally direct. Whether the saying carries eschatological overtones (final judgment) or remains a practical warning about earthly litigation is debated; likely both dimensions are present.
27. The second antithesis addresses the seventh commandment (Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18). The Greek *moicheuseis* ('commit adultery') refers specifically to sexual intercourse with another person's spouse, violating the marriage covenant.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 5:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The Greek *pros to epithymēsai* ('with the purpose of desiring, for the purpose of lusting') indicates deliberate, intentional gazing — not an involuntary glance but a cultivated look aimed at arousal. The infinitive of purpose makes the intent central: this is about the will's direction, not mere biological response. The phrase 'in his heart' (*en tē kardia autou*) again locates the moral action in the internal sphere of will and desire.
29. The Greek *skandalizei* ('causes to stumble, causes to sin, entraps') gives us the English 'scandalize.' The language is deliberately hyperbolic — Jesus is not commanding literal self-mutilation but using shock rhetoric to convey the urgency of dealing with sin at its source. The right eye and right hand (v. 30) represent the most valued members. The logic is surgical: better partial loss now than total ruin later.
30. The repetition of the eye/hand pattern reinforces the seriousness of the demand. The right hand was the hand of power, skill, and oath-taking. The verb *ekkopson* ('cut off') is more violent than the eye's 'tear out' (*exele*), escalating the rhetoric. The parallel between *apólētai* ('perish, be destroyed') for the limb and *apelthē* ('go away, depart') for the body into Gehenna highlights the choice: voluntary partial loss versus involuntary total destruction.
31. The third antithesis cites Deuteronomy 24:1-4, which regulated (but did not endorse) an existing practice of divorce. The Greek *apostasion* ('certificate of divorce, document of separation') was a legal document that freed the woman to remarry. In the first-century debate between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, the grounds for divorce were fiercely contested.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 24:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The exception clause *parektos logou porneias* ('except on the ground of porneia') appears only in Matthew (here and 19:9), not in Mark or Luke. The Greek *porneia* has a broad semantic range: sexual immorality, fornication, prostitution, incest, or any illicit sexual conduct. Whether it refers specifically to pre-marital unchastity, adultery, or sexual sin in general is debated. The logic assumes a patriarchal context where a divorced woman would need to remarry for economic survival — hence the divorced husband 'makes her' commit adultery by forcing her into a new marriage.
33. The fourth antithesis addresses oath-taking. The citation is a composite of Leviticus 19:12 ('You shall not swear falsely by my name'), Numbers 30:2, and Deuteronomy 23:21-23 (on fulfilling vows). The Greek *epiorkēseis* ('swear falsely, commit perjury') and the command to 'fulfill your oaths' (*apodōseis tous horkous*) together summarize the Torah's teaching: if you swear, do not lie; keep what you promise.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 19:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 30:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 23:21-23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The prohibition *mē omosai holōs* ('do not swear at all') is absolute in form. The practice of swearing by things adjacent to God (heaven, earth, Jerusalem, one's own head) was a way of invoking solemnity without directly using God's name — a legalistic evasion that Jesus exposes. His argument is that everything is connected to God, so every oath implicitly involves God.
35. The phrases echo Isaiah 66:1 ('Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool') and Psalm 48:2 ('the city of the great King'). Jesus's reasoning reveals a theology of divine sovereignty: heaven, earth, and Jerusalem all belong to God, so swearing by any of them ultimately invokes God himself. The 'great King' (*tou megalou basileōs*) is God, not an earthly monarch.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 66:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 48:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The climactic point: you cannot even swear by your own head because you do not have sovereignty over your own body. The inability to change the color of a hair demonstrates human limitations — even the self belongs to God. This strips away every possible basis for oath-making and drives the listener to the simple alternative of verse 37.
37. The doubled *nai nai, ou ou* ('yes yes, no no') emphasizes simplicity and reliability. The Greek *ek tou ponērou* can mean either 'from evil' (abstract) or 'from the evil one' (personal) — the ambiguity is present in the Greek and we follow the personal reading since Matthew elsewhere uses *ho ponēros* for Satan (13:19, 38). The principle is that truthful people do not need oaths — their word alone is sufficient.
38. The fifth antithesis cites the *lex talionis* ('law of retaliation') from Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, and Deuteronomy 19:21. In its original context, this law was a limitation on vengeance — it prevented disproportionate retaliation by requiring that punishment match the offense exactly. By the first century, the rabbis had already largely replaced literal application with monetary compensation.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 21:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 24:20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 19:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The Greek *mē antistēnai tō ponērō* ('do not resist the evil one/evildoer') sets up four illustrations of non-retaliation. A strike on the right cheek (*rhapizeī eis tēn dexian siagona*) with a right hand would be a backhanded slap — an insult, not an attack. This was a gesture of contempt in the ancient world. Turning the other cheek is not passive submission but a refusal to be defined by the insult, forcing the aggressor to either treat you as an equal or back down.
40. The Greek *chitōna* ('tunic, undergarment') was the inner garment; the *himation* ('cloak, outer garment') was the more valuable outer wrap that also served as a blanket at night. Under Exodus 22:26-27, a creditor could take a debtor's cloak as collateral but had to return it by nightfall. Jesus says to give it voluntarily — a radical generosity that exposes the absurdity of litigious greed.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 22:26-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The Greek *angareusei* ('to press into service, to requisition') is a Persian loanword for the power of a government official to compel a civilian to carry a load or provide labor. Roman soldiers had the legal right to conscript locals to carry equipment for one Roman mile (approximately 1,000 paces or 4,850 feet). The instruction to go a second mile transforms compelled service into voluntary generosity.
42. The two commands cover giving (*dos*, 'give') and lending (*danisasthai*, 'to borrow'). The Greek *mē apostraphēs* ('do not turn away') echoes Deuteronomy 15:7-8, which warns against hardening your heart or closing your hand against a poor brother. The instruction is not about financial naivety but about a disposition of open-handed generosity that refuses to calculate advantage.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 15:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The sixth and final antithesis. 'Love your neighbor' comes from Leviticus 19:18, but 'hate your enemy' is not a direct Torah quotation. It may reflect a popular interpretation, a Qumran-type ideology (the Dead Sea Scrolls' Rule of the Community mandates loving the sons of light and hating the sons of darkness), or a logical inference drawn from the limitation of 'neighbor' to fellow Israelites.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 19:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

44. The SBLGNT has the shorter reading without 'bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you' — these expansions appear in later manuscripts under the influence of Luke 6:27-28. We follow the critical text. The Greek *agapate* ('love') is the present imperative, commanding a habitual pattern of life, not a single act. The love commanded (*agapē*) is not emotional affection but willed, active commitment to the well-being of the other — including those who actively harm you.
45. The logic is breathtaking: God's indiscriminate generosity with sun and rain becomes the model for human love. The Father does not withhold creation's blessings from evildoers — his goodness extends to all. To be 'sons of your Father' (*huiioi tou patros hymōn*) means to share his character. The pairing of 'evil and good' with 'righteous and unrighteous' (*dikaious kai adikous*) covers the entire moral spectrum — God's provision is universal.
46. The Greek *telōnai* ('tax collectors') were Jews who collected taxes or tolls on behalf of the Roman government. They were despised as collaborators and assumed to be corrupt (since they often charged above the required amount). Jesus's argument is comparative: if your love extends only to those who love you back, you are no different from the most despised members of society. Even they manage reciprocal affection.
47. The SBLGNT reads *ethnikoi* ('Gentiles, pagans') rather than *telōnai* ('tax collectors') found in some manuscripts. The greeting (*aspasēsthe*) in the ancient Near East was more than a casual hello — it involved a blessing, an inquiry about welfare, and could include an embrace or kiss. To limit greetings to 'brothers' (*adelphous*, meaning fellow community members) was tribal exclusivism. The rhetorical question 'what are you doing more than others?' (*ti perisson poeite*) challenges disciples to exceed the normal human pattern.
48. The Greek *teleioi* ('perfect, complete, mature, whole') does not mean sinless moral perfection in the modern sense. It comes from the root *telos* ('end, goal, completion') and means 'whole, complete, having reached the intended goal.' In context, it means loving completely — without the partial, self-serving limitations exposed in verses 46-47. Luke's parallel (6:36) has 'be merciful' (*oiktirmones*), which may illuminate Matthew's 'perfect': wholeness of love that embraces even enemies. The future indicative *esesthe* ('you will be') can function as an imperative in Greek.

6

Summary: *Matthew 6 continues the Sermon on the Mount, shifting from the antitheses of chapter 5 to the practice of piety. Jesus addresses three pillars of Jewish devotion — giving to the needy (6:1-4), prayer (6:5-15), and fasting (6:16-18) — warning against performing them for human approval rather than for God. At the center stands the Lord's Prayer (6:9-13), the model prayer that encapsulates the entire Sermon's theology. The chapter then turns to the question of treasure and anxiety: where is your treasure? (6:19-24), and why do you worry? (6:25-34). The chapter culminates in the command to 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' with the promise that all material needs will be provided.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Lord's Prayer functions as a structural and theological center for the entire Sermon on the Mount. Its petitions move from God's concerns (name, kingdom, will) to human needs (bread, forgiveness, deliverance) — modeling the priority order that the rest of the Sermon teaches. The 'do not worry' passage (6:25-34) draws on creation theology: birds, flowers, and grass serve as witnesses to God's providential care. The phrase 'you cannot serve God and money' (6:24) uses the Aramaic *mamōnas*, a personification of wealth as a rival deity. The teaching on prayer explicitly contrasts Jewish practice ('do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do') with the intimacy of addressing God as 'Father.'*

Translation Friction: *The doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer ('For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen') does not appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts and is absent from the SBLGNT. We note this in the translator notes for verse 13. The phrase 'daily bread' (*arton epiousiōn*) contains a word (*epiousios*) that appears nowhere else in all of Greek literature — its precise meaning is debated. The relationship between 'debts' (*opheilēmata*, v. 12) and 'trespasses' (*paraptōmata*, vv. 14-15) involves a shift in vocabulary that we preserve and note.*

Connections: *The Lord's Prayer connects to the broader prayer tradition of Israel (especially the Amidah/Shemoneh Esreh). The 'do not worry' teaching echoes Psalm 37 and Proverbs 3:5-6. The 'eye as the lamp of the body' saying (6:22-23) connects to the purity of heart in 5:8. The teaching on treasures prepares for the parables of chapter 13 (hidden treasure, pearl of great price).*

1Be careful not to practice your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. 2So when you give to the needy, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴That your alms may be in secret — and your Father which sees in secret himself will reward you openly. ⁵And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, let your name be held holy. ¹⁰Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Provide us today with the bread we need. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' ¹⁴For if you pardon men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also pardon you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. ¹⁶When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so that their fasting will be noticed by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸That you appear not to men to fast, but to your Father which is in secret — and your Father, which sees in secret, will reward you openly. ¹⁹Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²²The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ²⁴No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. ²⁵Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life — what you will eat or what you will drink — or about your body — what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the sky — they do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? ²⁷And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life span? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not labor or spin, ²⁹Yet I tell you, that not even Solomon in all his splendor was never dressed as beautifully as even one of these flowers. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³²For the Gentiles pursue all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need all of them. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you as well. ³⁴So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads *dikaiosynēn* ('righteousness') rather than *eleēmosynēn* ('alms, charitable giving') found in later manuscripts. 'Righteousness' serves as the umbrella term for the three practices that follow: giving, prayer, and fasting. The Greek *pros to theathēnai* ('in order to be seen, for the purpose of being noticed') uses the verb from which we get 'theater' — performing religion for an audience. The Father 'in heaven' (*en tois ouranois*) is contrasted with the earthly audience throughout this section.
2. The Greek *hypokritai* ('hypocrites') originally meant 'actors' — those who perform behind a mask on stage. Jesus repurposes the theatrical metaphor: religious performers are actors playing to a human audience rather than living before God. Whether the 'trumpet sounding' is literal (some form of public announcement) or figurative (drawing attention to one's generosity) is debated. The verb *apechousin* ('they have received in full') is a commercial term meaning 'paid in full, receipt given' — human praise is the only payment they will ever receive.
3. The idiom is vivid hyperbole: even your own body should not be aware of your generosity. The right hand (*dexia*) was the hand of action and blessing; the left hand (*aristera*) was considered secondary. The point is not literal concealment (impossible from oneself) but a disposition so thoroughly free from self-display that giving becomes second nature — unconscious, reflexive, unperformed.
4. The SBLGNT does not include *en tō phanerō* ('openly') after 'will reward you,' which appears in later manuscripts. The contrast is between the 'secret' (*en tō kryptō*) place where genuine piety occurs and the public stage where performative religion operates. The Father 'who sees in secret' (*ho blepōn en tō kryptō*) is the only audience that matters — God perceives what no human observer can.

5. Standing (*hestōtes*) was the normal Jewish posture for prayer — Jesus does not criticize the posture but the motive. The Greek *philousin* ('they love, they take pleasure in') exposes the deeper problem: they enjoy being seen praying more than they enjoy praying. The 'corners of the broad streets' (*gōniais tōn plateiōn*) were intersections where one would be visible from multiple directions — maximum exposure.
6. The Greek *tameion* ('inner room, storeroom, private chamber') refers to the most private space in a house — often a windowless storage room. Shutting the door (*kleisas tēn thyran*) physically removes the human audience. The point is not that all prayer must be private (Jesus prayed publicly) but that the essential dynamic of prayer is between the person and God alone. Again the SBLGNT omits *en tō phanerō* ('openly').
7. The Greek *battalogēsēte* is a rare word, possibly onomatopoeic (imitating the sound of babbling: 'ba-ba-ba'). It may mean 'to babble, to speak repetitiously and without meaning, to heap up empty phrases.' The Greek *polylogia* ('many words, wordiness') diagnoses the underlying error: the assumption that God must be nagged or informed by sheer volume of speech. The contrast is with the concise Lord's Prayer that follows.
8. The logic raises a question: if God already knows our needs, why pray at all? Jesus does not answer this directly, but the Lord's Prayer that follows answers implicitly — prayer is not informing God but aligning oneself with God's purposes. The verb *oiden* ('knows,' perfect tense of *oida*) indicates settled, complete knowledge, not something God must learn.
9. The address 'Our Father' (*Pater hēmōn*) is communal — not 'my Father' but 'our Father,' embedding the pray-er in community from the first word. 'In heaven' (*ho en tois ouranois*) distinguishes the divine Father from earthly fathers. The passive imperative *hagiasthētō* ('let it be sanctified, let it be treated as holy') is a divine passive — God himself will bring about the honoring of his name, but the pray-er asks for it and commits to participating in it. The 'name' (*onoma*) in Hebrew thought represents the entire character and reputation of God.
10. The aorist imperatives *elthetō* ('let it come') and *genēthētō* ('let it be done') express urgency — bring the kingdom now, accomplish your will now. 'Your kingdom' (*hē basileia sou*) is the same kingdom of heaven Jesus has been proclaiming since 4:17. The phrase 'on earth as in heaven' (*hōs en ouranō kai epī gēs*) may modify all three petitions — let your name be holy, your kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth as these things already are in heaven.
11. The Greek *epiousios* ('daily') is one of the rarest words in the entire Greek language — it appears nowhere else in all surviving Greek literature outside the Lord's Prayer and may have been coined for this purpose. Possible meanings: (1) 'for the coming day' (from *epi + ienai*, 'for the next day'), (2) 'for existence/sustenance' (from *epi + ousia*, 'for being'), or (3) 'necessary, essential.' The prayer echoes the manna provision in Exodus 16, where Israel was given bread for one day at a time — daily dependence on God rather than hoarding.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek *opheilēmata* ('debts, what is owed') is a financial metaphor applied to moral and spiritual obligation. Matthew uses 'debts' where Luke (11:4) uses 'sins' (*hamartias*), revealing that both concepts overlap. The aorist *aphēkamen* ('we have forgiven,' completed action) is striking — the prayer presupposes that we have already forgiven before we ask God to forgive us. The 'as' (*hōs*) does not mean 'because' (earning forgiveness by forgiving) but establishes a pattern: those who have experienced God's forgiveness extend it to others.
13. The petition *mē eisenegkēs* ('do not bring into, do not lead into') has troubled interpreters: does God tempt people? James 1:13 says God tempts no one. The Greek *peirasmos* can mean 'testing' (from God) or 'temptation' (from evil) — the prayer asks to be spared the crisis of testing that could overwhelm faith. 'The evil one' (*tou ponērou*) can be masculine ('the evil one,' Satan) or neuter ('evil' in the abstract). Given Matthew's usage elsewhere (5:37, 13:19, 38), the personal reading is likely.
13. The doxology 'For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen' does not appear in the earliest manuscripts (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus) and is absent from the SBLGNT critical text. It was likely added in liturgical usage, possibly drawn from 1 Chronicles 29:11. We follow the critical text but note the addition for readers accustomed to the traditional form.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Chronicles 29:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The Greek *paraptōmata* ('trespasses, transgressions, false steps') is a different word from the 'debts' (*opheilēmata*) of verse 12. A *paraptōma* is literally a 'falling aside' — a misstep, a deviation from the right path. Jesus expands on the forgiveness petition from the prayer, making explicit what was implicit: the connection between receiving and extending forgiveness is not optional.
15. The negative counterpart is stated with equal force — refusal to forgive blocks the reception of forgiveness. This is not a transactional formula (forgiving to earn forgiveness) but a statement about the nature of forgiveness itself: a heart that cannot extend mercy has not truly received it. The same principle drives the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35.
16. The Greek *skythrōpoi* ('gloomy, sullen, with a dark look') describes a deliberately mournful appearance. The verb *aphanizousin* ('they disfigure, make unrecognizable, obscure') may refer to putting ash on the face, not washing, or deliberately making oneself look haggard. The ironic wordplay in Greek is between *aphanizousin* ('they make invisible/disfigure') and *phanōsin* ('they may appear/be visible') — they destroy their appearance in order to create an appearance.
17. Anointing the head with olive oil (*aleipsai sou tēn kephalēn*) and washing the face were signs of normal grooming and celebration in Jewish culture. The instruction is to look normal — even festive — while fasting. The fast remains between you and God; others should not be able to detect it from your appearance.

18. The three-part pattern is now complete: giving (vv. 2-4), prayer (vv. 5-6), and fasting (vv. 16-18) each follow the same structure — negative example of hypocrites, positive instruction for disciples, and assurance that the Father who sees in secret will reward. The Greek *kryphaios* ('hidden, secret') is a variant of *kryptos* used in the giving and prayer sections. The SBLGNT again omits *en tō phanerō* ('openly').
19. The Greek *thēsaurizete* ('store up, treasure up') shares the same root as *thēsauros* ('treasures') — a deliberate play on words: 'do not treasure treasures.' The three threats to earthly wealth — moth (*sēs*, which destroys stored garments), decay (*brōsis*, literally 'eating, corrosion,' which ruins stored food or metal), and theft — cover the major categories of ancient wealth: clothing, provisions, and precious metals.
20. Heavenly treasure is defined by its indestructibility — it is beyond the reach of the forces that threaten earthly accumulation. The concept of 'treasures in heaven' was known in Jewish tradition (Tobit 4:9, 2 Baruch 24:1) and refers to the lasting value of righteous deeds, generosity, and faithfulness before God.
21. The singular 'your' (*sou*) makes this directly personal — it applies to each individual listener. The logic is not merely 'your heart follows your treasure' but 'what you treasure reveals and determines who you are.' The heart (*kardia*) in biblical thought is the center of will, desire, and allegiance. Treasure placement is not a financial decision but an identity decision.
22. The Greek *haplous* ('single, simple, healthy, generous') is the key interpretive challenge. In Greek it can mean physically healthy (a 'sound' eye), morally simple/sincere, or generous (as in the closely related noun *haplotēs* in 2 Corinthians 8:2, 9:11). In context — between the teaching on treasure (vv. 19-21) and the warning about mammon (v. 24) — the sense 'generous' is strong. A 'single' eye is one focused on God rather than divided between God and wealth.
23. The Greek *ponēros* ('evil, bad, sick') stands in direct contrast to *haplous*. In Jewish idiom, an 'evil eye' (*ayin ra'ah* in Hebrew) specifically meant stinginess, greed, and envy — the opposite of generosity. The final exclamation is devastating: if the very organ designed to receive light (the eye/heart) has itself become dark, there is no remaining capacity to perceive truth. The corruption of what should be the source of guidance is the ultimate disaster.
24. The Greek *douleuein* ('to serve as a slave') is not casual employment but total allegiance. A slave has one master — divided ownership was legally impossible. The Aramaic *mamōnas* ('money, wealth, material possessions') is transliterated directly into Greek. By placing *mamōnas* alongside *theō* (God) as potential masters, Jesus personifies wealth as a rival deity. The claim is absolute: dual allegiance is structurally impossible, not merely difficult.
25. The Greek *mē merimnate* ('do not worry, do not be anxious') does not prohibit planning or working but the corrosive anxiety that assumes God's provision is unreliable. The word *merimnaō* is from the root *merizō* ('to divide') — anxiety divides the mind and pulls it in opposing directions. The rhetorical question uses an *a fortiori* argument: if God gave you life (the greater gift), will he not also provide food and clothing (the lesser gifts)?
26. The imperative *emblemsate* ('look at, observe carefully') calls for attentive observation of creation as theological evidence. Birds do not engage in the agricultural cycle (sowing, reaping, storing), yet they are fed. The argument is from lesser to greater (*qal wahomer* in rabbinic terms): if God provides for creatures that cannot farm, how much more for humans made in his image? 'Heavenly Father' (*ho patēr hymōn ho ouranios*) reinforces the relational basis of trust.
27. The Greek *hēlikian* can mean either 'stature' (height) or 'life span' (age), and *pēchyn* ('cubit,' about 18 inches) can be literal or metaphorical. If 'stature,' the saying is absurd (a cubit is about 18 inches — no one can grow that much by worrying). If 'life span,' the saying is practical (worry cannot extend life; it may shorten it). Both readings work, but the life span reading fits the context of existential anxiety better.
28. The verb *katamathete* ('learn thoroughly, observe carefully, consider well') is stronger than a casual glance — it means to study the lilies as one would study a text. The Greek *krina* ('lilies') may refer to various wildflowers rather than cultivated lilies specifically. Like the birds, the flowers do not 'labor' (*kopōsin*, hard physical work) or 'spin' (*nēthoustin*, the work of making thread for fabric). Creation itself testifies to God's generous provision.
29. Solomon was proverbially the wealthiest and most magnificently dressed king in Israel's history (1 Kings 10:4-7, 23). The Greek *doxē* ('glory, splendor, magnificence') here refers to his outward splendor. The comparison is deliberately shocking: a wildflower that lives a single day surpasses the greatest human display of wealth. The implication: if God lavishes beauty on temporary flowers, how much more will he provide for his children?
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 10:4-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The Greek *oligopistoi* ('of little faith') is a word characteristic of Matthew (6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8) — it describes not unbelief but insufficient trust in a God one already acknowledges. The *klibanon* ('oven') was a clay baking oven fueled by dried grass and brush. The argument reaches its climax: the most ephemeral thing in creation (grass that exists one day and is fuel the next) receives extravagant beauty from God — how much more will God provide for beings created in his image?
31. The three anxious questions cover the basic necessities: food, drink, and clothing. The subjunctive mood (*phagōmen, piōmen, peribalōmetha*) expresses the anxious deliberation of someone who does not know where their next provision will come from. Jesus does not dismiss the reality of material need but challenges the anxious mindset that treats provision as uncertain.
32. The Greek *ethnē* ('nations, Gentiles') here refers to those who do not know God as Father. The verb *epizētousin* ('eagerly seek, strive after') implies an anxious, driven pursuit. The contrast is sharp: those who do not know God as Father must be anxious about material needs; those who do know him should not be, because he already knows (*oiden*, settled knowledge) their needs. The repetition of 'your heavenly Father' reinforces the relational basis of freedom from anxiety.

33. This verse functions as the climax of the entire 'do not worry' section and arguably of the Sermon on the Mount itself. The imperative *zēteite* ('seek') is present tense — seek continuously, as a way of life. The word *prōton* ('first') establishes priority, not sequence: God's kingdom and righteousness are not the first item on a list but the governing priority that orders everything else. The passive *prostethēsetai* ('will be added, will be provided') is again a divine passive — God will add material provision. Notably, Matthew here uses 'kingdom of God' (*tēn basileian tou theou*) rather than his usual 'kingdom of heaven,' perhaps for emphasis.
34. The personification of 'tomorrow' worrying about itself (*hē aurion merimmēsei heatēs*) adds a touch of wry humor to the teaching. The Greek *kakia* ('trouble, evil, hardship') here means the day's burden of difficulty — not moral evil but the ordinary weight of living. The concluding maxim is proverbial in form: confine your concern to today's challenges. This echoes the 'daily bread' petition of 6:11 — live in daily dependence, not projected anxiety.

7

Summary: *Matthew 7 concludes the Sermon on the Mount with a series of sharply drawn contrasts. Jesus teaches on judging others (7:1-5), warns against giving holy things to those who will desecrate them (7:6), and offers the encouragement of ask/seek/knock (7:7-11). The Golden Rule (7:12) summarizes the entire Law and Prophets. The remainder of the chapter presents four pairs of contrasts — two gates (7:13-14), two kinds of prophets/trees (7:15-20), two kinds of disciples (7:21-23), and two builders (7:24-27). Each pair forces a choice between genuine and counterfeit responses to Jesus's teaching. The Sermon closes with the crowd's astonished reaction: he taught them 'as one having authority, and not as their scribes' (7:28-29).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Sermon on the Mount ends not with comfort but with urgency. The four final contrasts (two gates, two trees, two claims, two builders) all demand decision: hearing the words is not enough — doing them is the dividing line. The saying 'Lord, Lord' passage (7:21-23) is among the most sobering in the Gospels: people who prophesied, cast out demons, and performed miracles in Jesus's name are told 'I never knew you.' The criterion is not spectacular spiritual activity but doing the will of the Father. The Golden Rule (7:12) is presented as the summary of 'the Law and the Prophets' — a staggering claim that the entire Hebrew Scriptures can be distilled into a single principle of other-centered action.*

Translation Friction: *The instruction 'do not give what is holy to dogs' (7:6) is one of the most cryptic sayings in the Sermon, and its precise referent is debated. We render the Greek as given without imposing a specific interpretation. The relationship between 'judging' (7:1) and 'discernment' (7:6, 7:15-20) creates an apparent tension: do not judge, yet evaluate prophets by their fruit. The tension is real and intentional — Jesus prohibits censorious condemnation while requiring moral discernment.*

Connections: *The Golden Rule connects to Leviticus 19:18 ('love your neighbor as yourself') and to Hillel's famous negative formulation. The wise and foolish builders echo Proverbs' contrast between wisdom and folly. The phrase 'I never knew you' connects to the Hebrew concept of knowing (*yada*) as intimate covenant relationship. The crowd's reaction to Jesus's authority (7:28-29) sets up the conflicts with religious authorities that dominate chapters 8-12.*

¹Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is a log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. ⁶Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them underfoot and turn and tear you to pieces. ⁷Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks the door will be opened. ⁹Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! ¹²So whatever you want others to do for you, do the same for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. ¹³Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the road is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter

through it. ¹⁴How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few are those who find it! ¹⁵Watch out for false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruit. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰So then, you will recognize them by their fruit. ²¹Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²²On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.' ²⁴Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and struck that house, and it fell — and great was its collapse. ²⁸When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹Since he instructed them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *krinete* ('judge') covers a range from simple evaluation to legal condemnation. In context, Jesus prohibits the censorious, condemning judgment that appoints oneself as moral arbiter over others — not the moral discernment he commands in verses 6 and 15-20. The passive *krithēte* ('be judged') is a divine passive: God will judge you by the same standard you apply to others. The present imperative *mē krinete* suggests 'stop judging' or 'do not make a habit of judging.'
2. The principle of reciprocal measure was proverbial in Jewish thought (cf. Mishnah Sotah 1:7, 'By the measure with which a person measures, it is measured to him'). The Greek creates an emphatic sound pattern through the repetition of *kri-* and *metr-* roots. The 'measure' (*metrō*) image may come from the marketplace — the same measuring cup you use for others will be used for you.
3. The Greek *karpōs* ('speck, splinter, small piece of straw') versus *dokos* ('beam, log, large piece of timber') creates a comically exaggerated contrast — a person with a construction beam protruding from their eye is attempting delicate surgery on another's minor splinter. The humor carries a serious point: self-awareness must precede correction of others. The verb *katanoēs* ('notice, consider carefully, perceive') implies that the failure to see one's own faults is a willful blindness.
4. The rhetorical question exposes the absurdity of the situation. The Greek *aphes ekbalō* ('allow me to remove') sounds helpful and even caring, but the pretense of assistance while harboring a greater fault is itself a form of hypocrisy. The word *idou* ('look, see') calls attention to the obvious — everyone can see the log except the one carrying it.
5. The address *hypokrita* ('hypocrite, actor') is singular and direct — Jesus confronts the individual. Importantly, Jesus does not prohibit helping the brother with his speck — he insists on proper sequence: self-correction first (*prōton*), then assistance. The verb *diablepseis* ('see clearly, see through') implies that removing one's own log restores the clarity needed to genuinely help another. The passage thus teaches not the avoidance of moral evaluation but its proper practice.
6. This saying is among the most debated in the Sermon. 'Dogs' (*kysin*) and 'pigs' (*choirōn*) were both unclean animals in Jewish law and could function as derogatory terms. 'What is holy' (to *hagion*) may refer to sacred food (meat from the temple sacrifices) and 'pearls' (*margaritas*) to precious spiritual teaching. The saying recognizes that some truths, when offered to those who despise them, result not in gratitude but in violence against the giver. This qualifies the non-judgmental ethic of 7:1 — discernment about when and with whom to share is necessary.
7. The three imperatives — *aiteite* ('ask'), *zēteite* ('seek'), *krouēte* ('knock') — are all present tense, indicating continuous action: keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking. The three verbs may suggest escalating intensity: asking is verbal, seeking involves movement and effort, knocking implies arriving at a specific threshold. Each promise uses a divine passive: it will be given (by God), you will find (because God reveals), it will be opened (by God).
8. The word *pas* ('everyone, all') universalizes the promise — it is not restricted to a spiritual elite. The present tense participles (*aitōn*, *zētōn*, *krouonti*) describe ongoing patterns of life, not isolated incidents. The assurance is grounded not in the intensity of human effort but in the character of the Giver, as verses 9-11 will make clear.
9. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'No one!' The comparison works because round flat bread loaves and certain round stones looked similar — the substitution would be a cruel trick. Jesus argues from common human decency to divine generosity: if even flawed human parents give good things to their children, how much more will God?
10. The parallel intensifies: a snake (*ophin*) could visually resemble certain eels or fish, but the substitution would be dangerous rather than merely disappointing. The fish/snake contrast may also carry symbolic weight — fish were a food staple from the Sea of Galilee, while snakes connote

danger and deception (cf. Genesis 3).

10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The assumption 'you who are evil' (hymeis ponēroi ontes) is startling in its matter-of-fact assessment of human moral condition. Jesus does not soften it — even as sinful people, you manage to give good gifts. The a fortiori argument (posō mallon, 'how much more') reaches its conclusion: God's generosity infinitely surpasses the best of human parenting. Luke's parallel (11:13) specifies that the Father gives 'the Holy Spirit'; Matthew's broader 'good things' (agatha) encompasses all that the Father knows his children need.
12. The Golden Rule summarizes the Sermon and, according to Jesus, the entire Hebrew Scriptures ('the Law and the Prophets,' ho nomos kai hoi prophētai, the same phrase from 5:17). The positive formulation ('do for them') goes beyond the negative form attributed to Hillel ('What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor' — Shabbat 31a). The positive form requires active initiative, not merely restraint. The connective oun ('so, therefore') links this to the entire preceding discourse — the Golden Rule is not isolated wisdom but the practical application of everything Jesus has taught.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 30:15-19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 4:18-19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 21:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The SBLGNT reads ti ('how!') as an exclamation rather than hoti ('because'). The Greek tethlimmenē ('compressed, constricted, pressed, afflicted') is the participle of thlibō, which also means 'to afflict, to oppress' — the narrow road is not merely inconvenient but involves genuine hardship. The destination is zōēn ('life') — not mere survival but the fullness of life in God's kingdom. The word 'find' (heuriskontes) implies that the narrow gate requires searching — it is not self-evident.
15. The Greek pseudoprophētōn ('false prophets') warns that not all who claim to speak for God actually do. The sheep/wolf image is vivid: the exterior is harmless and community-affirming (sheep among sheep), but the interior is predatory (harpages, 'ravenous, greedy, plundering'). The image assumes that false prophets are not easily identified by outward appearance — they blend in. The test for discernment follows in verses 16-20.
16. The Greek karpon ('fruit') is the consistent metaphor for the visible results of a person's character and teaching. The verb epignōsesthe ('you will recognize, you will know fully') is a strengthened form of ginōskō — full, clear recognition over time. The rhetorical questions about grapes from thorns (akanthōn) and figs from thistles (tribolōn) expect the answer 'Of course not!' — nature does not deceive; plants produce according to their kind.
17. The Greek sapron ('rotten, decayed, bad') describes a tree that is diseased at its core — not merely unproductive but fundamentally corrupt. The adjectives agathos ('good') and ponēros ('bad, evil') form a clear moral binary. The principle is straightforward: what you are determines what you produce. Character precedes conduct.
18. The word ou dynatai ('is not able, cannot') states an impossibility, not merely an improbability. This strengthens the diagnostic power of fruit-inspection: the fruit is a reliable indicator because it is an inevitable product of the tree's nature. The chiasmic structure (good tree/bad fruit, bad tree/good fruit) reinforces the point through rhetorical symmetry.
19. This echoes John the Baptist's warning in 3:10 almost verbatim, creating continuity between the forerunner's message and Jesus's teaching. The present tenses ekkoptetai ('is cut down') and balletai ('is thrown') describe a general, ongoing practice — this is how orchards work, and this is how judgment works. The fire (pyr) carries judgment overtones throughout Matthew.
20. The concluding ara ge ('so then, therefore indeed') draws the inference from the entire tree/fruit illustration. The repetition of verse 16a forms an inclusio around the teaching. The verb epignōsesthe ('you will fully recognize') promises that patient observation of results — not first impressions, not claims, not appearances — will reveal the truth about any prophet or teacher.
21. The doubled vocative Kyrie, Kyrie ('Lord, Lord') suggests urgent, fervent address — these are not casual believers but passionate confessors. Yet the criterion for entering the kingdom is not verbal profession but enacted obedience: ho poiōn to thelēma ('the one who does the will'). The phrase 'my Father' (tou patros mou) — Jesus claims a unique filial relationship that distinguishes him from the disciples' 'your Father.' This verse begins the most sobering passage in the Sermon.
22. The phrase 'on that day' (en ekeinē tē hēmera) refers to the day of final judgment. The three activities listed — prophesying, exorcism, and mighty works (dynameis, 'miracles, powerful deeds') — are among the most impressive spiritual accomplishments imaginable. All three are done 'in your

name' (tō sō onomati), repeated three times for emphasis. The shock of the passage is that genuine supernatural activity can coexist with spiritual failure. Jesus here implicitly claims the role of final judge — a divine prerogative.

- 23.** The verb homologēsō ('I will declare, confess, acknowledge publicly') is the same word used elsewhere for public confession of faith — here it is turned to public condemnation. 'I never knew you' (oudepote egnōn hymas) uses ginōskō in the relational sense — not 'I never had information about you' but 'I never had a covenant relationship with you.' This echoes the Hebrew yada, intimate knowing. The Greek anomian ('lawlessness') is literally 'without law' (a-nomia) — a devastating charge in a sermon that has affirmed the Law's permanent validity (5:17-19). The quotation echoes Psalm 6:8.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 6:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** The final parable draws the Sermon's decisive line: hearing (akouei) plus doing (poiei) defines wisdom. 'These words of mine' (mou tous logous toutous) refers to the entire Sermon on the Mount. The Greek phronimō ('wise, prudent, sensible') describes practical wisdom — the ability to make sound decisions. Building on rock (petran) provides a foundation that endures under stress. In the geography of Palestine, sudden flash floods in dry valleys (wadis) are a real and lethal danger.
- 25.** The triple assault — rain (brochē), floods (potamoi, 'rivers, torrents'), and wind (anemoi) — represents comprehensive testing. Every direction of attack is covered: above (rain), below (floods), and sideways (wind). The pluperfect tethemeliōto ('it had been founded, its foundation had been laid') indicates that the foundation was already in place before the storm arrived — preparation precedes crisis. The storm tests what already exists; it does not create the foundation.
- 26.** The Greek mōrō ('foolish, stupid') is the root of English 'moron' — but in biblical wisdom tradition, foolishness is not intellectual deficiency but moral failure, the refusal to live according to reality (cf. Psalm 14:1). The foolish builder hears the same words as the wise builder — the difference is not in access to truth but in response to it. Building on sand (ammon) is building on what shifts and gives way under pressure.
- 26.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 14:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 27.** The storm is identical to verse 25 — both houses face the same test. The difference is entirely in the foundation. The Greek ptōsis ('fall, collapse, ruin') echoes the word used for the moral 'fall' of individuals in the Septuagint. The final phrase kai ēn hē ptōsis autēs megalē ('and great was its collapse') is emphatic in its placement — the sentence ends with the devastating result ringing in the listener's ears. The parable's force is eschatological: the storm represents the final judgment, when every life will be tested.
- 28.** The formula kai egeneto hote etelesen ho Iēsous ('and it happened when Jesus had finished') is Matthew's standard transition at the end of each of his five major discourses (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1). The Greek exoplēssonto ('were astonished, were struck with amazement') is a strong word — literally 'struck out of their senses.' The imperfect tense indicates a continued, lingering amazement rather than a momentary reaction.
- 29.** The Greek exousian ('authority, power, right') distinguishes Jesus from the scribes (grammateis), who taught by citing earlier authorities ('Rabbi Hillel says... Rabbi Shammai says...'). Jesus cited no human authority — his recurring formula 'But I say to you' (5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44) placed his own word alongside and above the Torah itself. The periphrastic construction ēn didaskōn ('he was teaching,' literally 'he was, teaching') emphasizes the ongoing quality and manner of his instruction. The phrase 'their scribes' (hoi grammateis autōn) subtly distances the crowd from the religious establishment.

8

Summary: *Matthew 8 opens a collection of miracle narratives that demonstrate Jesus's authority over disease, nature, and the demonic realm. After descending from the mountain where he delivered the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus heals a leper, a centurion's servant (at a distance), Peter's mother-in-law, and many others. He then calms a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee and casts out demons from two men in the region of the Gadarenes. Interspersed are two brief exchanges about the cost of discipleship.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The centurion episode (vv. 5-13) is remarkable for Jesus's astonishment at a Gentile's faith — greater than any he found in Israel. This leads to the first explicit statement that Gentiles will share in the kingdom of heaven while some 'sons of the kingdom' will be cast out. The healing narratives fulfill Isaiah 53:4, which Matthew quotes in verse 17. The storm-calming episode uses language that echoes God's mastery over chaotic waters in the Old Testament (Psalm 89:9, 107:29). The Gadarene encounter presents Jesus confronting the demonic realm with sovereign authority.*

Translation Friction: The geographic designation varies in manuscripts — 'Gadarenes,' 'Gergesenes,' or 'Gerasenes.' We follow the SBLGNT reading. Matthew has two demoniacs where Mark and Luke have one; we render Matthew's text as given without harmonizing. The phrase 'Son of Man' (huios tou anthropou) is a self-designation of Jesus drawn from Daniel 7:13-14 and rendered with both words capitalized.

Connections: The leper healing connects to Leviticus 14 (purification laws). The centurion narrative anticipates the Great Commission's universal scope (28:19). The Isaiah 53:4 quotation in verse 17 links Jesus's healing ministry to the Servant Songs. The storm scene echoes Jonah 1 (sleeping during a storm) and Psalm 107:23-30. The Gadarene episode anticipates the final confrontation language of Revelation.

¹When he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him. ²Then a man with a skin disease came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." ³Jesus reached out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be made clean." Immediately his skin disease was healed. ⁴Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one, but go show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." ⁵When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, ⁶"Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible suffering." ⁷Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." ⁸The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. ¹¹I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹²However, true children of the reign will be driven out into the darkness outside — where there is sobbing and grinding of teeth. ¹³Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go. Let it be done for you as you have believed." And his servant was healed at that very hour. ¹⁴When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand, and the fever left her. She got up and began serving him. ¹⁶When evening came, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed. He drove out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, ¹⁷That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet and stated, Himself picked up our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. ¹⁸When Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to cross over to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹A scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." ²⁰Jesus said to him, "Foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ²¹Another of his disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ²²But Jesus declared to him, Come with me. And let the dead bury their dead. ²³When he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴Suddenly a great storm arose on the sea, so violent that the boat was being swamped by the waves. But he was sleeping. ²⁵They came and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are going to die!" ²⁶He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷The men were amazed, saying, "What kind of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" ²⁸When he came to the other side, to the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs. They were so violent that no one could pass along that road. ²⁹Suddenly they cried out, "What do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the appointed time?" ³⁰Now some distance away a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹The demons begged him, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." ³²He said to them, "Go." They came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the water. ³³Those who had been tending the pigs fled. They went into the town and reported everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The genitive absolute construction (katabavtos de autou) marks a transition from the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7) to the miracle narratives. 'The mountain' (tou orous) uses the definite article, referring to the specific mountain of the Sermon. The crowds that heard his teaching now witness his authority in action.
2. The Greek leprosy covers a range of skin conditions beyond modern leprosy (Hansen's disease); 'skin disease' captures the broader Greek meaning while 'leprosy' appears in the KJV. The verb prosekynei ('knelt before, worshipped') can indicate either reverence or worship — the ambiguity is

significant. The leper's statement expresses total confidence in Jesus's power ('you can') while deferring to his will ('if you are willing').

3. Physical contact with a person suffering from a skin disease rendered one ritually unclean under Levitical law (Leviticus 13:45-46). Jesus's deliberate touch reverses the expected dynamic — instead of Jesus becoming unclean, the man becomes clean. The aorist passive katharisthēē ('be made clean') is a divine passive, implying God as the agent. The word eutheōs ('immediately') emphasizes the instantaneous nature of the healing.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 13:45-46 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The command to show himself to the priest follows the purification procedure of Leviticus 14:1-32, which required priestly inspection and specific offerings. Jesus upholds the Mosaic law even while demonstrating authority that transcends it. The phrase eis martyriōn autois ('as a testimony to them') is ambiguous — it could mean testimony to the priests that the man is healed, or testimony against them that the Messiah has come.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 14:1-32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The hekatontarchos was a Roman military officer commanding approximately one hundred soldiers. His approach to a Jewish teacher would have been culturally unusual. The participle parakalōn ('pleading, urging') indicates earnest, persistent appeal rather than casual request.
6. The Greek pais can mean 'child,' 'servant,' or 'boy.' In this military context, 'servant' is most likely, though some scholars argue for 'son.' The participle basanizomenos ('being tormented') is a strong word — it denotes severe suffering, not mild illness. The perfect passive bebletai ('has been laid low') indicates an ongoing state of helplessness.
7. Some interpreters read this as a question — 'Shall I come and heal him?' — with emphasis on the pronoun egō ('I myself'), expressing surprise that a Jewish teacher would enter a Gentile's house. The declarative reading is more natural in context and is followed here.
8. The centurion's declaration ouk eimi hikanos ('I am not worthy/sufficient') goes beyond social humility — a Roman officer acknowledging unworthiness before a Jewish teacher inverts every expected power dynamic. His request that Jesus 'just say the word' (monon eipe logō) reveals an understanding of Jesus's authority as operative at a distance, not requiring physical presence. This phrase has entered Christian liturgy in many traditions.
9. The centurion's reasoning is remarkable: because he understands chains of command, he recognizes that Jesus operates under divine authority and can therefore command sickness to depart just as the centurion commands soldiers. The phrase hypo exousias ('under authority') is key — the centurion's power to command others derives from being under authority himself, and he perceives the same structure in Jesus's relationship to God.
10. The verb ethaumasēn ('was amazed, marveled') is striking — it is rarely used of Jesus and indicates genuine astonishment. That a Gentile soldier surpasses all of Israel in faith is a provocative claim that foreshadows the Gospel's movement toward Gentile inclusion. The solemn formula amēn legō hymin ('truly I tell you') marks what follows as a declaration of particular weight.
11. The image of reclining at table (anaklithēsontai) evokes the messianic banquet — an eschatological feast anticipated in Isaiah 25:6-8. 'From east and west' signifies Gentile nations streaming to participate in Israel's covenant blessings. The phrase 'kingdom of heaven' (basileia tōn ouranōn) is Matthew's characteristic expression, using 'heaven' as a reverential circumlocution for God.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 25:6-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The 'sons of the kingdom' (huiōi tēs basileias) refers to those who would expect to inherit it by birthright — Israelites as covenant heirs. The reversal is stark: insiders become outsiders while outsiders enter. 'Outer darkness' (skotos to exōteron) contrasts with the illuminated banquet hall. 'Weeping and gnashing of teeth' (klathmos kai brygmōs tōn odontōn) is a recurring Matthean phrase for eschatological judgment (13:42, 13:50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30).
13. The imperative genēthētō ('let it be done') echoes the divine creative commands of Genesis 1 (genēthētō in the Septuagint). Jesus's word alone accomplishes the healing at a distance, exactly as the centurion had trusted it would. The phrase en tē hōra ekeinē ('at that very hour') confirms the instantaneous, remote healing.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The detail that Peter had a mother-in-law (pentheran) confirms he was married (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:5). The perfect participle beblēmēnē ('having been laid low') indicates she was bedridden. This domestic setting contrasts with the public healings that precede it.
15. The verb diēkonei ('was serving, ministering to') is from the same root as diakonos ('servant, deacon'). Her immediate service demonstrates complete restoration — not a gradual recovery but instant wholeness. Some manuscripts read autō ('him') while others read autois ('them'); the SBLGNT reads autō.
16. Evening (opsias genomenēs) marks the end of the Sabbath, after which people could travel and carry the sick. The phrase logō ('with a word') emphasizes that Jesus needed no rituals, incantations, or physical contact — his spoken command alone was sufficient. The word exebalen ('drove out, cast out') is forceful, depicting a violent expulsion.
17. Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4, but applies it to physical healing rather than the vicarious suffering interpretation more common in later Christian theology. The Greek elaben ('took') and ebastasen ('carried, bore') suggest Jesus personally bore the weight of human illness. This is Matthew's

fourth fulfillment formula, connecting Jesus's healing ministry to the Isaianic Servant.

17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb ekeleusen ('commanded, ordered') is a military term indicating authoritative direction, not a casual suggestion. 'The other side' (to peran) refers to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, predominantly Gentile territory. Jesus moves from Jewish to Gentile space.
19. The scribe addresses Jesus as didaskalos ('teacher'), not kyrios ('Lord') — a respectful but not confessional title. His pledge of unconditional loyalty is enthusiastic but untested. In Matthew's narrative, scribes are generally opponents; this one's offer stands out.
20. This is the first use of 'Son of Man' (ho huios tou anthrōpou) in Matthew. The title draws on Daniel 7:13-14, where 'one like a son of man' receives dominion, glory, and an everlasting kingdom. Jesus uses it to describe himself in radical vulnerability — the one destined for cosmic authority currently has less shelter than wild animals. The phrase ta peteina tou ouranou ('birds of the sky') uses ouranos, the same word translated 'heaven' elsewhere.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 7:13-14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Burying one's father was among the most sacred obligations in Jewish culture, taking precedence over virtually all other commandments. The request is not trivial — it invokes the deepest filial duty. Whether the father has just died or is elderly and the disciple is requesting a delayed commitment is debated; the urgency of Jesus's response suggests the latter.
22. Jesus's response is deliberately shocking. The phrase 'let the dead bury their own dead' uses 'dead' in two senses — the spiritually dead can attend to the physically dead. The demand places discipleship above the most fundamental family obligation, a radical claim that would have been deeply countercultural. The imperative akolouthei ('follow') is present tense, indicating ongoing commitment rather than a single act.
23. The verb akolouthēsān ('followed') is the same word used for discipleship throughout Matthew. Following Jesus into the boat is literal but also symbolic — the disciples follow him into danger and uncertainty.
24. Matthew uses seismos ('shaking, earthquake') rather than the expected lailaps ('storm, squall') that Mark uses. This word choice suggests cosmic upheaval, not merely bad weather — the same word is used for the earthquake at Jesus's death (27:54) and resurrection (28:2). Jesus sleeping through the chaos echoes Jonah 1:5 and contrasts with Psalm 121:4 ('he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep').
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jonah 1:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 121:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The cry sōson ('save') is the verbal form related to the noun sōtēria ('salvation') and the name Iesous ('the LORD saves'). In context it is a desperate plea for physical rescue, but Matthew's reader would hear the deeper resonance. The present tense apollymetha ('we are perishing, being destroyed') conveys ongoing, immediate danger.
26. The word oligopistoi ('you of little faith') is distinctively Matthean (6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8). It does not mean 'no faith' but insufficient, wavering faith. Jesus rebukes the disciples before calming the storm — the sequence is significant. The verb epetimēsen ('rebuked') is the same word used for commanding demons, treating the storm as a hostile force to be subdued. The phrase galēnē megalē ('great calm') mirrors seismos megas ('great storm'), creating a dramatic contrast.
27. The question potapos estin houtos ('what kind of man is this?') is left open — the narrative invites the reader to answer it. In the Old Testament, only God commands the sea (Psalm 89:9, 107:29; Job 38:8-11). The verb hypakouousin ('obey') is a compound of 'hear under' — the winds and sea submit to his authority as subordinates to a commander.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 89:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Job 38:8-11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The SBLGNT reads Gadarēnōn ('Gadarenes'), referring to the territory of Gadara, a city of the Decapolis about six miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Other manuscripts read 'Gergesenes' or 'Gerasenes.' Matthew has two demoniacs where Mark 5:2 and Luke 8:27 have one — this is not harmonized but rendered as Matthew presents it. The tombs (mnēmeiōn) were rock-cut burial caves, considered ritually unclean — the men inhabit a place of death and defilement.
29. The phrase ti hēmīn kai soi ('what to us and to you') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'what business do we have with each other?' The demons address Jesus as 'Son of God' (huie tou theou) — the demonic realm recognizes his identity before most humans do. The phrase pro kairou ('before the time') reveals the demons' awareness of an appointed eschatological judgment, and their alarm that Jesus may be enacting it prematurely.
30. The presence of pigs confirms this is Gentile territory — pigs were unclean animals under Jewish law (Leviticus 11:7) and would not be kept in a Jewish region. The detail serves the narrative but also marks the cultural boundary Jesus has crossed.

30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 11:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The conditional *ei ekballeis* ('if you cast us out') concedes Jesus's authority — the demons do not dispute his power to expel them but negotiate the terms. The verb *parekaloun* ('begged, urged') shows the complete reversal of power — the terrifying demonic forces that controlled two men and terrorized a region now beg for mercy from Jesus.
32. Jesus's single word *hypagete* ('go') is sufficient to command the entire demonic host — the same economy of speech demonstrated in the centurion episode. The verb *hōrmēsen* ('rushed, charged') describes a violent stampede. The destruction of the herd in the sea may echo the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea (Exodus 14-15) — chaotic evil forces destroyed in water.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 14-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The herdsmen's flight (*ephygon*) and subsequent report serve as witnesses to the event. The phrase *ta tōn daimonizomenōn* ('the things concerning the demon-possessed men') indicates they reported the men's liberation as well as the pigs' destruction.
34. The townspeople's response is the opposite of faith — rather than welcoming the one who freed two men from demonic torment, they ask him to leave. The verb *parekalesen* ('begged') is the same word the demons used in verse 31. The irony is pointed: both demons and townspeople want Jesus to go away. Fear of Jesus's disruptive power outweighs gratitude for his liberating power.

9

Summary: *Matthew 9 continues the miracle cycle with the healing of a paralytic (whose sins Jesus forgives first, provoking the scribes), the calling of Matthew the tax collector, debates with the Pharisees over eating with sinners, a question about fasting, the healing of a woman with a hemorrhage, the raising of a ruler's daughter, the healing of two blind men and a mute demoniac, and Jesus's compassion for the crowds described as sheep without a shepherd. The chapter culminates in Jesus's call for laborers for the harvest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The paralytic narrative (vv. 1-8) is the first direct confrontation between Jesus and the religious authorities in Matthew. Jesus's claim to forgive sins provokes the charge of blasphemy — only God can forgive sins. Rather than retreating, Jesus escalates by using the visible miracle to validate the invisible one. The calling of Matthew (v. 9) is notable as the author's own call narrative. The 'new wine in old wineskins' saying (v. 17) signals that Jesus's ministry cannot be contained within existing religious structures.*

Translation Friction: *The ruler (archōn) in verse 18 is not named in Matthew, though Mark 5:22 identifies him as Jairus. We render Matthew's text without importing details from Mark. The interweaving of the hemorrhaging woman's healing within the Jairus narrative is a Markan sandwich that Matthew compresses significantly. The phrase 'Son of David' in verse 27 is a messianic title that the blind men use publicly.*

Connections: *The forgiveness of sins connects to the name 'Jesus' ('the LORD saves... from their sins,' 1:21). The call of Matthew connects to the theme of unexpected people entering the kingdom (8:11). The new wine/wineskins saying anticipates the new covenant theology. The harvest metaphor (vv. 37-38) sets up the mission discourse of chapter 10. The 'sheep without a shepherd' image echoes Numbers 27:17 and Ezekiel 34.*

1He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own town. 2Some people brought to him a paralyzed man lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, child — your sins are forgiven." 3At this, some of the scribes said among themselves, "This man is blaspheming." 4Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you harbor evil in your hearts? 5For which is easier — to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 6But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — then he said to the paralytic — "Get up, pick up your stretcher, and go home." 7He got up and went home. 8When the crowds saw this, they were filled with awe and glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings. 9As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. 10While Jesus was reclining at table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were eating with him and his disciples. 11When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12When he heard this, he said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I did not come to

call the righteous, but sinners." ¹⁴Then the disciples of John came to him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear becomes worse. ¹⁷Nor do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. Instead, they pour new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved." ¹⁸While he was saying these things to them, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died. But come and place your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹Jesus got up and followed him, and so did his disciples. ²⁰Just then a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak. ²¹For she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." ²²Jesus turned and saw her. He said, "Take heart, daughter. Your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed from that moment. ²³When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, ²⁴He stated to them, Give location — for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. Then they laughed him to scorn. ²⁵After the crowd had been sent outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶And the report of this spread throughout that entire region. ²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" ²⁸When he entered the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹Then he touched their eyes, saying, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." ³⁰Their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one finds out about this." ³¹But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that entire region. ³²As they were leaving, a demon-possessed man who was mute was brought to Jesus. ³³After the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowds were amazed, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!" ³⁴But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons." ³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Jesus's 'own town' (tēn idian polin) is Capernaum, his base of operations in Galilee (cf. 4:13), not Nazareth where he grew up. The crossing refers to returning from the eastern (Gentile) shore to the western (Jewish) shore of the Sea of Galilee.
2. Jesus responds to 'their faith' (tēn pistin autōn) — the faith of those carrying the man, not only the paralytic's own faith. The first words are not 'be healed' but 'your sins are forgiven' (aphientai sou hai hamartiai), establishing that forgiveness is the deeper need. The present tense aphientai ('are forgiven') indicates an accomplished reality, not a future hope. The address teknon ('child') is tender, not condescending.
3. The charge of blasphemy (blasphēmei) is technically accurate by their reasoning — forgiving sins is a divine prerogative (Isaiah 43:25, 'I, I am he who blots out your transgressions'). The scribes reason silently (en heautois, 'within themselves'), which sets up Jesus's demonstration of knowing their thoughts.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 43:25 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The verb eidōs ('knowing') implies direct perception, not deduction — Jesus discerns their unspoken thoughts. The word enthymēseis ('thoughts, deliberations') comes from en + thymos ('in the passion/spirit'), suggesting these are not idle thoughts but deeply held convictions. The adjective ponēra ('evil, wicked') is strong — Jesus characterizes their reasoning as morally corrupt, not merely mistaken.
5. The question is rhetorically brilliant. Saying 'your sins are forgiven' is easier because it cannot be visibly verified or disproven; saying 'get up and walk' is harder because failure would be immediately public. Jesus will do the verifiable miracle to validate the unverifiable one.
6. The sentence breaks mid-thought (an anacoluthon): Jesus shifts from addressing the scribes to addressing the paralytic. The claim is staggering — the Son of Man possesses authority (exousian) on earth to forgive sins, which is functionally a claim to exercise divine prerogative. The phrase epi tēs gēs ('on earth') may emphasize that this heavenly authority is now operative in the earthly realm.
7. The brevity is striking — no fanfare, no extended description. The man who was carried in walks out. The simplicity of the Greek mirrors the effortlessness of the miracle.

8. The verb *ephobēthēsan* ('were afraid, were awed') conveys reverential fear, not mere admiration. The crowds glorify God rather than Jesus directly, and attribute the authority 'to human beings' (*tois anthrōpois*, plural) — they see Jesus as a divinely empowered human, not yet grasping the full implications of what they have witnessed. Matthew may intend the plural as a hint toward the church's future authority to pronounce forgiveness (cf. 18:18).
9. The *telōnion* ('tax booth, toll station') was where customs duties were collected, likely on goods passing through Capernaum along trade routes. Tax collectors (*telōnai*) were despised as collaborators with Rome and assumed to be corrupt. Jesus's two-word call (*akolouthei moi*, 'follow me') and Matthew's instant response (*anastas ēkolouthēsen*, 'getting up, he followed') mirror the call of the first disciples (4:18-22). The author's identification of himself as a tax collector is remarkably self-deprecating.
10. Table fellowship in the ancient world was a powerful social act — eating with someone signified acceptance and solidarity. The pairing 'tax collectors and sinners' (*telōnai kai hamartōloi*) was a standard phrase for social outcasts. The verb *synanekeinto* ('were reclining together') indicates a formal meal where diners reclined on couches, not a casual gathering.
11. The Pharisees address the disciples rather than Jesus directly, perhaps intending to undermine their confidence in him. The address 'your teacher' (*ho didaskalos hymōn*) is distancing — they do not call him 'teacher' themselves. Their objection is about ritual purity: eating with sinners could render one ritually contaminated.
12. Jesus overhears the Pharisees and responds directly with a proverbial saying. The metaphor reframes the situation: the Pharisees see sinners as sources of contamination, but Jesus sees them as patients in need of a physician. The implication is that Jesus's presence among sinners is therapeutic, not compromising.
13. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6, a text he will cite again in 12:7. The phrase 'go and learn' (*poreuthentes mathete*) was a standard rabbinic formula used when sending students to study a passage more carefully — Jesus turns the Pharisees' own pedagogical language back on them. The Greek *eleos* ('mercy') translates the Hebrew *chesed* in Hosea 6:6. The SBLGNT does not include 'to repentance' (*eis metanoian*) after 'sinners,' which appears in some later manuscripts; we follow the critical text.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Hosea 6:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The question comes from John the Baptist's disciples, not the Pharisees — an important distinction. John's followers practiced ascetic discipline and would have expected Jesus's movement to do the same. The word *polla* ('often, much') appears in brackets in the SBLGNT, indicating manuscript uncertainty; we include it as it fits the context.
15. The phrase *huiōi tou nymphōnos* ('sons of the bridal chamber') is a Semitic idiom for wedding guests or attendants. Jesus casts himself as the bridegroom — an image rich with Old Testament associations where God is the husband of Israel (Hosea 2:19-20, Isaiah 54:5). The passive *aparthē* ('is taken away') contains a hint of violent removal, foreshadowing Jesus's death. Matthew uses *penthein* ('to mourn') where Mark has *nēsteuein* ('to fast'), linking fasting to grief.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 2:19-20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 54:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The Greek *rhakous agnaphou* ('unshrunk cloth, unprocessed fabric') refers to cloth that has not been fulled or treated. When washed, it would shrink and tear away from the older, already-shrunk fabric. The metaphor is about incompatibility — Jesus's ministry cannot simply be patched onto existing religious frameworks.
17. New wine still fermenting would expand and burst brittle old wineskins (*askous*), but fresh, supple skins could accommodate the expansion. The parallel with verse 16 reinforces the point: Jesus's ministry requires new structures. The word *kainos* ('new, fresh') denotes qualitative newness, not merely chronological newness (*neos*). Matthew adds the note that 'both are preserved' (*amphoterōi syntērountai*), perhaps suggesting that the old is not destroyed but simply cannot contain the new.
18. Matthew uses *archōn* ('ruler, leader') without specifying the type, though the context indicates a synagogue official (Mark 5:22 names him Jairus). Matthew compresses Mark's account dramatically — in Mark, the girl is initially dying and dies during the encounter; in Matthew, she is already dead when the father arrives. The verb *prosekynēi* ('knelt before, worshipped') again carries the ambiguity of reverence or worship. The father's faith is remarkable: he believes Jesus can raise the dead.
19. The verb *ēkolouthēsen* ('followed') is notable when applied to Jesus — throughout Matthew, others follow Jesus. Here Jesus follows the father, indicating willingness to respond to faith-filled requests.
20. The participle *haimorroousa* ('suffering from a flow of blood') indicates a chronic hemorrhagic condition. Under Levitical law (Leviticus 15:25-30), this rendered her perpetually unclean and socially isolated — anyone she touched would also become unclean. The *kraspedon* ('fringe, tassel, border') likely refers to the *tzitzit*, the tassels worn on the corners of a garment in obedience to Numbers 15:38-39. Her approach from behind suggests both reverence and the social shame of her condition.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 15:25-30 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 15:38-39 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The verb *sōthēsomai* ('I will be saved/healed') is the same root as *sōzō* ('to save'), connecting physical healing to the broader salvation vocabulary. Her internal reasoning (*en heautē*) reveals faith: she believes that even indirect, unauthorized contact with Jesus's garment will be sufficient.
22. Jesus addresses her as *thygatēr* ('daughter') — a term of familial affection that publicly restores her to community after twelve years of isolation. The perfect tense *sesōken* ('has saved/healed') indicates a completed action with lasting results. Matthew compresses the account significantly compared to Mark 5:25-34, omitting the crowd dynamics and the woman's trembling confession. The phrase *apo tēs hōras ekeinēs* ('from that hour') echoes 8:13.
23. The *aulētas* ('flute players') were professional mourners hired for funerals. The Mishnah (*Ketubot* 4:4) specifies that even the poorest family should hire at least two flute players and one wailing woman for a funeral. Their presence confirms the girl is genuinely dead, not merely ill.
24. Jesus's statement that the girl 'is sleeping' (*kathendei*) has been interpreted either as a literal claim that she was unconscious (not dead), or as a metaphor for death in light of resurrection (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, John 11:11). The mourners' derisive laughter (*kategelōn*) — they who had just been weeping — suggests they knew she was dead and found his statement absurd.
25. The passive *exelēthē* ('was put out') uses the same verb as casting out demons (*ekballō*), suggesting the mourners were forcibly removed. Matthew's account is remarkably compressed — Mark 5:41 includes Jesus's Aramaic words 'Talitha koum,' which Matthew omits. The verb *ēgerthē* ('she got up/was raised') is the same word used for resurrection throughout the New Testament.
26. The noun *phēmē* ('report, news, fame') indicates that despite Jesus's frequent commands to silence, word spread. The phrase *holēn tēn gēn ekeinēn* ('all that land/region') likely refers to the surrounding area of Galilee, not the entire country.
27. The title 'Son of David' (*huios Daudid*) is a messianic designation — the expected Davidic king was believed to have healing powers (based on traditions about Solomon as healer and exorcist). That blind men recognize Jesus as Messiah while the sighted religious leaders do not is deeply ironic. The verb *eleēson* ('have mercy') is an urgent plea that becomes the basis of the later Christian 'Kyrie eleison' prayer.
28. Jesus delays the healing until they reach the house, testing their persistence and faith. The question *pisteuete* ('do you believe?') makes explicit what was implicit in the centurion and hemorrhaging woman episodes — faith is the prerequisite. Their simple affirmation *nai kyrie* ('yes, Lord') combines belief in Jesus's ability with acknowledgment of his authority.
29. The phrase *kata tēn pistin hymōn genēthētō hymin* ('let it be done for you according to your faith') echoes the centurion episode (8:13). The imperative *genēthētō* again recalls the creative commands of Genesis. Jesus's healings are not arbitrary displays of power but responses to faith.
30. The verb *enebrimēthē* ('sternly warned, was deeply moved/angered') is an intense word — it conveys emotional force, perhaps even agitation. The command to secrecy (the 'messianic secret') appears throughout the Gospels. Jesus's reasons may include avoiding premature political messianic fervor and maintaining control over his public identity.
31. The verb *diēphēmisan* ('spread the news, made widely known') is emphatic — they did precisely what Jesus told them not to do. Their disobedience is understandable (they can now see) but complicates Jesus's ministry by increasing crowds and public expectations.
32. The adjective *kōphon* can mean 'mute,' 'deaf,' or both. In this context, where the man speaks after the demon is expelled (v. 33), 'mute' is the primary meaning. The man is brought by others — his condition prevents him from seeking Jesus himself.
33. The crowd's declaration *oudepote ephanē houtōs en tō Israēl* ('never has such a thing appeared in Israel') is a superlative claim — not even the prophets or Moses performed such acts. This sets up the Pharisees' counter-interpretation in the next verse.
34. The Pharisees attribute Jesus's power to the *archonti tōn daimoniōn* ('the ruler of the demons') — later identified as Beelzebul (12:24). Unable to deny the miracles, they reinterpret their source. This accusation will receive a full rebuttal in chapter 12. The same evidence (exorcism) produces opposite conclusions depending on the observer's posture toward Jesus.
35. This summary verse nearly duplicates 4:23, creating an *inclusio* that frames the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7) and miracle cycle (chs. 8-9) as a unified demonstration of Jesus's ministry. The three activities — teaching, proclaiming, healing — represent the fullness of his work. The phrase to *euangelion tēs basileias* ('the good news of the kingdom') is distinctively Matthean.
36. The verb *esplanchnisthē* ('was moved with compassion') derives from *splanchna* ('entrails, inner organs') — it describes a visceral, gut-level emotional response, the deepest compassion possible. The participles *eskulmenoi* ('harassed, troubled, weary') and *errimmenoi* ('thrown down, helpless, cast aside') paint a picture of a people battered and abandoned. The shepherd image echoes Numbers 27:17, where Moses asks God to appoint a leader so Israel will not be 'like sheep without a shepherd,' and Ezekiel 34, where God condemns Israel's failed shepherds.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 27:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. The metaphor shifts from shepherding to harvesting. The harvest (*therismos*) is an eschatological image — the gathering of people into God's kingdom. The contrast between 'plentiful' (*polys*) and 'few' (*oligoi*) creates urgency. Jesus sees the crowds not as a burden but as a ripe harvest

awaiting workers.

38. The verb *ekbalē* ('send out, thrust out') is surprisingly strong — the same word used for casting out demons. God does not gently invite workers; he thrusts them out into the harvest. The 'Lord of the harvest' (*tou kyriou tou therismou*) is God, who owns the harvest and dispatches the laborers. This prayer request immediately precedes chapter 10, where Jesus himself sends out the Twelve — the prayer is answered in the next scene.

10

Summary: *Matthew 10 records Jesus's commissioning of the twelve apostles for their first mission. He names all twelve, instructs them to go only to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' grants them authority over demons and diseases, gives detailed instructions about provisions, hospitality, and persecution, warns that following him will bring division — even within families — and concludes with promises of reward for those who receive them. This is the second of Matthew's five major discourses.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The discourse moves seamlessly from the immediate Galilean mission to language about persecution before governors and kings (v. 18), the coming of the Son of Man (v. 23), and being acknowledged before the Father in heaven (v. 32-33). This telescoping suggests Matthew compiled sayings from different occasions into a single discourse. The repeated command 'do not fear' (vv. 26, 28, 31) structures the middle section. The radical claim that Jesus brings 'not peace but a sword' (v. 34) and the demand to love him above family (v. 37) represent some of the most challenging statements in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *The restriction to Israel (vv. 5-6) stands in tension with the Great Commission's universal scope (28:19). We render the text as given, noting the narrative development. The list of apostles varies slightly across the Gospels in name order and in some cases name forms. We follow the SBLGNT text. The phrase 'Son of Man' is capitalized as a title throughout.*

Connections: *The mission charge echoes Moses commissioning Joshua and Elijah commissioning Elisha. The 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' language connects to Ezekiel 34 and Jesus's shepherd compassion in 9:36. The warnings about persecution anticipate the Olivet Discourse (ch. 24-25). The family division sayings echo Micah 7:6, which Jesus explicitly quotes. The promise about sparrows and numbered hairs (vv. 29-31) connects to God's providential care throughout the Old Testament.*

¹He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to drive them out and to heal every disease and every sickness. ²Now the names of the twelve messengers are these. The foremost, Simon, who is known as Peter, and Andrew his brother. James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. ⁵Jesus sent out these twelve, instructing them: "Do not go on the road to the Gentiles, and do not enter any town of the Samaritans, ⁶However, go rather to the lost sheep of the home of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, drive out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. ⁹Do not acquire gold or silver or copper for your money belts, ¹⁰Nor scrip since your journey, and not two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves — for the workman is worthy of his meat. ¹¹Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³If the house is worthy, let your peace rest on it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴If anyone does not receive you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. ¹⁶Look, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷Be on guard against people, for they will hand you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues. ¹⁸You will be brought before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say, for what you are to say will be given to you at that time. ²⁰For it is not you who are speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise up against parents and

have them put to death. ²²You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next. For truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. ²⁴A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a servant above the master. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple to become like the teacher, and the servant like the master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! ²⁶So do not be afraid of them. For there is nothing covered that will not be uncovered, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰Even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows. ³²Therefore everyone who acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. ³³But whoever denies me before others, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven. ³⁴Do not think that I came to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I came to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶A person's enemies will be members of his own household. ³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ⁴⁰Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous person because he is righteous will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴²And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple — truly I tell you, that person will by no means lose his reward."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *proskalesamenos* ('having summoned') indicates a formal calling together, not a casual gathering. The authority (exousian) Jesus delegates is the same authority he himself exercises in chapters 8-9. The phrase *pneumatōn akathartōn* ('unclean spirits') echoes the Old Testament purity language — these spirits make people ritually and morally defiled.
2. This is the only place Matthew uses the term *apostolōn* ('apostles,' literally 'sent ones'). The designation *prōtos* ('first') for Simon Peter indicates rank, not merely sequence — Peter consistently holds primacy in all apostolic lists. The pairs reflect the calling narratives of 4:18-22.
3. Matthew identifies himself as 'the tax collector' (*ho telōnēs*) — a self-deprecating label that no one else in the list receives. The SBLGNT reads *Thaddaios* where the KJV has 'Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.' Luke's list has 'Judas the son of James' in this position, possibly the same person under a different name.
4. The term *Kananaios* is not 'Canaanite' (an ethnic designation) but an Aramaic equivalent of *zēlōtēs* ('zealot'), indicating either membership in the Zealot movement or zealous temperament. Rendering as 'the Zealot' follows Luke 6:15 and clarifies the meaning. Judas is listed last with the damning participle *paradous* ('the one who handed over, betrayed'). The name *Iskariōtēs* may derive from Hebrew *ish-Kerioth* ('man of Kerioth'), a town in Judea.
5. The restriction *eis hodon ethnōn* ('onto a road of Gentiles') limits the mission to Jewish territory. This is not ethnic prejudice but strategic priority — the message goes 'to the Jew first' (cf. Romans 1:16). The separate mention of Samaritans acknowledges their intermediate status, neither fully Jewish nor Gentile. This restriction is explicitly lifted in the Great Commission (28:19).
6. The phrase *ta probata ta apolōlota* ('the lost sheep') echoes Ezekiel 34:4-6, where God condemns Israel's leaders for failing to seek the lost, scattered sheep. Jesus sends his disciples to do what Israel's shepherds failed to do. The genitive *oikou Israēl* ('of the house of Israel') limits the scope but the compassion language is universal.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 34:4-6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The disciples' message is identical to John the Baptist's (3:2) and Jesus's own (4:17): *ēggiken hē basileia tōn ouranōn*. The perfect tense *ēggiken* indicates that the kingdom has drawn near and remains near — it is not merely approaching but arriving. The verb *kēryssete* ('proclaim') denotes public, authoritative announcement.
8. The four commands mirror Jesus's own miracle types from chapters 8-9. The phrase *dōrean elabete, dōrean dote* ('freely you received, freely give') establishes the principle of gratuitous ministry — the grace they have received must be passed on without charge. The word *dōrean* means 'as a gift, without cost,' from the same root as *dōron* ('gift').

9. The three metals — gold (chryson), silver (argyron), copper (chalkon) — represent a descending scale of value, emphasizing total financial dependence. The zōnas ('belts, girdles') had folds used as purses. The verb ktēsēthe ('acquire, obtain') prohibits accumulating resources for the journey.
10. The pēran ('bag, knapsack') was a traveler's provision bag. The prohibition of extra clothing and a staff forces radical dependence on hospitality. The principle axios gar ho ergatēs tēs trophēs autou ('the worker deserves his food') is quoted by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18. The logic: they should not stockpile because the communities they serve are obligated to support them.
11. The verb exetasate ('find out, inquire carefully') implies a deliberate search for a reputable host. 'Worthy' (axios) here means receptive to the message. The instruction to stay in one house (rather than moving to better accommodations) prevents the appearance of opportunism.
12. The greeting (aspasasthe) would have been the standard Jewish blessing of peace — 'Shalom aleichem' ('peace be upon you'). The command to greet 'the house' (tēn oikian) rather than 'the household' treats the home as a unit that receives or rejects the blessing.
13. The 'peace' (eirēnē, corresponding to Hebrew shalom) is treated as a substantial reality that can be bestowed, rest upon a place, or be recalled — not merely a polite wish. The concept of blessing as a tangible force that can be directed and returned reflects the Hebrew understanding of the power of spoken words.
14. Shaking dust from the feet (ektinaxate ton koniorton tōn podōn) was a gesture Jews performed when leaving Gentile territory, symbolically removing pagan contamination. Applied to Jewish towns that reject the message, it declares those towns equivalent to pagan lands — a shocking symbolic act.
15. Sodom and Gomorrah were the ultimate biblical symbols of divine judgment (Genesis 19). Jesus's comparison is deliberately extreme — towns that reject the gospel message face a more severe accounting than those cities destroyed by fire, because they have received a greater revelation and refused it.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The combination of animal metaphors is deliberately paradoxical — sheep (vulnerable), wolves (predatory), serpents (cunning), doves (gentle). The word phronimoi ('shrewd, wise, prudent') carries positive connotations of practical wisdom, not deception. The word akeraioi ('innocent, pure, unmixed') literally means 'unmixed' — without admixture of evil. The disciples need both qualities simultaneously.
17. The synedria ('councils, courts') refers to local Jewish judicial bodies. The verb mastigōsousin ('will flog') refers to the synagogue punishment of lashing (up to thirty-nine strokes, cf. 2 Corinthians 11:24). The phrase 'their synagogues' (tais synagōgais autōn) suggests a growing separation between Jesus's movement and the synagogue — language that may reflect Matthew's own community situation.
18. The scope expands beyond the immediate mission to encompass Roman governors (hēgemonas) and kings (basileis), anticipating Paul's trials and the broader post-resurrection mission. The phrase eis martyrion ('as a testimony') could mean 'testimony to' (evangelistic opportunity) or 'testimony against' (judicial evidence). The ambiguity is preserved.
19. The verb merimnēsēte ('worry, be anxious') is the same word Jesus used in the Sermon on the Mount (6:25-34). The divine passive dothēsetai ('will be given') indicates God as the source of their words. This is not a promise about improvisation but about divine provision under pressure.
20. The phrase to pneuma tou patros hymōn ('the Spirit of your Father') is distinctively Matthean — Mark 13:11 has 'the Holy Spirit.' Matthew's formulation emphasizes the familial relationship: the Spirit who empowers their testimony belongs to the Father who cares for them.
21. The escalation from religious persecution (vv. 17-18) to family betrayal is jarring. The verb paradōsei ('will hand over, betray') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal of Jesus. The family breakdown described here echoes Micah 7:6, which Jesus will quote explicitly in verse 35-36.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 7:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The phrase dia to onoma mou ('because of my name') indicates that persecution comes specifically from identification with Jesus — his name is the cause. The promise ho de hypomeinas eis telos sōthēsetai ('the one who endures to the end will be saved') uses the verb hypomenō, which means to remain under pressure rather than flee from it. Salvation is promised not to those who escape suffering but to those who persist through it.
23. This is one of the most debated verses in Matthew. The statement ou mē telesēte tas poleis tou Israēl ('you will not finish the cities of Israel') before the Son of Man comes has been interpreted variously: as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, to the transfiguration, to the resurrection, to the ongoing mission of the church, or to the second coming. The double negative ou mē with the subjunctive is the strongest form of negation in Greek. We render the text without imposing a specific interpretation.
24. This proverb establishes the principle that disciples should expect no better treatment than their teacher received. The parallel structure mathētēs/didaskalon and doulos/kyrion reinforces the point. If Jesus himself faces rejection and persecution, his followers cannot expect exemption.
25. The argument moves from principle to application: if they called Jesus 'Beelzebul' (the accusation noted in 9:34 and expanded in 12:24), his disciples will receive worse. The name Beelzebul likely derives from Hebrew ba'al zevul ('lord of the dwelling') — a mocking name for the prince of demons. The wordplay is rich: the oikodespotēs ('master of the house') is called 'lord of the dwelling' (Beelzebul), and his oikiakoi ('household members') share his reputation.

- 26.** The first of three 'do not fear' commands (vv. 26, 28, 31) that structure this section. The promise that all hidden things will be revealed (apokalyphthēsetai, from which 'apocalypse' derives) reassures persecuted disciples that the truth about their faithfulness and their persecutors' injustice will ultimately be exposed.
- 27.** The contrast between private instruction ('in the dark,' 'whispered into the ear') and public proclamation ('in the light,' 'from the housetops') indicates that Jesus's private teaching to the disciples is meant for public dissemination. The flat rooftops of Palestinian houses served as gathering places and announcement platforms.
- 28.** The second 'do not fear' command. The distinction between sōma ('body') and psychē ('soul') here reflects the belief that human identity has a dimension that persecutors cannot reach. Geenna (Gehenna) refers to the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, which had associations with child sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10) and became a symbol of divine judgment. We transliterate 'Gehenna' rather than using the interpretive 'hell' to preserve the specific geographic and theological reference.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 23:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The assarion was a Roman copper coin worth about one-sixteenth of a denarius — the cheapest available currency. Sparrows (strouthia) were the least valuable birds sold in the market. The phrase aneu tou patros hymōn ('apart from your Father') is striking in its brevity — it does not say 'without your Father's knowledge' or 'permission' but simply 'apart from your Father,' implying total divine involvement in even the most insignificant events.
- 30.** The perfect passive ērithmēmenai ('having been counted') indicates a completed action — God has already counted every hair. The argument moves from lesser to greater: if God attends to sparrows (nearly worthless) and to hairs (individually insignificant), how much more to the whole person.
- 31.** The third and climactic 'do not fear' command. The verb diapherete ('are worth more, surpass, differ from') establishes the basis for courage: the disciples' value to God exceeds that of the sparrows he already attends to.
- 32.** The verb homologēsō ('will acknowledge, confess') means to publicly declare allegiance. The phrase en emoi ('in me') suggests more than verbal acknowledgment — it implies union with Jesus. Jesus claims to serve as advocate or witness before the Father, placing himself in a role of cosmic juridical authority.
- 33.** The verb arnēsētai ('denies, disowns') is the opposite of homologeō. The parallel structure creates a solemn either/or with no middle ground. This saying gains poignancy in light of Peter's later denial (26:69-75) and subsequent restoration.
- 34.** The verb balein ('to throw, cast') is more forceful than 'send' — Jesus throws down a sword, not peace. The machairan ('sword') here is not literal military violence but a metaphor for the division his message creates. The statement is deliberately provocative, contradicting expectations of the Messiah as a prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus describes the effect of his mission: allegiance to him will cut through existing social bonds.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 9:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The verb dichasai ('to divide, to turn against') describes Jesus's purpose in terms that echo Micah 7:6. The list moves through three family pairs, each representing a generational division. These are the closest family bonds in ancient Near Eastern culture — their rupture represents the most radical possible social disruption.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Micah 7:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** This is a direct quotation of Micah 7:6 (LXX). In Micah, the passage describes the social breakdown of Judah before divine restoration. Jesus applies it to the effect of his own mission — loyalty to him will create enmity within families. The word oikiakoi ('household members') connects to the oikodespotēs ('head of the house') language in verse 25.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 7:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 37.** The verb philōn ('loving') here denotes natural family affection. Jesus does not prohibit loving family but demands that loyalty to him take precedence over the deepest human bonds. The repeated phrase ouk estin mou axios ('is not worthy of me') frames the demand as a question of worthiness for discipleship. Luke's parallel (14:26) uses the stronger 'hate' (miseō); Matthew's 'more than me' (hyper eme) may soften the expression.
- 38.** This is the first mention of the cross (stauron) in Matthew's Gospel. For Jesus's original audience, crucifixion was a Roman method of executing slaves, rebels, and non-citizens — the most shameful death imaginable. The condemned person carried the crossbeam (patibulum) to the execution site. The metaphor means accepting suffering, shame, and potentially death as the cost of following Jesus.
- 39.** The word psychē ('soul, life, self') means both physical life and one's total existence/identity. The paradox operates on both levels: clinging to self-preservation leads to ultimate loss, while surrendering life for Jesus's sake leads to ultimate gain. The phrase heneken emou ('for my sake') is the distinguishing factor — not all loss is redemptive, only loss incurred through loyalty to Jesus.
- 40.** The chain of reception — disciples, Jesus, the Father — establishes the principle of agency: to receive the messenger is to receive the sender. This concept is rooted in the Jewish shaliah principle, where an authorized agent carries the full authority of the one who sends him. The verb dechomenos ('receives, welcomes') implies hospitality and acceptance of both person and message.

41. The phrase *eis onoma prophētou* ('in the name of a prophet') means 'because of his identity as a prophet' — the host shares in the reward because the hospitality is an act of faith in the prophet's mission. The principle extends to righteous people generally. Reward (*misthon*) in Matthew's Gospel is not wage-earning but gracious divine recompense.
42. The climax moves from prophets to righteous people to 'little ones' (*mikrōn*, the least and most vulnerable). The gift is reduced to its minimum — a cup of cold water (*potērion psychrou*) — yet even this smallest act of kindness to a disciple will be rewarded. The double negative *ou mē* ('by no means') provides emphatic assurance. The phrase 'these little ones' anticipates 18:6, 10, 14, where it becomes a major theme.

11

Summary: Matthew 11 marks a turning point in the Gospel. John the Baptist, now imprisoned, sends disciples to ask whether Jesus is 'the one who is to come.' Jesus responds by pointing to his deeds, then delivers a eulogy for John as the greatest born of women yet less than the least in the kingdom of heaven. He denounces the unrepentant cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, then delivers one of the most intimate prayers in the Gospels, thanking the Father for revealing truth to 'little children' rather than the wise. The chapter climaxes with the great invitation: 'Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.'

What Makes This Remarkable: John's question from prison (v. 3) is striking — the one who declared Jesus the 'Lamb of God' now appears to doubt. Jesus's response does not rebuke but redirects: look at the evidence. The woe oracles against Galilean cities (vv. 20-24) are shocking because these are Jewish cities that witnessed Jesus's miracles firsthand. The mutual knowledge between Father and Son (v. 27) is one of the highest christological statements in the Synoptic Gospels, approaching Johannine theology. The invitation of vv. 28-30 uses the metaphor of a yoke — a rabbinic term for Torah obedience — and claims that Jesus's yoke is easy and his burden light.

*Translation Friction: The phrase 'the kingdom of heaven suffers violence' (v. 12) is notoriously difficult in Greek. The verb *biazetai* could be passive ('is being violently attacked') or middle ('is forcefully advancing'), and *biastai* ('violent ones') could be opponents who attack or passionate seekers who seize it. We render the ambiguity and note the options. The citation of Isaiah in vv. 4-5 is a composite from multiple passages.*

Connections: John's question connects to his announcement in 3:11-12. The works Jesus cites (vv. 4-5) echo Isaiah 35:5-6, 61:1. The judgment on cities connects to the Sodom and Gomorrah language of 10:15. The Father-Son revelation passage (v. 27) anticipates the Great Commission's 'all authority' (28:18). The yoke invitation echoes Sirach 51:23-27 and reinterprets the Wisdom tradition.

¹When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their towns. ²When John heard in prison about the works of the Christ, he sent word through his disciples ³Stated to him, Art you he that should come, or do we look for another? ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with skin diseases are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news proclaimed to them. ⁶And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." ⁷As they were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? Look, those who wear fine clothes are found in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you — and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written: 'Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared. Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people are seizing it. ¹³For every one of the prophets and the law prophesied until John. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵Whoever has ears, let them hear. ¹⁶To what should I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: ¹⁷'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a funeral song, and you did not mourn.' ¹⁸He has a devil, for John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say. ¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." ²⁰Then he began to denounce the towns where most of his miracles had been performed, because

they did not repent: ²¹"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum — will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the miracles performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴But I tell you, it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you." ²⁵At that time Jesus declared, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, for this was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰My yoke is not heavy, and what I ask you to carry is light.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The formula *kai egeneto hote etelesen* ('and it happened when he finished') is one of Matthew's five discourse-ending formulas (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1), structuring the Gospel around five major teaching blocks. The phrase *en tais poleisin autōn* ('in their towns') is ambiguous — 'their' could refer to the disciples' towns or the people's towns. We follow the more natural reading of the surrounding towns.
2. Matthew refers to *ta erga tou Christou* ('the works of the Christ'), using the title with the article — 'the Christ,' the Messiah. John is in prison (*desmōtēriō*) under Herod Antipas, as explained later in 14:3-12. That John hears about Jesus's works but sends to question him suggests a gap between what he expected of the Messiah and what Jesus is doing.
3. The title *ho erchomenos* ('the coming one') is a messianic designation drawn from Psalm 118:26 ('Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD') and Malachi 3:1. The question is not necessarily about doubt in Jesus's identity but possibly about the nature of his messiahship — John expected a figure who would baptize 'with fire' and judgment (3:11-12), but Jesus's ministry has been characterized by compassion and healing.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 118:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Malachi 3:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Jesus does not give a direct yes or no but points to evidence — his deeds speak for themselves. The verbs *akouete kai blepete* ('you hear and see') are present tense, directing them to what is happening right now around them.
5. This list combines Isaiah 35:5-6 (blind, deaf, lame) with Isaiah 61:1 (good news to the poor) and adds lepers and the dead. Each item corresponds to miracles already narrated in Matthew 8-9. The final item — *ptōchoi euaggelizontai* ('the poor are evangelized') — is climactic: the ultimate messianic sign is not spectacular power but that the marginalized receive God's message.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 35:5-6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 61:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *skandalisthē* ('is caused to stumble, is offended') carries the sense of a trap or snare — something that causes one to trip and fall away from faith. The gentle warning is directed at John: blessed is the person who can accept a Messiah who does not match expectations. The beatitude form (*makarios*, 'blessed') echoes the Sermon on the Mount.
7. Jesus defends John's significance with three rhetorical questions (vv. 7-9). The 'reed shaken by the wind' (*kalamon hypo anemou saleuomenon*) may be a political reference — Herod Antipas used a reed as his symbol on coins minted at his capital Tiberias. If so, Jesus is asking: did you go to see someone who bends to Herod's authority? The answer is clearly no.
8. The contrast between John's rough desert existence and the luxury of royal courts is pointed. The word *malakois* ('soft things') refers to expensive, luxurious garments. The implicit comparison with Herod's court — where John is now imprisoned — carries ironic force.
9. The third question answers itself and escalates: John is not merely a prophet but *perissoteron prophētou* ('more than a prophet'). The comparative form sets John above the entire prophetic tradition. What makes him 'more' is explained in the next verse.
10. The quotation combines Exodus 23:20 and Malachi 3:1, with a significant modification: Malachi's 'before me' becomes 'before you,' making Jesus the one whose way is prepared. The word *aggelon* ('messenger') is the same word translated 'angel' in other contexts. John is God's messenger who prepares the way for the Lord's arrival — a role that exceeds ordinary prophetic function.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Malachi 3:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

- 10.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 23:20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 11.** The phrase *en gennētois gynaikōn* ('among those born of women') encompasses all humanity. The paradox is sharp: John is the greatest human who ever lived, yet the least person in the kingdom of heaven surpasses him. This is not a diminishment of John but an elevation of the kingdom — the new era Jesus inaugurates transcends even the greatest achievements of the old. The comparative *mikroteros* ('lesser, least') could also be translated 'the younger one,' possibly referring to Jesus himself.
- 12.** This is one of the most disputed verses in the New Testament. The verb *biazetai* can be middle voice ('is forcefully advancing') or passive ('is being violently attacked'). The *biastai* ('violent ones') can be positive (passionate seekers who forcefully lay hold of the kingdom) or negative (opponents who assault it). The passive/negative reading is adopted here because it fits the context of John's imprisonment and the opposition Jesus faces, but the alternative reading is well attested. Luke 16:16 has a clearly positive version: 'everyone forces their way into it.'
- 13.** The unusual order 'the Prophets and the Law' (rather than the standard 'Law and Prophets') may emphasize the prophetic, forward-looking character of the entire Old Testament. The statement that prophecy extended 'until John' (*heōs Iōannou*) positions John at the hinge between the old era and the new — he is both the last of the old prophets and the first voice of the new age.
- 14.** The identification of John with Elijah fulfills Malachi 4:5 ('I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD'). The qualification *ei thelete dexasthai* ('if you are willing to accept it') acknowledges that this identification requires faith — it is not self-evident. Jesus does not mean that John is literally Elijah reincarnated but that he fulfills Elijah's prophetic role.
- 14.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 4:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 15.** This refrain (repeated in 13:9, 43) signals that what has just been said requires spiritual perception, not merely physical hearing. The distinction between hearing sound and understanding meaning runs throughout Jesus's teaching.
- 16.** Jesus introduces a parable comparing 'this generation' (*tēn genean tautēn*) — a term of disapproval throughout Matthew — to petulant children in the marketplace. The agora was the town square where children would play. The image is of children who refuse to participate in any game their peers suggest.
- 17.** The children's complaint describes two games refused: a wedding game (flute playing, dancing) and a funeral game (mourning songs, beating the breast). The point is that 'this generation' refuses to respond no matter what approach is used — they are determined not to participate.
- 18.** John's ascetic lifestyle (fasting, desert living, restricted diet) is dismissed as demonic possession rather than recognized as prophetic discipline. The phrase *mēte esthiōn mēte pinōn* ('neither eating nor drinking') is hyperbolic — he ate and drank but not in normal social settings.
- 19.** Jesus's social engagement at meals (eating and drinking) is dismissed as excess — the opposite accusation from that leveled at John. The terms *phagos* ('glutton') and *oinopotēs* ('drunkard') echo Deuteronomy 21:20, the charge against a rebellious son worthy of death. The closing proverb *edikaiōthē hē sophia apo tōn ergōn autēs* ('wisdom is vindicated by her deeds') personifies wisdom (as in Proverbs 8) and suggests that the results of both John's and Jesus's ministries will ultimately prove them right. The SBLGNT reads 'deeds' (*ergōn*) where Luke 7:35 has 'children' (*teknōn*).
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Proverbs 8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 20.** The verb *oneidizein* ('to reproach, denounce') is strong language — public shaming. The noun *dynameis* ('mighty works, miracles') refers to the healings and exorcisms of chapters 8-9. The cause of the denunciation is not that they rejected his miracles but that they failed to repent (*metanoēsan*) — the miracles were intended to produce a turning of heart and life.
- 21.** The woe oracle (*ouai*) is a prophetic form of lament-judgment found throughout the Old Testament prophets. Chorazin and Bethsaida are Galilean towns near Capernaum. Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician coastal cities that the prophets condemned for pride and wickedness (Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 26-28). Jesus's comparison is devastating: pagan cities would have responded more faithfully than these Jewish towns.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 26-28. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The comparative *anektoteron* ('more bearable, more tolerable') implies degrees of judgment — greater privilege brings greater accountability. The 'day of judgment' (*hēmera kriseōs*) is the eschatological reckoning.
- 23.** Capernaum, Jesus's own base of operations, receives the harshest judgment. The language echoes Isaiah 14:13-15, originally addressed to the king of Babylon. The contrast between heaven (*ouranon*) and Hades (*hadou*) represents the extremes of exaltation and humiliation. Hades (*hadēs*) is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew *Sheol*, the realm of the dead — not 'hell' in the later Christian sense but the place of departed spirits. The claim about Sodom — the most judged city in biblical history — surpasses even the Tyre/Sidon comparison.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 14:13-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

24. The progression Tyre/Sidon (v. 22) to Sodom (v. 24) intensifies the judgment — each comparison city is more notorious than the last. Capernaum's judgment exceeds even Sodom's because its privilege was greater.
25. The verb *exomologoumai* ('I praise, I thank, I confess') introduces a prayer of startling intimacy after the preceding judgment oracles. Jesus addresses God as *pater* ('Father') and *kyrie tou ouranou kai tēs gēs* ('Lord of heaven and earth'). The paradox is that divine revelation bypasses the *sophōn kai synetōn* ('wise and intelligent') — those with religious expertise — and is given to *nēpiois* ('infants, little children') — those without status or credentials. This is not anti-intellectualism but a statement about the posture required to receive revelation.
26. The phrase *eudokia egeneto emprosthen sou* ('it was well-pleasing before you') is a Semitic construction meaning 'this was your deliberate, delighted purpose.' The word *eudokia* ('good pleasure, gracious will') indicates not arbitrary choice but purposeful delight. Jesus affirms the Father's sovereign decision as both right and good.
27. This verse is often called 'a bolt from the Johannine blue' because its mutual knowledge language (the Father knows the Son, the Son knows the Father) resembles the Fourth Gospel more than the Synoptics. The verb *epiginōskei* ('knows fully, recognizes deeply') indicates intimate, relational knowledge, not mere intellectual awareness. The claim that all things (*panta*) have been delivered to Jesus by the Father anticipates 28:18 ('all authority'). The Son's role as sole revealer of the Father places him in a position of unique mediatorial authority.
28. This invitation is one of the most beloved passages in the New Testament. The participle *kopiōntes* ('laboring, toiling to exhaustion') and the perfect participle *pephortismenoi* ('having been loaded down, burdened') describe people crushed under weight — likely the burden of religious obligation as enforced by the scribes and Pharisees (cf. 23:4). The promise *anapausō hymas* ('I will give you rest') echoes God's promise of rest in Exodus 33:14 and the Sabbath rest of creation. Jesus offers himself — not a system, not a set of rules — as the source of rest.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 33:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The 'yoke' (*zygon*) was a standard rabbinic metaphor for Torah obedience — students were said to 'take upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom of heaven' and 'the yoke of the commandments.' Jesus does not abolish the yoke but offers his own yoke as a replacement. The self-description *praus eimi kai tapeinos tē kardia* ('I am gentle and humble in heart') echoes the meekness beatitude (5:5) and the prophecy of the humble king in Zechariah 9:9 (quoted in 21:5). The phrase *anapausin tais psychais hymōn* ('rest for your souls') echoes Jeremiah 6:16.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 9:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 6:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The adjective *chrēstos* ('easy, pleasant, kind, good') is related to the word for 'Christ' (*Christos*) by sound (a wordplay early Christians noted). A well-fitted wooden yoke was 'easy' in the sense of fitting properly and not chafing — the metaphor is not that there is no yoke but that this one fits. The adjective *elaphron* ('light') contrasts with the heavy burdens of verse 28. Jesus does not promise freedom from all obligation but obligation that gives life rather than crushing it.

12

Summary: *Matthew 12 intensifies the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. It opens with two Sabbath controversies — the disciples plucking grain and Jesus healing a man's withered hand — followed by the Pharisees' plot to destroy Jesus. Matthew inserts a lengthy Isaiah Servant quotation (vv. 18-21). The Beelzebul controversy erupts when Jesus heals a blind and mute demoniac, and the Pharisees attribute his power to the prince of demons. Jesus responds with the 'kingdom divided' argument, warns about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, teaches that a tree is known by its fruit, and warns about idle words. The Pharisees demand a sign, and Jesus offers only the sign of Jonah. The chapter ends with a redefinition of family: whoever does the Father's will is Jesus's brother, sister, and mother.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Sabbath disputes (vv. 1-14) establish Jesus's authority over the Law's interpretation by invoking David, the priests, the temple, and the prophets — then claiming to be 'greater than the temple' (v. 6) and 'Lord of the Sabbath' (v. 8). The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (v. 31-32) is Jesus's most severe warning in the Gospels — an 'unforgivable sin' that has generated centuries of pastoral anxiety. The sign of Jonah (vv. 39-41) links Jesus's death and resurrection to Jonah's three days in the fish. The redefinition of family (vv. 46-50) subordinates biological kinship to spiritual obedience.*

Translation Friction: *The Hosea 6:6 quotation appears for the second time (cf. 9:13). The phrase 'three days and three nights' (v. 40) does not correspond exactly to the timeline of Good Friday afternoon to Easter Sunday morning by modern counting, but Jewish reckoning counted partial days as full days. The 'unpardonable sin' passage requires careful rendering that preserves Jesus's actual words without either minimizing or exaggerating*

the warning.

Connections: The Sabbath grain episode echoes 1 Samuel 21:1-6 (David and the showbread). The Isaiah 42:1-4 quotation (vv. 18-21) is the longest Old Testament citation in Matthew. The Beelzebul controversy connects to the accusation in 9:34 and 10:25. The sign of Jonah points to the death and resurrection narratives. The family redefinition anticipates the church as a new community (ch. 18).

¹At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick heads of grain and eat them. ²When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." ³He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry — ⁴How he went into into the home of God, and did consume the shewbread, which was not permitted for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵Or have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and yet are without guilt? ⁶But I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷If you had known what this means — 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice' — you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." ⁹Moving on from there, he went into their synagogue. ¹⁰A man was there with a withered hand. They asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" — so that they could accuse him. ¹¹He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable then is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as healthy as the other. ¹⁴The Pharisees went out and conspired against him, plotting how to destroy him. ¹⁵Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from there. Large crowds followed him, and he healed all of them. ¹⁶Charged them that they should not render him recognized: ¹⁷That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet and stated, ¹⁸"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul delights. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹He will not quarrel or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, until he leads justice to victory. ²¹And in his name the nations will put their hope." ²²Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to him. Jesus healed him so that the man could both speak and see. ²³All the crowds were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man drives out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." ²⁵Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or household divided against itself will stand. ²⁶If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁸But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹Or how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. ³⁰Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. ³³Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. ³⁶I tell you that on the day of judgment people will give an account for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." ³⁸Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." ³⁹He answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The people of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah — and look, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon — and look, something

greater than Solomon is here. ⁴³When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest and does not find it. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I will return to my house that I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean, and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle there. And the last condition of that person becomes worse than the first. So it will be with this evil generation." ⁴⁶While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸But he replied to the one who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *sporimōn* ('sown fields, grain fields') refers to cultivated land with standing grain. The verb *tillein* ('to pluck, to pull off') describes pulling heads of grain by hand, which was permitted under Deuteronomy 23:25 but which the Pharisees considered 'reaping' — one of the thirty-nine categories of Sabbath-prohibited work in later rabbinic tradition. Matthew adds that the disciples 'were hungry' (*epeinasan*), providing a sympathetic motive absent in Mark.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 23:25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Pharisees' charge *ouk exestin* ('it is not lawful') frames the issue as a legal violation. The prohibition is not from the written Torah itself (which permits plucking by hand) but from their interpretive tradition about what constitutes 'work' on the Sabbath. They address Jesus rather than the disciples, holding the teacher responsible for his students' behavior.
3. Jesus's counter-argument begins with the rhetorically sharp *ouk anegnōte* ('have you not read?') — a challenge to the Pharisees' scriptural expertise. The appeal to David (1 Samuel 21:1-6) establishes a precedent where human need overrode ceremonial regulation, and where the kingdom's anointed exercised freedom within the law.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 21:1-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The *artous tēs protheseōs* ('bread of the Presence,' literally 'bread of the setting forth') were twelve loaves placed on a table in the tabernacle and renewed weekly (Leviticus 24:5-9). Only priests could eat the old loaves. David's consumption of this bread (1 Samuel 21:1-6) was technically illegal yet not condemned by Scripture. Jesus's argument: if David's hunger justified breaking a ceremonial regulation, so does the disciples' hunger.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 24:5-9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Samuel 21:1-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The second argument is even more pointed: priests perform 'work' on the Sabbath (slaughtering animals, maintaining the fire, preparing offerings) yet are *anaitioi* ('guiltless, without blame'). The verb *bebēlousin* ('profane, desecrate') is deliberately provocative — Jesus uses the Pharisees' own categories against them. Temple service overrides Sabbath restriction by the Law's own provisions.
6. The neuter *meizon* ('something greater') rather than the masculine *meizōn* ('someone greater') makes the claim even more sweeping — not merely a greater person but a greater reality. If temple service overrides the Sabbath, and something greater than the temple is present, then this greater reality certainly overrides Sabbath regulations. The claim would be shocking to any first-century Jew — the temple was the center of Jewish religious life and the place of God's dwelling presence.
7. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 for the second time (cf. 9:13). The pluperfect *egnōkeite* ('if you had known,' implying 'but you did not') is a rebuke: the Pharisees who pride themselves on scriptural knowledge have failed to understand a key prophetic text. The word *anaitios* ('innocent, guiltless') declares the disciples formally acquitted — the same word used of the Sabbath-working priests in verse 5.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Hosea 6:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The climactic claim: the Son of Man has sovereign authority (*kyrios*, 'Lord') over the Sabbath itself. Since the Sabbath was instituted by God at creation (Genesis 2:2-3), claiming lordship over it is implicitly claiming divine authority. The word order in Greek places *kyrios* ('Lord') first for emphasis.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2:2-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The phrase *tēn synagōgēn autōn* ('their synagogue') again uses the distancing possessive, suggesting tension between Jesus's movement and the synagogue establishment. The second Sabbath controversy follows immediately.

- 10.** The adjective *xēran* ('dry, withered, shriveled') describes a hand that has atrophied or become paralyzed. The question is a trap (*hina katēgorēsōsin autou*, 'in order that they might accuse him'). Later rabbinic tradition permitted Sabbath healing only when life was in immediate danger — a withered hand was not life-threatening, so by their standards, healing could wait until the next day.
- 11.** Jesus uses a *qal wahomer* (lesser to greater) argument, common in rabbinic reasoning. Even the stricter Sabbath interpreters allowed rescuing an animal from a pit on the Sabbath (though the Damascus Document from Qumran prohibited even this). The specification 'one sheep' (*probaton hen*) heightens the analogy — this is someone's only animal, their livelihood.
- 12.** The conclusion *posō oun diapherei anthrōpos probatou* ('how much more a person differs from a sheep') establishes that if Sabbath rescue of an animal is permitted, Sabbath healing of a person must be permitted all the more. Jesus reframes the Sabbath question from 'what is prohibited?' to 'what is good?' — the Sabbath is for doing good (*kalōs poiein*), not for withholding compassion.
- 13.** Jesus heals with a command alone — no physical contact, no medicine, no action that could be classified as 'work.' The verb *apekatestathē* ('was restored') indicates return to a former healthy state. The healing is complete (*hygiēs hōs hē allē*, 'healthy as the other') — not partial or gradual.
- 14.** The response to a healing is a death plot — the irony is devastating. The phrase *symbolion elabon* ('took counsel together, conspired') is a formal term for deliberative action. The verb *apolesōsin* ('might destroy') foreshadows the passion narrative. A Sabbath healing provokes the defenders of the Sabbath to violate the commandment against murder.
- 15.** Jesus's withdrawal (*anechōrēsen*) is strategic, not fearful — the same verb was used for the family's flight to Egypt (2:14). Despite the growing opposition from leaders, the crowds continue to follow, and Jesus continues to heal — his compassion is not deterred by the conspiracy against him.
- 16.** The command to secrecy (the messianic secret motif) continues. Jesus does not seek public confrontation at this point — his hour has not yet come. The verb *epetimēsen* ('warned, rebuked') is the same strong word used for rebuking storms and demons.
- 17.** This introduces the longest Old Testament quotation in Matthew's Gospel — Isaiah 42:1-4, the first Servant Song. Matthew sees Jesus's withdrawal, quiet ministry, and compassion for the weak as fulfillment of this prophetic portrait.
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 42:1-4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** The word *pais* ('servant, child') echoes the Hebrew *eved* of Isaiah 42:1. The language of choosing, beloved status, and Spirit-bestowal recalls the baptism scene (3:16-17). The term *krisin* ('justice, judgment') translates Hebrew *mishpat* — not punitive judgment but restorative justice, the right ordering of society. The scope extends to *ta ethnē* ('the nations, the Gentiles'), anticipating the universal mission.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 42:1-4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 19.** The description of the Servant's quiet demeanor contrasts sharply with typical political or military messianic expectations. The verb *erisei* ('quarrel, wrangle') and *kraugasei* ('shout, cry out') describe the absence of aggressive self-promotion. This matches Jesus's repeated commands to silence and his withdrawal from public confrontation.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:1-4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 20.** The bruised reed (*kalamon syntetrimmenon*) and smoldering wick (*linon typhomenon*) are images of extreme fragility — things about to be discarded. The Servant refuses to crush what is already broken or extinguish what is barely alive. This describes Jesus's ministry to the weak, sick, and marginalized of chapters 8-9. The phrase *eis nikos* ('to victory') replaces the Hebrew 'in truth/faithfulness' (*le'emet*), interpreting justice as ultimately triumphant.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 42:1-4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The quotation concludes with the universal hope: *ethnē elpiousin* ('the nations will hope'). The Hebrew original has 'the coastlands will wait for his instruction (torah).' Matthew's Greek version shifts from *torah* to 'name' (*onomati*) and from 'wait' to 'hope' (*elpiousin*), emphasizing personal trust in the Servant rather than obedience to a teaching.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 42:1-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** This healing combines two conditions from the messianic signs of 11:5 (blind receive sight, mute speak), making it an unmistakable messianic indicator. The double restoration — speaking and seeing — provokes the two opposite responses that follow.
- 23.** The verb *existanto* ('were amazed, astonished, beside themselves') indicates overwhelming wonder. The question *mēti houtos estin ho huios Dauid* uses the particle *mēti*, which in Greek expects a negative answer but here expresses cautious hope — 'this couldn't be the Son of David, could it?' The crowds are tentatively arriving at the messianic conclusion.
- 24.** The Pharisees' response directly counters the crowds' messianic question. Unable to deny the miracle, they attribute its source to Beelzeboul, *archonti tōn daimoniōn* ('the ruler of the demons'). The accusation is the same as in 9:34 but now stated publicly and explicitly. This is the charge Jesus will identify as approaching the unforgivable sin.

25. Jesus again perceives unspoken thoughts (eidōs tas enthymēseis autōn). The argument is logical: internal division destroys any entity — kingdoms, cities, households. The verb erēmoutai ('is made desolate, is laid waste') is strong, suggesting complete devastation. The principle is applied to Satan's kingdom in the next verse.
26. The name Satanias is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew satan ('adversary, accuser'). Jesus's logic: if his exorcisms were powered by Satan, then Satan would be working against his own interests — destroying his own agents. This is self-evidently absurd.
27. The second argument: Jewish exorcists also existed (cf. Acts 19:13-14). If Jesus's exorcisms require a satanic explanation, consistency demands the same explanation for their own practitioners. The phrase hoi huiōi hymōn ('your sons/people') refers to Jewish exorcists associated with the Pharisees' own circles. Jesus turns their accusation into a self-indictment.
28. This is one of the rare places Matthew uses 'kingdom of God' (basileia tou theou) instead of his usual 'kingdom of heaven.' The verb ephthasen ('has arrived, has come upon') indicates that the kingdom is not merely approaching but has already arrived — present tense, operative now. Jesus's exorcisms are evidence of the kingdom's invasion of enemy territory. The conditional 'if' (ei) is a first-class condition in Greek, assuming the premise is true: 'since I drive out demons by God's Spirit...'
29. The parable of the strong man depicts the cosmic conflict behind exorcism. The 'strong man' (ischyros) is Satan; his 'house' is his domain over the demonized; his 'possessions' (skeuē) are the people he holds captive. Jesus is the one who has bound the strong man and is now plundering his domain. The verb dēsē ('bind') anticipates the binding authority Jesus gives to the church (16:19, 18:18).
30. This absolute either/or allows no neutrality toward Jesus. The agricultural metaphor — gathering (synagōn) versus scattering (skorpizein) — depicts the harvest of 9:37-38. Those who do not join Jesus in gathering people into God's kingdom are actively dispersing them. The saying stands in tension with Mark 9:40 ('whoever is not against us is for us'), but the different contexts address different situations.
31. The opening scope is extraordinarily generous — pasa hamartia kai blasphemia apethēsetai ('every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven'). The single exception stands out starkly: blasphemy against the Spirit (hē tou pneumatōs blasphemia). In context, this refers specifically to attributing the Holy Spirit's work to Satan — seeing the evidence of God's kingdom and deliberately calling it demonic. It is not an isolated sinful word but a settled posture of willful misidentification of good as evil.
32. The distinction between speaking against the Son of Man (forgivable) and speaking against the Spirit (unforgivable) is significant. Rejecting the human Jesus out of ignorance can be forgiven — Peter's denial was forgiven. But deliberately attributing the Spirit's unmistakable work to Satan represents a hardening beyond recovery, because it rejects the very agent of conviction and repentance. The phrase oute en toutō tō aiōni oute en tō mellonti ('neither in this age nor in the coming age') uses eschatological language that covers all of time.
33. The imperative poiēsate ('make') is not a command to produce fruit but a demand for consistency — if the fruit (Jesus's deeds) is good, then the tree (Jesus's source of power) must be good. You cannot call the fruit good (acknowledging the healings) and the tree bad (attributing them to Satan). The principle ek tou karpou to dendron ginōsketai ('by the fruit the tree is known') echoes 7:16-20.
34. The insult gennēmata echidnōn ('offspring of vipers') repeats John the Baptist's words (3:7), linking the Pharisees to the serpent imagery of Genesis 3. The principle ek tou perisseumatōs tēs kardias to stoma lalei ('out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks') grounds speech in character — words reveal the inner person. The Pharisees' blasphemous words expose a blasphemous heart.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The word thēsauroi ('treasure, storehouse') depicts the heart as a repository from which words and deeds are drawn. The verb ekballei ('brings out, throws out') is the same word used for casting out demons — what is stored inside inevitably comes out. The parallelism is absolute: good in, good out; evil in, evil out.
36. The adjective argon ('idle, careless, useless') comes from a-ergon ('without work, unproductive'). In context, the 'careless word' is not merely thoughtless chatter but words like the Pharisees' blasphemous accusation — speech that seems offhand but reveals the heart's true orientation. The phrase apodōsousin logon ('will give an account, will render a word') uses the language of legal reckoning.
37. The passive verbs dikaiōthēsē ('will be justified, acquitted') and katadikasthēsē ('will be condemned') are divine passives — God is the implied judge. Words serve as evidence because they reveal character. This does not contradict justification by faith but affirms that genuine faith produces certain kinds of speech while its absence produces others.
38. The request for a sēmeion ('sign') comes immediately after Jesus has just healed a blind and mute demoniac — they have seen signs. The demand is for a spectacular, undeniable cosmic sign that would prove his authority beyond dispute. The address didaskalos ('teacher') is polite but uncommitted.
39. The labels ponēra ('evil') and moichalis ('adulterous') are severe. 'Adulterous' uses the Old Testament prophetic metaphor of Israel as God's unfaithful spouse (Hosea, Ezekiel 16). The sign of Jonah is the only sign Jesus will offer — and it requires faith to interpret, not the kind of overwhelming proof the Pharisees demand.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. The Greek kētous ('sea creature, great fish') is more accurate than the KJV's 'whale' — the Hebrew in Jonah 1:17 uses dag gadol ('great fish') without specifying the species. The phrase en tē kardia tēs gēs ('in the heart of the earth') refers to the grave/death. The 'three days and three nights' follows Jewish inclusive reckoning where any part of a day counts as a full day — Friday afternoon, all of Saturday, and Sunday morning constitute 'three

days.'

40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jonah 1:17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The Ninevites — pagans, Assyrians, Israel's enemies — repented at Jonah's reluctant, minimal preaching. 'This generation' has received far greater revelation and refuses to repent. The neuter pleion ('something greater,' not 'someone greater') makes the claim even more comprehensive — not just a greater prophet but a greater reality is present.
42. The 'queen of the South' is the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13), who traveled a great distance to hear Solomon's wisdom. Again a Gentile figure condemns 'this generation.' The parallel structure — Ninevites/Jonah, queen/Solomon — presents Jesus as greater than Israel's greatest prophet and wisest king. The neuter pleion ('something greater') is repeated.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 10:1-13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The anhydrōn topōn ('waterless, dry places') reflects the ancient Near Eastern belief that demons inhabit desolate wilderness regions (cf. Isaiah 13:21, 34:14; Baruch 4:35). The demon seeks anapausin ('rest') — ironically, the same word Jesus offers to the weary in 11:28. The passage functions as a parable about spiritual vacancy.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 13:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. The demon calls the person 'my house' (ton oikon mou), claiming ownership. The three participles — scholazonta ('empty, unoccupied, idle'), sesarōmenon ('swept clean'), kekosmēmenon ('put in order, decorated') — describe a person who has been cleaned up but not filled with anything positive. Moral reformation without spiritual filling leaves one vulnerable to worse occupation.
45. The number seven (hepta) symbolizes completeness — the reinfestation is total and overwhelming. The phrase ta eschata cheirona tōn prōtōn ('the last things worse than the first') warns that spiritual emptiness invites greater evil than the original condition. The application to 'this evil generation' (tē genea tautē tē ponēra) transforms the parable from individual exorcism to national warning — Israel has received temporary cleansing through John's ministry and Jesus's healings but refuses to be filled with the kingdom's reality.
46. The phrase heistēkeisan exō ('stood outside') creates a spatial metaphor — family members are on the outside while the listening crowd is on the inside. The mention of adelphoi ('brothers') indicates Jesus had siblings (see 13:55 for their names). Their desire to 'speak to him' may reflect concern about his safety given the growing opposition (cf. Mark 3:21).
47. This verse is bracketed in the SBLGNT, indicating uncertainty about whether it was in the original text — some important manuscripts omit it. Without it, verse 48 follows directly from verse 46 and still makes sense. We include it as it appears in the majority of manuscripts and provides the natural link to Jesus's response.
48. The question is rhetorically shocking — it appears to disown his biological family. Jesus is not rejecting his mother and brothers but redefining the category of family itself. The question demands a new answer that transcends biological kinship.
49. The physical gesture — ekteinas tēn cheira ('stretching out his hand') — makes the redefinition visible and public. The disciples are identified as Jesus's true family. This creates a new kinship community based not on blood but on shared commitment to God's will.
50. The criterion for belonging to Jesus's family is doing the will of the Father (to thelēma tou patros mou) — the same standard from the Sermon on the Mount (7:21). The threefold 'brother and sister and mother' (adelphos kai adelphē kai mētēr) is inclusive of all — notably, 'father' is omitted because that role belongs exclusively to God. This redefinition of family becomes foundational for the church's self-understanding.

13

Summary: *Matthew 13 is the third of Matthew's five major discourses — the Parable Discourse. Jesus teaches seven parables about the kingdom of heaven: the sower (with explanation), the wheat and tares (with explanation), the mustard seed, the leaven, the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, and the dragnet. Interspersed is a discussion with the disciples about why Jesus speaks in parables, a citation of Isaiah 6:9-10 about hearing without understanding, and a quotation of Psalm 78:2. The chapter concludes with Jesus's rejection in his hometown of Nazareth.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter marks a decisive shift in Jesus's teaching method — from this point, parables become his primary public teaching vehicle. The purpose of parables is paradoxical: they both reveal and conceal. To those with receptive hearts, they illuminate the kingdom's nature; to those with hardened hearts, they confirm blindness (vv. 11-15). The parable of the wheat and tares is unique to Matthew and addresses the coexistence of good and evil within the kingdom community until the final judgment. The series of short parables (mustard seed, leaven, treasure, pearl, net) each capture a different facet of the kingdom's nature.*

Translation Friction: The Isaiah 6:9-10 quotation (vv. 14-15) raises the question of whether parables are designed to prevent understanding. We render Jesus's words and Isaiah's text as given without resolving the tension. The Greek conjunction hina in verse 13 can mean 'in order that' (purpose) or 'so that' (result), and this ambiguity affects whether the concealment is intended or consequential. The identification of the 'field' as 'the world' (v. 38) rather than 'the church' has significant implications for interpreting the wheat and tares.

Connections: The sower parable connects to the harvest imagery of 9:37-38. The wheat and tares anticipates the separation at the final judgment (25:31-46). The mustard seed echoes Daniel 4's tree that shelters nations. The parables of treasure and pearl echo the wisdom tradition (Proverbs 2:4, 8:11). The Nazareth rejection connects to the broader theme of Israel's unresponsiveness (chs. 11-12). The scribe trained for the kingdom (v. 52) may be Matthew's self-description.

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, while the whole crowd stood on the shore. ³He told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. ⁴As he was sowing, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow, ⁶When the sun was up, they were scorched. And on account of the fact that they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil and produced a crop — some a hundred times, some sixty, some thirty what was sown. ⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear." ¹⁰The disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹He answered, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For whoever has will be given more, and will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables: because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear or understand. ¹⁴In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'You will hear and hear but never understand; you will look and look but never perceive. ¹⁵For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they barely hear, and they have shut their eyes, so that they might not see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn — and I would heal them.' ¹⁶But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. ¹⁸Listen then to the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The seed sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹Indeed, yet has he not root in himself, but dureth for a while — for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the message, by and by he is offended. ²²The seed sown among the thorns is the person who hears the word, but the worries of this age and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²³But the seed sown on good soil is the person who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces — some a hundred, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown." ²⁴He put another parable before them: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷The owner's servants came and said to him, 'Master, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' ²⁸He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and pull them up?' ²⁹He said, 'No, because while gathering the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I will tell the reapers: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat into my barn.'" ³¹He put another parable before them: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man took and planted in his field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches." ³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and mixed into three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." ³⁴Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables. He did not say anything to them without a parable, ³⁵Indeed, that it could be fulfilled which had been spoken by the prophet of old and stated, I will open my mouth in parables. I will utter things which have been kept

secret from the foundation of the world. ³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." ³⁷He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world. The good seed — these are the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one. ³⁹The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who practice lawlessness, ⁴²Will cast them into a furnace of fire — there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear. ⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and in his joy he went and sold everything he had and bought that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything he had and bought it. ⁴⁷Again, heaven's kingdom is like to a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: ⁴⁸When it was full, they pulled it up on the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into containers but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the righteous ⁵⁰Will cast them into the furnace of fire — there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹"Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." ⁵²He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his storeroom new things and old." ⁵³When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place. ⁵⁴He came to his hometown and taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? ⁵⁵Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶And aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." ⁵⁸And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *en tē hēmera ekeinē* ('on that day') links this discourse to the events of chapter 12. The movement from house to seaside establishes the public setting for parabolic teaching. The Sea of Galilee serves as a natural amphitheater.
2. The sitting position (*kathēsthai*) was the standard posture for teaching in the ancient world. The boat creates natural distance and acoustics. The crowd standing (*heistēkei*) on the shore while Jesus sits in the boat reverses the typical rabbi-student arrangement and creates a visual tableau.
3. The noun *parabolē* ('parable,' from *para* + *ballō*, 'to throw alongside') refers to a comparison or illustration that places a familiar image alongside a spiritual truth. The sower parable is the foundational parable — its interpretation governs how all subsequent parables are read. The phrase *ho speirōn* ('the sower') uses the article, suggesting a representative or well-known figure.
4. Palestinian farmers sowed by broadcasting seed across a field. The path (*para tēn hodon*) was the hard-packed pathway through or alongside the field where seed could not penetrate the soil. The birds (*ta peteina*) are identified as representing 'the evil one' in verse 19.
5. The *petrōdē* ('rocky ground') refers not to ground with scattered stones but to thin soil over a limestone shelf — common in the Galilean landscape. The rapid growth (*eutheōs exaneteilen*, 'immediately it sprang up') is not a sign of health but of shallow rooting. Without depth (*bathos gēs*, 'depth of earth'), the growth is superficial.
6. The sun that nurtures deep-rooted plants destroys shallow-rooted ones — the same external pressure produces opposite outcomes depending on root depth. The verb *exēranthē* ('withered, dried up') describes complete death, not temporary wilting.
7. The *akanthas* ('thorns, thistles') represent competing plants that were already present in the soil. The verb *epnixan* ('choked, strangled') is violent — the thorns suffocated the grain by stealing light, water, and nutrients. This soil type has potential for growth but competing forces prevent fruitfulness.
8. The good soil (*gēn tēn kalēn*) is distinguished by its fruitfulness. The yields — hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold — range from extraordinary to very good. In ancient Palestine, a tenfold return was considered good; even the lowest yield here (thirtyfold) far exceeds normal expectations. The descending order (100, 60, 30) may suggest that any productive response to the word, whatever the degree, represents good soil.
9. The refrain from 11:15 returns, signaling that the parable demands more than surface hearing. The plural *ōta* ('ears') may suggest that physical hearing is not the issue — spiritual perception is required.
10. The disciples' question *dia ti* ('why?') indicates that parabolic teaching is a new method. The pronoun *autois* ('to them') distinguishes the crowds from the disciples — the disciples receive private explanation while the crowds receive parables.

11. The divine passive *dedotai* ('it has been given') indicates that understanding is a gift from God, not an achievement of intellect. The word *mystēria* ('mysteries') does not mean 'puzzles' but 'revealed secrets' — truths about God's kingdom that have been hidden and are now being disclosed to the initiated. The distinction between 'you' (the disciples) and 'them' (the crowds) reflects the growing division in response to Jesus.
12. This saying appears paradoxical and even harsh. The 'having' in question is receptivity to the kingdom message — those who respond to what they have received will receive more understanding, while those who refuse to engage will lose even the initial exposure they had. The principle is spiritual, not economic: responsiveness to truth generates more truth; indifference leads to loss.
13. Matthew uses *hoti* ('because') where Mark 4:12 has *hina* ('in order that'), softening the purpose clause into a causal explanation. The parables are given because the people have already demonstrated their inability to perceive — the parables respond to existing spiritual blindness rather than causing it. The paradox of seeing-without-seeing and hearing-without-hearing describes willful incomprehension.
14. The verb *anaplēroutai* ('is being fulfilled') is present tense — the fulfillment is happening now, in this moment. The quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10 was originally spoken to Isaiah at his commissioning, describing the stubborn unresponsiveness of Israel. Matthew sees the same pattern repeating. The emphatic doubling — *akoē akousete* ('hearing you will hear'), *blepontes blepsete* ('seeing you will see') — stresses the thoroughness of the incomprehension.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 6:9-10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *epachynthē* ('has grown fat, has become dull') describes a heart that has become insensitive through accumulated resistance. The Isaiah passage attributes the closure to the people themselves (*tous ophthalmous ekammysan*, 'they have shut their eyes') — this is self-inflicted blindness. The sequence — see, hear, understand, turn, be healed — represents the progression that has been blocked. The conditional 'I would heal them' (*iasomai autous*) reveals God's desire to heal, frustrated by human refusal.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. After the harsh words about the unresponsive crowds, Jesus turns to the disciples with a contrasting beatitude. Their seeing and hearing is a gift (cf. v. 11) — they are privileged witnesses to the kingdom's arrival.
17. The verb *epethymēsan* ('longed, desired earnestly') expresses intense, unfulfilled desire. The prophets and righteous people of Israel's history anticipated the messianic age but did not live to see it. The disciples are living in the era the entire Old Testament pointed toward — a privilege greater than they realize.
18. The imperative *akousate* ('listen, hear') is emphatic — you who have been given the gift of hearing, now use it. The phrase *tēn parabolēn tou speirantos* ('the parable of the one who sowed') identifies this as the interpretive key for the others.
19. The interpretation identifies the seed as *ton logon tēs basileias* ('the word of the kingdom') — the message about God's reign. The birds of verse 4 are identified as *ho ponēros* ('the evil one,' Satan). The failure is comprehension — *mē synientos* ('not understanding') — the word never takes root because it is never grasped. The verb *harpazei* ('snatches away') is violent, depicting active opposition.
20. The immediate, joyful response (*euthys meta charas lambanōn*, 'immediately with joy receiving') sounds positive but proves shallow. Quick enthusiasm without depth of commitment characterizes this soil type. The joy is genuine but superficial.
21. The phrase *ouk echei rhizan en heautō* ('has no root in himself') describes internal shallowness — the word has not penetrated deeply enough to sustain the person through difficulty. The word *proskairōs* ('temporary, short-lived, lasting only for a season') contrasts with the enduring fruit of good soil. The verb *skandalizetai* ('is caused to stumble, falls away') — the stumbling block that trips this person is suffering, not temptation.
22. Two thorns are named: *hē merimna tou aiōnos* ('the worry/anxiety of this age') — the same worry Jesus addressed in 6:25-34 — and *hē apatē tou ploutou* ('the deceitfulness of wealth'). The word *apatē* ('deceit, seduction') treats wealth as an active deceiver, not a passive possession. The result is *akarpos* ('unfruitful') — the word survives but produces nothing.
23. The distinguishing mark of good soil is *synieis* ('understanding') — the word that was absent from the path soil (v. 19). Hearing plus understanding equals fruitfulness. The verb *karpophorei* ('bears fruit') is the goal of the entire parable. The varying yields (100, 60, 30) allow for different degrees of fruitfulness without disqualifying any productive response.
24. The formula *hōmoiōthē hē basileia tōn ouranōn* ('the kingdom of heaven has become like') introduces the comparison. This parable is unique to Matthew. The 'good seed' (*kalon sperma*) and 'his field' (*en tō agrō autou*) establish the owner's rightful possession and proper action.
25. The *zizania* ('weeds') is commonly identified as darnel (*Lolium temulentum*), a weed that closely resembles wheat in its early growth stages and cannot be distinguished until the grain heads form. Deliberately sowing darnel in an enemy's field was a known act of sabotage in the ancient world, serious enough to be addressed in Roman law. The enemy acts secretly (*en tō katheudein*, 'while sleeping') and departs (*apēlthen*) — evil often works covertly.
26. The weeds become visible only when the grain appears — at the earlier stages, wheat and darnel are indistinguishable. The word *ephanē* ('appeared, became visible') marks the moment of revelation.
27. The servants' question addresses the problem of evil in miniature: if the owner sowed good seed, where did the weeds come from? The word *pothen* ('from where?') asks about origin — the question humanity has always asked about the presence of evil in God's good creation.

- 28.** The master's answer *echthros anthrōpos* ('an enemy person, a hostile man') identifies the source simply and directly. The servants' eagerness to remove the weeds immediately (*syllēxōmen*, 'shall we gather/collect them?') represents the human impulse to purge evil from the community immediately and completely.
- 29.** The master's refusal is practical — darnel roots intertwine with wheat roots, making selective removal impossible without destroying good plants. The theological implication: premature judgment of the community risks destroying genuine believers. The verb *ekrizōsēte* ('might uproot') describes tearing out by the roots — total destruction.
- 30.** The command *aphete synauxanesthai* ('let them grow together') requires patience — coexistence of good and evil within the kingdom community until God's appointed time. The *therismos* ('harvest') is the final judgment (v. 39). The order is significant: weeds are gathered first for burning, then wheat is gathered into the barn. The barn (*apothēkēn*) represents the final secure dwelling of the righteous.
- 31.** The *kokkō sinapeōs* ('mustard seed,' from the plant *Sinapis nigra* or *Brassica nigra*) was proverbially the smallest seed known in Palestine. Jesus uses the smallest to illustrate the kingdom's beginnings. The kingdom starts imperceptibly small.
- 32.** The contrast between *mikroteron pantōn tōn spermatōn* ('smallest of all seeds') and *meizon tōn lachanōn* ('largest of garden plants') captures the kingdom's trajectory from insignificant beginning to impressive result. The mustard plant can grow to 8-10 feet. The image of birds nesting in branches echoes Daniel 4:12 (Nebuchadnezzar's tree) and Ezekiel 17:23, 31:6, where a great tree sheltering birds symbolizes a kingdom that provides refuge for all nations.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 4:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 17:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** Leaven (*zymē*) is usually a negative symbol in Jewish tradition (cf. 16:6, 'leaven of the Pharisees'), making its positive use here surprising. The verb *enekrypsen* ('hid, concealed') emphasizes the invisible nature of the kingdom's working. Three measures (*sata tria*) of flour is an enormous quantity — approximately 50 pounds, enough to feed over 100 people. This echoes the amount Sarah prepared for the three visitors in Genesis 18:6 (three seahs). The point: a tiny amount of leaven transforms a massive quantity of dough.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 18:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** The statement *chōris parabolēs ouden elalei autois* ('without a parable he said nothing to them') applies to this occasion and phase of ministry, not to Jesus's entire teaching career — he taught directly in the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7). The shift to exclusively parabolic public teaching marks a new phase.
- 35.** The quotation is from Psalm 78:2, attributed to 'the prophet' (some manuscripts add 'Isaiah,' but the SBLGNT does not). The psalmist Asaph speaks of recounting Israel's history as parables. Matthew applies this to Jesus's parabolic teaching as revealing *kekrymmena apo katabolēs kosmou* ('things hidden since the foundation/creation of the world') — the kingdom truths that have been concealed in God's plan since creation itself.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 78:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The shift from public seaside teaching to private house instruction mirrors the pattern of the sower parable. The verb *diasaphēsōn* ('explain clearly, make plain') indicates the disciples cannot interpret the wheat-and-weeds parable without help.
- 37.** The allegorical interpretation begins with a series of identifications. The sower is the Son of Man — Jesus himself. This makes the parable autobiographical: Jesus is the one planting good seed in the world.
- 38.** The identification *ho agros estin ho kosmos* ('the field is the world') is significant — the field is not the church but the world. This means the coexistence of wheat and weeds is a reality of the world at large, not merely a problem within the church community. The 'sons of the kingdom' (*huiōi tēs basileias*) and 'sons of the evil one' (*huiōi tou ponērou*) live intermixed in the same world until the harvest.
- 39.** The enemy is identified as *ho diabolos* ('the devil,' literally 'the slanderer/accuser'). The harvest is the *synteleia aiōnos* ('completion/culmination of the age') — not the 'end of the world' (KJV) but the conclusion of the present age that gives way to the age to come. The reapers are angels, not humans — the final sorting is God's work through his heavenly agents.
- 40.** The analogy moves from agricultural practice (burning weeds) to eschatological reality. The verb *katakaietai* ('is burned up') describes complete destruction. The phrase *en tē synteleia tou aiōnos* ('at the completion of the age') repeats from verse 39.
- 41.** The Son of Man sends 'his angels' (*tous aggelous autou*) — a claim to authority over the heavenly host that belongs to God alone. They collect *ta skandala* ('stumbling blocks, things that cause sin') and *tous poiountas tēn anomian* ('those who practice lawlessness'). The word *anomia* ('lawlessness') is a key Matthean term (7:23, 23:28, 24:12) describing not ignorance of the law but willful disregard for God's will.
- 42.** The *kaminon tou pyros* ('furnace of fire') echoes Daniel 3, where the three young men were thrown into a furnace. The phrase *ho klauthmos kai ho brygmōs tōn odontōn* ('weeping and gnashing of teeth') recurs from 8:12 and appears again in 13:50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30.
- 42.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

43. The promise eklamphousin hōs ho hēlios ('will shine forth like the sun') echoes Daniel 12:3 ('those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the sky'). The image of luminous glorification describes the final state of the righteous. The phrase tē basileia tou patros autōn ('the kingdom of their Father') is warm and familial. The 'ears to hear' refrain appears for the third time in this chapter.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 12:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Burying valuables in fields was common in the ancient world as a form of protection (no banks existed for ordinary people). The man's response is driven by joy (apo tēs charas, 'from the joy'), not grim duty — discovering the kingdom is exhilarating. He sells panta hosa echei ('everything he has') — total investment. The ethics of concealing the treasure before purchasing the field troubled later interpreters, but the parable's point is the kingdom's incomparable worth, not the man's business practices.
45. The emporō ('merchant, wholesaler') is a professional dealer, not a casual buyer — he is actively seeking (zētounti) quality merchandise. This contrasts with the man in verse 44 who stumbled upon treasure. Both responses to the kingdom are valid: some encounter it unexpectedly, others find it through dedicated seeking.
46. The hena polytimon margaritēn ('one pearl of great value') is singular — one incomparable item that renders all other possessions secondary. Pearls were the most valuable commodity in the ancient world, sometimes worth more than their weight in gold. The merchant's response mirrors the treasure-finder's: total divestiture for a single incomparable possession. The kingdom is worth everything.
47. The sagēnē ('dragnet') was a large net drawn between two boats or pulled from shore, capturing everything in its path indiscriminately. The phrase ek pantos genous ('of every kind') emphasizes the indiscriminate character of the catch. This parable is thematically parallel to the wheat and tares — the kingdom community contains a mixture that will be sorted at the end.
48. The sorting process (kathisantes synelexan, 'sitting down they collected') is careful and deliberate, not hasty. The adjective sapra ('bad, rotten, worthless') is the same word used for 'bad' trees and fruit in 7:17-18. The good fish go into containers (aggē, 'vessels'); the bad are discarded. The scene would be familiar to the Galilean fishermen among Jesus's disciples.
49. The interpretation closely parallels the wheat-and-tares explanation. The verb aphoriosisin ('will separate, set apart') is the same root as 'Pharisee' (pharisaios, 'separated one') — an irony perhaps intentional. The final separation is done by angels (as in v. 41), not by humans.
50. This verse repeats verse 42 nearly verbatim, creating an inclusio around the kingdom parables. The repetition of the judgment warning frames the entire parable discourse with eschatological seriousness.
51. The verb synēkate ('have you understood?') echoes the key word from the sower parable — understanding (synieis) is what distinguishes good soil from the path. The disciples' affirmative nai ('yes') claims comprehension. Whether they truly understand remains to be tested. The SBLGNT does not include kyrie ('Lord') after 'Yes,' which appears in some manuscripts.
52. The grammateus mathēteutheis ('scribe made a disciple, scribe trained') is a striking image — a Torah expert who has become a student of the kingdom. Many scholars see this as Matthew's self-description — a Jewish scribe who has become a disciple of Jesus. The storeroom (thēsaourou) contains both kaina kai palaia ('new things and old'), suggesting that the kingdom-trained scribe values both the old Scriptures and the new revelation in Jesus, drawing on both treasuries.
53. The formula kai egeneto hote etelesen ('and it happened when he finished') marks the end of the third discourse, paralleling 7:28, 11:1, 19:1, and 26:1.
54. The patriada ('hometown, fatherland') is Nazareth (cf. 2:23). The verb eklēttesthai ('to be astounded, struck with amazement') is strong but leads to rejection rather than faith. The question pothen toutō ('where did this man get...?') focuses on the source of his authority — they know his background and cannot reconcile it with his present power.
55. The designation ho tou tektonos huios ('the carpenter's son') identifies Jesus by his father's trade. The Greek tektōn ('builder, craftsman') could refer to a woodworker, stoneworker, or general builder. Matthew names four brothers — Iakōbos, Iōsēph, Simōn, Ioudas — and verse 56 mentions sisters. The people's familiarity with his family becomes the basis for their rejection: they think they know everything about him.
56. The repeated pothen ('where from?') frames their inability to reconcile Jesus's extraordinary authority with his ordinary origins. The word pasai ('all') and the phrase pros hēmas ('with us, among us') emphasize that Jesus's family is local, known, and unremarkable. Familiarity breeds contempt.
57. The verb eskandalizōnto ('were offended, were caused to stumble') echoes the blessed/offended contrast of 11:6. Jesus responds with a proverbial saying about prophetic rejection at home — a pattern seen in Elijah, Jeremiah, and most prophets. The word atimos ('without honor, dishonored') is the opposite of the honor-shame dynamic that governed ancient Near Eastern social life.
58. The statement that Jesus ouk epoiēsen dýnamiis pollas ('did not do many mighty works') is remarkable — it does not say he could not but that he did not. The reason is dia tēn apistian autōn ('because of their unbelief'). Faith is presented as the environment in which Jesus's power operates, and unbelief (apistia) creates an environment that restricts it. Mark 6:5 says more boldly 'he could not do any mighty work there'; Matthew softens slightly to 'did not do many.'

14

Summary: *Matthew 14 opens with Herod Antipas hearing reports about Jesus and fearing that John the Baptist has risen from the dead. This triggers a flashback to John's execution: Herod had imprisoned John for condemning his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and was manipulated into beheading John through Herodias's daughter's dance and request. Upon hearing the news, Jesus withdraws by boat to a deserted place, but crowds follow on foot. Moved by compassion, he heals their sick and feeds five thousand men (plus women and children) with five loaves and two fish. That night, Jesus walks on the sea to reach his disciples' storm-tossed boat. Peter attempts to walk on water but sinks when he becomes afraid. The chapter closes with healings in Gennesaret.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle (besides the resurrection) recorded in all four Gospels, underscoring its centrality. The language of 'took, blessed, broke, gave' (v. 19) anticipates the Last Supper (26:26). Jesus walking on the sea echoes God's sovereignty over chaotic waters (Job 9:8, Psalm 77:19). Peter's water-walking attempt — unique to Matthew — dramatizes the relationship between faith and fear. Jesus's self-identification *egō eimi* ('it is I' / 'I AM') in verse 27 may carry the resonance of the divine name.*

Translation Friction: *The feeding miracle raises questions about the nature of the multiplication — whether it was instantaneous or progressive, visible or hidden. We render the text as given without speculating on mechanism. The number 'five thousand men' (andres) plus 'women and children' (v. 21) could put the total crowd at 15,000-20,000. Herodias's daughter is not named in Matthew (Josephus identifies her as Salome). The chronological relationship between John's death and Jesus's withdrawal is compressed in the narrative.*

Connections: *The feeding echoes Elisha feeding a hundred with twenty loaves (2 Kings 4:42-44) and Moses providing manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16). The sea-walking echoes God's mastery over the sea in the exodus (Exodus 14) and the psalms (Psalm 77:19). Peter's cry 'Lord, save me' (v. 30) echoes the disciples' cry in the earlier storm (8:25). The twelve baskets of leftovers (v. 20) may symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel — God's provision is more than sufficient for his people.*

¹At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus ²Stated to his attendants, This is John the Baptist. He is returned to life from the no longer alive. And therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. ³For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, ⁴For John stated to him, It is not lawful for you to have her. ⁵Although Herod wanted to kill him, he feared the crowd because they regarded John as a prophet. ⁶But when Herod's birthday celebration came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the guests and pleased Herod, ⁷Whereupon he swore with an oath to provide her whatsoever she would ask. ⁸Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." ⁹The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he commanded it to be given to her. ¹⁰He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. ¹²John's disciples came, took the body, and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. ¹³When Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there by boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard about it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵When evening came, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a remote place and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." ¹⁷They said to him, "We have nothing here except five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸He said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹He directed the crowds to sit down on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰They all ate and were satisfied. The disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces left over. ²¹Those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. ²²Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there

alone. ²⁴By this time the boat was many stadia from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them. ²⁵In the fourth watch of the night, he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid." ²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the strong wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they climbed into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³Those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." ³⁴When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. ³⁵When the people of that place recognized him, they sent word throughout the surrounding region. People brought to him all who were sick ³⁶Besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment — and as numerous as touched were appointed perfectly whole.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Herod here is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch (tetraarchēs, 'ruler of a fourth') from 4 BC to AD 39. He is not a king, though Mark 6:14 loosely calls him one. The noun akoēn ('report, what is heard, fame') indicates that Jesus's reputation has reached the political establishment.
2. Herod's conclusion reveals a guilty conscience — he leaps to the supernatural explanation that John has been raised (ēgerthē, the same verb used for Jesus's resurrection). The phrase hai dynameis energousin en autō ('the powers are at work in him') suggests Herod believes that death and resurrection have given John supernatural abilities he did not have before. The paidin autou ('his servants') are court attendants.
3. Matthew now explains Herod's guilt through a flashback. Herodias had been married to Herod's half-brother Philip (not the tetrarch Philip of Luke 3:1 but another son of Herod the Great). The sequence kratēsas... edēsen... apetheto ('having seized... bound... put away') describes a forcible, deliberate imprisonment. According to Josephus (Antiquities 18.5.2), John was imprisoned at the fortress of Machaerus east of the Dead Sea.
4. The imperfect tense elegen ('was saying, kept saying') indicates repeated confrontation — John did not make this accusation once but persistently. The prohibition is based on Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21, which forbid marriage to a brother's wife while the brother is alive. John spoke truth to power at the cost of his freedom and ultimately his life.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 18:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Herod's desire to kill (thelōn apokteinai) is restrained only by political calculation — fear of the crowd (ephobēthē ton ochlon), not moral scruple. The people's recognition of John as a prophet provides temporary protection. Mark 6:20 presents a more complex picture where Herod 'feared John' and 'heard him gladly'; Matthew simplifies the motivation to murderous intent.
6. The genesisiois ('birthday celebration') was a banquet with court officials, military commanders, and leading citizens (cf. Mark 6:21). The daughter of Herodias (identified by Josephus as Salome) danced en tō mesō ('in the midst'), meaning before the assembled company. That a princess of the Herodian house would dance publicly before male banqueters was considered scandalous in Jewish culture. The verb ēresen ('pleased') has undertones left unstated.
7. The phrase meth' horkou hōmologēsen ('he promised with an oath') binds Herod with a vow — the same kind of rash oath that entrapped Jephthah (Judges 11:30-40). Jesus has just taught against swearing oaths in the Sermon on the Mount (5:33-37). Herod's oath creates the trap that Herodias will exploit.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Judges 11:30-40. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The participle probibistheisa ('having been prompted, coached, put forward') reveals that Herodias is the architect of the request — the daughter is her instrument. The demand for the head epi pinaki ('on a platter/dish') transforms the banquet setting into a scene of horror — a serving dish meant for food will carry a human head. The word hōde ('here') means immediately, at this banquet.
9. Matthew calls Herod basileus ('king') here, though technically he was only a tetrarch — the title may reflect popular usage or may be ironic. The verb lypētheis ('was grieved, distressed') suggests genuine discomfort, but Herod's concern for public face before his guests (tous synanakeimenous, 'those reclining at table with him') overrides his reluctance. The plural 'oaths' (horkous) may indicate he had repeated the promise.
10. The verb apekephalisen ('beheaded') is stark and without elaboration. The execution happens en tē phylakē ('in the prison'), away from the banquet — Herod does not watch. The brevity of the account contrasts with the elaborate setup, emphasizing the swiftness and finality of the act.
11. The passive ēnechthē ('was brought') maintains the impersonal horror. The chain of delivery — platter to girl, girl to mother — completes Herodias's plan. The word korasiō ('girl, young woman') emphasizes the daughter's youth, making the scene more disturbing. Herodias is the ultimate recipient, achieving through manipulation what Herod had been restrained from doing.

12. John's disciples perform the final act of devotion — burial of the ptōma ('corpse, body'). Their report to Jesus (apēggeilan tō Iēsou) connects the two movements: John's work is finished, and Jesus's intensifies. The narrative implies that John's fate foreshadows Jesus's own.
13. Jesus's withdrawal (anechōrēsen) upon hearing of John's death reflects grief and possibly a sense that his own time is drawing closer. The erēmon topon ('deserted, isolated place') seeks solitude. The crowds' persistence (ēkolouthēsan... pezē, 'followed on foot') demonstrates their determination — they walked around the lake to reach him. Jesus's desire for solitude is overridden by the needs of the people.
14. The verb esplanchnisthē ('was moved with compassion') is the same visceral word used in 9:36 — a gut-level response to human need that overrides his own grief and desire for solitude. Despite the loss of John and the threat to his own life, Jesus's response to the crowd is not frustration but compassion. He heals tous arrōstous ('the sick, the infirm').
15. The disciples' concern is practical — a large crowd in an isolated area (erēmos topos) with no food as evening approaches. Their solution is dispersal — send them away (apolyson) to fend for themselves. The verb agorasōsin ('might buy') assumes normal economic mechanisms. Jesus will offer a different solution.
16. The emphatic pronoun hymeis ('you yourselves') shifts responsibility to the disciples. The command dote autois hymeis phagein ('you — give them to eat') echoes Elisha's instruction in 2 Kings 4:42-44. The impossibility of the task from a human perspective is the entire point — it requires divine intervention.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 4:42-44. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The disciples' report emphasizes scarcity — ouk echomen ('we do not have') except five loaves (artous, flat bread rounds) and two fish (ichthyas). These were likely small barley loaves and dried fish, a common meal for the poor. The disparity between the tiny provision and the massive need is the setup for the miracle.
18. Jesus's request is simple — pherete moi ('bring them to me'). He does not dismiss the inadequacy of the provision but asks for what is available. The principle: offer what you have to Jesus, however insufficient it seems.
19. The four verbs — labōn ('took'), eulogēsen ('blessed'), klasas ('broke'), edōken ('gave') — form a sequence that will be repeated at the Last Supper (26:26). This eucharistic pattern (take, bless, break, give) shapes early Christian understanding of both miracles and the Lord's Supper. Looking up to heaven (anablepsas eis ton ouranon) signals prayer and divine dependence. The disciples serve as intermediaries — Jesus gives to them, and they distribute to the crowds.
20. The verb echortasthēsan ('were satisfied, were filled') denotes complete satiation, not mere nibbling. The twelve baskets (dōdeka kophinous) of leftovers exceed the original provision — there is more remaining than there was at the start. The kophinos was a wicker basket particularly associated with Jewish travelers. The number twelve likely symbolizes the twelve tribes of Israel — God provides abundantly for his whole people.
21. The count of pentakischilioi andres ('five thousand men/males') follows ancient convention of counting adult males. The addition chōris gynaikōn kai paidiōn ('apart from women and children') indicates the total number was significantly larger. This specification is unique to Matthew among the Synoptics and emphasizes the magnitude of the miracle.
22. The verb ēnagkasen ('compelled, forced, constrained') is unusually strong — Jesus does not suggest but insists that the disciples leave immediately. The urgency may relate to John 6:15, which reports that the crowd wanted to make Jesus king by force after the feeding. Jesus separates the disciples from the politically charged crowd and sends them across the lake.
23. Jesus finally achieves the solitude he sought in verse 13 — but now for prayer rather than rest. The mountain (to oros) connects to the Old Testament pattern of encountering God on mountains (Sinai, Horeb, Carmel). The phrase monos ēn ekei ('he was alone there') creates the setting for the sea-walking miracle — Jesus is on the mountain, the disciples are on the sea, and both are in darkness.
24. The SBLGNT reads stadiou pollous ('many stadia') where some manuscripts have 'in the middle of the sea.' A stadion was approximately 600 feet (185 meters). The participle basanizomenon ('being tortured, battered') is intense — the same word used for human torment (8:6, 29). The wind is enantios ('contrary, opposing'), creating a situation of exhausting, fruitless rowing through the night.
25. The fourth watch (tetartē phylakē) was the Roman time division for 3:00-6:00 AM — the darkest, most exhausting hour of the night. The disciples have been struggling since evening. The phrase peripatōn epi tēn thalassan ('walking on the sea') echoes Job 9:8 (LXX), where God alone 'walks on the waves of the sea.' Jesus does what only God does.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Job 9:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The verb etarachthēsan ('were troubled, were agitated, were terrified') describes deep inner disturbance. The word phantasma ('ghost, apparition, phantom') reflects their inability to process what they are seeing — a human figure walking on water in the dark of night. Their cry (ekraxan) is a scream of terror, not a call for help.
27. Jesus responds euthys ('immediately') to their fear. The phrase egō eimi ('I am' / 'it is I') operates on two levels: a simple identification ('it's me, not a ghost') and a possible echo of God's self-revelation in Exodus 3:14 (egō eimi ho ōn, 'I AM WHO I AM') and Isaiah 43:10 ('I am he'). The command mē phobeisthe ('do not be afraid') is the characteristic divine greeting in theophanies throughout the Old Testament.

27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 43:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. This exchange is unique to Matthew and reveals Peter's character — impulsive faith that acts on what Jesus says. The conditional *ei sy ei* ('if it is you') is not doubt but a test: if Jesus commands and Peter can do it, then the identification is confirmed. The verb *keleuson* ('command') recognizes that Peter cannot walk on water on his own initiative — it requires Jesus's authoritative word.
29. Jesus's one-word command *elthe* ('come') is sufficient. Peter obeys — he climbs out of the boat (*katabas*, 'having come down') and walks on the water (*periepatēsen epi ta hydata*). For a brief time, Peter does the impossible because Jesus commanded it and he obeyed. The phrase *ēlthen pros ton Iēsoun* ('came toward Jesus') shows that the miracle works as long as Peter's focus is on Jesus.
30. The shift is dramatic: *blepōn ton anemon* ('seeing the wind') — Peter's attention moves from Jesus to the storm. Fear replaces faith, and he immediately begins to sink (*katapontizesthai*, 'to be drowned, to sink into the deep'). His cry *kyrie sōson me* ('Lord, save me') is the shortest prayer in the Gospels and echoes the disciples' cry in 8:25. The word *sōson* ('save') again carries both physical and theological weight.
31. Jesus's response is immediate (*eutheōs*) — he does not let Peter drown. The verb *epelabeto* ('seized, caught hold of') describes a firm rescue grip. The address *oligopiste* ('you of little faith') — singular here, applied directly to Peter — is the same word used in 8:26 (plural, to all the disciples). The verb *edistasas* ('doubted, wavered') appears only here and in 28:17 in the New Testament. Peter's faith was real enough to get him out of the boat but insufficient to sustain him through the storm.
32. The wind ceases (*ekopasen*, 'died down, became weary') the moment Jesus and Peter enter the boat — the connection between his presence and the cessation of the storm is implicit. The verb *kopazo* means literally 'to grow weary, to abate,' as if the wind exhausted itself.
33. The verb *prosekynēsan* ('worshipped') here moves beyond the ambiguity of earlier uses (8:2, 9:18) — after witnessing Jesus walk on water and command the wind, the response is worship. The confession *alēthōs theou huios ei* ('truly you are God's Son') is the first time the disciples as a group make this declaration in Matthew. It anticipates Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (16:16). The absence of the article before *theou huios* could mean 'a son of God' or 'the Son of God'; in context, the definite reading is more appropriate.
34. Gennesaret (Gennēsaret) was a fertile plain on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum. The name is related to Kinneret/Chinnereth (Numbers 34:11), the ancient name for the lake itself.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 34:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The verb *epignontes* ('having recognized') suggests Jesus was already known in this area from previous visits. The rapid communication network (*apesteilan eis holēn tēn perichōron*, 'sent into the whole surrounding region') demonstrates the organized response that Jesus's reputation generated.
36. The request to touch *tou kraspedou tou himatiou* ('the fringe/tassel of his cloak') echoes the hemorrhaging woman's action in 9:20. Word of her healing has clearly spread, generating faith that even touching his garment is sufficient. The verb *diesōthēsan* ('were completely healed, were saved through') is a strengthened form of *sōzō* — total restoration, with no partial or failed healings. The chapter ends on a note of abundant, accessible healing power.

15

Summary: *Matthew 15 opens with a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees over ritual purity and human tradition versus divine commandment. Jesus declares that defilement comes from within, not from unwashed hands. He then withdraws to the region of Tyre and Sidon, where a Canaanite woman persistently begs for her daughter's healing — a tense exchange that ends with Jesus commending her great faith. The chapter closes with Jesus healing many on a mountainside by the Sea of Galilee and feeding four thousand men (plus women and children) with seven loaves and a few fish.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Canaanite woman episode is one of the most theologically striking passages in Matthew. Jesus initially seems to refuse her, using the metaphor of children's bread and dogs — yet the woman's witty reply ('even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table') draws from Jesus one of his strongest commendations of faith in the entire Gospel. This Gentile woman succeeds where Israel's leaders have failed. The feeding of the four thousand parallels the feeding of the five thousand (chapter 14) but occurs in predominantly Gentile territory, suggesting the extension of Israel's blessings to the nations.*

Translation Friction: Jesus's statement about being 'sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (v. 24) and the 'dogs' metaphor (v. 26) are difficult for modern readers. We render the Greek faithfully without softening the language. The word kynarion ('little dog, house dog') is a diminutive, but its force remains dismissive. The passage's resolution — healing given on the basis of faith — reframes the entire exchange. The discourse on defilement (vv. 10-20) contains a parenthetical observation that effectively abolishes kosher food laws, though Matthew is less explicit about this than Mark 7:19.

Connections: The handwashing controversy connects to Exodus 30:19-21 and the Pharisaic expansion of priestly purity rules to all Jews. Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13 (lip-service vs. heart-worship) and cites the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12) and its penalty (Exodus 21:17). The Canaanite woman evokes Old Testament encounters with Gentiles (1 Kings 17, Elijah and the widow of Zarephath). The feeding of four thousand parallels 2 Kings 4:42-44 (Elisha feeding one hundred) and the manna narrative of Exodus 16.

¹Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, ²"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." ³He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death.' ⁵But you say, 'Whoever tells his father or mother, "Whatever you might have received from me is a gift to God" — ⁶Honour not his Parent or his parent, he will be free. Thus possess you fashioned the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. ⁷Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said: ⁸"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. ⁹They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of people." ¹⁰Then he called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand: ¹¹It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth — this defiles a person." ¹²Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" ¹³He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind person guides a blind person, both will fall into a pit." ¹⁵Peter responded and said to him, "Explain this parable to us." ¹⁶Jesus said, "Are you still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not understand that everything that enters the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled into the latrine? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and that is what defiles a person. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander. ²⁰These are the things that defile a person. But eating with unwashed hands does not defile a person." ²¹Jesus left that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and kept crying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely tormented by a demon." ²³But he did not answer her a word. His disciples came and urged him, "Send her away, because she keeps crying out after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶He answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, your faith is great! Let it be done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that moment. ²⁹Jesus moved on from there and went along the Sea of Galilee. He went up on the mountain and sat down there. ³⁰Large crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, blind, crippled, mute, and many others, and they placed them at his feet, and he healed them. ³¹The crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel. ³²Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been staying with me for three days now and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry; they might collapse on the way." ³³The disciples said to him, "Where could we get enough bread in this desolate place to feed such a large crowd?" ³⁴Jesus asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish." ³⁵He directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶He took the seven loaves and the fish, and after giving thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ³⁷They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up seven large baskets full of the leftover pieces. ³⁸Those who ate were four thousand men, not counting women and children. ³⁹After sending the crowds away, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The detail 'from Jerusalem' (apo Hierosolymon) signals that this is an official delegation, not local Galilean opponents. Jerusalem was the center of religious authority, and their journey north to confront Jesus implies a deliberate investigation.
2. The 'tradition of the elders' (paradosis ton presbyteron) refers to the oral Torah — interpretive traditions transmitted alongside the written law. Ritual handwashing before meals was not commanded in the Mosaic law but was a Pharisaic extension of priestly purity practices to ordinary Jews. The verb parabainousin ('transgress, cross over') is deliberately strong — they accuse the disciples of violation, not mere oversight.
3. Jesus turns their accusation back on them using the same verb parabainete ('you break'). The contrast is sharp: they charge his disciples with violating human tradition; he charges them with violating God's commandment (entole tou theou). The phrase 'your tradition' (teen paradosin hymon) pointedly shifts ownership — it is their tradition, not God's.
4. Jesus cites two Old Testament texts: Exodus 20:12 (the fifth commandment) and Exodus 21:17 (its judicial penalty). The verb kakologon ('speaks evil of, reviles') is broader than 'curses' — it includes any verbal dishonoring. The death penalty (thanato teleutato) underscores the seriousness with which the Torah treats parental honor.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 21:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The Greek doron ('gift') refers to the practice of qorban — dedicating property or funds to the temple so they cannot be used for other purposes. The irony is that the dedication could be nominal; the person retained the use of the assets while declaring them unavailable for parental support. Jesus is exposing a legal fiction that allows financial self-interest to masquerade as piety.
6. The verb ekyrosate ('you have nullified, voided, made invalid') is a legal term — their tradition has rendered God's commandment legally void. Matthew uses 'word of God' (ton logon tou theou) rather than 'commandment,' broadening the indictment: it is not merely a single rule they have circumvented but God's expressed will.
7. The term hypokritai ('hypocrites') derives from Greek theater, meaning 'actors' — those who perform a role that does not reflect their true character. Jesus applies the term to religious leaders whose outward piety masks disobedience to God's actual commands. The adverb kalos ('rightly, well, fittingly') adds rhetorical force.
8. Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13 following the Septuagint text. The contrast between lips and heart is the core of the hypocrisy charge — external religious performance without internal devotion. The SBLGNT text omits 'draws near to me with their mouth' (found in the KJV, following the fuller Septuagint tradition and some later manuscripts).
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 29:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The adverb maten ('in vain, to no purpose') renders their entire worship project futile. The phrase entalmata anthropon ('commandments of people') directly contrasts with 'commandment of God' in verse 3, completing the rhetorical frame: human tradition has displaced divine command, and the resulting worship is empty.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 29:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Jesus shifts from the Pharisees to the crowd, broadening his audience for a public teaching. The double imperative akouete kai syniete ('listen and understand') demands not just hearing but comprehension — the same call that appears in the parable discourse (13:13-15).
11. The verb koinoi ('makes common, defiles') is a purity term — to make ritually unclean. Jesus reverses the direction of defilement: contamination flows outward from the heart, not inward from food. This principle, if followed to its logical conclusion, dismantles the entire system of dietary purity laws, though Matthew does not make this implication as explicit as Mark 7:19.
12. The verb eskandalisthesan ('were scandalized, took offense') carries the sense of being tripped up, stumbling over something. The disciples' question reveals their concern about the political consequences of offending Jerusalem's delegation.
13. The agricultural metaphor of planting and uprooting echoes Isaiah 5:1-7 (God's vineyard) and Jeremiah 1:10 (prophetic commission to uproot and plant). Jesus declares that the Pharisees' traditions, not having originated with God, will not endure. The phrase 'my heavenly Father' (ho pater mou ho ouranios) asserts Jesus's unique filial relationship.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 5:1-7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 1:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The proverbial saying about blind guides (typhloi hodegoi typhon) is a devastating dismissal of the Pharisees' claim to spiritual authority. The word hodegos ('guide, leader') implies someone who shows the way — their blindness is not physical but spiritual. The 'pit' (bothnon) represents disaster or ruin.

15. Peter's request treats Jesus's statement in verse 11 as a parable (parabole) — an opaque saying requiring explanation. The verb phrasō ('explain, make clear') indicates the disciples did not grasp the revolutionary implications of Jesus's teaching on defilement.
16. The adverb akmen ('still, even now') conveys frustration — after all this time with Jesus, they remain asynetoi ('without understanding, lacking comprehension'). The 'also' (kai) links the disciples' incomprehension to that of the Pharisees and the crowds.
17. Jesus makes his argument crudely physical: food follows a digestive path and exits the body. The word aphedrona ('latrine, toilet') is earthy and deliberate — Jesus is demystifying the Pharisees' elaborate purity system by pointing to basic biology. The implication is that food cannot reach or contaminate the heart.
18. The heart (kardia) in biblical anthropology is the seat of will, thought, and intention — not merely emotion. Jesus locates the source of defilement in the human interior, the center of moral agency. Words reveal the heart's true condition.
19. The vice list moves from internal (dialogismoi ponerōi, 'evil thoughts/reasonings') to external acts. Several of the items echo the Ten Commandments: murder (sixth), adultery (seventh), theft (eighth), false testimony (ninth). The Greek porneiai ('sexual immorality') is broader than 'fornication' and covers any sexual conduct outside God's design. Blasphemiai here likely means 'slander' against others rather than blasphemy against God, given the context of interpersonal sins.
20. Jesus circles back to the Pharisees' original complaint about handwashing (v. 2), now reframing it within his radical redefinition of defilement. The contrast is complete: moral corruption from the heart defiles; ritual omission does not. The adjective aniptoos ('unwashed') appears only here and in Mark 7:2 in the New Testament.
21. The verb anechōresen ('withdrew') suggests deliberate retreat, used previously for Jesus withdrawing from conflict (2:14, 12:15, 14:13). Tyre and Sidon were Gentile coastal cities in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon), outside Jewish territory. This is the only time in Matthew's Gospel that Jesus enters explicitly Gentile land.
22. Matthew calls her 'Canaanite' (Chananaia) — an archaic term evoking Israel's ancient enemies, while Mark 7:26 calls her 'Syrophoenician.' Matthew's choice emphasizes the ethnic and religious gulf between her and Jesus. The imperfect ekrazen ('kept crying') indicates persistent, repeated calling. Her address 'Lord, Son of David' uses the Davidic messianic title — remarkable for a Gentile woman, suggesting she has heard of Jesus's identity.
23. Jesus's silence (ouk apekrithe aute logon, literally 'he did not answer her a word') is striking and deliberate. The disciples' request apolyson auten ('send her away, dismiss her') is ambiguous — it could mean 'grant her request so she'll leave' or 'drive her away.' Their motivation is annoyance, not compassion.
24. The passive apestaleen ('I was sent') points to the Father as the sender, and the restriction 'only' (ei me, 'except') to Israel echoes the mission charge of 10:5-6. This statement reflects Jesus's understanding of his earthly mission's scope within Matthew's Gospel. The universal commission does not come until 28:19. The metaphor of 'lost sheep' (ta probata ta apolalota) recalls Ezekiel 34, where God condemns Israel's shepherds and promises to shepherd the flock himself.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The verb prosekynei ('worshipped, knelt before, prostrated') can indicate full worship or respectful supplication. The imperfect tense suggests ongoing action — she kept prostrating herself. Her plea is reduced to three words in Greek (kyrie, boethei moi) — stripped of all argument, pure appeal to mercy.
26. The diminutive kynariois ('little dogs, household dogs') is slightly softer than the full kyon ('dog'), which was a standard Jewish epithet for Gentiles. But the force is still dismissive — the 'children' (tekna) are Israel, and the Gentiles are compared to household pets. The word artos ('bread') anticipates the feeding miracle later in this chapter. Whether Jesus is testing her faith, teaching the disciples, or expressing genuine reluctance is debated; the narrative resolution suggests the exchange serves to display her extraordinary faith.
27. Her reply is a masterpiece of rhetorical persistence. She accepts the metaphor ('Yes, Lord') but turns it: even within the hierarchy Jesus has described, the dogs receive something. The word psichion ('crumb, small piece') suggests that what she asks for is not the full portion but the overflow — Israel's blessings are so abundant that even the surplus is enough to heal her daughter. She does not challenge Jesus's priority of Israel; she simply claims the excess.
28. The exclamation O gynai ('O woman') with megale sou he pistis ('great is your faith') is one of only two times Jesus explicitly praises someone's faith as 'great' — the other is the centurion, also a Gentile (8:10). The pattern is remarkable: Gentiles display the faith that Israel's leaders lack. The passive genetheto ('let it be done') mirrors the divine creative language of Genesis 1 in the Septuagint. The healing is instantaneous and at a distance, emphasizing the power of the word alone.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The definite article to oros ('the mountain') may indicate a specific well-known location or may simply reflect Semitic narrative style. Jesus sitting (ekatheto) is the posture of a teacher in Jewish tradition. The setting — a mountain by the sea — creates a tableau of authority reminiscent of Moses.
30. The verb erripsan ('threw, cast down') is vivid — the sick were deposited urgently at Jesus's feet. The list of afflictions (lame, blind, crippled, mute) echoes the messianic promises of Isaiah 35:5-6, where the coming of God brings healing to the blind, deaf, lame, and mute. The location in

predominantly Gentile territory gives this healing ministry a universal scope.

- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 35:5-6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** The phrase 'the God of Israel' (ton theon Israel) is significant — if this crowd were Jewish, the phrase would be redundant. Its presence suggests that Matthew understands the crowd as at least partly Gentile, glorifying Israel's God in response to Jesus's miracles. This echoes the prophetic vision of Gentiles coming to worship Israel's God (Isaiah 2:2-4, 60:1-6).
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 2:2-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The verb *splanchnizomai* ('I have compassion') derives from *splanchna* ('intestines, gut') — it describes a visceral, gut-level response, not a mild sentiment. The three-day stay indicates the crowd's persistence in remaining with Jesus despite having no provisions. Jesus takes the initiative here, unlike the feeding of the five thousand where the disciples raised the problem (14:15).
- 33.** Despite having witnessed the feeding of the five thousand (14:13-21), the disciples express the same helplessness. The word *eremia* ('desolate place, wilderness') echoes the wilderness feeding traditions of Exodus 16 (manna) and Numbers 11 (quail). Matthew does not comment on the disciples' apparent failure to remember the previous miracle.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** The diminutive *ichthydia* ('small fish') indicates these are not large catches but modest provisions. The number seven often symbolizes completeness in biblical numerology, contrasting with the five loaves of the earlier feeding.
- 35.** The verb *parangeelas* ('commanded, directed') carries authority. The verb *anapesein* ('to recline, sit down') is the standard term for taking a meal position. Unlike the five thousand fed on grass (14:19), this crowd sits on bare ground (teen gen), consistent with a more desolate location.
- 36.** The sequence — took, gave thanks (*eucharistesas*), broke, gave — follows the same pattern as the feeding of the five thousand (14:19) and anticipates the Last Supper (26:26). The verb *eucharisteo* ('to give thanks') is the root of 'Eucharist,' though Matthew does not draw explicit sacramental connections here. The disciples serve as intermediaries, distributing what Jesus provides.
- 37.** The verb *echortasthesan* ('were satisfied, were filled to satisfaction') indicates not mere survival but abundance. The word *spyridas* ('large baskets') differs from the *kophinous* ('small baskets') of the five thousand feeding (14:20). The *spyris* was a large rope basket, possibly big enough to hold a person (cf. Acts 9:25, where Paul is lowered in a *spyris*). Seven full large baskets of surplus from seven loaves declares overwhelming abundance.
- 38.** As with the feeding of the five thousand (14:21), only men (*andres*) are counted; the total number including women and children would have been significantly larger. The number four thousand, combined with the predominantly Gentile setting, may carry symbolic weight — four often represents universality (four corners of the earth, four winds).
- 39.** The SBLGNT reads 'Magadan' (Magadan) rather than 'Magdala' (as in some manuscripts and the KJV). The location is uncertain — it may be the same as Magdala (home of Mary Magdalene) on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, or a variant name for the same area. Mark's parallel (8:10) reads 'Dalmanutha,' another otherwise unknown location. Jesus returns from Gentile territory to the Jewish side of the lake.

16

Summary: *Matthew 16 opens with the Pharisees and Sadducees testing Jesus by demanding a sign from heaven. Jesus refuses, offering only 'the sign of Jonah,' and warns the disciples about the 'leaven' of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The chapter reaches its climax at Caesarea Philippi, where Peter confesses Jesus as 'the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus responds with the famous declaration about building his church on 'this rock' and giving Peter the 'keys of the kingdom of heaven.' Immediately after this high point, Jesus makes his first explicit prediction of his suffering, death, and resurrection — and when Peter objects, Jesus rebukes him with the stunning words, 'Get behind me, Satan.' The chapter concludes with the cost of discipleship: 'Whoever wants to save his life will lose it.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Caesarea Philippi was a deliberately chosen setting — a Gentile city at the foot of a cliff face with a cave shrine to Pan, near temples to Augustus Caesar. Against this backdrop of pagan worship and imperial power, Peter's confession that Jesus is 'the Christ, the Son of the living God' is a political and theological declaration. The rapid reversal from Peter as recipient of divine revelation (v. 17) to Peter as mouthpiece of Satan (v. 23) is one of the most dramatic character moments in the Gospels. The 'keys' saying and the 'binding and loosing' language have generated*

centuries of ecclesiastical debate between traditions claiming Petrine authority and those reading the passage differently.

Translation Friction: *The identity of 'this rock' (v. 18) — whether it refers to Peter himself, his confession, or Christ — is one of the most debated questions in New Testament interpretation. We translate the Greek without resolving the ambiguity. The wordplay between Petros (Peter's name) and petra (rock) is evident in Greek but involves a grammatical gender shift. 'Gates of Hades' (v. 18) is rendered literally; it refers to the power of death, not to a geographic location. Jesus's command to silence about his messiahship (v. 20) reflects what scholars call the 'messianic secret.'*

Connections: *The sign of Jonah connects to Jonah 1:17 and Matthew 12:39-40. Peter's confession echoes Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14 (Davidic sonship). The 'keys' imagery draws on Isaiah 22:22 (the key of the house of David given to Eliakim). 'Binding and loosing' was rabbinic language for authoritative legal rulings. The first passion prediction introduces the pattern of prediction-misunderstanding-teaching that structures chapters 16-20. The cross-bearing language (v. 24) anticipates the crucifixion narrative of chapters 26-27.*

¹The Pharisees and Sadducees came and tested Jesus by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. ²He answered them, "When evening comes you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' ³And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to read the appearance of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times." ⁴An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." Then he left them and went away. ⁵When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, "Watch out, and guard yourselves against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ⁷They discussed this among themselves, saying, "It is because we did not bring any bread." ⁸Aware of this, Jesus said, "You of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? ⁹Do you still not understand? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you collected? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many large baskets you collected? ¹¹How do you not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Guard yourselves against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ¹²Then they understood that he had not told them to guard against the leaven of bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. ¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴They said, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰Then he strictly ordered the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. ²¹From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, for you are not thinking the things of God but the things of people." ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit a person to gain the whole world but forfeit his soul? Or what will a person give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will repay each person according to what they have done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The unusual alliance of Pharisees and Sadducees — normally theological opponents — united against Jesus signals the depth of opposition. The participle *peirazontes* ('testing') indicates hostile intent, not genuine inquiry. The phrase 'sign from heaven' (*semeion ek tou ouranou*) demands a cosmic spectacle beyond earthly miracles, implying their dissatisfaction with the healings and feedings they already knew about.

2. Verses 2b-3 are enclosed in brackets in the SBLGNT, indicating textual uncertainty — they are absent from important early manuscripts including Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. However, they are widely attested in other traditions. We include the text following the SBLGNT's bracketed reading. The weather proverb about red sky at evening is a folk observation still proverbial today.
3. The contrast is devastating; they can interpret weather patterns but are blind to the eschatological moment (ta semeia ton kairon, 'the signs of the times'). The word kairos ('appointed time, season') differs from chronos ('chronological time') — it refers to the decisive moment in God's plan. The SBLGNT does not include 'hypocrites' (hypokritai), which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV tradition.
4. The phrase 'adulterous generation' (genea moichalis) uses the Old Testament prophetic metaphor of Israel as an unfaithful spouse (Hosea 1-3, Ezekiel 16). Their sign-seeking is spiritual infidelity. The 'sign of Jonah' was explained in 12:40 as the Son of Man's three days in the earth, pointing to death and resurrection. Jesus's abrupt departure (katalipan autous apeelthen) is a dramatic rejection of their demand.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 1-3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The detail about forgetting bread sets up Jesus's teaching about 'leaven.' The irony is thick — they have just witnessed two miraculous feedings and are worried about bread supplies.
6. The double imperative horate kai prosechete ('watch out and guard') indicates urgent warning. Leaven (zyme) in Jewish tradition often symbolizes corruption — a small amount permeates the whole batch (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8). Mark's parallel (8:15) includes 'the leaven of Herod' instead of the Sadducees.
7. The verb diologizonto ('they were reasoning, discussing') shows the disciples taking Jesus's metaphorical warning literally. Their fixation on physical bread after two miraculous feedings demonstrates the obtuseness that Jesus will address in the following verses.
8. The term oligopistoi ('you of little faith') is distinctive to Matthew (6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8) and describes not the absence of faith but its inadequacy. The participle gnous ('having known, perceiving') suggests either supernatural knowledge or simply overhearing their conversation.
9. Jesus appeals to their own experience. The word kophinous ('baskets') specifies the smaller Jewish provision baskets used at the feeding of the five thousand (14:20), distinct from the larger spyridas of 15:37. The parallel structure of the questions builds a rhetorical case against their forgetfulness.
10. The distinction between kophinous (v. 9, smaller baskets) and spyridas (larger baskets) is maintained precisely, confirming that Jesus and Matthew distinguish between the two feeding events. The rhetorical question expects the answer: 'We collected twelve baskets and seven baskets — so provision is obviously not the issue.'
11. The exasperated pos ou noeite ('how do you not understand') brings the rebuke to its peak. Jesus repeats the warning, now clarifying that 'leaven' is metaphorical. The disciples' confusion illustrates a recurring theme in Matthew: proximity to Jesus does not automatically produce comprehension.
12. Matthew, unlike Mark (8:21), resolves the disciples' confusion — they finally understand. The word didache ('teaching, doctrine') identifies the 'leaven' as the Pharisees' and Sadducees' interpretive tradition that, like yeast, invisibly permeates and corrupts. Mark 8:15 identifies the leaven as that of Herod rather than the Sadducees.
13. Caesarea Philippi (modern Banias) was located at the base of Mount Hermon, rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch and named for Caesar Augustus. It contained a grotto sacred to Pan and various pagan temples. The setting for the climactic identity question is deliberately Gentile. Jesus uses the third person 'Son of Man' (ton huion tou anthropou) — a title drawn from Daniel 7:13-14 that was his preferred self-designation.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:13-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The popular identifications are all prophetic figures, indicating that the crowds recognize Jesus as a prophet but not as the Messiah. The mention of Jeremiah is unique to Matthew — Jeremiah was the weeping prophet who predicted the destruction of the temple and the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34), themes central to Matthew's portrayal of Jesus. Elijah's appearance reflects Malachi 4:5's promise of Elijah's return before the day of the LORD.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 31:31-34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 4:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The emphatic pronoun hymeis ('you yourselves') draws a sharp contrast between public opinion and the disciples' own conviction. This is the hinge question of the entire Gospel — everything that follows depends on the answer. The present tense legete ('do you say') demands a current, personal declaration.
16. Peter's confession combines two titles: 'the Christ' (ho Christos, the Messiah/Anointed One) and 'the Son of the living God' (ho huios tou theou tou zontos). The latter goes beyond messianic expectation to assert a unique divine relationship. The qualifier 'living' (tou zontos) distinguishes the true God from the dead idols of the surrounding pagan temples at Caesarea Philippi — a pointed contrast in this setting. Matthew's version is fuller than Mark's simple 'You are the Christ' (Mark 8:29).
17. The patronymic Bariona ('son of Jonah') uses the Aramaic bar ('son') — one of the few Aramaic forms preserved in Matthew. 'Flesh and blood' (sarx kai haima) is a Semitic idiom for human beings in their natural capacity. The point is that Peter's confession came not from human reasoning but from divine revelation (apokalypsis). This makes Peter both uniquely blessed and uniquely responsible.

- 18.** The wordplay between Petros (Peter's name, masculine) and petra ('rock,' feminine) is central but debated. In Aramaic, the underlying word kepha would be identical in both cases, making the connection tighter than in Greek. Whether 'this rock' refers to Peter, his confession, or Christ himself has been disputed since the patristic era. The Greek ekklesia ('assembly, church') appears in the Gospels only here and in 18:17 — it translates the Hebrew qahal, the assembly of God's people. 'Gates of Hades' (pylai hadou) refers to the power of death, not to a place of punishment. The image is of a fortress: death itself cannot breach the community Jesus builds.
- 19.** The 'keys' (kleidas) image draws on Isaiah 22:22, where the key of the house of David is placed on the shoulder of Eliakim the steward — authority to open and shut, admit and exclude. 'Binding and loosing' (deo and lyo) was standard rabbinic terminology for declaring something forbidden or permitted. The authority given to Peter here is extended to the whole community in 18:18. The periphrastic future perfect construction (estai dedemenon, 'will have been bound') may indicate that earthly decisions ratify what heaven has already determined, rather than heaven following earth's lead.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 22:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 20.** The verb diesteilato ('he strictly ordered, charged') is emphatic. The command to secrecy about his messianic identity — the so-called 'messianic secret' — reflects Jesus's concern that the title 'Christ' carried political and military expectations he did not intend to fulfill. The immediately following passion prediction (v. 21) redefines what messiahship means.
- 21.** The phrase apo tote ('from that time') marks a major structural transition in Matthew (cf. 4:17). The verb dei ('it is necessary, must') indicates divine necessity, not mere fate — this is God's plan. The triad 'elders, chief priests, and scribes' represents the three components of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. The passive egerthenai ('be raised') implies God as the agent of resurrection. This is the first of three passion predictions (16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17-19), each becoming progressively more detailed.
- 22.** The verb proslabomenos ('took aside, drew to himself') suggests Peter pulled Jesus aside privately. The audacity of a disciple rebuking (epitiman) his teacher is remarkable. The phrase hileos soi is an idiomatic expression meaning 'may God be merciful to you' or 'God forbid' — a strong rejection of what Jesus has just said. Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (v. 16) has not yet accommodated a suffering Messiah.
- 23.** The address 'Satan' (Satana) does not identify Peter as literally the devil but recognizes that Peter's words echo the tempter's offer of glory without suffering (4:8-10). The word skandalon ('stumbling block, snare, offense') means something that causes someone to fall — Peter, who was just called the rock of the church, is now called a stumbling stone. The verb phroneis ('you are thinking, you are minded') indicates that Peter's entire orientation is wrong — he is operating from a human framework, not a divine one.
- 24.** The three imperatives — deny (aparnesastho), take up (arato), and follow (akoloutheito) — form a sequence of escalating commitment. 'Deny himself' (aparnesastho heautou) means to renounce one's own claims, rights, and self-interest. The cross (stauros) was an instrument of Roman execution — for Jesus's original audience, this was not a metaphor for mild inconvenience but for lethal suffering and public shame. The present imperative akoloutheitho ('keep following') indicates continuous, ongoing discipleship.
- 25.** The word psyche means both 'life' and 'soul' — the ambiguity is intentional. On one level, clinging to physical survival leads to spiritual death; on another, grasping at self-preservation in any form leads to ultimate loss. The paradox is sharpened by the phrase 'for my sake' (heneken emou) — Jesus makes himself the criterion that determines whether loss becomes gain.
- 26.** Here psyche is rendered 'soul' rather than 'life' because the context shifts to eternal valuation — what is the self ultimately worth? The verb zemiothee ('to suffer loss, to forfeit') is a commercial term: it frames the soul as an asset that can be lost in a transaction. The word antallagma ('exchange price, ransom') asks what could possibly serve as currency to buy back a forfeited soul. The answer is: nothing. The whole world is insufficient.
- 27.** The Son of Man who has just predicted his suffering and death now claims future glory, angelic retinue, and judicial authority. The phrase 'in the glory of his Father' (en tee doxe tou patros autou) claims a share in the Father's own divine splendor. The language of repaying 'according to their deeds' (kata teen praxin autou) echoes Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12. The combination of suffering-then-glory is the pattern Jesus has been establishing since verse 21.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 62:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 24:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** The solemn amen lego hymin ('truly I tell you') introduces a saying that has challenged interpreters for centuries. 'Taste death' (geusontai thanatou) is a Semitic idiom for experiencing death. What event Jesus refers to is debated: the Transfiguration (which immediately follows in chapter 17), the resurrection, Pentecost, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, or the ongoing expansion of God's kingdom. The placement immediately before the Transfiguration narrative suggests Matthew understood at least a partial fulfillment in that event.

17

Summary: *Matthew 17 opens with the Transfiguration, where Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain and is transformed before them — his face shining like the sun, his clothes becoming brilliant white. Moses and Elijah appear alongside him, and a voice from the cloud declares, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.' After descending, Jesus heals a demon-possessed boy the disciples could not cure, rebuking their lack of faith. He makes his second passion prediction, and the chapter closes with the unusual incident of the temple tax, where Jesus instructs Peter to find a coin in a fish's mouth.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Transfiguration is the most overtly theophanic scene in the Synoptic Gospels. Every element is loaded with Old Testament resonance: the high mountain (Sinai), the bright cloud (the shekinah glory), the voice from the cloud (the divine voice at Sinai), Moses (the law), and Elijah (the prophets). The scene reveals Jesus's true nature momentarily unveiled — what the disciples glimpse on the mountain is the glory that was hidden beneath the ordinary human appearance. Peter's offer to build three tabernacles (skenas) evokes the Feast of Tabernacles and the desire to prolong the experience of divine presence. The command 'Listen to him' echoes Deuteronomy 18:15, the promise of the prophet like Moses.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'high mountain' is unspecified — traditionally Mount Tabor, but Mount Hermon (near Caesarea Philippi) is geographically more likely given the preceding narrative. The phrase 'if you have faith as small as a mustard seed' (v. 20) appears in some manuscripts but is bracketed or absent in others; we follow the SBLGNT. Verse 21 is absent from the earliest manuscripts and is not included in the SBLGNT. The temple tax episode (vv. 24-27) raises questions about Jesus's relationship to the temple establishment and whether the miracle actually occurred — Matthew narrates the instruction but not the execution.*

Connections: *The Transfiguration connects to Exodus 24:15-18 and 34:29-35 (Moses on Sinai, his face shining), 1 Kings 19:8-18 (Elijah on Horeb), and Daniel 7:9 (the Ancient of Days with white garments). The divine voice combines Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 42:1, and Deuteronomy 18:15. The failed exorcism connects to the disciples' authority given in 10:1. The second passion prediction advances the pattern from 16:21. The temple tax discussion connects to Exodus 30:11-16 (the half-shekel tax for the tabernacle).*

¹After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³And there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Peter responded and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will make three shelters here — one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him!" ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown and were terrified. ⁷Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up, and do not be afraid." ⁸When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself, alone. ⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." ¹⁰The disciples asked him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹¹He answered, "Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things. ¹²But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. In the same way, the Son of Man is also going to suffer at their hands." ¹³Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist. ¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man came up to him, kneeling before him ¹⁵Indeed, declaring, Lord, have mercy on my son — since he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him." ¹⁷Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." ¹⁸Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed from that moment. ¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁰He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will

be impossible for you." ²²While they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of people, ²³They will kill him, and the third day he will be raised again. Then they were exceeding sorry. ²⁴When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?" ²⁵He said, "Yes." When he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect tolls or taxes — from their own sons or from others?" ²⁶When he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. ²⁷But so that we do not cause them to stumble, go to the sea, cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. When you open its mouth, you will find a four-drachma coin. Take that and give it to them for me and for you."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'six days' may echo Exodus 24:16, where the cloud covered Mount Sinai for six days before God spoke to Moses on the seventh. Peter, James, and John form an inner circle who witness events hidden from the other disciples (cf. the raising of Jairus's daughter, Mark 5:37, and the agony in Gethsemane, 26:37). The phrase *kat' idian* ('by themselves, privately') emphasizes the exclusive, revelatory nature of the experience.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 24:16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The verb *metemorphothe* ('was transfigured, was transformed') describes a change of form (*morphe*), not merely appearance. The passive voice implies divine agency — God transforms Jesus. The shining face echoes Moses descending from Sinai with radiant skin (Exodus 34:29-35), but here the glory is Jesus's own, not reflected. The similes — face like the sun, clothes like light — push human language to its limits describing divine splendor.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 34:29-35. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Moses represents the Torah (the Law) and Elijah represents the Prophets — together they embody the entirety of Old Testament revelation. Both experienced theophanies on mountains (Sinai/Horeb). Both had unusual departures from earthly life (Moses's hidden burial, Deuteronomy 34:5-6; Elijah's ascent in a chariot of fire, 2 Kings 2:11). The verb *syllalountes* ('conversing with') indicates an active exchange, not mere presence. Luke 9:31 specifies they discussed Jesus's 'departure' (*exodus*) in Jerusalem.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 34:5-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 2:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word *skenas* ('tents, shelters, tabernacles') evokes the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), when Israel dwelt in temporary shelters commemorating the wilderness wandering and God's presence among them. Peter's instinct to build three shelters may reflect a desire to prolong the moment of divine encounter, or an attempt to honor all three figures equally — a misunderstanding the divine voice will correct. Matthew's 'if you wish' (*ei theleis*) is more deferential than Mark's account, which notes Peter did not know what to say (Mark 9:6).
5. The bright cloud (*nephele photeina*) is the *shekinah* — the visible manifestation of God's presence that led Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22) and filled the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 40:34-35, 1 Kings 8:10-11). The verb *epeskiasen* ('overshadowed') is the same word used of the Spirit overshadowing Mary in Luke 1:35. The divine voice repeats the baptismal declaration (3:17) with the crucial addition *akouete autou* ('listen to him'), echoing Deuteronomy 18:15 — the promise that God would raise up a prophet like Moses whom the people must heed. This command elevates Jesus above Moses and Elijah.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 13:21-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 40:34-35 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 8:10-11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 18:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Falling facedown (*epesan epi prosopon auton*) is the standard Old Testament response to a theophany — encountering the unmediated presence of God (cf. Genesis 17:3, Ezekiel 1:28, Daniel 8:17). The adverb *sphodra* ('extremely, greatly') intensifies their fear. This is not reverent awe but overwhelming terror in the presence of the divine.

6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 17:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:28. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 8:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The physical touch (*hapsamenos auton*) bridges the gap between divine encounter and human comfort. The command 'do not be afraid' (*me phobeisthe*) echoes the angelic reassurance given throughout Scripture when humans encounter the divine (Genesis 15:1, Daniel 10:12, Luke 1:30). Jesus mediates between the overwhelming divine presence and his terrified friends.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 10:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The phrase 'Jesus himself, alone' (*auton Iesoun monon*) is theologically precise — Moses and Elijah have departed, and only Jesus remains. The Law and the Prophets have borne their witness and yielded the stage to the one they pointed toward. The disciples' gaze is redirected to Jesus alone, fulfilling the command 'Listen to him.'
9. The word *horama* ('vision') is Matthew's term for what they witnessed — it classifies the Transfiguration as a revelatory experience. The command to silence is tied to the resurrection: only after the cross and empty tomb will the Transfiguration be properly understood. Before the resurrection, glory without suffering would feed exactly the wrong kind of messianic expectation.
10. The disciples' question arises naturally from what they have just seen: if Elijah has appeared on the mountain, what about the scribal teaching (based on Malachi 4:5) that Elijah must return before the messianic age? The word *proton* ('first') reflects the expectation that Elijah's return would precede and prepare for the Messiah's arrival.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Malachi 4:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Jesus affirms the scribal expectation: Elijah will come and 'restore all things' (*apokatastisei panta*). The verb *apokathistemi* ('to restore, to reestablish') implies returning something to its original state. In the Malachi context, Elijah's mission is to turn the hearts of fathers to children and children to fathers before the great day of the LORD.
12. Jesus identifies John the Baptist as the Elijah who was to come — a typological, not literal, fulfillment. The phrase 'they did not recognize him' (*ouk epegnosan auton*) parallels Israel's historic failure to recognize its prophets. The ominous parallel 'in the same way the Son of Man is also going to suffer' links John's fate (beheading by Herod, 14:1-12) to Jesus's approaching passion. The pattern is clear: Israel rejects its prophets, and it will reject its Messiah.
13. Matthew, characteristically, resolves the disciples' confusion (cf. 16:12). The verb *synekan* ('they understood') indicates genuine comprehension. The identification of John with Elijah is not reincarnation but prophetic typology — John came 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' (Luke 1:17).
14. The descent from the mountain to the crowd creates a sharp narrative contrast — from divine glory to human suffering. The participle *gonypeton* ('kneeling') indicates a posture of urgent supplication. The scene parallels the descent of Moses from Sinai to find Israel's failure below (Exodus 32).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *seleniazetai* (literally 'is moon-struck') was associated with epileptic-like seizures, believed in the ancient world to be influenced by the moon. We render it 'has seizures' since modern English 'lunatic' carries different connotations. Matthew retains both the medical description (seizures) and the spiritual diagnosis (demon-possession, v. 18), without reducing one to the other. The dangerous symptoms — falling into fire and water — indicate the severity and life-threatening nature of the condition.
16. The disciples' failure is significant because Jesus had explicitly given them authority over unclean spirits (10:1). The verb *edyneethesan* ('they were able') with the negation *ouk* indicates inability, not unwillingness. The father's turning from the disciples to Jesus underscores the gap between delegated authority and its source.
17. The exclamation echoes Moses's frustration with Israel in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 32:5, 20). The adjective *diestrammene* ('twisted, perverted, distorted') describes a generation that has bent away from its proper orientation toward God. The double 'how long' (*heos pote*) expresses both exhaustion and anticipation of departure. The rebuke is directed broadly — at the disciples, the crowd, the entire generation — not just the father.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 32:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *epetimesen* ('rebuked') is a word of authoritative command, the same term used for rebuking the wind and sea (8:26). The healing is instantaneous — 'from that very hour' (*apo tes horas ekeines*) — and requires no ritual, no incantation, only Jesus's word of command. The contrast with the disciples' failure is total.

19. The private setting (kat' idian) suggests the disciples are embarrassed by their public failure. Their question is honest: they had been given authority (10:1) and had exercised it successfully (cf. Luke 10:17), so what went wrong? The answer in the next verse will locate the problem in their faith, not their authority.
20. The word oligopistian ('littleness of faith') is the noun form of the adjective oligopistos used throughout Matthew. The mustard seed was proverbially the smallest seed in Palestinian agriculture. The paradox is deliberate: their faith does not need to be large — even the smallest genuine faith can accomplish the impossible. 'This mountain' (to orei touto) may gesture toward the mountain they have just descended, or may simply be a proverbial expression for any insurmountable obstacle.
21. Verse 21 is absent from the earliest and most reliable Greek manuscripts, including Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and is not included in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears to have been added from Mark 9:29 in later manuscripts. The KJV includes it because it follows the Textus Receptus tradition. We omit it following the SBLGNT.
22. The verb systrefomenon ('gathering, assembling') suggests the disciples came together, possibly after dispersal. The verb paradidosthai ('to be delivered, to be handed over, to be betrayed') is a key passion term — the same word used for Judas's betrayal (26:15-16) and for God 'handing over' Jesus (Romans 8:32). The wordplay between 'Son of Man' (huios tou anthropou) and 'hands of people' (cheiras anthron) creates a bitter irony: the quintessential human will be killed by humans.
23. This second passion prediction (cf. 16:21) is briefer and more blunt than the first — no specification of who will kill him, just the stark 'they will kill him.' The passive 'will be raised' (egertheesetai) again implies God as agent. The disciples' response — deep grief (elypeethesan sphodra) rather than Peter's rebuke of 16:22 — suggests they are beginning to accept what Jesus is saying, even if they do not fully understand it.
24. The didrachma was a two-drachma coin equivalent to the half-shekel temple tax required annually of every Jewish male aged twenty and above (Exodus 30:11-16). The tax supported the daily operations of the Jerusalem temple. The collectors' question implies uncertainty about whether Jesus would comply — his stance toward the temple was already controversial.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 30:11-16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Peter answers affirmatively without consulting Jesus. The verb proephthasen ('anticipated, spoke first') indicates Jesus raised the topic before Peter could report the conversation, displaying supernatural awareness. The analogy is straightforward: kings tax their subjects, not their own family. The implication — that Jesus as God's Son is exempt from a tax paid to God's temple — is a subtle Christological claim.
26. The conclusion is logical: if kings tax outsiders, not their children, then the Son of God is exempt from the tax levied for God's house. The adjective eleutheroi ('free, exempt') carries both legal (exempt from tax) and theological (free as sons) force. This is one of the subtlest Christological declarations in Matthew — Jesus claims the status of God's Son through an analogy rather than a direct statement.
27. Despite being exempt, Jesus pays the tax 'so that we do not cause them to stumble' (hina me skandalisomen autous) — the same concern for others' conscience that Paul will later develop (Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 8). The stater (stateera) was a four-drachma coin — exactly enough for two persons' temple tax. The miraculous provision of the coin in the fish's mouth is unique to Matthew and has no parallel elsewhere in the Gospels. Notably, Matthew does not narrate the execution of the miracle — only the instruction. Peter's inclusion ('for me and for you') underscores his special role as Jesus's representative.

18

Summary: *Matthew 18 is the fourth major discourse in Matthew's Gospel, focused on relationships within the community of disciples. It opens with the question 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' and Jesus's answer: a child. The chapter addresses the seriousness of causing others to stumble, the parable of the lost sheep, procedures for resolving conflict within the community, the authority of binding and loosing given to the assembled church, the promise of Jesus's presence wherever two or three gather, and Peter's question about the limits of forgiveness. The discourse climaxes with the parable of the unforgiving servant, whose enormous debt is forgiven by his master only for him to refuse mercy to a fellow servant who owes him a trivial sum.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains Matthew's only other use of ekklesia ('church,' also in 16:18), here referring not to a universal institution but to a local assembly with authority to adjudicate disputes. The forgiveness teaching is radical — Peter's suggestion of 'seven times' already exceeds normal rabbinic expectations, but Jesus's 'seventy-seven times' (or 'seventy times seven') demolishes all counting. The parable of the unforgiving servant makes the theological logic explicit: those who have received immeasurable forgiveness from God are obligated to extend proportional forgiveness to others. The chapter's movement from the greatness of children to the mechanics of community discipline to unlimited forgiveness creates a coherent vision of kingdom community.*

Translation Friction: The 'stumbling block' passage (vv. 6-9) uses hyperbolic language about millstones, cutting off hands, and plucking out eyes that must be read as deliberate exaggeration for rhetorical force, not literal instruction. The church discipline procedure (vv. 15-17) ending in treating someone 'as a Gentile and a tax collector' is ironic in a Gospel where Jesus befriends precisely those people. The debt figures in the parable are deliberately extreme — ten thousand talents is an astronomically impossible sum, making the contrast with one hundred denarii all the more devastating.

Connections: The child as model of greatness inverts the disciples' question and connects to 19:13-15. The lost sheep parable parallels Luke 15:3-7 but is applied differently — in Luke it is about seeking sinners, in Matthew about caring for vulnerable community members. The binding and loosing authority (v. 18) extends what was given to Peter in 16:19 to the whole community. 'Seventy-seven times' (v. 22) may echo Genesis 4:24, where Lamech boasts of seventy-sevenfold vengeance — Jesus inverts the principle from vengeance to forgiveness. The unforgiving servant parable connects to the Lord's Prayer petition 'forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors' (6:12).

1At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2He called a child over and placed him in the middle of them 3Said, truly I tell you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you will not enter into heaven's kingdom. 4Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. 6But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble — it would be better for that person to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the open sea. 7Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come, but woe to the person through whom the stumbling block comes. 8If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. 9And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of Gehenna. 10"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father who is in heaven. 12What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders off, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go search for the one that wandered away? 13And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that did not wander off. 14In the same way, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost. 15"If your brother sins against you, go and point out the fault to him privately, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother back. 16But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you, so that every matter may be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses. 17If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them." 21Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how many times will my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. 23"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24When he began to settle them, one was brought to him who owed ten thousand talents. 25Since he could not repay, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and everything he had, in order to make payment. 26So the servant fell down and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you everything.' 27Moved with compassion, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the loan. 28But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe!' 29So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you.' 30But he refused and went and threw him into prison until he should pay back what was owed. 31When his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had taken place. 32Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' 34And in anger his master handed him over to the jailers to

be tortured until he should repay all that was owed. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The question about rank (tis ara meizon, 'who then is greatest') reveals the disciples' persistent misunderstanding of kingdom values. The particle ara ('then') connects this to the preceding events — perhaps Peter's special role in chapter 16 or the inner circle's experience on the mountain in chapter 17 has provoked a status competition. This question provides the occasion for the entire discourse.
2. The word paidion ('child, little child') refers to a young child, not an infant. Jesus uses a visual object lesson — the child stands before the disciples as a living illustration. In the ancient world, children had no social status, no legal standing, and no claim to honor. Setting a child in the center of a discussion about greatness is a deliberate inversion.
3. The verb straphete ('turn, turn around') implies a fundamental reorientation — not merely adding humility to existing ambition but reversing direction entirely. The double negative ou me ('never, absolutely not') is the strongest negation possible in Greek. Jesus does not answer the question 'Who is the greatest?' but instead challenges the premise: without becoming like children, they will not even enter the kingdom, let alone rank within it.
4. The verb tapeinosei ('will humble') is active, not passive — it requires deliberate self-lowering. The child models not innocence or simplicity (neither is the point) but lack of status. The child has no accomplishments, no rank, no claim. Whoever voluntarily occupies that position — expecting nothing, claiming nothing — is, paradoxically, the greatest.
5. The verb dexetai ('welcomes, receives') means to accept someone into one's care and fellowship. The phrase 'in my name' (epi to onomati mou) means on the basis of allegiance to Jesus. Jesus identifies himself with the lowest-status members of the community — to welcome a child (or anyone without social power) is to welcome Christ himself. This principle is expanded in 25:31-46.
6. The 'little ones' (ton mikron touton) shifts from literal children to vulnerable believers within the community. The verb skandalise ('to cause to stumble, to lead into sin') is the same root as 'stumbling block' in 16:23. The mylos onikos ('donkey millstone') is the large stone turned by a donkey, as opposed to the smaller hand-mill — large enough to ensure drowning. The image is deliberately gruesome: causing a vulnerable believer to fall away from faith is worse than a violent death.
7. The exclamation ouai ('woe') is a prophetic warning of judgment, not merely an expression of sorrow. The word ananke ('necessity, inevitability') acknowledges that in a fallen world, stumbling blocks are unavoidable — but this inevitability does not excuse the individual who serves as the instrument of harm. The tension between divine sovereignty (it must happen) and human responsibility (woe to the person) is maintained without resolution.
8. This saying parallels 5:29-30 but extends from eye and hand to include the foot. The language is hyperbolic — Jesus is not commanding literal self-mutilation but emphasizing the radical seriousness of anything that leads to sin. 'Eternal fire' (to pyr to aionion) uses aionios, which corresponds to the Hebrew olam — a duration whose end is beyond sight. The contrast between 'life' (zoe) and 'eternal fire' frames the ultimate stakes.
9. Here Matthew uses geenna ('Gehenna') rather than 'eternal fire' — Gehenna refers to the Valley of Hinnom (ge-hinnom) south of Jerusalem, associated with child sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 7:31) and later with divine judgment. By Jesus's time it had become a metaphor for the place of final punishment. We preserve 'Gehenna' rather than using 'hell,' which carries accumulated English connotations beyond the original term.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 23:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 7:31. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb kataphronesete ('despise, look down on') literally means to 'think down upon' — to regard as insignificant. The reference to 'their angels' (hoi angeloi auton) is the clearest New Testament basis for the concept of guardian angels. The phrase 'continually see the face of my Father' (dia pantos blepousin to prosopon tou patros mou) indicates these angels have direct, uninterrupted access to God — the highest court privilege, reserved for those with immediate access to the king. The little ones have powerful advocates.
11. Verse 11 is absent from the earliest manuscripts (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus) and is not included in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears to have been imported from Luke 19:10 by later scribes. We omit it following the SBLGNT.
12. The opening question 'What do you think?' (ti hymin dokei) draws the audience into the parable as participants. The verb planetee ('wanders off, goes astray') can refer to both physical wandering and spiritual error (the English 'planet' derives from the same root — 'wanderer'). Unlike Luke's version (15:3-7), which addresses Pharisees about seeking sinners, Matthew's context applies the parable to the care of vulnerable community members ('these little ones').
13. The conditional 'if he finds it' (ean genetai heurein auto) introduces a note of realism — finding is not guaranteed. But the joy when it happens is disproportionate to the arithmetic: one sheep out of a hundred. This disproportion reveals the heart of God toward the vulnerable and lost. The solemn 'truly I tell you' (amen lego hymin) elevates the parable's conclusion to authoritative teaching.
14. The phrase 'the will of your Father' (thelema emprosthen tou patros hymon) uses the Semitic idiom 'will before' — literally 'it is not will before your Father,' meaning 'it is not your Father's desire.' The verb apoletai ('be lost, perish, be destroyed') carries both temporal (wandering from the community) and eternal (final destruction) connotations. The application is clear: the community must pursue its wandering members because God

does not want any of them lost.

15. The phrase 'against you' (eis se) is in brackets in the SBLGNT, indicating textual uncertainty — some manuscripts omit it, making the passage about any sin rather than personal offense. The verb elegxon ('point out, reprove, convict') implies direct, honest confrontation — not gossip, not avoidance, not public shaming. The verb ekerdesas ('you have won, gained') treats the restoration of the relationship as a profit or gain. The procedure begins with the smallest possible circle: one on one.
16. The escalation from private to semi-private follows the legal principle of Deuteronomy 19:15, where two or three witnesses are required to establish a charge. The phrase epi stomatos ('by the mouth of') is a Septuagint quotation. The witnesses serve a dual purpose: to verify the original confrontation was fair and to add weight to the appeal for repentance.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 19:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The verb parakouse ('refuses to listen, disregards') is stronger than mere failure to hear — it implies deliberate rejection. This is the only use of ekklesia ('church, assembly') in the Gospels outside of 16:18. The final status — 'as a Gentile and a tax collector' (hosper ho ethnikos kai ho telones) — places the unrepentant person outside the covenant community. The irony is profound: in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is known precisely for welcoming Gentiles and tax collectors (9:10-11, 15:21-28). This may imply not permanent rejection but a new starting point — they become objects of mission rather than members of the community.
18. This repeats the binding and loosing authority given to Peter in 16:19 but now extends it to the community as a whole (the verbs are second person plural). In rabbinic usage, 'binding' (deo) meant declaring something forbidden, and 'loosing' (lyo) meant declaring it permitted. The periphrastic future perfect (estai dedemena, 'will have been bound') may indicate that the community's decisions ratify what heaven has already determined. The community acts with divine backing, not ahead of it.
19. The verb symphonesousin ('agree, harmonize') is the root of 'symphony' — it implies not mere verbal agreement but genuine harmony of purpose. In context, this refers to the community's prayers in connection with the discipline process just described, not a blank check for any request. The word pragmatos ('matter, thing, case') has legal overtones, supporting the judicial context.
20. This promise echoes the Jewish rabbinic saying that when two or three study Torah together, the Shekinah (divine presence) is among them. Jesus replaces Torah with himself ('in my name,' eis to emon onoma) as the gathering point that guarantees divine presence. The phrase 'there I am' (ekei eimi) may echo the divine self-disclosure formula of the Old Testament. In context, this assures the community that their discipline decisions are made in Jesus's presence, not by human authority alone.
21. Peter's suggestion of seven times is already generous — some rabbinic traditions limited the obligation to forgive the same person to three times (based on Amos 1:3, 'for three transgressions'). Peter doubles it and adds one for good measure. The number seven also carries symbolic weight as the number of completeness. Peter assumes forgiveness must have a reasonable upper limit.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Amos 1:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The Greek hebdomekontakis hepta is ambiguous — it can mean either 'seventy-seven times' or 'seventy times seven' (490). Either way, the point is the same: Jesus is not setting a higher limit but abolishing limits altogether. The number may deliberately invert Genesis 4:24, where Lamech boasts of seventy-sevenfold vengeance. Where Lamech's vengeance was boundless, Jesus's forgiveness must be equally boundless.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 4:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The introductory formula homoiothe he basileia ton ouranon ('the kingdom of heaven may be compared to') introduces one of Matthew's most powerful parables. The phrase synarai logon ('settle accounts, take a reckoning') is a financial term — the king is auditing his servants' management of royal funds. The 'servants' (douloi) in a royal context are high-ranking officials entrusted with significant resources.
24. Ten thousand talents (myrion talanton) is a deliberately absurd sum. A talent was the largest unit of currency, and ten thousand (myrioi) was the largest named number in Greek. The total would be roughly equivalent to 200,000 years of a laborer's wages — an unpayable debt, the entire annual tax revenue of a major province several times over. The exaggeration is the point: this is how large human sin-debt is before God.
25. The sale of a debtor and his family into slavery was legally practiced in the ancient Near East (cf. 2 Kings 4:1, Nehemiah 5:5). Even this drastic measure would raise only a tiny fraction of ten thousand talents — the gesture is more punitive than practical. The inclusion of 'wife and children and everything he had' underscores the totality of the ruin.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 4:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Nehemiah 5:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The verb prosekynei ('prostrated himself, worshipped') indicates complete submission. The verb makrothymeson ('be patient, be long-suffering') literally means 'be long-tempered' — the opposite of short-tempered. The servant's promise to 'repay everything' (panta apodoso soi) is transparently absurd given the size of the debt — but desperation makes impossible promises. The irony is that the master does something far better than patience: he forgives the debt entirely.

27. The verb *splanchnistheis* ('moved with compassion') is the same visceral term used of Jesus in 15:32 — gut-level mercy. The verb *apheeken* ('forgave, released, let go') is the standard term for forgiveness in the New Testament. The master does not merely defer payment or reduce the amount — he cancels the entire astronomical debt. This is the parable's image of God's forgiveness: total, unmerited, beyond all reasonable expectation.
28. The contrast is devastating. A hundred denarii was about four months' wages for a day laborer — a real debt, but roughly one six-hundred-thousandth of ten thousand talents. The physical violence (*kratesas auton epnigen*, 'seized him and began to choke him') is shocking after the mercy just received. The verb *pnigo* ('to choke, to strangle') is graphic. The demand 'Pay back what you owe' (*apodos ei ti opheileis*) uses the same language the servant used in his own plea (v. 26) — he has learned nothing from his own experience of mercy.
29. The fellow servant's plea is virtually identical to the first servant's plea in verse 26 — the same posture (falling down), the same words (*makrothymeson*, 'be patient'), the same promise to repay. The parallel is deliberately precise so that the first servant's refusal in the next verse is maximally damning. The difference is that this promise is actually keepable — a hundred denarii could be repaid.
30. The blunt 'he refused' (*ouk eethelen*, literally 'he was not willing') stands in stark contrast to the master's compassion. Imprisonment for debt was common in the ancient world, though it paradoxically made repayment harder since the prisoner could not earn. The verb *ebalen* ('threw') conveys harsh treatment.
31. The fellow servants' distress (*elypethesan sphodra*) and their report to the master serve as witnesses within the parable. The verb *diesaphesan* ('reported clearly, explained in detail') implies they gave a thorough account. The community of servants functions as a moral check — they recognize the injustice and bring it to the authority who can act.
32. The address *doule ponere* ('wicked servant') is a judgment — the servant's wickedness is not the original debt but his refusal to extend the mercy he received. The master's words make the logic explicit: 'I forgave you... because you pleaded' — the forgiveness was real, complete, and generous. What follows reveals the condition that was always implicit.
33. The verb *edei* ('it was necessary, you ought to have') expresses moral obligation — receiving mercy creates the duty to show mercy. The verb *eleesai* ('to show mercy, to have compassion') echoes the prayer of 'Lord, have mercy' (*kyrie, eleeson*) that runs through the Gospel. The question is rhetorical: the answer is obvious, and the servant's failure is inexcusable.
34. The verb *paredoken* ('handed over') is the same verb used for Jesus being 'handed over' to death (17:22, 26:15). The *basanistais* ('torturers, jailers who torture') indicates not merely imprisonment but active punishment. Since the debt of ten thousand talents can never be repaid, the punishment is effectively permanent. The parable's ending is deliberately harsh — unforgiveness brings devastating consequences.
35. The application is direct and severe: 'my heavenly Father will do the same to you.' The qualifier 'from your heart' (*apo ton kardion hymon*) rules out mere formal or verbal forgiveness — the forgiveness must be genuine, internal, and complete. This connects to 6:14-15 (the Lord's Prayer commentary) and 5:23-24 (reconciliation before worship). The entire discourse that began with a question about greatness ends with a warning about the necessity of heartfelt forgiveness.

19

Summary: *Matthew 19 marks Jesus's departure from Galilee toward Judea and his final journey to Jerusalem. The chapter addresses marriage, divorce, and celibacy in response to Pharisaic testing; Jesus blesses children who are brought to him; and a rich young man asks what he must do to inherit eternal life, only to depart in sorrow when told to sell everything. Jesus's declaration that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom provokes the disciples' astonished question, 'Who then can be saved?' The chapter closes with Peter's question about the disciples' reward and Jesus's promise of the twelve thrones and the hundredfold return.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Jesus's teaching on divorce is one of his most direct engagements with Mosaic law. He distinguishes between what Moses permitted (divorce certificate, Deuteronomy 24:1) and what God intended from the beginning (permanent one-flesh union, Genesis 1:27, 2:24). The 'exception clause' (*porneia*, v. 9) is unique to Matthew and has generated centuries of interpretation. The rich young man episode reveals the radical economic demands of discipleship — the man is not condemned for immorality but for attachment to wealth. The disciples' shock ('Who then can be saved?') shows that wealth was commonly understood as a sign of divine favor, making Jesus's teaching genuinely disorienting.*

Translation Friction: *The exception clause 'except for sexual immorality' (me epi porneia) in verse 9 is unique to Matthew (absent from Mark 10:11, Luke 16:18). The meaning of *porneia* is debated — it could refer to adultery, incest, premarital unfaithfulness during betrothal, or sexual immorality broadly. We render the Greek term and note the debate. The disciples' reaction in verse 10 ('it is better not to marry') suggests they found*

Jesus's teaching restrictive. Jesus's response about 'eunuchs for the kingdom' (v. 12) is unusual language that has been interpreted variously. The 'eye of a needle' saying (v. 24) is clearly hyperbolic; attempts to identify it as a small gate in Jerusalem are medieval inventions without ancient support.

Connections: The divorce teaching connects to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 (creation ordinance), Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (Mosaic concession), and Malachi 2:13-16 ('God hates divorce'). The blessing of children connects back to 18:1-5. The rich young man's question echoes Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (choose life). Jesus's promise of twelve thrones (v. 28) connects to Daniel 7:9 (thrones set up) and Luke 22:28-30. The 'regeneration' (palingenesia, v. 28) is a term used in Stoic philosophy for cosmic renewal and here refers to the eschatological new creation.

¹When Jesus had finished these words, he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. ³Some Pharisees came to him to test him and asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?" ⁴He answered, "Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵Stated, For this cause will a man leave Father and mother, and will cleave to his wife — then they twain will be one flesh? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no person separate." ⁷They said to him, "Why then did Moses command a certificate of divorce to be given, and to send her away?" ⁸He said to them, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hardness of heart, but from the beginning it was not this way. ⁹I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." ¹⁰The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." ¹¹He said to them, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to accept this accept it." ¹³Then children were brought to him so that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." ¹⁵After laying his hands on them, he went on from there. ¹⁶And someone came up to him and said, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?" ¹⁷He said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸He said to him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹Honour your Father and your mother — and, you shalt love your neighbour as thyself. ²⁰The young man said to him, "I have kept all these. What do I still lack?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you want to be complete, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ²²When the young man heard this, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions. ²³Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁵When the disciples heard this, they were utterly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁶Jesus looked at them and said, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." ²⁷Then Peter answered him, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will there be for us?" ²⁸Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, in the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The formula 'when Jesus had finished these words' (hote etelesen ho Iesous tous logous toutous) marks the end of the fourth discourse (chapter 18), paralleling the formula at the end of each major discourse in Matthew (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1). The phrase 'beyond the Jordan' (peran tou Iordanou) refers to Perea, the region east of the Jordan. This marks the beginning of Jesus's final journey toward Jerusalem.
2. The summary statement of healing serves as a transition, indicating that Jesus's ministry continues even as the narrative shifts geographically toward Jerusalem. The crowds' following (ekoloutheesan) uses the verb that regularly describes discipleship.
3. The participle peirazontes ('testing') marks hostile intent. The phrase kata pasan aitian ('for any reason') reflects the debate between the rabbinic schools of Hillel and Shammai. Hillel's school allowed divorce for virtually any cause (including a burnt meal); Shammai's school restricted it to sexual immorality. The Pharisees are asking Jesus to take a side in a live controversy.

4. The phrase 'have you not read' (ouk anegnote) is a pointed challenge to biblical scholars — of course they have read it, but they have not understood it. Jesus appeals past the Mosaic legislation to the creation narrative (Genesis 1:27), establishing God's original design as the authoritative standard. The phrase *ap' arches* ('from the beginning') grounds the argument in the creation order.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1:27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Jesus now quotes Genesis 2:24. The verb *kollethesetai* ('will be joined, will be united, will cling to') is a strong term suggesting permanent adhesion. The phrase 'one flesh' (*sarka mian*) describes a union that creates a new entity — not merely a legal arrangement but an ontological change. The logic builds toward the conclusion in verse 6.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *synezeyxen* ('joined together, yoked together') is a strong term — the same root as 'yoke' (*zeugos*). God himself is identified as the agent of the union, not merely the officiant. The prohibition 'let no person separate' (*anthropos me chorizeto*) places the onus on human beings: divorce is a human act that undoes what God has done. Jesus transcends the Hillel-Shammai debate by returning to creation theology.
7. The Pharisees cite Deuteronomy 24:1-4 as a counterargument. Note their verb: they say Moses 'commanded' (*eneteilato*) divorce. Jesus will correct this in verse 8 — Moses did not command divorce; he permitted it. The *biblion apostasiou* ('certificate of divorce, document of separation') was a legal document that freed the woman to remarry. The Pharisees treat the Mosaic provision as normative; Jesus will treat it as a concession.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Jesus makes two crucial corrections. First, Moses 'permitted' (*epetrepson*), not 'commanded' — divorce is a concession, not an ideal. Second, the reason for the concession is 'hardness of heart' (*sklerokardia*, literally 'hard-heartedness'), a term used in the Old Testament for Israel's stubborn resistance to God's will (cf. Deuteronomy 10:16, Jeremiah 4:4). Jesus's phrase 'from the beginning' (*ap' arches*) reasserts the creation ideal as the standard by which all subsequent legislation must be measured.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 10:16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 4:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The 'exception clause' (*me epi porneia*, 'except for sexual immorality') is unique to Matthew (cf. 5:32). The Greek *porneia* is broader than *moicheia* ('adultery') and can encompass any serious sexual transgression — its exact scope here is heavily debated. Some scholars argue it refers specifically to incestuous marriages (as in Acts 15:20, 29), others to adultery, others to premarital unfaithfulness. The SBLGNT text does not include the final clause about marrying a divorced woman, which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV tradition (*Textus Receptus*).
10. The disciples' reaction reveals how radical Jesus's teaching is — they conclude that if divorce is so restricted, marriage itself becomes too risky. The phrase *ou sympherei gamesai* ('it is not advantageous to marry') uses the language of practical calculation. Their response shows they understood Jesus to be significantly restricting the prevailing norms.
11. The phrase *ton logon touton* ('this word') is ambiguous — does 'this word' refer to the disciples' suggestion about not marrying, or to Jesus's teaching about divorce? The context suggests the former: not everyone has the gift of celibacy. The passive 'it has been given' (*dedotai*) implies God as the giver — celibacy, like marriage, is a divine calling.
12. Jesus identifies three categories of celibacy: congenital (born eunuchs), imposed (castrated by others, as was common for court officials), and voluntary (those who renounce marriage for the kingdom). The third category is metaphorical — Jesus is not advocating self-mutilation but describing those who voluntarily forgo marriage to devote themselves entirely to God's purposes. The closing invitation 'let the one who is able to accept this accept it' (*ho dynamenos chorein choreito*) acknowledges this is an extraordinary calling, not a universal requirement.
13. The passive *proseneechthesan* ('were brought') indicates parents bringing their children. The purpose — laying on of hands and prayer — is a request for blessing, not healing. The disciples' rebuke (*epetimesan*) suggests they thought Jesus's time was too valuable for children. This echoes their misunderstanding of 'the greatest in the kingdom' from 18:1-5 — they still have not grasped the lesson.
14. The double command — 'let' (*aphete*) and 'do not hinder' (*me koluete*) — corrects the disciples forcefully. The phrase *ton toiouton* ('of such as these') means 'people who are like these children' — those who come with the humility, dependence, and lack of status that characterize children. This reiterates the teaching of 18:3-4.
15. Jesus does exactly what was requested — he lays hands on the children. The simple narrative detail contrasts with the disciples' attempted barrier. Matthew's account is briefer than Mark's (10:16), which adds that Jesus embraced the children.
16. Matthew's version differs from Mark's ('Good Teacher'). Here the man asks 'what good thing' (*ti agathon*) rather than addressing Jesus as 'Good Teacher.' The question assumes that eternal life (*zoe aionios*) can be secured by performing a specific act. The man's approach is sincere — he is not testing Jesus — but his framework is transactional: what must I do to earn this?
17. Matthew's version redirects the question: 'Why do you ask me about the good?' rather than Mark's 'Why do you call me good?' (Mark 10:18). The statement 'there is only one who is good' (*heis estin ho agathos*) points to God as the sole source of goodness. Jesus's answer — 'keep the commandments' (*tereson tas entolas*) — meets the man where he is: if you want to approach this through doing, then the commandments are the

starting point.

18. The man's follow-up question 'Which ones?' (poias) may reflect genuine uncertainty or a desire for a specific checklist. Jesus cites commandments from the second table of the Decalogue — those governing human relationships (sixth through ninth commandments). The absence of the first four commandments (duties toward God) is notable and may be deliberate, as the man's real deficiency involves his relationship with God, not his ethical conduct.
19. Jesus adds the fifth commandment (honor parents) and Leviticus 19:18 ('love your neighbor as yourself'). The addition of the love command is significant — it summarizes the ethical intent of all the commandments Jesus has listed and signals that mere prohibition is insufficient; positive love is required.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Matthew identifies the man as neaniskos ('young man'), providing a detail the other Synoptics convey differently (Mark says Jesus loved him, Luke calls him a ruler). His claim to have kept all the commandments (panta tauta ephylaxa) is presented sincerely, not arrogantly. His question 'What do I still lack?' (ti eti hystero) reveals an awareness that commandment-keeping has not brought the assurance of eternal life he seeks.
21. The adjective teleios ('perfect, complete, mature') does not mean sinless perfection but wholeness — the young man's lack is not moral failure but incomplete devotion. The sequence of commands — go, sell, give, come, follow — dismantles the barrier between the man and full discipleship. 'Treasure in heaven' (thesauron en ouranois) contrasts with earthly treasure (cf. 6:19-21). The final imperative 'follow me' (akolouthei moi) is the definitive invitation to discipleship.
22. The participle lypoumenos ('grieving, sorrowing') indicates that the departure was not callous but painful. He understood what Jesus was asking and could not bring himself to do it. The phrase 'many possessions' (ktemata polla) explains his grief — his wealth owned him more than he owned it. He is the only person in the Gospels who is explicitly called to follow Jesus and walks away.
23. The adverb dyskolos ('with difficulty, hardly') indicates not impossibility but severe difficulty. The solemn introduction 'Truly I tell you' elevates this to authoritative teaching. In Jewish tradition, wealth was often viewed as a sign of divine blessing (cf. Deuteronomy 28:1-14), making Jesus's warning deeply counterintuitive.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 28:1-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The image is deliberately absurd — a camel (kamelon), the largest animal in Palestine, through the eye of a needle (trypematōs rhapsidos), the smallest opening imaginable. Medieval interpreters invented a small gate called 'the eye of the needle' in Jerusalem, but no such gate is historically attested. The hyperbole is the point: this is humanly impossible. Matthew uses 'kingdom of God' (basileia tou theou) here rather than his usual 'kingdom of heaven,' perhaps following his source.
25. The verb exeplessonto ('were utterly astonished, were struck with amazement') is one of the strongest terms for shock in Greek. Their reasoning is clear: if even the rich — those who appear most blessed by God — cannot enter the kingdom, then who can? The question tis ara dynatai sotheenai ('Who then can be saved?') assumes what many first-century Jews assumed: wealth indicates divine favor. If God's favorites cannot be saved, salvation is impossible for everyone.
26. The verb emblepsas ('looked directly at, fixed his gaze on') indicates an intentional, significant look. Jesus does not soften his teaching about wealth — he confirms it is humanly impossible. But he adds the decisive qualifier: para theo panta dynata ('with God all things are possible'), echoing Genesis 18:14 ('Is anything too hard for the LORD?'). Salvation is God's work, not a human achievement. This reframes the entire conversation from 'What must I do?' (v. 16) to 'What can God do?'
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 18:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. Peter's statement is factual — the disciples have left occupations, homes, and families (4:18-22). His question ti ara estai hemin ('What then will there be for us?') is characteristically blunt. It raises the issue of reward for sacrifice, which Jesus answers without rebuke, suggesting the question is legitimate even if the framing is self-interested.
28. The word palingenesia ('regeneration, renewal, rebirth') appears only here and in Titus 3:5 in the New Testament. In Stoic philosophy it referred to the cosmic renewal after periodic destruction. Here it refers to the eschatological restoration of all things — the new creation. 'His glorious throne' (thronou doxes autou) alludes to Daniel 7:9-14. The twelve thrones for the twelve apostles judging twelve tribes presents the reconstituted Israel under the authority of Jesus and his chosen leaders.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:9-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The promise extends beyond the twelve to 'everyone' (pas hostis) who sacrifices for Jesus. The list covers property (houses, fields) and family relationships — the full range of human attachment. The 'hundredfold' (hekatontaplasia) return and 'eternal life' (zoen aionion) represent both present-age blessings (new community, new family in the church) and future-age consummation. The SBLGNT omits 'wife' (gynaika), which appears in some manuscripts.

30. This saying reverses human expectations of status and reward — a theme running throughout this chapter (children over adults, poor over rich, servants over rulers). The reversal formula 'first/last, last/first' frames the parable of the workers in the vineyard that immediately follows (20:1-16), which also ends with this saying. The word 'many' (polloi) suggests the reversal is not absolute but widespread.

20

Summary: *Matthew 20 opens with the parable of the workers in the vineyard, where laborers hired at different hours all receive the same pay — a denarius — provoking complaint from those who worked longest. Jesus uses this to illustrate that God's generosity transcends human calculations of merit. The chapter then contains the third and most detailed passion prediction, the ambitious request of James and John's mother for her sons to sit at Jesus's right and left in his kingdom, Jesus's teaching that greatness means servanthood, and the healing of two blind men near Jericho.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The vineyard parable is unique to Matthew and is one of the most provocative stories Jesus tells. It offends our sense of fairness — the workers who labored all day in the heat receive the same wage as those who worked one hour. The landowner's response ('Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?') reframes the issue from justice to generosity. The third passion prediction (vv. 17-19) is the most specific yet, adding details about being handed to Gentiles, mocking, flogging, and crucifixion. The request for honored seats and Jesus's response introduce the cup metaphor for suffering and culminate in the definitive statement of his mission: 'The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'*

Translation Friction: *The parable's apparent unfairness is the point — God's grace does not operate by the merit-based system humans expect. We render the landowner's question in verse 15 as closely as possible to preserve the challenge. The SBLGNT places James and John's mother as the one making the request (v. 20), while Mark 10:35 has the brothers themselves asking — Matthew may be softening the brothers' image. The word *lytron* ('ransom,' v. 28) has significant theological weight and has been central to atonement theology; we render it directly without interpretive expansion.*

Connections: *The vineyard parable connects to Isaiah 5:1-7 (God's vineyard = Israel) and echoes the 'first shall be last' saying from 19:30. The third passion prediction fulfills the pattern established in 16:21 and 17:22-23. The 'cup' metaphor (v. 22) anticipates Gethsemane (26:39). The 'ransom' saying (v. 28) connects to Isaiah 53:10-12 (the servant who bears others' sins) and the Passover redemption theology. The Jericho healing marks the last stop before Jerusalem.*

¹"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the workers on a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³Going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace ⁴Stated to them. Go you also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. Then they traveled their way. ⁵So they went. He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. ⁶About the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' ⁷They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' ⁹When those hired about the eleventh hour came, each received a denarius. ¹⁰When the first came, they expected to receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²Indeed, declaring, These last have wrought but one hour, and you have created them as equal to us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. ¹³But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴Take what is yours and go. I choose to give to this last worker the same as I gave to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first last." ¹⁷As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside privately and said to them on the way, ¹⁸"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹Indeed, will deliver him to the Gentiles to

mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him — and the third day he will come back to life. ²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, kneeling before him and making a request. ²¹He said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." ²²Jesus 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." ²³He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right and at my left is not mine to grant. That is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." ²⁴When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ²⁶It must not be this way among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷Whosoever will be chief in the midst of you, let him be your servant. ²⁸Even as the Son of Man arrived not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for numerous. ²⁹As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰And two blind men sitting beside the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³¹The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the louder, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³²Jesus stopped and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." ³⁴Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes, and immediately they received their sight and followed him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The parable is introduced with 'For' (gar), connecting it to the 'first shall be last' saying of 19:30. The oikodespotes ('master of the house, landowner') represents God. The vineyard (ampelon) is a traditional Old Testament symbol for Israel (Isaiah 5:1-7). Going out 'early in the morning' (hama proi) indicates the start of the workday at approximately 6:00 AM.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 5:1-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The verb symphonesas ('having agreed') indicates a mutual contract. A denarius (denarion) was the standard daily wage for a laborer. The KJV's 'penny' is misleading in modern English; we retain 'denarius' as the specific coin. The agreement establishes a just wage — the later controversy is not about underpayment but about equal payment for unequal work.
3. The 'third hour' (triten horan) is approximately 9:00 AM by Jewish reckoning (counting from sunrise). The marketplace (agora) was where day laborers gathered hoping for employment. The word argous ('idle, unemployed') does not necessarily imply laziness — these workers had no one to hire them.
4. Unlike the first group, these workers receive no specific wage agreement — only the promise of 'whatever is right' (ho ean e dikaion). The word dikaion ('right, just, fair') sets up the parable's central question about what constitutes fairness. These workers must trust the landowner's character.
5. The sixth hour is approximately noon, the ninth hour approximately 3:00 PM. The repeated hiring — at 6 AM, 9 AM, noon, and 3 PM — creates a pattern that makes the final hiring at the eleventh hour (v. 6) the climactic surprise. Each group works progressively less time.
6. The eleventh hour is approximately 5:00 PM — one hour before the workday ends at sundown. These workers have waited all day without employment. The landowner's question is not accusatory but inquisitive, and their answer (v. 7) reveals that unemployment, not laziness, is the cause.
7. Their explanation — 'no one hired us' (oudeis hemas emisthosato) — evokes sympathy. The SBLGNT does not include the additional phrase 'and whatever is right you will receive,' which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV tradition. The landowner simply sends them to work with no stated wage.
8. The instruction to pay 'from the last to the first' (arxamenos apo ton eschaton heos ton proton) is a deliberate narrative device — the first-hired must watch the last-hired receive their pay, which creates the expectation and subsequent outrage that drives the parable's point. The epitropos ('manager, steward') handles the actual payment. The evening payment complies with Leviticus 19:13 and Deuteronomy 24:15, which require same-day wages.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 19:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 24:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The eleventh-hour workers receive a full denarius for one hour of work. The phrase ana denarion ('a denarius each') emphasizes that every worker in this group received the same amount as was contracted with the first group. This is the parable's surprise — and it sets up the complaint.
10. The verb enomisan ('they supposed, expected') reveals their reasoning: if the last received a full denarius, proportional justice would give the first much more. The phrase kai autoi ('they also') emphasizes the equal treatment that the first group finds unjust. Their expectation is entirely logical by human standards — which is precisely the point.

11. The verb *egongyzon* ('grumbled, murmured') echoes Israel's murmuring against God in the wilderness (Exodus 16:7-8, Numbers 14:2). The allusion is probably deliberate: those who have been provided for complain that others have received undeserved generosity.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16:7-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 14:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The complaint is vivid and visceral: 'the burden of the day and the scorching heat' (to baros tes hemeras kai ton kausona) evokes twelve hours of physical labor under the Palestinian sun. The word *isous* ('equal') is the crux — they object not to the last group's payment but to the equality. They want hierarchical reward, not equal generosity. Their grievance feels entirely reasonable, which makes the landowner's response all the more challenging.
13. The address *hetaire* ('friend, companion') is polite but formal — Matthew uses it in contexts of gentle correction or warning (22:12, 26:50). The verb *adiko* ('I wrong, I am unjust to') directly addresses the complaint: no injustice has occurred. The contracted wage has been paid in full. The landowner's defense rests on two pillars: contractual integrity (v. 13) and sovereign generosity (v. 15).
14. The imperatives *aron* ('take') and *hypage* ('go') are firm dismissals. The verb *thelo* ('I choose, I wish, I want') is the key — the landowner asserts his sovereign right to be generous beyond contractual obligation. The phrase *touto to eschato* ('to this last one') pointedly identifies the recipient of the generosity.
15. Two rhetorical questions drive the parable's theology home. The first asserts the owner's sovereign freedom over his own possessions. The second — literally 'Is your eye evil?' (ho ophthalmos sou poneros estin) — uses the Semitic idiom where an 'evil eye' denotes envy or stinginess (cf. 6:23). We render it 'envious' to capture the meaning. The word *agathos* ('good, generous') is the same word the young man used in his question to Jesus (19:16-17). The parable's God-figure claims the attribute of goodness that belongs to God alone.
16. The saying that opened this section (19:30) now closes it, forming an *inclusio*. The parable has illustrated the principle: God's generosity does not follow human hierarchies of merit. The SBLGNT does not include 'for many are called but few are chosen,' which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV tradition — that saying appears authentically at 22:14.
17. The verb *anabainon* ('going up') is geographically accurate — Jerusalem sits at approximately 2,500 feet elevation, and travelers from Jericho ascend significantly. But 'going up to Jerusalem' also carries theological weight as pilgrimage language. The private setting (*kat' idian*) indicates that the passion prediction is for the inner circle, not the crowds.
18. This third passion prediction (cf. 16:21, 17:22-23) is the most detailed. The verb *paradothesetai* ('will be handed over') adds the theme of betrayal/delivery. For the first time, the role of the Jewish leadership (chief priests and scribes) in condemning Jesus is specified alongside the role of the Gentiles (v. 19). The phrase *katakrinousin auton thanato* ('they will condemn him to death') indicates a formal legal sentence.
19. The Gentiles (*ethnesin*) are the Romans, who alone had the authority to execute by crucifixion. The three infinitives — *empaizai* ('to mock'), *mastigosai* ('to flog'), *staurasai* ('to crucify') — describe the precise sequence of the passion narrative as it will unfold in chapters 26-27. This is the first time Jesus explicitly names crucifixion (*staurasai*) as the method of his death. The passive 'will be raised' (*egertheesetai*) affirms God's final action beyond the human violence.
20. Matthew places the mother as the spokesperson, while Mark 10:35 has James and John making the request directly. This may reflect Matthew's tendency to soften the portrayal of the apostles. The sons of Zebedee are James and John (4:21). The participle *proskynousa* ('kneeling, worshipping') indicates the seriousness of the approach.
21. The request for seats at the right and left (*ek dexion and ex euonymon*) of the king was a request for the two highest positions of honor and authority in the coming kingdom. The mother has heard the promise of twelve thrones (19:28) and wants the best seats for her sons. The irony — visible only in retrospect — is that the positions at Jesus's right and left at his 'enthronement' will be occupied by two crucified criminals (27:38).
22. Jesus shifts from the mother to the sons (the verb *oidate and aiteisthe* are second person plural). The 'cup' (*poterion*) is a well-established Old Testament metaphor for suffering and divine judgment (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). The SBLGNT does not include the reference to baptism, which appears in Mark 10:38 and some Matthew manuscripts. The brothers' confident 'We are able' (*dynametha*) is sincere but uninformed — they do not yet know what the cup contains.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 75:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 51:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 25:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. Jesus confirms their future suffering (James was martyred, Acts 12:2; John, according to tradition, endured exile) but refuses to grant the seating request, deferring to the Father's sovereign arrangement. The passive *hetoimastai* ('it has been prepared') indicates prior divine planning. Jesus's refusal reveals something about his self-understanding: he operates within the Father's authority, not independently of it.

24. The verb *eganaktesan* ('were indignant, were angry') reveals that the other ten disciples share the same ambition — they are not offended by the desire for status but by the attempt to secure it first. Their anger provides the occasion for Jesus's teaching on servant leadership.
25. The verbs *katakryrieousin* ('lord it over, dominate') and *katexousiazousin* ('exercise authority over, tyrannize') both use the prefix *kata-* ('down upon'), indicating oppressive, top-down power. Jesus describes the standard model of leadership in the Roman world — and then explicitly rejects it for his community.
26. The prohibition *ouch houtos estai en hymin* ('it must not be this way among you') is categorical. The word *diakonos* ('servant, minister, one who serves at table') was not a prestigious role — it denoted someone who waited on others at meals. Jesus redefines greatness as service, inverting the power structure he has just described.
27. The escalation from *diakonos* ('servant,' v. 26) to *doulos* ('slave') intensifies the demand. A *doulos* had no rights, no autonomy, no personal agenda — only the master's will. The word 'first' (*protos*) echoes the parable's concern with first and last (vv. 8, 16) and the disciples' desire for preeminence.
28. This is one of the most theologically dense sentences in the Gospels. Jesus defines his entire mission in terms of service and self-sacrifice. The word *lytron* ('ransom') appears only here and in Mark 10:45 in the Gospels. It refers to the price paid to free a slave or prisoner. The preposition *anti* ('in place of, instead of') indicates substitution — Jesus's life given in exchange for 'many' (*pollon*). The language echoes Isaiah 53:10-12, where the Servant of the LORD bears the sin of many. 'Many' (*polloi*) is a Semitic inclusive term that often means 'all' (cf. Romans 5:15-19).
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:10-12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. Jericho, about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, was the last major stop on the pilgrim route to Jerusalem. The 'large crowd' (*ochlos polys*) suggests the growing numbers of Passover pilgrims joining Jesus as he approaches the capital.
30. Matthew has two blind men where Mark 10:46 names one (Bartimaeus). This is consistent with Matthew's tendency to double figures (cf. two demoniacs in 8:28 where Mark has one). The address 'Son of David' (*huios Daudid*) is a messianic title acknowledging Jesus as the expected Davidic king. The plea 'have mercy' (*eleeson*) echoes the Canaanite woman's cry (15:22) — the same faith-filled appeal from those on society's margins.
31. The crowd's attempt to silence the blind men parallels the disciples' attempt to send away the children (19:13) and the Canaanite woman (15:23). The pattern is consistent: human gatekeepers try to prevent the marginal from reaching Jesus, and the desperate refuse to be silenced. The comparative *meizon* ('louder, more urgently') shows their persistence increasing under pressure.
32. Jesus's stopping (*stas*) is significant — he is on his way to Jerusalem, to his death, yet he stops for two blind beggars. The question 'What do you want me to do for you?' (*ti thelete poieso hymin*) is the same question he effectively asked the mother of James and John (v. 21). The contrast is pointed: she wanted status; they want sight.
33. Their request is simple and direct: 'that our eyes may be opened' (*hina anoigosin hoi ophthalmoi hemon*). The opening of blind eyes is a messianic sign (Isaiah 35:5, 42:7), so their request implicitly affirms the 'Son of David' title they have used. The passive *anoigosin* ('may be opened') acknowledges that they cannot heal themselves.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 35:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The verb *splanchnistheis* ('moved with compassion') again denotes the visceral, gut-level mercy characteristic of Jesus (cf. 9:36, 14:14, 15:32). The physical touch (*hepsato ton ommaton*, 'touched their eyes') is not strictly necessary for healing — Jesus has healed at a distance — but adds personal, intimate contact. The immediate result (*eutheos*) and their following (*ekoloutheesan*) indicate both physical healing and discipleship. As Jesus enters Jerusalem for the final time, he does so accompanied by those whose eyes he has opened — a fitting symbolic conclusion to the journey.

21

Summary: *Matthew 21 marks the beginning of Jesus's final week in Jerusalem. He enters the city riding on a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, acclaimed by crowds shouting 'Hosanna to the Son of David.' He then drives the merchants and money changers from the temple, declaring it should be a house of prayer. After cursing a barren fig tree -- which withers immediately -- Jesus teaches about faith and prayer. The chief priests and elders challenge his authority, and Jesus responds with three confrontational parables: the two sons, the wicked tenants, and (beginning in chapter 22) the wedding feast. The chapter escalates the conflict between Jesus and the Jerusalem religious establishment that will culminate in his arrest and crucifixion.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Matthew's account of the entry uniquely mentions two animals -- a donkey and a colt -- following the parallelism of the Zechariah quotation literally. The temple action is presented not merely as reform but as prophetic judgment: Jesus quotes both Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, framing the temple establishment as having betrayed its purpose. The fig tree episode functions as an enacted parable of Israel's spiritual barrenness. The parable of the wicked tenants is an allegory*

transparent enough that the chief priests recognize themselves in it (v. 45), yet its Old Testament foundation in Isaiah 5 gives it prophetic weight beyond mere polemic.

Translation Friction: The two-donkey detail in verses 2-7 has puzzled interpreters. Matthew appears to read Zechariah 9:9's Hebrew parallelism ('a donkey, even a colt, the foal of a donkey') as referring to two separate animals, while Mark and Luke mention only one. We render Matthew's text as written. The immediate withering of the fig tree (v. 19) differs from Mark's two-day sequence. Matthew has compressed the timeline, presenting the miracle and its lesson as a single dramatic unit. The stone quotation in verse 42 (Psalm 118:22-23) was a key text in early Christian apologetics and appears across multiple New Testament books.

Connections: The triumphal entry fulfills Zechariah 9:9 and echoes Solomon's royal procession on David's mule (1 Kings 1:33-40). 'Hosanna' comes from Psalm 118:25-26, a Hallel psalm sung at Passover and Tabernacles. The temple cleansing connects to Malachi 3:1-3 ('the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple'). The fig tree echoes Jeremiah 8:13 and Hosea 9:10. The parable of the wicked tenants draws on Isaiah 5:1-7 (the Song of the Vineyard). The rejected cornerstone (Psalm 118:22-23) ties the entry psalm to the passion narrative.

¹When they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²Declaring to them, Go into the village over opposed to you, and right away you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her — loose them, and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." ⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Look, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds going ahead of him and those following were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹The crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." ¹²Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling doves. ¹³He said to them, "It is written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a den of robbers." ¹⁴The blind and the lame went to him in the temple. And he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the remarkable things he did, and the children shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they became indignant ¹⁶Stated to him, Hearst you what these say? And Jesus says to them, Yea. Have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have perfected praise? ¹⁷And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and spent the night there. ¹⁸In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went to it and found nothing on it except leaves only. He said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again." And the fig tree withered at once. ²⁰When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" ²¹Jesus answered them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. ²²And whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive." ²³When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John -- where was it from? From heaven or from men?" They discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'From men,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁸"What do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹He answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. ³⁰He went to the other and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him.

And even when you saw this, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him. ³³"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they treated them the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take his inheritance.' ³⁹They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹They said to him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." ⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls." ⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶Although they wanted to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Bethphage ('house of unripe figs') was a village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, near Bethany. The Mount of Olives carried eschatological significance from Zechariah 14:4, where the LORD would stand on it in the day of final deliverance. Jesus's approach from the east mirrors Ezekiel's vision of God's glory returning to the temple from the east (Ezekiel 43:1-4).
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 14:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 43:1-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. Matthew uniquely mentions both the mother donkey (onon) and the colt (polon), reading Zechariah 9:9 as referring to two animals. Jesus's foreknowledge of the donkeys' exact location demonstrates prophetic authority. The untying of a tethered animal without the owner's prior consent required the explanation given in the next verse.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 9:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The title *ho kyrios* ('the Lord') here may function as either 'the master/owner' or with the fuller theological sense of 'the Lord.' The ambiguity may be deliberate -- Jesus claims sovereign right over the animals while the owner hears a reasonable request. The immediate compliance anticipated suggests prior arrangement or divine authority recognized.
4. This is Matthew's characteristic fulfillment formula (cf. 1:22, 2:15, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35). The prophet is Zechariah, though Matthew does not name him. The passive *plerothē* ('might be fulfilled') indicates divine intentionality -- these events were orchestrated by God, not coincidence.
5. The quotation combines Isaiah 62:11 ('Say to the daughter of Zion') with Zechariah 9:9. The key word *praus* ('humble, gentle, meek') is the same word Jesus used of himself in 11:29 ('I am gentle and humble in heart'). In Zechariah's context, this king comes in peace, not on a warhorse. The Hebrew parallelism in Zechariah ('a donkey / a colt, the foal of a donkey') describes one animal in two ways, but Matthew's narrative presents two animals.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 9:9 -- see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 62:11 -- see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *synetaxen* ('directed, instructed, commanded') emphasizes the deliberate nature of the entry -- this was not spontaneous but a planned prophetic enactment. The disciples' obedience mirrors the pattern seen throughout Matthew.
7. The pronoun *auton* ('them') in 'he sat on them' most naturally refers to the cloaks, not both animals. The cloaks serve as an improvised saddle -- a mark of honor. The act of spreading garments echoes Jehu's anointing as king (2 Kings 9:13).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 9:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Spreading garments on the road was a gesture of royal homage (cf. 2 Kings 9:13). The cutting of branches recalls the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:40) and the rededication of the temple under Judas Maccabeus (1 Maccabees 13:51, 2 Maccabees 10:7). The crowd instinctively treats Jesus's entry as a royal and liturgical event.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 9:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 23:40 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The acclamation quotes Psalm 118:25-26, a Hallel psalm sung during Passover. 'Hosanna' (from Hebrew hoshi'a na, 'save now, please') had evolved from a plea into a shout of praise. 'Son of David' is an explicitly messianic title. 'The one who comes' (ho erchomenos) may echo Malachi 3:1 and the messianic expectation of 'the coming one' (cf. 11:3). 'In the highest' (en tois hypsistois) directs the praise heavenward.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 118:26. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 3:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb eseisthe ('was shaken, stirred') is related to seismos ('earthquake') -- the same root used for the earthquake at Jesus's death (27:51) and resurrection (28:2). Matthew uses seismic language for moments of divine disruption. The city's question 'Who is this?' sets up the christological tension that dominates the rest of the Gospel.
11. The crowd identifies Jesus as 'the prophet' (ho prophetēs), possibly the eschatological prophet like Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18:15. The geographical identification 'from Nazareth of Galilee' is both factual and slightly deflating -- Galilee was considered peripheral, and Nazareth insignificant (cf. John 1:46). The crowd's answer falls short of the full confession 'Son of David' from verse 9.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek hieron refers to the broader temple complex, specifically the Court of the Gentiles where commercial activity took place. Money changers (kollybiston) converted Roman and Greek currency into the Tyrian shekel required for the temple tax. Doves were the offering prescribed for the poor (Leviticus 5:7, 12:8). Jesus's action targets a system that profited from worship and excluded Gentiles from their designated prayer space.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 5:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Jesus combines Isaiah 56:7 ('my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations') with Jeremiah 7:11 ('has this house become a den of robbers in your eyes?'). The Jeremiah reference is especially pointed: in Jeremiah 7, God threatens to destroy the temple because the people treat it as a safe hideout while practicing injustice. The Greek leston ('robbers, bandits') is stronger than 'thieves' -- these are violent exploiters, not petty criminals.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 56:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 7:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. This detail is unique to Matthew. The blind and lame were traditionally excluded from the temple (cf. 2 Samuel 5:8, though the interpretation of that passage is debated). By healing them in the temple, Jesus enacts the restoration and inclusion that the prophets envisioned. The temple becomes what it was meant to be -- a place of divine healing and access.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 5:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The word thaumasia ('remarkable things, wonders') is used only here in the New Testament. The chief priests and scribes are angered not by the healings alone but by the children's messianic acclamation -- 'Hosanna to the Son of David' -- spoken in the temple itself. The Davidic title in the temple carries political and theological weight they cannot ignore.
16. Jesus quotes Psalm 8:2 (LXX), where God ordains praise from the youngest and most vulnerable. The quotation implies that the children perceive what the religious experts cannot -- or will not -- acknowledge. The verb katertiso ('you have prepared, perfected, established') suggests that God has deliberately arranged for this praise.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 8:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Bethany ('house of affliction' or 'house of dates') was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives. It was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:1). Jesus's nightly withdrawal from Jerusalem during Passion Week was both practical (avoiding arrest) and symbolic (departing from the city that rejects its prophets).
18. Jesus's hunger is a reminder of his full humanity. The detail also sets up the fig tree episode as a prophetic sign-act rather than a fit of frustration -- the hunger provides the occasion, but the meaning goes far deeper.
19. The fig tree is a well-established prophetic symbol for Israel (Jeremiah 8:13, Hosea 9:10, Micah 7:1). A tree with leaves but no fruit advertises productivity it cannot deliver -- like a temple full of commerce but empty of justice. In Matthew's compressed timeline, the tree withers parachrema ('at once, immediately'), making the prophetic point unmistakable. Mark's account spreads this over two days.

19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 8:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 9:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Micah 7:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The disciples focus on the speed of the miracle rather than its symbolic meaning. Their amazement (*ethaumasán*) opens the door for Jesus's teaching on faith and prayer in the following verses.
21. The phrase *amen lego hymin* ('truly I say to you') is Jesus's characteristic formula for solemn pronouncement. 'This mountain' (*to orei touto*) likely refers to the Mount of Olives, visible from where they stood. Moving mountains was a Jewish metaphor for accomplishing the seemingly impossible. The verb *diakritete* ('doubt, waver') is related to the word used for Peter's doubt on the water (14:31).
22. This promise is conditioned by two factors: prayer (*en te proseuche*) and faith (*pisteuontes*). It is not a blank check for material desires but a statement about the power of God channeled through trusting prayer. The present participle *pisteuontes* ('believing, having faith') indicates an ongoing disposition, not momentary confidence.
23. The double question about authority (*exousia*) targets both the nature and the source of Jesus's power. 'These things' (*tauta*) refers to the temple cleansing, the healings, and the teaching -- all of which bypass the established religious hierarchy. The chief priests and elders represent the Sanhedrin, the recognized governing body. Their challenge is both theological and jurisdictional.
24. Jesus's counter-question is a standard rabbinic debate technique -- not evasion but a method of exposing the real issue. By linking his answer to their answer, he forces them to confront the very authority they are trying to deny.
25. The question 'from heaven or from men' (*ex ouranou e ex anthropon*) presents the only two options: divine origin or human origin. 'Heaven' is a Jewish circumlocution for God. The leaders' private calculation reveals that their concern is not truth but political advantage -- they reason from consequences rather than convictions.
26. The leaders' fear of the crowd (*phoboumetha ton ochlon*) mirrors Herod's fear of the people regarding John (14:5). In both cases, political calculation overrides honest engagement with prophetic authority. Their inability to answer exposes their bad faith.
27. Their answer 'We do not know' (*ouk oidamen*) is technically a lie -- they have a private opinion but refuse to state it. Jesus's refusal to answer is not evasion but justice: those who will not engage honestly with the evidence they already have do not deserve further revelation. The implicit answer is clear -- Jesus's authority, like John's, comes from heaven.
28. The parable of the two sons is unique to Matthew. The opening 'What do you think?' (*ti hymin dokei*) draws the leaders into rendering judgment on themselves -- the same technique Nathan used against David (2 Samuel 12:1-7). The vineyard (*ampelon*) is a standard Old Testament symbol for Israel (Isaiah 5:1-7).
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 12:1-7 -- the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 5:1-7 -- the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The verb *metameletheis* ('changed his mind, felt regret') is distinct from *metanoeo* ('repent' in the fuller sense). This son's initial refusal followed by obedience represents those who initially rejected God's call but later responded -- the tax collectors and prostitutes mentioned in verse 31.
30. The second son addresses his father with the respectful *kyrie* ('sir, lord') and gives immediate verbal assent, but his actions contradict his words. He represents the religious leaders who profess obedience to God but fail to respond to John's (and now Jesus's) message. Words without corresponding action is a theme throughout Matthew (cf. 7:21-23).
31. The leaders pronounce their own verdict. Jesus's application is devastating: the social outcasts (*telonai*, 'tax collectors'; *pornai*, 'prostitutes') who initially lived in rebellion but responded to John's call are entering the kingdom ahead of the religious establishment. The present tense *proagousin* ('are going ahead, are entering') indicates this is happening now, not merely in the future.
32. The phrase 'in the way of righteousness' (*en hodo dikaiosynes*) may mean John came living righteously, or came teaching the way of righteousness, or both. The double indictment is severe: they rejected John's message, and even after seeing others respond, they refused to reconsider. The verb *metemelete* ('change your minds') echoes the first son's change of heart in verse 29.
33. The parable's opening deliberately echoes Isaiah 5:1-2, the Song of the Vineyard, where God plants and cares for Israel as his vineyard. Every detail -- the fence, the winepress, the tower -- comes from Isaiah's text. The *oikodespotes* ('master of the house, landowner') represents God. The *georgoi* ('tenant farmers') represent Israel's leaders. The audience would have recognized the allusion immediately.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 5:1-2 -- the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The servants (*doulous*, 'slaves') represent the prophets sent to Israel throughout its history. The 'season of fruit' (*kairos ton karpon*) indicates the time when God expected a return on his investment in Israel -- justice, righteousness, and faithfulness.

35. The three-fold violence -- beating, killing, stoning -- summarizes Israel's treatment of the prophets, a theme running through the Old Testament (cf. 2 Chronicles 24:21, Jeremiah 26:20-23, Nehemiah 9:26) and explicit in Jesus's lament over Jerusalem (23:37). Stoning (elithobolisan) was the traditional punishment for blasphemy and false prophecy, ironically used against true prophets.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Chronicles 24:21 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 26:20-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Nehemiah 9:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The landowner's persistence in sending more servants (pleionas ton proton, 'more than the first group') reflects God's patience and repeated appeals through successive generations of prophets. The tenants' unchanging response reveals the depth of their rebellion.
37. The shift from 'servants' to 'his son' (ton huion autou) marks the climax of the parable and its transparent christological claim. The sending of the son is qualitatively different from the sending of servants -- this is the final appeal, the last and greatest envoy. The verb entrapesontai ('will respect, will be put to shame before') expresses the owner's reasonable expectation.
38. The tenants recognize the son as the heir (kleronomos) -- their crime is not ignorance but deliberate rebellion. They calculate that killing the heir will give them ownership of the vineyard, a legal assumption in certain ancient property arrangements. The parallel to the Jerusalem leaders' conspiracy against Jesus is unmistakable.
39. The detail that they threw him 'out of the vineyard' before killing him prefigures Jesus's crucifixion outside the walls of Jerusalem (cf. Hebrews 13:12). The sequence -- seizure, expulsion, death -- will be enacted literally in chapters 26-27.
40. Jesus forces the leaders to pronounce judgment again -- the same technique used in the parable of the two sons (v. 31). The question assumes the owner's return is certain; only the timing is unknown. The phrase kyrios tou ampelonos ('lord/owner of the vineyard') carries both literal and theological weight.
41. The Greek kakous kakos ('wretches wretchedly' or 'evil ones evilly') is a wordplay -- the punishment fits the crime. The leaders unwittingly pronounce their own doom. The transfer of the vineyard to 'other tenants' (allois georgois) foreshadows the inclusion of the Gentiles and the reconstitution of God's people around Jesus.
42. Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22-23, the same Hallel psalm from which the crowds shouted 'Hosanna' at the entry (v. 9). The rejected stone becoming the cornerstone (kephalen gonias, literally 'head of the corner') was a key early Christian testimony text (cf. Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7). The 'builders' who reject the stone are the leaders standing before Jesus.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 118:22-23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. This is one of the rare instances where Matthew uses 'kingdom of God' (basileia tou theou) rather than his preferred 'kingdom of heaven.' The word ethnei ('nation, people') is singular and does not necessarily mean 'Gentiles' (though that reading is possible); it may refer to a reconstituted people of God that includes both Jews and Gentiles who bear fruit. The emphasis is on fruit-bearing (karpos), connecting back to the fig tree (v. 19) and the vineyard's expected produce.
44. This verse draws on Isaiah 8:14-15 (the stone of stumbling) and Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45 (the stone that crushes the statue). The two scenarios -- falling on the stone and the stone falling on someone -- represent two ways of encountering Jesus: stumbling over him in offense, or being crushed by his judgment. Some scholars question this verse's originality, but it is present in the SBLGNT.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 8:14-15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 2:34-35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The verb egnosan ('knew, recognized, understood') confirms that the parables were not obscure -- the leaders understood them clearly. They are now named specifically: 'chief priests and Pharisees,' the two groups who will drive the passion narrative. Their comprehension without repentance fulfills the pattern of the second son in verse 30.
46. The chapter ends with the same dynamic that opened the John the Baptist flashback (14:5) -- the leaders want to act against God's messenger but fear the people. The crowd's recognition of Jesus as a prophet, while falling short of the full messianic confession, nevertheless provides temporary protection. The arrest is deferred but not abandoned; it will come in 26:47-56.

22

Summary: *Matthew 22 opens with the parable of the wedding banquet, in which a king's invited guests refuse to come and are replaced by strangers from the streets. The chapter then records three challenge questions posed to Jesus by various groups: the Pharisees and Herodians ask about paying taxes to Caesar, the Sadducees pose a hypothetical about resurrection and marriage, and a Pharisee lawyer asks which commandment is the greatest. Jesus answers each decisively, then poses his own question about the Messiah's identity as David's Lord — silencing all challengers.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The three challenge questions represent the major theological factions of first-century Judaism converging against Jesus: Pharisees (political trap about taxes), Sadducees (theological trap about resurrection), and a lawyer from among the Pharisees (legal trap about the commandments). Jesus not only escapes each trap but turns the final exchange into an offensive question about Psalm 110:1 that none of them can answer. The wedding banquet parable contains Matthew's distinctive addition of the guest without wedding garments (vv. 11-14), raising the stakes beyond mere invitation to proper response.*

Translation Friction: *The parable's violent imagery — the king destroying the murderous invitees and burning their city (v. 7) — has been read as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. We render the Greek as given without imposing a specific historical identification. The phrase 'many are called but few are chosen' (v. 14) has generated centuries of theological debate about election; we render the Greek straightforwardly. Jesus's answer about the greatest commandment combines Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, a combination not found elsewhere in Jewish literature of this period.*

Connections: *The wedding banquet parable echoes Isaiah 25:6-8 (the eschatological feast). The tax question connects to the broader theme of God's kingdom versus earthly kingdoms. The resurrection debate anticipates Matthew 28. Jesus's citation of Psalm 110:1 becomes foundational for early Christian Christology (Acts 2:34-35, Hebrews 1:13). The double love commandment becomes the hermeneutical key for the entire law (cf. Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:14).*

1 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. 3 He sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the feast, but they refused to come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my banquet — my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' 5 But they paid no attention and went away — one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads, and invite to the feast as many as you find.' 10 Those servants went out into the roads and gathered everyone they found, both evil and good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 For numerous are called, but few are chosen. 15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to trap him with his own words. 16 They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God honestly. You do not defer to anyone, for you show no partiality. 17 So tell us what you think: is it lawful to pay the tax to Caesar, or not?' 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin used for the tax.' They brought him a denarius. 20 He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription is this?' 21 They said, 'Caesar's.' Then he said to them, 'Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God.' 22 When they heard this, they were amazed. And they left him and went away. 23 That same day Sadducees came to him — those who say there is no resurrection — and they asked him, 24 'Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies without children, his brother is to marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.' 25 Now

there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. ²⁶The same thing happened with the second, the third, and on through all seven. ²⁷Last of all, the woman died. ²⁸So in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her as wife." ²⁹Jesus answered them, "You are mistaken, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰For in the resurrection people neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven. ³¹And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ³²'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead but of the living." ³³When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching. ³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a challenge, tempting him, ³⁶"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" ³⁷He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang every one of the law and the prophets. ⁴¹While the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus asked them, ⁴²"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "David's." ⁴³He said to them, "How then does David, speaking by the Spirit, call him Lord? ⁴⁴'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"'? ⁴⁵How is he his son?, and if David then call him Lord. ⁴⁶No one was able to answer him a word, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *apokritheis* ('answering') does not imply a question was asked — it is a Semitic idiom meaning 'responded to the situation.' The plural *parabolais* ('parables') may indicate that Matthew groups this with the preceding parables of chapter 21, though only one parable follows here.
2. The Greek *gamous* (plural 'wedding festivities') encompasses the entire multi-day celebration, not just the ceremony. 'Wedding feast' captures the communal banquet dimension better than 'marriage.' The aorist *homiothee* ('was compared') frames the parable as a completed analogy.
3. The double invitation — first a prior invitation (*keklemenous*, perfect participle, 'those having been invited'), then the servants sent to summon them — reflects ancient Near Eastern banquet protocol. The refusal is deliberate: *ouk ethelon* ('they were not willing') emphasizes willful rejection, not inability.
4. The Greek *ariston* can mean 'breakfast' or 'midday meal' but here refers to a grand banquet. The detail of slaughtered oxen (*tauroi*) and fattened cattle (*sitista*) emphasizes lavish provision and the urgency of the invitation — the food is prepared and will not keep. The king's patience in sending a second delegation heightens the gravity of the refusal.
5. The verb *amelesantes* ('having disregarded, having been careless about') conveys not hostility but indifference — the most common form of rejection. The mundane alternatives (*field, business*) make the point: ordinary concerns displaced the king's extraordinary invitation.
6. The parable escalates sharply from indifference (v. 5) to violence. The verb *hybrisan* ('mistreated, insulted') denotes outrageous abuse. This mirrors the prophetic tradition of Israel killing God's messengers (cf. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16, Matthew 23:37).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Chronicles 36:15-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The burning of 'their city' (*teen polin auton*) has been widely read as an allusion to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Whether this reflects a post-70 addition or Jesus's prophetic foresight is debated. The Greek *eneprēsen* ('burned') is vivid and specific.
8. The adjective *axioi* ('worthy, deserving') introduces a key theme: the invitation was free, but the invitees rendered themselves unworthy by their response. Worthiness here is defined by willingness to come, not by prior qualification.
9. The Greek *diexodous ton hodon* ('exits of the roads,' i.e., crossroads, intersections, or where roads leave the city) suggests the boundary between the city and the surrounding countryside — places where anyone might be found. The invitation becomes indiscriminate and universal.
10. The pairing *ponērous te kai agathous* ('both evil and good') is striking — the replacement guests are a mixed company, not a moral elite. This reflects Matthew's consistent picture of the kingdom as a mixed community (cf. the wheat and weeds, 13:24-30; the net, 13:47-50). The Greek *anakeimenon* ('reclining ones') indicates the Greco-Roman dining posture.
11. The 'wedding garment' (*endyma gamou*) has generated much discussion. Some scholars suggest hosts provided garments; others see this as symbolic of righteousness or repentance. The man was gathered from the streets (v. 10), so the expectation of proper attire implies provision was made. The singular man among many guests suggests this is not about social class but about response — even among those who come, proper preparation is required.
12. The address *hetaire* ('friend, companion') appears only three times in Matthew (here, 20:13, 26:50) and always carries an ominous edge — it is used when someone has overstepped. The man's silence (*ephimōthē*, 'was muzzled, was silenced') indicates he has no defense; the passive voice may suggest divine silencing rather than mere embarrassment.

- 13.** The attendants here are diakonoi ('servants, ministers') — different from the douloi ('slaves') sent to invite guests. 'Outer darkness' (skotos to exōteron) is a Matthean phrase (cf. 8:12, 25:30) depicting exclusion from the lit banquet hall into the night. 'Weeping and gnashing of teeth' is a formulaic expression in Matthew for eschatological judgment (8:12, 13:42, 13:50, 24:51, 25:30).
- 14.** This summarizing statement distinguishes klētoi ('called, invited') from eklektoi ('chosen, selected'). The parable illustrates both categories of failure: those who refuse the call entirely (vv. 3-7) and those who come without proper response (vv. 11-13). The saying's theological weight — particularly regarding divine election versus human response — has been debated throughout church history. The Greek is rendered straightforwardly without resolving that tension.
- 15.** The verb pagideusōsin ('to ensnare, to trap') is from pagis ('a snare, a trap') — hunting imagery. The Pharisees are now deliberately setting a verbal trap. The phrase en logō ('in a word/statement') means they want Jesus to say something that can be used against him.
- 16.** The coalition of Pharisee disciples and Herodians is politically improbable — Pharisees resented Roman rule while Herodians supported the Herod dynasty and Roman accommodation. Their alliance against Jesus is itself revealing. The flattery is calculated: 'you show no partiality' (ou blepeis eis prosōpon anthrōpōn, literally 'you do not look at the face of people') is designed to pressure Jesus into giving a direct answer regardless of political consequences.
- 17.** The Greek kēnson is a loanword from the Latin census, referring specifically to the Roman poll tax (tributum capitis). This was the most hated tax because it symbolized subjugation — every payment acknowledged Roman sovereignty. The trap is elegant: a 'yes' alienates the Jewish populace; a 'no' constitutes sedition against Rome.
- 18.** The word ponērian ('wickedness, malice') is stronger than mere trickery — it ascribes evil intent. The verb peirazete ('you are testing') is the same word used for Satan's temptation of Jesus in chapter 4. Hypokritai ('hypocrites') originally meant 'stage actors' — people playing a role. Jesus exposes the flattery of verse 16 as performance.
- 19.** The denarius (dēnaron) was a Roman silver coin, a day's wage for a laborer (cf. 20:2). That they could produce one immediately in the temple precincts is itself telling — they carried the very coin bearing Caesar's image into sacred space. The KJV's 'penny' is a misleading anachronism.
- 20.** The word eikōn ('image, likeness') carries theological resonance — humans are made in God's eikōn (Genesis 1:26-27 LXX). Jesus's question sets up a contrast between what bears Caesar's image and what bears God's image. The epigraphē ('inscription') on a Tiberian denarius would read 'Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus.'
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:26-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The verb apodote ('give back, return, render') is crucial — it implies returning what already belongs to someone, not making a gift. Caesar's coin bears Caesar's image; give it back. But since humans bear God's image, the unstated implication is far more sweeping: give your whole self back to God. The answer transcends the political trap entirely by reframing the question from taxation to total allegiance.
- 22.** The verb ethaumasān ('they marveled, were astonished') indicates that Jesus's answer genuinely surprised them — it was not the binary response they had prepared for. Their departure signals that the trap failed completely.
- 23.** Matthew's parenthetical note about Sadducean theology (legontes mē einai anastasin, 'saying there is no resurrection') orients the reader to the nature of the coming trap. The Sadducees accepted only the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) as authoritative and found no explicit resurrection teaching there. Their question is designed to make resurrection belief look absurd.
- 24.** The Sadducees cite the levirate marriage law from Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (with echoes of Genesis 38). The Greek epigambreusei ('shall marry as next-of-kin') is a technical term for levirate marriage. By grounding their question in Moses — the one authority they accept — they believe they have framed an unanswerable challenge to resurrection belief.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 25:5-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 38. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 25.** The scenario is likely hypothetical, perhaps a stock riddle used in Sadducean-Pharisee debates. Seven brothers creates the maximum absurdity for a resurrection scenario. The phrase par' hēmin ('among us') may be a fictional framing device rather than a claim about real people.
- 26.** Matthew compresses the narrative — Mark 12:21-22 provides slightly more detail. The repetition through all seven brothers drives home the point: whose wife would she be in the resurrection?
- 27.** The phrase hysteron pantōn ('last of all') completes the hypothetical with finality — all eight parties are now dead, setting up the resurrection question.
- 28.** The Greek pantes gar eschon autēn ('for they all had her') could be read crudely, but in context it means all seven were legally married to her in succession. The Sadducees believe they have created a logical impossibility that disproves resurrection — one woman cannot simultaneously be wife to seven men.
- 29.** The verb planasthe ('you are led astray, you wander') implies not just intellectual error but spiritual disorientation. Jesus identifies two sources of their mistake: ignorance of Scripture (tas graphas, the very Torah they claim to champion) and ignorance of God's power (tēn dynamin tou theou) — they have limited God to what their theology permits.

30. Jesus does not deny resurrection but redefines its nature. The distinction between gamousin ('they marry,' active, typically of men) and gamizontai ('they are given in marriage,' passive, typically of women being given by their father) reflects first-century marriage customs. The comparison to angels does not mean people become angels but that the resurrected state transcends the social structures of mortal life, including marriage. This directly dissolves the Sadducees' riddle.
31. Jesus now turns to Scripture — specifically the Torah, the only authority the Sadducees accept. The phrase to rhēthen hymin ('what was spoken to you') is pointed: this was not spoken to ancient Israelites only but to you, the Sadducees, who claim to live by Moses.
32. Jesus quotes Exodus 3:6, from the burning bush narrative — firmly within the Torah. His argument turns on the present tense 'I am' (egō eimi): God does not say 'I was' their God but 'I am,' implying that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive to God. This is an argument the Sadducees cannot dismiss as coming from the Prophets or Writings, which they considered less authoritative.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The verb exeplessōnto ('were struck out of their senses, were astonished') is stronger than mere surprise — it connotes being overwhelmed. The same verb describes the crowd's reaction to the Sermon on the Mount (7:28). 'Teaching' (didachē) is preferred over the KJV's 'doctrine,' which in modern English implies systematic theology.
34. The verb ephimōsen ('silenced, muzzled') is the same word used for the speechless guest in verse 12 — a verbal link suggesting divine authority that stops mouths. The Pharisees, having failed through their proxies (v. 16), now regroup for a direct challenge. The irony is that the Pharisees would have agreed with Jesus about resurrection — yet they still oppose him.
35. The nomikos ('lawyer, legal expert') is someone skilled in the Torah and its interpretation. The participle peirazōn ('testing') again uses the temptation vocabulary (cf. v. 18, 4:1). Whether this lawyer has hostile or genuinely curious intent is ambiguous — Mark's parallel (12:28) presents the scribe more positively. Matthew's peirazōn tilts toward a hostile reading.
36. The question poia entolē megalē ('which commandment is great?') reflects a real rabbinic debate. The rabbis identified 613 commandments in the Torah (248 positive, 365 negative) and debated which were 'heavy' (important) and which were 'light.' Asking Jesus to prioritize forces him to potentially diminish some commandments in favor of others.
37. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:5, the centerpiece of the Shema — the daily Jewish confession of faith. The Greek follows the Septuagint with three terms: kardia ('heart,' the seat of will and thought in Semitic usage), psychē ('soul/life'), and dianōia ('mind, understanding'). The Hebrew original has 'heart, soul, and strength' (me'od); Matthew's 'mind' may represent an interpretive rendering of the Hebrew or follow a variant Septuagint tradition. The threefold 'all' (holē) demands totality — no compartment of the self is exempt.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 6:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. Jesus identifies the Shema command as both megalē ('great' in importance) and prōtē ('first' in rank). By citing Deuteronomy 6:5, Jesus answers from the Torah itself — the ground shared by Pharisees, Sadducees, and all Jewish groups.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 6:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. Jesus volunteers a second commandment from Leviticus 19:18 that was not asked for. The word homoia ('like, similar') does not mean identical but says the second shares the same essential character as the first — love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable. The combination of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 into a unified ethical framework appears to be original to Jesus, though Rabbi Hillel's 'Golden Rule' (b. Shabbat 31a) expresses a similar instinct.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. The verb krematai ('hangs, depends') is vivid — the entire Torah and prophetic corpus is suspended from these two commands like a door on its hinges. Jesus does not replace the 613 commandments but provides their organizing center. 'The Law and the Prophets' (ho nomos kai hoi prophētai) is the standard Jewish designation for Scripture (cf. 5:17, 7:12).
41. The initiative now shifts — Jesus moves from defense to offense. Having answered three challenges, he poses his own question. The genitive absolute synēgmenōn ('while being gathered') recalls their gathering in verse 34, making Jesus's counter-question an immediate response to their collective challenge.
42. The question peri tou Christou ('about the Christ/Messiah') is about the expected Messiah, not about Jesus himself — at least not explicitly. The Pharisees' answer 'David's son' is theologically correct but incomplete, as Jesus will demonstrate. This was the standard messianic expectation drawn from 2 Samuel 7 and Isaiah 11.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Samuel 7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The phrase *en pneumati* ('in/by the Spirit') attributes Davidic authorship of Psalm 110 to divine inspiration. Jesus's argument depends on two premises: (1) David wrote Psalm 110, and (2) he wrote it under the Spirit's guidance. Both were uncontested assumptions in first-century Judaism.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1 from the Septuagint. The Hebrew original distinguishes two figures: YHWH (the LORD) speaks to *adoni* ('my lord,' David's superior). In the Greek, both are *kyrios* ('Lord'), but the first represents God and the second the Messiah. The right hand is the position of co-regency and supreme honor. This psalm was the most frequently cited Old Testament text in the early church (Acts 2:34-35, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Hebrews 1:13).
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. Jesus's argument is not that the Messiah is not David's son — the genealogy in chapter 1 affirms that he is. Rather, the Messiah must be more than David's son: he must also be David's Lord. A father does not call his descendant 'my Lord.' The Messiah must therefore transcend mere Davidic descent. Jesus leaves the implication unspoken, forcing the Pharisees to grapple with it.
46. The double negative — no one could answer (*edynato apokriθēnai*) and no one dared ask (*etolmēsen eperōtēsai*) — creates a comprehensive silencing. The verb *tolmaō* ('to dare, to have courage') indicates that questions stopped not from satisfaction but from fear. This verse closes the series of public debates that began in 21:23 and transitions to Jesus's initiative in chapter 23.

23

Summary: *Matthew 23 records Jesus's most sustained public denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. After warning the crowds and his disciples about their hypocrisy, Jesus delivers seven 'woe' pronouncements, each targeting a specific form of religious pretense: blocking others from the kingdom, exploiting converts, manipulating oaths, obsessing over minor rules while ignoring justice and mercy, maintaining outward purity while harboring inward corruption, and honoring dead prophets while persecuting living ones. The chapter closes with Jesus's lament over Jerusalem, expressing anguish at the city's refusal to receive God's messengers.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The seven woes form a carefully structured prophetic oracle in the tradition of Isaiah and Amos. Each 'woe' (*ouai*) is addressed directly to the scribes and Pharisees as 'hypocrites' (*hypokritai*), creating a relentless rhetorical rhythm. The chapter stands in sharp tension with Jesus's instruction in 23:2-3 to respect the teaching authority of the scribes — the critique is not of the Torah but of those who teach it without practicing it. The lament over Jerusalem (vv. 37-39) shifts from prophetic anger to maternal grief, using the image of a hen gathering her chicks. This is one of the most emotionally raw passages attributed to Jesus in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *This chapter has a difficult history in Jewish-Christian relations. The language of condemnation has been weaponized against Jewish people as a whole, which is a misreading — Jesus himself is Jewish, his audience is Jewish, and this is an intra-Jewish prophetic critique in the tradition of Jeremiah and Amos. We render the Greek faithfully while noting that 'scribes and Pharisees' designates specific religious leaders, not the Jewish people. The relationship between Matthew's community and the synagogue likely shaped the intensity of this rhetoric.*

Connections: *The woe oracles echo Isaiah 5:8-23 and Habakkuk 2:6-20. The imagery of whitewashed tombs recalls Ezekiel 13:10-16. Jesus's lament over Jerusalem draws on the maternal imagery of Isaiah 66:13 and the prophetic grief of Jeremiah 8-9. The reference to Abel and Zechariah (v. 35) spans the entire Hebrew Bible from Genesis 4 to 2 Chronicles 24. The closing quotation from Psalm 118:26 connects to the triumphal entry (21:9) and will be fulfilled at the Parousia.*

1Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples: 2"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses's seat. 3So do and observe everything they tell you, but do not follow their example, for they preach but do not practice. 4They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. 5Everything they do is done to be seen by others. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. 6They love the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, 7Greetings in the markets, and to be known as of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8But you are not to be

called 'Rabbi,' for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. ⁹And do not call anyone on earth your father, for you have one Father — the heavenly one. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor — the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. ¹³But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor do you allow those who are trying to enter to go in. ¹⁴Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You cross sea and land to make a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. ¹⁵Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it means nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is bound by the oath.' ¹⁶You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? ¹⁷And you say, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it means nothing; but whoever swears by the gift on it is bound by the oath.' ¹⁸You blind ones! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ¹⁹So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²⁰And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. ²¹And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by the one who sits on it. ²²Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You tithe mint, dill, and cumin, but you have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faithfulness. These you should have practiced without neglecting the others. ²³Blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. ²⁴Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁵Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside may become clean as well. ²⁶Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs that appear beautiful on the outside but inside are full of dead people's bones and every kind of impurity. ²⁷In the same way, you appear righteous to people on the outside, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. ²⁸Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ²⁹Say, If we had been in the period of our fathers, we would not possess been partakers with them in the lifeblood of the God's spokespersons. ³⁰So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³¹Then fill up the measure of your ancestors! ³²You snakes, you brood of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell? ³³Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from city to city, ³⁴Indeed, that upon you may come every one of the righteous blood shed upon the world, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. ³⁵Truly I tell you, all these things will come upon this generation. ³⁶"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you — how often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁷Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁸For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The dual audience — crowds (*ochlois*) and disciples (*mathētais*) — is significant. The warnings that follow are not private instruction but public proclamation. This positions Jesus as a prophet addressing the entire people, not just his inner circle.
2. The 'seat of Moses' (*Mōyseōs kathedras*) refers to the teaching authority inherited from Moses — the right to interpret and apply the Torah. Archaeological evidence confirms that synagogues had a literal stone seat from which the Torah was taught. Jesus acknowledges the legitimacy of the office even as he critiques its occupants.
3. This verse is striking: Jesus validates the scribes' and Pharisees' teaching authority (*panta hosa ean eipōsin*, 'everything they say') while completely rejecting their behavior (*kata ta erga autōn mē poieite*, 'do not do according to their works'). The critique is hypocrisy — the gap between word and deed — not the content of their teaching itself.
4. The imagery of *phortia barea* ('heavy loads') contrasts sharply with Jesus's own invitation in 11:30 ('my burden is light'). The verb *desmeuousin* ('they bind') suggests legal obligations tied tightly. The phrase *tō daktylō autōn ou thelousin kinēsai* ('they are not willing to move with their finger') exposes the asymmetry: they impose rules they do not share the burden of keeping.
5. Phylacteries (*phylaktēria*) are small leather boxes containing Scripture passages (Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18), worn on the forehead and arm during prayer. Making them wider makes one's piety more visible. The tassels (*kraspeda*) are the fringed borders of the prayer shawl commanded in Numbers 15:38-39. Jesus does not condemn phylacteries or tassels — he himself wore tassels (9:20, 14:36) — but the ostentatious enlargement of them for public display.

5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 6:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 15:38-39 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The *prōtoklisian* ('first reclining place') at a banquet was the seat nearest the host, denoting highest status. The *prōtokathedrias* ('first seats') in the synagogue were those facing the congregation, reserved for distinguished persons. Both represent social capital — visible markers of religious rank.
7. The title *Rabbi* (*Rhabbi*, from the Hebrew *rav*, 'great one') means 'my master' or 'my teacher.' In the first century it was transitioning from a general honorific to a formal title for Torah scholars. The desire to be called *Rabbi* reflects the pursuit of status through religious authority.
8. The Greek *adelphoi* ('brothers') is rendered inclusively as 'brothers and sisters' since the audience includes the crowds (v. 1), not just male disciples. The SBLGNT reads *ho didaskalos* ('the teacher') without the addition 'even Christ' found in some manuscripts and reflected in the KJV. Jesus establishes a radically egalitarian community ethic — no hierarchy of religious titles.
9. The prohibition against calling anyone 'father' (*patera*) as a religious title parallels the *Rabbi* prohibition. 'Father' (*abba*, *pater*) was used as a title of respect for esteemed teachers. Jesus does not prohibit the biological use of the word but the use of parental titles to establish religious hierarchy — all authority derives from the heavenly Father alone.
10. The Greek *kathēgētai* ('guides, instructors, leaders') is distinct from *didaskalos* ('teacher,' v. 8). Jesus covers three titles — *Rabbi*, Father, Instructor — to prohibit any title that creates a spiritual hierarchy between believers. The Christ (*ho Christos*) is identified as the sole legitimate instructor, a significant Christological claim.
11. The word *diakonos* ('servant, one who serves') is the root of 'deacon.' Jesus redefines greatness not as authority over others but as service to others — a consistent theme (20:26-27). This inverts the entire religious hierarchy just described.
12. The passive verbs *tapeinōthēsetai* ('will be humbled') and *hypsōthēsetai* ('will be exalted') are divine passives — God is the unspoken agent who brings down the proud and lifts up the humble. This saying echoes Proverbs 29:23, Ezekiel 21:26, and appears elsewhere in Jesus's teaching (Luke 14:11, 18:14).
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 29:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 21:26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The first woe. The Greek *ouai* ('woe') is not a curse but a prophetic lament — it expresses grief as much as judgment (cf. Isaiah 5:8-23). The verb *kleiete* ('you shut, you lock') pictures the kingdom as a door being barred. The participle *eiserchomous* ('those entering, those in the process of entering') suggests people who were on their way into the kingdom but were blocked by the religious leaders' obstruction.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 5:8-23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Verse 14 is not present in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears in the KJV based on later manuscripts that likely imported it from Mark 12:40 or Luke 20:47. Modern critical editions omit it. The verse numbering jumps from 13 to 15 in the SBLGNT.
15. The second woe. The Greek *prosēluton* ('proselyte, convert') refers to a Gentile who fully converts to Judaism, including circumcision and Torah observance. The verb *periategete* ('you go around, you traverse') with 'sea and land' conveys exhaustive effort. The phrase *huion geennēs* ('son of Gehenna') uses the Semitic idiom 'son of X' meaning 'one characterized by X.' *Geenna* refers to the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, associated with child sacrifice (Jeremiah 7:31) and later with eschatological punishment.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 7:31 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The third woe. The address shifts from 'hypocrites' to 'blind guides' (*hodēgoi typhloi*), emphasizing not just their insincerity but their inability to lead others. The casuistry Jesus describes — distinguishing binding from non-binding oaths based on what one swears by — is a form of oath manipulation that allows deception while maintaining technical innocence. The verb *opheilei* ('is obligated, is bound') is a financial term applied to moral obligation.
17. The epithet *mōroi* ('fools') is the same word Jesus warned against using in 5:22 — its use here, in prophetic denunciation from the one with authority to judge, is deliberate. The participle *hagiasas* ('having sanctified, having made holy') establishes the theological point: the temple consecrates the gold, not the reverse. Valuing the gold over the temple inverts the sacred order.
18. The same casuistry is now applied to the altar (*thysiastērion*) and the gift (*dōron*) placed upon it. The parallel with verses 16-17 exposes the systematic nature of the deception — it is not a single error but an entire system of oath manipulation.
19. The SBLGNT reads *typhloi* ('blind ones') without *mōroi* ('fools'), differing from some manuscripts reflected in the KJV. The argument parallels verse 17 exactly: the altar consecrates the offering, not the reverse.

20. Jesus dismantles the casuistry: swearing by a sacred object includes everything associated with it. You cannot separate the container from the contents. This verse begins the logical conclusion (vv. 20-22) that makes all oaths equally binding.
21. The participle *katoikounti* ('the one dwelling') refers to God's presence in the temple. The argument escalates: swearing by the temple invokes not just a building but God himself, who inhabits it. This connects to the Shekhinah tradition — God's dwelling presence in the sanctuary.
22. The argument reaches its pinnacle: heaven is God's throne (cf. 5:34, Isaiah 66:1), so every oath invoking heaven invokes God. The conclusion is inescapable — no oath can be made 'non-binding' because all sacred things ultimately point to God, before whom all oaths are binding.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 66:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The fourth woe. Mint (*hēdyosmon*), dill (*anēthon*), and cumin (*kyminon*) are small garden herbs — tithing them represents extreme scrupulousness about minor regulations. The 'weightier matters' (*ta barytera*) — justice (*krisin*), mercy (*eleos*), and faithfulness (*pistin*) — echo Micah 6:8. Crucially, Jesus does not say they should stop tithing herbs; he says they should do both (*tauta edei poiēsai kakeina mē afienai*). The issue is proportion and priority, not abolition of the lesser commands.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 6:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. This vivid hyperbole may contain a wordplay in Aramaic: *qalma* ('gnat') and *gamla* ('camel') are near-homophones. The image of straining wine to remove a tiny insect (for ritual purity) while somehow ingesting an entire camel (the largest animal in Palestine, also unclean per Leviticus 11:4) is deliberately absurd. It captures the inverted priorities of verse 23 in a single memorable image.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 11:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The fifth woe. The cup and dish metaphor addresses ritual purity laws about vessels (cf. Mark 7:1-4). The Greek *harpagēs* ('robbery, plunder, greed') and *akrasias* ('lack of self-control, self-indulgence') describe the moral contents behind the ritually clean exterior. The contrast between *exōthen* ('outside') and *esōthen* ('inside') is the essence of hypocrisy.
26. The singular address *Pharisaie typhle* ('Blind Pharisee') suddenly personalizes the critique. The logic is simple: if you clean the inside, the outside will follow naturally. Internal transformation produces external purity, not the reverse. This principle underlies Jesus's entire ethical teaching.
27. The sixth woe. Tombs were whitewashed before Passover so that pilgrims could avoid accidental contact with them, which would cause ritual defilement (Numbers 19:16). The irony is devastating: the whitewash exists to warn people away from contamination, but here it becomes a metaphor for deliberate concealment. The word *akatharsias* ('impurity, uncleanness') is the ritual opposite of the purity the Pharisees obsessively cultivate.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 19:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The application makes the metaphor explicit. The word *anomia* ('lawlessness') is striking — these are the very people who claim to be the Torah's guardians, yet Jesus accuses them of *anomia*, the negation of law (*a-nomia*, 'without law'). Their meticulous rule-keeping paradoxically constitutes a deeper form of lawlessness because it violates the law's true intent.
29. The seventh woe. Archaeological evidence confirms that elaborate tomb monuments were being built around Jerusalem in this period. The verb *oikodomeite* ('you build') and *kosmeite* ('you adorn, you decorate') describe acts of memorial piety — honoring prophets of the past. The hypocrisy lies in what follows.
30. The Greek *koinōnoi* ('partners, participants, sharers') implies active complicity, not just passive agreement. The claim to moral superiority over their ancestors is the setup for Jesus's devastating reversal in the next verse — by identifying their ancestors as prophet-killers, they unwittingly confess the family lineage.
31. The verb *martyreite* ('you testify, you bear witness') is legal language — they have given testimony that convicts them. The word *huiōi* ('sons') means both biological descendants and spiritual heirs. Jesus's logic: by acknowledging that your fathers killed the prophets, you admit kinship with prophet-killers — and your current actions prove the family resemblance.
32. The imperative *plērōsate* ('fill up!') is darkly ironic — possibly a command, possibly a sarcastic permission, possibly a prophetic declaration of inevitability. The 'measure' (*metron*) of sin is an image from Genesis 15:16, where God tells Abraham that the iniquity of the Amorites 'is not yet complete.' Jesus implies that his generation will bring the accumulated guilt to its fullness.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The epithets *opheis* ('snakes') and *gennēmata echidnōn* ('offspring of vipers') echo John the Baptist's language in 3:7. The rhetorical question *pōs phygēte* ('how will you flee?') implies no escape is possible. The word *geennēs* ('Gehenna/hell') refers to the Valley of Hinnom, the image of final divine judgment (cf. 5:22, 29-30, 10:28).
34. The remarkable claim *egō apostellō* ('I am sending') places Jesus in the role of God himself, who in the Old Testament sends prophets. Jesus predicts the persecution of his own future messengers using four escalating verbs: kill (*apokteneite*), crucify (*staurōsete*), flog (*mastigōsete*), and pursue

(diōxete). The prediction of crucifixion is specifically Roman punishment, suggesting Jesus foresees the Roman context of early Christian persecution.

35. Abel (Genesis 4) is the first murder victim in the Hebrew Bible; Zechariah son of Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 24:20-22) is the last, since Chronicles is the final book in the Hebrew canon. Together they span the entire scriptural record of innocent blood. The identification 'son of Barachiah' creates a difficulty — the Zechariah killed in the temple was the son of Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 24:20), not Barachiah. This may reflect confusion with the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah (Zechariah 1:1), or it may represent a tradition otherwise lost to us. We render the Greek as given.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Chronicles 24:20-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 1:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The solemn amēn legō hymin ('truly I say to you') marks this as an authoritative prophetic declaration. The phrase tēn genean tautēn ('this generation') most naturally refers to Jesus's contemporaries, placing the prophesied judgment within a generation — a timeframe consistent with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
37. The tone shifts dramatically from prophetic denunciation to lament. The double vocative Ierousalēm Ierousalēm expresses deep grief (cf. 'Absalom, Absalom!' in 2 Samuel 19:4). The maternal image of a hen (ornis) gathering chicks (nossia) under her wings (pterygas) is extraordinary — Jesus uses a feminine, nurturing metaphor for his own desire to protect Jerusalem. The divine wing as shelter echoes Psalm 91:4 and Ruth 2:12. The verb ēthelēsate ('you were willing') places the blame squarely on Jerusalem's refusal.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Samuel 19:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 91:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ruth 2:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The word oikos ('house') likely refers to the temple, though it could mean Jerusalem or the nation. The adjective erēmos ('deserted, desolate') echoes Jeremiah 22:5 ('this house will become a desolation'). The verb aphietai ('is left, is abandoned') suggests divine departure — God is vacating the premises. The passive voice is a divine passive: God is the one leaving.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 22:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. Jesus quotes Psalm 118:26, the same psalm the crowds sang at his triumphal entry (21:9). The phrase ap' arti ('from now') marks a turning point — Jesus's public ministry in Jerusalem is ending. The 'until' (heōs an) implies a future moment of recognition, whether at the Parousia or at a future national repentance. The quotation frames Jesus's departure as a withdrawal of divine presence that will end only when Jerusalem welcomes him as the one coming in the LORD's name.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 118:26. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

24

Summary: *Matthew 24 contains the Olivet Discourse — Jesus's extended teaching on the destruction of the temple, the signs of his coming, and the end of the age. Prompted by the disciples' question about when the temple will be destroyed and what signs will signal his return, Jesus describes a sequence of tribulations: false messiahs, wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, the 'abomination of desolation,' cosmic disturbances, and finally the coming of the Son of Man. The chapter closes with parables and warnings about readiness, emphasizing that no one knows the day or hour.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Olivet Discourse is one of the most debated passages in the New Testament. The disciples' question in verse 3 may conflate two events (the temple's destruction and the end of the age) that Jesus addresses separately, or Jesus may see them as typologically connected. The phrase 'abomination of desolation' (v. 15) draws from Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11, originally referring to Antiochus Epiphanes' desecration of the temple in 167 BC, here reapplied to a future event. The discourse weaves together language of historical catastrophe (consistent with 70 AD) and cosmic apocalyptic imagery (suggesting an event beyond history).*

Translation Friction: The central interpretive challenge is distinguishing which predictions refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and which refer to the final return of Christ — or whether such a distinction is even intended. We render the Greek as given without imposing a particular eschatological framework. The phrase 'this generation will not pass away until all these things take place' (v. 34) has been interpreted as referring to the generation alive in Jesus's day, the generation alive when the signs begin, or 'generation' in the sense of 'race/people.' We render genea straightforwardly as 'generation' and note the interpretive range.

Connections: The discourse draws heavily on Daniel 7 (Son of Man coming on clouds), Daniel 9 (abomination of desolation), Isaiah 13 and 34 (cosmic upheaval language), Zechariah 12-14 (mourning and judgment), and Joel 2 (signs in sun and moon). The 'days of Noah' comparison (vv. 37-39) connects to Genesis 6-8. The discourse serves as the foundation for much of Revelation's imagery and for Paul's eschatological teaching in 1 Thessalonians 4-5 and 2 Thessalonians 2.

¹Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came to him to point out the buildings of the temple. ²He answered them, "Do you see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another — every one will be thrown down." ³As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will deceive many. ⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these things are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. ¹⁰At that time many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and deceive many. ¹²And because lawlessness will increase, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. ¹⁵"So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place" — let the reader understand — ¹⁶Then let them which be in Judaea escape into the hills. ¹⁷The one on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house, ¹⁸And do not allow him that is in the field return back to take his clothes. ¹⁹How terrible it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! ²⁰Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹For at that time there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, and never will again. ²²If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. ²³Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' — do not believe it. ²⁴For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵See, I have told you in advance. ²⁶So if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness!' — do not go out. Or, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms!' — do not believe it. ²⁷For as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸Wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. ³²Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: when its branch becomes tender and puts out leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³In the same way, when you see all these things, you know that it is near — right at the door. ³⁴Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ³⁶But concerning that day and hour, no one knows — not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son — but the Father alone. ³⁷For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸Until the day that noe entered into the ark,, for as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. ³⁹Recognized not until the flood arrived, and picked up them all away. So will also the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and one left. ⁴²Therefore stay alert, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But

understand this: if the homeowner had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴For this reason, you also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ⁴⁵"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing so when he arrives. ⁴⁷Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that wicked servant says in his heart, 'My master is delayed,' ⁴⁹Will start to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. ⁵⁰The lord of that attendant will arrive in a time when he looketh not for him, and in an moment that he is not aware of,. ⁵¹Will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites — where there is sobbing and grinding of teeth.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *eporeueto* ('was going, was walking away') is imperfect, suggesting Jesus was in the process of departing — a symbolic act following the 'desolate house' pronouncement of 23:38. The disciples' impulse to show him the temple buildings (*oikodomas tou hierou*) reflects pride in Herod's temple, one of the architectural wonders of the ancient world. Josephus describes its massive stones and gold ornamentation.
2. The double negative *ou mē* ('absolutely not') with the subjunctive *aphethē* expresses the strongest possible negation in Greek — this will certainly happen. The prophecy was fulfilled literally in 70 AD when the Romans under Titus destroyed the temple. Josephus records that soldiers pried apart the stones to recover gold that had melted between them during the fire (Jewish War 7.1.1).
3. The disciples' question contains two or possibly three parts: (1) when will the temple be destroyed? (2) what is the sign of your coming (*parousia*)? (3) what signals the end of the age (*synteleias tou aiōnos*)? The Greek *parousia* means 'arrival, presence, coming' and became the technical term for Christ's return. The phrase *synteleias tou aiōnos* means 'completion of the age,' not 'end of the world' as in the KJV — *aiōn* is 'age,' not 'world' (*kosmos*). The Mount of Olives, east of the temple, is associated with eschatological events in Zechariah 14:4.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 14:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Jesus begins not with a timeline but with a warning. The verb *planēsē* ('leads astray, deceives') is from the same root as 'planet' (wandering star) — it suggests being led off course. The imperative *blepete* ('watch, be alert') sets the tone for the entire discourse: vigilance, not speculation, is the proper response to eschatological questions.
5. The phrase *epi tō onomati mou* ('on the basis of my name') means they will invoke Jesus's authority or claim to be his successor. The claim *egō eimi ho Christos* ('I am the Christ') predicts messianic pretenders. Josephus records several such figures in the decades before 70 AD (Theudas, the Egyptian, Bar Kokhba later in 132 AD).
6. The verb *throoisthe* ('be alarmed, be disturbed') suggests panic or anxiety. Jesus distinguishes between preliminary signs and the end itself (*to telos*). The word *dei* ('it is necessary, it must') indicates divine necessity — these events are part of the plan, not signs that the plan has failed. The phrase *oupō estin to telos* ('the end is not yet') prevents premature eschatological calculation.
7. The phrase *ethnos epi ethnos* ('nation against nation') echoes Isaiah 19:2 and 2 Chronicles 15:6. The SBLGNT does not include 'pestilences' (*loimoi*), which appears in some manuscripts reflected in the KJV. The catalog — wars, famines, earthquakes — represents the standard prophetic signs of divine judgment (cf. Isaiah 13, Ezekiel 38, Joel 2).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 19:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Chronicles 15:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 38. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joel 2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek *ōdinōn* ('birth pains, labor contractions') is more specific than the KJV's 'sorrows.' The metaphor is significant: birth pains are not pointless suffering but purposeful agony that leads to new life. The image comes from the prophetic tradition (Isaiah 26:17, 66:7-9, Jeremiah 4:31, Micah 4:9-10) where Israel's suffering is compared to labor preceding deliverance.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 26:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 4:31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 4:9-10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The verb *paradōsousin* ('they will hand over, deliver up') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal of Jesus (26:15) and for Jesus being handed over to Pilate (27:2). The term *thlipsin* ('affliction, distress, tribulation') denotes severe pressure and suffering. The phrase *dia to onoma mou* ('because of my name') identifies the cause: association with Jesus himself.
10. The verb *skandalisthēsontai* ('will be caused to stumble, will fall away') describes apostasy under pressure — faith collapsing when the cost becomes too high. The triple repetition of *allēlous* ('one another') paints a picture of community disintegration: mutual betrayal and mutual hatred replacing mutual love.
11. The pseudoprophētai ('false prophets') are distinct from the false messiahs of verse 5. The term echoes Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and Jeremiah 23:9-40 — Israel's perennial problem of prophets who speak without divine commission. The repetition of *pollous* ('many') in both subject and object emphasizes the scale of the deception.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 13:1-5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 23:9-40. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The word *anomian* ('lawlessness') — the same term used in 23:28 — here describes societal moral collapse. The verb *psygēsetai* ('will be cooled, will grow cold') uses a temperature metaphor for love (*agapē*) — the opposite of the fervent love commanded in 22:37-39. The connection between rampant lawlessness and the cooling of love suggests that moral chaos erodes the capacity for genuine community.
13. The participle *hypomeinas* ('having endured, having persevered') is from *hypomenō* ('to remain under, to bear up under') — it pictures standing firm under pressure rather than escaping it. 'The end' (*telos*) may refer to the end of one's life, the end of the tribulation, or the consummation of the age. 'Will be saved' (*sōthēsetai*) encompasses both spiritual salvation and physical deliverance, depending on context.
14. The Greek *oikoumenē* ('inhabited world') referred to the known world of the Roman Empire, though its scope may extend beyond that. The phrase *eis martyriōn* ('as a testimony/witness') indicates that the proclamation itself constitutes a witness — whether people accept or reject it. This verse makes worldwide gospel proclamation a precondition for 'the end' (to *telos*), providing a missionary mandate embedded in eschatological prophecy.
15. The 'abomination of desolation' (to *bdelygma tēs erēmōseōs*) comes from Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11. In Daniel it referred to Antiochus IV Epiphanes setting up a pagan altar in the temple in 167 BC. Jesus reapplies it to a future desecration. The parenthetical 'let the reader understand' (ho *anaginōskōn noeitō*) may be Matthew's editorial note to his readers rather than Jesus's words, alerting them that this prophecy requires careful discernment. The 'holy place' (*topō hagiō*) is the temple area.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 9:27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The imperative *pheugetōsan* ('let them flee') conveys urgency — immediate flight, no delay. The instruction to flee to the mountains is practical advice for a military siege: the Judean wilderness and hills east of Jerusalem provided natural refuge. The early church historian Eusebius records that Christians in Jerusalem fled to Pella in Transjordan before the Roman siege of 70 AD.
17. The flat roof (*dōmatos*) of a Palestinian house was used for daily activities and could be accessed by an external staircase. The instruction is to flee via the rooftops without even entering one's own home — the urgency is that extreme. Every moment spent collecting possessions risks death.
18. The *himation* ('cloak, outer garment') was an essential item — it served as both clothing and bedding (cf. Exodus 22:26-27). Even this necessity must be abandoned. The verb *epistrepsatō* ('let him turn back') echoes Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26) — looking back is dangerous.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 22:26-27 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 19:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The *ouai* ('woe, alas') here expresses compassion, not condemnation — grief for those whose physical condition makes flight nearly impossible. The phrase *en gastri echousais* ('having in the womb') and *thēlāzousais* ('nursing') depict the most vulnerable members of society in a crisis.
20. Winter (*cheimōnos*) makes travel through the Judean wilderness dangerous — cold, rain, swollen wadis. A Sabbath flight would face two obstacles: restricted travel distances (a 'Sabbath day's journey' was about 2,000 cubits or three-quarters of a mile) and city gates that might be shut. The mention of Sabbath assumes a Jewish-observant audience and reflects Matthew's Jewish-Christian community context.
21. The phrase *thlipsis megalē* ('great tribulation') has become a technical eschatological term in many traditions. The language of unprecedented suffering echoes Daniel 12:1. The superlative — nothing like it before or after — may be hyperbolic prophetic language (cf. Exodus 10:14 about the locusts, Joel 2:2) or may describe a truly singular event. Josephus's account of the siege of Jerusalem describes starvation, cannibalism, and mass crucifixion that corroborates extreme suffering.

21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 12:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 10:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Joel 2:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The verb *ekolobōthēsan* ('were cut short, were curtailed') implies divine intervention to limit the duration of suffering. The term *pasa sarx* ('all flesh') means all living people, not just believers. The *eklektous* ('elect, chosen ones') are the reason for God's mercy in shortening the tribulation — divine compassion for his people sets a boundary on catastrophe.
23. Jesus returns to the warning against false messiahs (cf. v. 5). The construction *ean tis* ('if anyone') is deliberately indefinite — the source of deception could be anyone. The imperative *mē pisteusēte* ('do not believe') is decisive and unqualified.
24. The compound *pseudochristoi* ('false messiahs/false christs') appears only here and in Mark 13:22 in the entire New Testament. The phrase *sēmeia megala kai terata* ('great signs and wonders') uses the same language used positively for God's miraculous acts in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:22) — the deception is sophisticated enough to mimic divine authentication. The clause *ei dynaton* ('if possible') leaves ambiguous whether the elect can actually be deceived — the conditional suggests it may approach but not achieve that.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The verb *proeirēka* ('I have foretold') emphasizes that the warning comes before the events, removing any excuse for being caught off guard. The brevity of the statement gives it the force of a prophetic seal — 'You have been warned.'
26. Two contrasting locations are named: the wilderness (*erēmō*), where prophetic and messianic movements typically gathered (cf. the Qumran community, various revolutionary movements), and the inner rooms (*tameiois*), suggesting secret, esoteric knowledge. Both are rejected — the true coming of the Son of Man will not be hidden or localized.
27. The lightning metaphor (*astrapē*) establishes three qualities of the Parousia: it will be sudden, visible everywhere simultaneously, and unmistakable. No one needs to be told lightning has struck — you simply see it. This eliminates the possibility of a secret or localized return. The title 'Son of Man' (*huios tou anthrōpou*) draws from Daniel 7:13-14.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. This proverb-like saying is enigmatic. The Greek *aetoi* can mean 'eagles' or 'vultures' — vultures is more contextually appropriate since eagles do not typically feed on carrion (*ptōma*, 'fallen body, corpse'). The saying may mean that judgment naturally finds its target, just as vultures inevitably find a carcass. Some interpreters see a reference to Roman eagles (legionary standards). The exact application is deliberately obscure.
29. The adverb *eutheōs* ('immediately') creates an interpretive challenge — if the tribulation of 'those days' refers to 70 AD, what follows 'immediately' after? The cosmic imagery draws heavily from Isaiah 13:10 (judgment on Babylon) and Isaiah 34:4 (judgment on Edom), where darkened sun and falling stars are prophetic language for political upheaval and divine judgment, not necessarily literal astronomical events. Whether Jesus uses this language literally or figuratively (as the prophets often did) remains debated. The 'powers of the heavens' (*dynameis tōn ouranōn*) may refer to celestial bodies or to spiritual forces.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 13:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 34:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The 'sign' (*sēmeion*) of the Son of Man is not identified — it may be the Son of Man himself, a banner, a light, or something else entirely. The mourning of 'all the tribes of the earth' (*pasai hai phylai tēs gēs*) echoes Zechariah 12:10-12, where Israel mourns one whom they have pierced. The coming 'on the clouds' (*epi tōn nephelōn*) directly fulfills Daniel 7:13-14, where the Son of Man receives universal dominion from the Ancient of Days. The combination of *dynamis* ('power') and *doxa* ('glory') contrasts with Jesus's first coming in humility.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 7:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 12:10-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The trumpet (*salpingos*) echoes the great trumpet of Isaiah 27:13, which summons the scattered Israelites home. The gathering of the elect (*eklektous*) from the four winds (*tessarōn anemōn*) fulfills the ingathering prophecies of Deuteronomy 30:4, Isaiah 11:11-12, and Zechariah 2:6. The phrase *ap' akrōn ouranōn heōs tōn akrōn autōn* ('from the extremities of the heavens to their extremities') means from one horizon to the other — a universal gathering.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 27:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 30:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 11:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 2:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The fig tree (sykēs) parable is an analogy from nature, not an allegory (the fig tree does not represent Israel here, despite some interpretive traditions). In Palestine, the fig tree's visible budding is a reliable harbinger of summer. The Greek hapalos ('tender, soft') describes the supple new growth. Jesus applies this to the preceding signs: when you see them, know that the fulfillment is near.
33. The pronoun 'it' (implied by the verb *estin*) is ambiguous — 'it' could be the Son of Man, the kingdom, or the predicted destruction. The phrase *epi thyras* ('at the doors') is a vivid spatial metaphor: whatever is coming has arrived at the threshold and is about to enter.
34. This is one of the most debated verses in the New Testament. The word *genea* ('generation') most naturally means the people alive at a given time (roughly 30-40 years). If taken at face value, Jesus predicts that everything described in vv. 4-31 will occur within the lifetime of his contemporaries. This fits the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD, about 40 years after Jesus's ministry) but creates tension with the cosmic-scale events of vv. 29-31. Alternative readings take *genea* as 'race' (the Jewish people will not cease to exist) or 'type of people' (evil generation). We render the word in its primary sense and note the interpretive range.
35. The contrast between the temporary (heaven and earth) and the permanent (Jesus's words) is a staggering claim. The verb *pareusetai* ('will pass away, will come to an end') applied to heaven and earth echoes Isaiah 51:6 and Psalm 102:26. The double negative *ou mē parethōsin* ('absolutely will not pass away') applied to Jesus's words places them above creation itself in permanence — a claim of divine authority.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 51:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 102:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The SBLGNT includes *oude ho huioi* ('nor the Son'), which some manuscripts omit (the KJV follows manuscripts that omit it). The inclusion is generally considered original and theologically significant: Jesus acknowledges a limitation on his own knowledge regarding the timing of the end. The three-tiered exclusion (no human, no angel, not even the Son) concentrates all knowledge of the timing in the Father alone. This verse fundamentally undercuts all attempts to calculate the date of Christ's return.
37. The Noah comparison (*hai hēmerai tou Nōe*) establishes an analogy not about wickedness but about normalcy — people will be going about ordinary life when the end comes. The Greek *Nōe* is the Septuagint form of the Hebrew Noah.
38. The activities listed — eating (*trōgontes*), drinking (*pinontes*), marrying (*gamountes*), and giving in marriage (*gamizontes*) — are not sinful but ordinary. The point is not that they were doing evil things but that they were oblivious. The *kataklysmos* ('flood, deluge') is the Greek term used in the Septuagint for Noah's flood (Genesis 6-8).
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 6-8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The verb *ouk egnōsan* ('they did not know, they did not realize') is the key: the catastrophe was not unannounced (Noah was building the ark in plain sight) but unrecognized. The verb *ēren* ('took away, swept away') pictures sudden, total removal. The *parousia* will similarly overtake those who are not alert.
40. The verb *paralambanetai* ('is taken, is received') and *aphietai* ('is left, is released') have been interpreted in opposite ways: 'taken' as gathered for salvation (cf. v. 31) or 'taken' in judgment (as the flood 'took' in v. 39). The Noah context suggests 'taken' means taken in judgment and 'left' means spared, though the reverse interpretation (taken to be with the Lord) is also defended. We render the Greek without interpretive addition.
41. Grinding grain at a hand mill (*mylō*) was a common daily task for women in first-century Palestine. The parallel with verse 40 extends the point: the separation will occur during the most routine activities, without warning, in both men's and women's domains of daily life.
42. The imperative *grēgoreite* ('stay awake, be watchful, be alert') becomes the dominant theme from here through chapter 25. The SBLGNT reads *hēmera* ('day') rather than *hōra* ('hour') found in some manuscripts. The practical application of the preceding prophecy is not calculation but constant readiness.
43. The Greek *oikodespotēs* ('master of the house, homeowner') becomes the subject of a brief parable. The *phylakē* ('watch') refers to the Roman system dividing the night into four watches. The verb *diorychthenai* ('to be dug through') reflects Palestinian construction: mud-brick walls could literally be tunneled through by a thief. The analogy is startling — the Son of Man's coming is compared to a thief's break-in (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:2, Revelation 3:3).
44. The imperative *ginesthe hetoimoi* ('be ready, become prepared') calls for ongoing readiness, not a one-time preparation. The phrase *hē ou dokeite hōra* ('the hour you do not think/expect') adds an ironic twist: the one thing you can be sure of is that it will not be when you expect it.

45. The parable shifts to a household manager. The Greek *pistos* ('faithful, trustworthy') and *phronimos* ('wise, prudent') describe the ideal servant. The *oiketeia* ('household, household servants') represents those under the servant's care. The question 'who then is...?' invites the listener to identify with or aspire to this role.
46. The word *makarios* ('blessed, fortunate, happy') is the same word that opens the Beatitudes (5:3-11). The key phrase is *houtōs poiounta* ('doing thus') — blessedness is found in faithful action at the moment of the master's return, not in speculation about when the return will occur.
47. The reward for faithfulness is expanded responsibility — the servant who managed the household well is given authority over all the master's possessions (*pasin tois hyparchousin*). This principle — faithfulness in small things leading to authority over greater things — recurs in the parable of the talents (25:21, 23).
48. The phrase *en tē kardia autou* ('in his heart') indicates private calculation, not public rebellion. The verb *chronizei* ('delays, takes a long time') reveals the servant's reasoning: he assumes the master's absence will continue, so he can act with impunity. The adjective *kakos* ('wicked, evil') characterizes the servant by his response to the delay, not by a separate category of person.
49. The wicked servant's behavior manifests in two ways: abuse of those under his authority (*typtein tous syndoulous*, 'beating his fellow servants') and self-indulgence (eating and drinking with drunkards). The combination of oppression and excess characterizes unfaithful leadership — using one's position for personal gain while harming those one is supposed to serve.
50. The double expression — a day he does not expect (*ou prosdoka*) and an hour he does not know (*ou ginōskei*) — echoes verse 36. The servant's calculation that the master is delayed proves fatally wrong. The surprise element reinforces the discourse's central theme: readiness, not prediction.
51. The verb *dichotomēsei* ('will cut in two, will cut to pieces') is shockingly graphic — whether literal dismemberment or a metaphor for severe punishment is debated. The phrase *meta tōn hypokritōn* ('with the hypocrites') is distinctly Matthean (Luke's parallel has 'with the unfaithful'). The unfaithful servant is classified with the hypocrites of chapter 23 — those who had a role in God's household but served themselves instead. The formula 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' appears for the sixth and final time in Matthew.

25

Summary: *Matthew 25 continues the Olivet Discourse with three parables about readiness and accountability. The parable of the ten virgins warns against being unprepared for the bridegroom's delayed arrival. The parable of the talents teaches that faithful stewardship of what has been entrusted will be rewarded, while fearful inaction will be judged. The chapter culminates in the parable of the sheep and goats — a vision of the Son of Man judging all nations based on how they treated 'the least of these,' identifying care for the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned as care for Christ himself.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The sheep and goats passage (vv. 31-46) is unique to Matthew and is one of the most ethically demanding texts in the Gospels. The criterion of judgment is not doctrinal correctness or religious observance but practical compassion for the vulnerable. Both the righteous and the unrighteous are surprised by the identification of Jesus with 'the least of these' — neither group knew they were serving or neglecting Christ himself. This radical identification of the exalted Son of Man with the suffering poor has shaped Christian ethics for two millennia.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of 'the least of these my brothers' (v. 40) is debated: does it refer to all suffering people, to persecuted Christians specifically, or to Christian missionaries? The Greek *adelphōn mou* ('my brothers') could support any of these. We render the text straightforwardly. The parable of the talents has been misused to justify economic exploitation; the original context is eschatological accountability, not capitalist productivity. The 'outer darkness' language (v. 30) and 'eternal punishment' (v. 46) raise questions about the nature and duration of divine judgment that we note without resolving.*

Connections: *The ten virgins echoes Song of Solomon 3:1-4 (seeking the beloved at night) and connects to the wedding feast imagery of 22:1-14. The talents parable develops the faithful/wicked servant contrast of 24:45-51. The sheep and goats scene draws on Daniel 7:9-14 (the Son of Man's tribunal), Ezekiel 34 (God judging between sheep), and Joel 3:1-3 (judgment of the nations). The six acts of mercy listed in vv. 35-36 became foundational for Christian charitable practice.*

¹"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³When the foolish ones took their lamps, they did not take oil with them. ⁴But the wise ones took oil in flasks along with their lamps. ⁵When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶B

ut at midnight a shout rang out: 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' ⁷Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise answered, 'There may not be enough for both us and you. Go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰While they were going away to buy oil, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast. And the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, lord, open the door for us!' ¹²But he answered, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' ¹³Therefore stay alert, for you know neither the day nor the hour. ¹⁴"For it is like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one — each according to his own ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and made five more. ¹⁷In the same way, the one with two talents gained two more. ¹⁸But the one who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The one who had received five talents came forward and brought five more, saying, 'Master, you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²²The one with two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you entrusted me with two talents. See, I have gained two more.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴Then the one who had received one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Here — you have what is yours.' ²⁶His master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰And throw the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ³¹"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?' ⁴⁰And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' ⁴¹Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not serve you?' ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *parthenois* ('virgins, unmarried young women') refers to the bridal attendants, not the bride herself. The *lampadas* ('torches, lamps') were likely torchlike lamps — oil-soaked cloths wrapped around sticks — used in wedding processions. The scene depicts a nighttime bridal procession, a common feature of Jewish weddings where the bridegroom came to collect the bride and bring her to his home.
2. Matthew reverses the typical order and names the foolish (*mōrai*) first, emphasizing their failure. The adjectives *mōrai* ('foolish') and *phronimoi* ('wise, prudent') are the same terms used for the builders on sand and rock in 7:24-26 — folly and wisdom are defined by preparedness for what is coming.

3. The Greek *elaion* ('olive oil') was the standard lamp fuel. Taking lamps without extra oil reveals short-term thinking — they prepared for the event but not for a delay. The folly is not malice but negligence.
4. The *aggeiois* ('vessels, containers, flasks') represent reserve supply. The wise virgins' preparation was not extraordinary — they simply anticipated that the bridegroom might be delayed. Wisdom, in this parable, is realistic expectation combined with adequate preparation.
5. The participle *chronizontos* ('delaying, being late') uses the same root as 24:48 where the wicked servant said 'my master is delayed.' Crucially, all ten — wise and foolish — fell asleep. Sleep is not the failing; lack of oil is. The distinction between the two groups is not greater vigilance but better preparation.
6. The timing — *mesēs nyktos* ('middle of the night') — fulfills the theme of unexpected arrival (24:44, 50). The *kraugē* ('shout, cry') pierces the sleeping darkness. The imperative *exerchesthe* ('come out!') demands immediate action. The verb *apantēsīn* ('meeting, encounter') was used technically for the welcoming delegation that went out to meet a visiting dignitary.
7. The verb *ekosmēsān* ('trimmed, arranged, put in order') involves adjusting the wicks and refueling — standard lamp maintenance. All ten perform the same action, but only now does the difference in preparation become apparent.
8. The present tense *sbennyntai* ('are being extinguished, are going out') describes the lamps flickering and dying — there is still a brief window, but it is closing. The request *dote hēmin* ('give us') reveals the crisis: preparation cannot be borrowed at the last moment.
9. The refusal is not selfishness but realism — *mēpote ou mē arkesē* ('perhaps there will certainly not be enough') acknowledges that sharing would leave all ten without adequate oil. The parable's point is that some things cannot be shared or transferred at the last moment: personal spiritual preparedness is not a communal resource.
10. The timing is cruel in its precision: the bridegroom arrives during the foolish virgins' absence. The word *hetoimoi* ('ready, prepared') is the same term from 24:44 ('you also must be ready'). The passive *ekeisthē* ('was shut') has the finality of divine decision — the door, once closed, will not reopen. The shut door is the parable's climactic image.
11. The doubled vocative *kyrie kyrie* ('Lord, lord!') echoes 7:21-23, where Jesus warned that saying 'Lord, Lord' would not be enough without corresponding obedience. The frantic repetition conveys desperation. The request *anoixon hēmin* ('open for us!') meets the closed door of verse 10.
12. The bridegroom's response *ouk oida hymas* ('I do not know you') is not a factual claim of unfamiliarity but a legal-relational declaration of non-recognition — equivalent to disowning. This parallels 7:23 ('I never knew you'). In Semitic idiom, 'to know' implies relationship; 'not to know' means the relationship does not exist.
13. The SBLGNT does not include 'wherein the Son of man comes' (*en hē ho huiois tou anthrōpou erchetai*), which appears in later manuscripts and the KJV. The imperative *grēgoreite* ('stay alert, keep watch') provides the moral of the parable, linking back to 24:42. The emphasis is on the double ignorance: neither the day (*hēmeran*) nor the hour (*hōran*) is knowable.
14. The Greek *apodēmōn* ('going abroad, traveling away') indicates an extended absence — the master's return is indefinite. The verb *paredōken* ('handed over, entrusted') implies both trust and accountability. The master's property (*ta hyparchonta autou*) represents whatever God entrusts to his people. The SBLGNT does not include 'the kingdom of heaven is as' explicitly, but the meaning is implied by the connecting *gar* ('for').
15. A *talanton* ('talent') was a unit of weight (about 75 pounds / 34 kg), and when applied to money, represented approximately 6,000 denarii — about 20 years' wages for a laborer. Even one talent was an enormous sum. The phrase *kata tēn idian dynamin* ('according to his own ability') indicates that the distribution was personalized, not arbitrary — the master knew each servant's capacity.
16. The adverb *eutheōs* ('immediately, at once') indicates prompt action. The verb *ērgasato* ('worked, traded, did business') implies active investment. The verb *ekerdēsen* ('gained, profited') is from *kerdos* ('gain, profit'). The 100% return represents exceptional stewardship, not a specific investment strategy.
17. The word *hōsautōs* ('in the same way, likewise') establishes that the proportional return, not the absolute amount, is what matters. Both the five-talent and two-talent servants achieved 100% return — identical faithfulness despite different scales.
18. Burying money (*ōryxen gēn*, 'dug the earth') was a common method of safeguarding valuables in the ancient world and was considered a reasonable precaution in rabbinic law (b. Baba Metzia 42a). The servant did not lose the money or steal it — he preserved it. His failure was in doing nothing more than preserving it.
19. The phrase *meta polyn chronon* ('after much time') reinforces the theme of delayed return from 24:48 and 25:5. The expression *synairei logon* ('settles accounts,' literally 'takes up a reckoning together') is a commercial term for auditing — the time of accountability has come.
20. The servant's report is straightforward and factual: he acknowledges what was given (*paredōkas*, 'you entrusted') and presents the result (*ekerdēsa*, 'I gained'). There is no boasting — the credit structure of the sentence places the master's entrustment before the servant's achievement.
21. The exclamation *eu* ('well done!') is a single Greek word conveying approval. The adjectives *agathe* ('good') and *piste* ('faithful, trustworthy') describe character, not just performance. The phrase *epi oligā* ('over a few things') is remarkable — five talents was an enormous sum, yet the master calls it 'a few things' compared to what is coming. The invitation *eiselthe eis tēn charan* ('enter into the joy') transcends mere reward — it is admission to participation in the master's own celebration.

22. The two-talent servant's report mirrors the five-talent servant's almost verbatim. The parallel structure emphasizes that the proportion of faithfulness, not the absolute amount, is what the master evaluates.
23. The master's response is word-for-word identical to verse 21. The two-talent servant receives exactly the same commendation, the same reward, and the same invitation to joy as the five-talent servant. This is the parable's most important structural feature: God's approval is based on faithfulness relative to what was given, not on absolute output.
24. The one-talent servant does not report results but offers an accusation: *egnōn se* ('I knew you') becomes a character indictment. The adjective *sklēros* ('hard, harsh, demanding') frames the master as exploitative. The agricultural metaphor — reaping where you did not sow (*therizōn hopou ouk espeiras*), gathering where you did not scatter (*synagōn hothēn ou dieskorpisas*) — accuses the master of profiting from others' labor. Whether this is an accurate description of the master or the servant's self-justifying distortion is the interpretive question.
25. The participle *phobētheis* ('being afraid, having feared') reveals the servant's motivation: fear, not laziness. The phrase *ide echeis to son* ('look, you have what is yours') is simultaneously a return of property and a rejection of relationship. The servant treats the talent as a liability to be preserved, not a gift to be invested.
26. The master's reply uses the servant's own words against him. The adjectives *ponēre* ('wicked') and *oknēre* ('lazy, slothful, hesitant') provide the master's counter-assessment. The word *oknēros* implies not just idleness but timid shrinking back. The master's question *ēdeis hoti* ('you knew that...?') can be read as accepting the servant's premise for argument's sake: 'Even if that were true, it should have motivated you to act, not to freeze.'
27. The *trapezitais* ('bankers, money-changers,' literally 'table-men' from *trapeza*, 'table') operated exchange tables in the marketplace. The word *tokō* ('interest,' literally 'offspring' — money begetting money) refers to the return on a deposit. The master's argument is devastating: even the minimum effort — simply depositing the money — would have been acceptable. The servant did not even do that. The prohibition against charging interest to fellow Israelites (Deuteronomy 23:19-20) did not apply to banking deposits.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 23:19-20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The command to redistribute the talent to the most productive servant (not divided equally) follows the principle stated in verse 29. The one talent is not returned to the master's treasury but given to another servant — unfaithfulness results in the loss of what was entrusted.
29. This paradoxical principle appears four times in the Gospels (Matthew 13:12, 25:29; Mark 4:25; Luke 19:26). In context, 'having' means having produced results through faithful stewardship. The one who uses what is given receives more; the one who does not use it loses even the original gift. This is a spiritual principle about faithfulness, not an economic observation about wealth concentration.
30. The adjective *achreion* ('useless, worthless, unprofitable') describes the servant's net contribution: nothing. The phrase *to skotos to exōteron* ('the outer darkness') and the formula 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' appear for the final time in Matthew (cf. 8:12, 22:13, 24:51). The severity of the punishment — identical to the hypocrites' fate — indicates that inactive preservation of what God gives is as culpable as active rebellion.
31. The scene shifts from parable to apocalyptic vision. The Son of Man arrives *en tē doxē autou* ('in his glory') — the same glory foretold in 24:30. The phrase *thronos doxēs* ('throne of glory') echoes the divine throne room of Daniel 7:9-10 and 1 Enoch 62:5. Jesus claims the judicial authority that in the Old Testament belongs exclusively to God.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:9-10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The phrase *panta ta ethnē* ('all the nations/peoples') is universal in scope. The verb *aphorisei* ('will separate, will set apart') uses the same root as 'Pharisee' (*pharisaios*, 'separated one'). The pastoral imagery of a shepherd (*poimēn*) dividing sheep from goats echoes Ezekiel 34:17-22, where God himself judges between sheep. In Palestine, sheep and goats often grazed together but were separated at night.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 34:17-22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The right side (*dexiōn*) is the position of honor and favor throughout Scripture and the ancient world (cf. Psalm 110:1). The left (*euōnymōn*, literally 'well-named' — a euphemism, since the left was considered unlucky) is the position of disfavor. The spatial arrangement visualizes the coming verdict.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The title *basileus* ('King') replaces 'Son of Man' — the judge is also the king. The passive *eulogēmenoi* ('blessed ones') is a divine passive: blessed by God. The verb *klēronomēsate* ('inherit') frames the kingdom as an inheritance, not an earned wage — it was prepared (*hētoimasmenēn*, 'made ready') before the beneficiaries existed, from the foundation of the world (*apo katabolēs kosmou*). The kingdom is God's gift, even though the criterion of entry involves human action.
35. The six acts of mercy begin. The first-person statements are extraordinary — the King identifies himself with the recipients of care. The word *xenos* ('stranger, foreigner') denotes someone outside the community, without local connections or legal protections. The verb *synēgagete* ('you gathered together, you took in') implies hospitality — bringing the outsider into community.

36. The final three acts: clothing the naked (gymnos, which can mean 'poorly clothed' as well as completely unclothed), visiting the sick (epeskepsasthe, from episkopeō, 'to look upon, to visit, to care for' — the root of 'bishop/overseer'), and visiting prisoners (en phylakē, 'in custody/prison'). Ancient prisons provided no food or care — prisoners depended entirely on outside visitors for survival. These six acts (feeding, giving drink, hospitality, clothing, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners) became the traditional 'corporal works of mercy' in Christian ethics.
37. The righteous (dikaioi) are genuinely surprised — their compassion was not calculated to earn a reward. The question pote se eidomen ('when did we see you?') reveals that they were unaware they were serving Christ. This unconscious righteousness is precisely the point: authentic compassion does not perform for an audience.
38. The questions continue through the same six categories, emphasizing the righteous ones' complete lack of awareness that their acts of mercy had any connection to Christ. The repetition creates a liturgical rhythm.
39. The final pair — sick and imprisoned — represents the most marginalized members of society. Visiting the sick and imprisoned carried social stigma and personal risk. The righteous ones' question implies they would have done more had they known.
40. This is the theological center of the passage. The phrase eph' hoson ('inasmuch as, to the extent that, whatever') creates a comprehensive equivalence. The superlative elachistōn ('least, smallest, most insignificant') identifies Christ with society's most overlooked members. The phrase tōn adelphōn mou ('my brothers') has been interpreted as referring to all suffering people, to fellow Christians, or to Christian missionaries. The Greek adelphōn is rendered 'brothers and sisters' as the context addresses all nations. The identification emoi epoiēsate ('you did it to me') makes compassion for the vulnerable a direct encounter with Christ.
41. The contrast with verse 34 is sharp: 'Come' versus 'Depart' (poreuesthe ap' emou); 'blessed by my Father' versus 'cursed' (katēramenoi); 'inherit the kingdom prepared for you' versus 'into the eternal fire prepared for the devil.' Note that the kingdom was prepared 'for you' while the fire was prepared 'for the devil and his angels' (tō diabolō kai tois angelois autou) — the fire's intended occupants are demonic, not human. Humans who end up there are in a place not designed for them. The adjective aiōnion ('eternal, age-long') is from aiōn ('age'); its precise meaning — unending or age-long — is debated.
42. The accusation mirrors verses 35-36 point by point, with the devastating addition of ouk ('not') before each verb. The judgment is not for active harm but for passive neglect — sins of omission rather than commission.
43. The six categories are compressed slightly here — 'sick and in prison' are combined into one clause — but the same acts of neglect are catalogued. The passive construction makes the failing clear: they saw need and did nothing.
44. The goats' question mirrors the sheep's (vv. 37-39) — they too are surprised. They did not realize that neglecting the vulnerable was neglecting Christ. The verb diēkonēsamen ('we served, we ministered to') is from diakoneō, the root of 'deacon/servant.' Their defense is ignorance, but ignorance of Christ's identification with the suffering is not accepted as an excuse.
45. The negative counterpart to verse 40. The word adelphōn ('brothers') is absent from the SBLGNT here (present in v. 40 but not v. 45), which may broaden the identification beyond 'my brothers' to 'the least' in general. The principle works in both directions: service to the least is service to Christ; neglect of the least is neglect of Christ.
46. The parallel structure places kolasin aiōnion ('eternal punishment') and zōēn aiōnion ('eternal life') in direct opposition, both modified by the same adjective aiōnion. The word kolasin ('punishment, correction') comes from kolazō ('to prune, to cut short, to punish'). Whether aiōnion means 'everlasting' (without end) or 'of the age to come' (pertaining to the coming age) is debated; the same adjective modifies both destinies, so consistency requires reading them the same way. This verse concludes the Olivet Discourse and Jesus's public teaching in Matthew.

26

Summary: *Matthew 26 narrates the events leading to Jesus's arrest and trial. The chapter opens with the plot to kill Jesus, the anointing at Bethany, and Judas's agreement to betray him. Jesus then shares the Passover meal with his disciples, institutes the Lord's Supper, predicts Peter's denial, agonizes in prayer at Gethsemane, and is arrested. The chapter concludes with Jesus's trial before the high priest Caiaphas, Peter's three denials, and Peter's bitter weeping.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter is dense with irony and theological significance. The woman who anoints Jesus performs a prophetic act that the disciples cannot understand — she is anointing him for burial while they debate the waste. Judas's betrayal price of thirty silver coins echoes Zechariah 11:12-13. The Last Supper reinterprets the Passover in terms of Jesus's own body and blood, establishing a 'new covenant.' Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane — 'not as I will, but as you will' — is the ultimate expression of submission to the Father. The arrest scene includes Jesus's enigmatic statement that he could summon twelve legions of angels but chooses not to, placing his suffering squarely within divine purpose.*

Translation Friction: The institution narrative (vv. 26-29) is among the most theologically disputed texts in Christianity — different traditions interpret 'this is my body' and 'this is my blood' in radically different ways (transubstantiation, consubstantiation, memorial, spiritual presence). We render the Greek without theological interpretation. The phrase 'blood of the covenant poured out for many' (v. 28) echoes both Exodus 24:8 (covenant blood) and Isaiah 53:12 (poured out for many). Jesus's statement 'the one who dipped his hand in the bowl with me' (v. 23) does not identify Judas publicly — in the reclining posture, multiple people shared the same dish.

Connections: The Passover setting connects to Exodus 12. The anointing echoes the anointing of priests and kings (Exodus 29, 1 Samuel 16). The thirty silver coins fulfill Zechariah 11:12. The cup language draws on Isaiah 51:17 and Jeremiah 25:15 (cup of God's wrath). Gethsemane ('oil press') connects to the Mount of Olives and the crushing imagery of Isaiah 53. Peter's denial fulfills Jesus's prediction and echoes the scattering of the sheep (Zechariah 13:7, quoted in v. 31). The trial before Caiaphas involves the Son of Man language of Daniel 7:13 and the right-hand imagery of Psalm 110:1.

¹When Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples, ²"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." ³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the courtyard of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴Plotted that they might take Jesus by subilty, and kill him. ⁵But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people." ⁶In the house of simon the leper,, and now after Jesus was in Bethany. ⁷There arrived to him a lady having an alabaster box of very costly ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. ⁸When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. ⁹"This could have been sold for a large sum and the money given to the poor." ¹⁰Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubling this woman? She has done a beautiful thing for me. ¹¹For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹²By pouring this perfume on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her." ¹⁴Went to the chief priests,, then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot. ¹⁵Stated to them, What will you give me, and I will deliver him to you? then they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶From that time on, he looked for an opportunity to hand Jesus over. ¹⁷On the first day of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My time is near. I will observe the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" ¹⁹The disciples did as Jesus directed them and prepared the Passover. ²⁰When evening came, he reclined at the table with the Twelve. ²¹While they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." ²²Deeply distressed, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" ²³He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me — he will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man goes as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." ²⁵Judas, who was betraying him, answered, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself." ²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat. This is my body." ²⁷Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ³¹Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' ³²But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." ³³Peter answered him, "Even if everyone else falls away because of you, I will never fall away." ³⁴Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." ³⁵Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you." And all the disciples said the same thing. ³⁶Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷Taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him, he began to be sorrowful and deeply troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." ³⁹Going a little farther, he fell face down and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." ⁴⁰Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter,

"So, could you not keep watch with me for one hour? ⁴¹Stay awake and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴²Again, a second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more, praying a third time, saying the same thing again. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is near." ⁴⁷While he was still speaking, suddenly Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, and with him a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I kiss — that is the man. Seize him." ⁴⁹Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came forward, seized Jesus, and arrested him. ⁵¹Suddenly, one of those with Jesus reached for his sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?" ⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as if against a rebel, with swords and clubs to arrest me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples abandoned him and fled. ⁵⁷Those who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and elders had gathered. ⁵⁸But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He went inside and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. ⁵⁹The chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, ⁶⁰But discovered none — yea, though numerous false witnesses arrived, yet discovered they none. At the last arrived two false witnesses, ⁶¹Stated, This fellow stated, I am able to destroy the sanctuary of God, and to build it in three period. ⁶²The high priest stood up and said to him, "Have you no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against you?" ⁶³But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I put you under oath by the living God: tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have just heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." ⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists, and some slapped him, ⁶⁸Declaring, Prophecy to us, you Christ, Who is he that smote you? ⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant girl came up to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." ⁷¹When he went out to the gateway, another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷²Again he denied it, with an oath: "I do not know the man." ⁷³After a little while, the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them too — your accent gives you away." ⁷⁴Then he began to invoke curses on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The formula *kai egeneto hote etelesen* ('and it happened when he finished') marks the conclusion of each of Jesus's five major discourses in Matthew (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1). This is the fifth and final occurrence, signaling the end of Jesus's teaching ministry. The verb *etelesen* ('finished, completed') shares its root with *tetelestai* ('it is finished,' John 19:30).
2. Jesus yokes the Passover (to *pascha*) to his own crucifixion — the Passover lamb and the Son of Man converge. The present tense *paradidotai* ('is being handed over') suggests the process is already underway. The verb *staurōthēnai* ('to be crucified') is the first explicit prediction of crucifixion as the method of death in Matthew's passion narrative.
3. The Greek *aulēn* ('courtyard, palace') refers to the enclosed court of the high priest's residence. Caiaphas (Joseph bar Caiaphas) served as high priest from approximately 18-36 AD — an unusually long tenure that suggests political skill. The SBLGNT does not include 'scribes' (*grammateis*), which appears in some manuscripts reflected in the KJV.

4. The verb *synebouleusanto* ('they counseled together, they plotted') indicates a formal conspiracy. The word *dolō* ('by guile, by stealth, by treachery') reveals that even the authorities recognized they could not act openly — Jesus's popularity required covert action.
5. The word *heortē* ('festival, feast') refers to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when Jerusalem's population swelled with pilgrims. The fear of *thorybos* ('uproar, riot, tumult') reflects the political volatility of Passover — a celebration of liberation from oppression — under Roman occupation. Ironically, events will force them to act during the festival after all.
6. Bethany was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. Simon 'the leper' (*tou leprou*) was presumably healed — he would not host a dinner while ritually unclean. The designation likely preserves his former identity. This Simon is otherwise unknown.
7. Matthew does not name the woman (John 12:3 identifies her as Mary of Bethany). The *alabastron* ('alabaster flask') was a stone container with a sealed neck, broken open for use — a one-time expenditure. The *myron barytimou* ('very expensive ointment/perfume') was likely *spikenard*. Pouring it on Jesus's head (*epi tēs kephalēs*) evokes priestly and royal anointing (Exodus 29:7, 1 Samuel 16:13).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 29:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 16:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Matthew attributes the indignation (*ēganaktēsan*) to the disciples generally, not to Judas specifically (as in John 12:4-5). The word *apōleia* ('waste, destruction, loss') is ironic — the same word is used for perdition and damnation elsewhere. What the disciples see as waste, Jesus will interpret as prophetic worship.
9. The Greek *pollou* ('for much') is vague where Mark 14:5 specifies 'more than 300 denarii' (nearly a year's wages). The argument — resources should go to the poor (*ptōchois*) rather than to extravagant gestures — sounds reasonable, which is what makes Jesus's response surprising.
10. The Greek *ergon kalon* ('good/beautiful work/deed') uses *kalon*, which means both 'good' and 'beautiful' — the act is morally good and aesthetically fitting. Jesus reframes the anointing from 'waste' to 'beauty,' countering the disciples' utilitarian calculus with a different set of values.
11. Jesus echoes Deuteronomy 15:11 ('the poor will never cease from the land'). This is not a dismissal of poverty relief but a recognition of the unique moment: Jesus's death is imminent, and the window for this act is closing. The contrast between *pantote* ('always') for the poor and *ou pantote* ('not always') for Jesus underscores the urgency.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 15:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb *entaphiasai* ('to prepare for burial, to anoint for burial') reveals the prophetic dimension of her act. Whether the woman intended this meaning or not, Jesus interprets her anointing as anticipating his death — she has done what the disciples will not have the opportunity to do properly after the crucifixion.
13. The phrase *eis mnēmosynon autēs* ('as a memorial of her') uses liturgical language — *mnēmosynon* is the word for a memorial offering. Jesus guarantees that this unnamed woman's act will be remembered worldwide and perpetually — a remarkable promise for a single spontaneous gesture. The prophecy itself fulfills itself: the story is being told.
14. The placement of Judas's betrayal immediately after the anointing story creates a devastating juxtaposition: extravagant devotion versus calculated treachery. Matthew emphasizes Judas's identity — *heis tōn dōdeka* ('one of the Twelve') — the betrayer comes from the innermost circle. 'Iscaiot' (*Iskariōtēs*) may derive from Hebrew 'ish *Qeriyot*' ('man of Kerioth'), indicating his hometown.
15. Judas's question *ti thelete moi dounai* ('what are you willing to give me?') reduces betrayal to a transaction. The thirty silver coins (*triakonta argyria*) echoes Zechariah 11:12, where thirty pieces of silver is the contemptuous price for the shepherd of Israel — the price of a slave (Exodus 21:32). The verb *estēsan* ('they set, they weighed out, they paid') may indicate payment in advance.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 11:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 21:32 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The imperfect *ezētei* ('he was seeking, he kept looking for') indicates ongoing, deliberate effort. The word *eukairian* ('a good opportunity, a favorable moment') implies calculated patience — Judas needed a time when Jesus was away from the protective crowds.
17. The 'first day of Unleavened Bread' (*prōtē tōn azymōn*) technically refers to 15 Nisan, but colloquially included the preparation day (14 Nisan) when the Passover lamb was slaughtered. The question about preparation reflects the practical logistics: a room must be secured, a lamb purchased and sacrificed at the temple, and the meal prepared according to Passover regulations.
18. The phrase *ton deina* ('a certain man, such-and-such a person') is deliberately vague in Matthew — Mark and Luke provide more detail about how to identify the host. The statement *ho kairos mou engys estin* ('my time is near') has a double meaning: the time for the Passover meal, and the time of his death. The word *kairos* ('appointed time, critical moment') is more theologically loaded than *chronos* ('sequential time').

- 19.** The verb *synetaxen* ('directed, instructed, arranged') implies detailed instructions. The verb *hētoimasan* ('prepared') encompasses the full Passover preparation: procuring and roasting the lamb, preparing unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine, and setting the table according to tradition.
- 20.** The Passover meal began after sunset (the start of 15 Nisan in Jewish reckoning). The verb *anekeito* ('reclined') reflects the Hellenistic custom adopted for Passover — reclining on couches around a low table, a posture symbolizing freedom (slaves ate standing). 'The Twelve' (*tōn dōdeka*) includes Judas.
- 21.** The announcement comes during the meal itself — the betrayer is eating the Passover with the one he will betray. The phrase *heis ex hymōn* ('one of you') is devastating: the threat comes from within, not from outside. The verb *paradōsei* ('will hand over') is the same word used throughout the passion narrative.
- 22.** The particle *mēti* expects a negative answer ('it's not me, is it?') but betrays uncertainty — each disciple fears it might be possible. The adverb *sphodra* ('exceedingly, greatly') and the verb *lypoumenoi* ('being grieved, being distressed') capture the emotional shock. That each one asks individually (*heis hekastos*, 'each one') rather than pointing fingers reveals genuine self-doubt.
- 23.** The phrase *ho embapsas* ('the one having dipped') refers to the shared dish used during the Passover meal for dipping bread or bitter herbs. Since multiple people shared the same dish at a communal meal, this does not necessarily single out Judas to the other disciples. The poignancy is in the intimacy — sharing food was a bond of friendship and trust in ancient culture (cf. Psalm 41:9, 'Even my close friend who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me').
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 41:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** Jesus holds divine sovereignty and human responsibility in tension: the Son of Man goes 'as it is written' (*kathōs gegraptai*) — his death fulfills Scripture — but the betrayer is still held accountable. The phrase *kalon ēn autō ei ouk egnēthē* ('it would have been good for him if he had not been born') is the most severe personal condemnation Jesus utters in the Gospels. The divine plan does not excuse the human agent.
- 25.** Judas asks the same question as the other disciples (*mēti egō eimi*, 'it isn't me, is it?') but addresses Jesus as 'Rabbi' (*rhabbi*) rather than 'Lord' (*kyrie*) as the others did (v. 22) — a subtle but possibly significant distinction in Matthew. Jesus's response *sy eipas* ('you have said it' or 'you yourself have said') is an affirmative that places the confession in Judas's own mouth. This exchange may have been quiet enough that the other disciples did not hear it clearly.
- 26.** The four actions — took (*labōn*), blessed (*eulogēsas*), broke (*eklasen*), gave (*dous*) — become the liturgical pattern for the Eucharist/Lord's Supper across all Christian traditions. The blessing (*eulogēsas*) is the standard Jewish *berakah* ('Blessed are you, LORD our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth'). The declaration *touto estin to sōma mou* ('this is my body') is rendered without interpretive addition — whether 'is' (*estin*) means 'is identical with,' 'represents,' or 'becomes' is the central question of eucharistic theology, and the Greek does not resolve it.
- 27.** The verb *eucharistēsas* ('having given thanks') is the source of the word 'Eucharist.' For the bread Jesus 'blessed' (*eulogēsas*); for the cup he 'gave thanks' (*eucharistēsas*) — the two verbs are essentially synonymous in this context. The command *piete ex autou pantes* ('drink from it, all of you') emphasizes universal participation — the cup is for everyone, not just select members.
- 28.** The phrase *to haima mou tēs diathēkēs* ('my blood of the covenant') echoes Exodus 24:8, where Moses sprinkled 'the blood of the covenant' on the people at Sinai. Jesus reinterprets the covenant blood as his own. The SBLGNT does not include 'new' (*kainēs*) before 'covenant,' though some manuscripts include it (cf. Luke 22:20, 'the new covenant in my blood'). The participle *ekchynnomenon* ('being poured out') uses sacrificial language. The phrase *peri pollōn* ('for many') echoes Isaiah 53:12. The phrase *eis aphesin hamartiōn* ('for the forgiveness of sins') is unique to Matthew's institution narrative.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 24:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The vow of abstinence (*ou mē piō*, 'I will certainly not drink') transforms the meal into both a farewell and a promise. The phrase *genēmatos tēs ampelou* ('fruit of the vine') is the standard Jewish blessing formula for wine. The adverb *kainon* ('new') may modify the wine (new wine in the kingdom) or the drinking (drink it in a new way). The promise *meth' hymōn* ('with you') assures reunion — this is not a final farewell but a temporary separation.
- 30.** The hymn (*hymnēsantes*) is almost certainly the Hallel — Psalms 113-118, traditionally sung at the conclusion of the Passover meal. Psalms 115-118 would have been the final portion. The group leaves the upper room and walks east across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives, about a fifteen-minute walk.
- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 113-118 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 115-118 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

31. The verb skandalisthēsesthe ('you will be caused to stumble, you will fall away') predicts total abandonment by all the disciples. Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7, but with a significant change: the original has 'Strike the shepherd' (imperative), while Matthew has 'I will strike the shepherd' (pataxō, first person) — God himself is the agent who strikes. The scattering of the sheep (diaskorpisthēsontai) will be fulfilled in verse 56.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 13:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The passive egerthēnai ('to be raised') is a divine passive — God will raise Jesus. The promise proaxō hymas ('I will go before you') uses shepherd imagery: the shepherd goes ahead and the sheep follow (cf. John 10:4). This promise anticipates the resurrection appearances in Galilee (28:7, 10, 16).
33. Peter's emphatic egō oudepote ('I — never!') places himself above the other disciples. The contrast between pantes ('all') and egō ('I') reveals Peter's self-confidence. The adverb oudepote ('never, at no time') is absolute — Peter makes a claim Jesus will prove false within hours.
34. Jesus counters Peter's 'never' with a precise timeframe: en tautē tē nykti ('on this very night'). The rooster's crow (alektora phonēsai) typically occurs in the early morning hours, around 3:00 AM (the Roman 'cockcrow' watch). The triple denial (tris aparnēsē, 'three times you will deny') will be fulfilled in verses 69-75.
35. Peter doubles down with the strongest possible claim: willingness to die (kan deē me syn soi apothanein, 'even if it is necessary for me to die with you'). The double negative ou mē ('absolutely not') matches Jesus's own emphatic formulations. The phrase homoiōs kai pantes ('likewise also all') indicates unanimous agreement — every disciple makes the same pledge, and every one will fail to keep it.
36. The name Gethsēmani (Γεθσημανί) comes from the Aramaic gat shemanim ('oil press'), a fitting name for a place on the Mount of Olives and grimly appropriate for what will happen there — Jesus is about to be pressed to the point of anguish. The chōrion ('place, piece of land') was apparently a garden or estate they had visited before (cf. John 18:2, 'Jesus often met there with his disciples').
37. The inner circle — Peter, James, and John (the two sons of Zebedee) — are the same three who witnessed the Transfiguration (17:1-8). They have seen his glory; now they will see his agony. The verb lypeisthai ('to be grieved, to be sorrowful') and adēmonein ('to be distressed, to be in anguish') together describe intense emotional suffering. The word adēmonein may derive from a root meaning 'away from home' — a profound disorientation and alienation.
38. The phrase perilypos estin hē psychē mou heōs thanatou ('my soul is sorrowful to the point of death') echoes Psalm 42:5-6 and Jonah 4:9. The preposition heōs ('unto, as far as, to the point of') suggests grief so intense it approaches death — emotional suffering that threatens to be fatal. The request grēgoreite met' emou ('keep watch with me') uses the same verb from the parables of readiness (24:42, 25:13) — now applied to personal accompaniment in suffering.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 42:5-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jonah 4:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The posture — epesen epi prosōpon ('fell on his face') — expresses total prostration before God. The 'cup' (potērion) is a well-established Old Testament metaphor for suffering and divine judgment (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). Jesus asks for the cup to 'pass' (parelthato) — the same verb used for heaven and earth passing away in 24:35. The concluding clause ouch hōs egō thelō all' hōs sy ('not as I will but as you [will]') is the supreme expression of human will yielding to divine will. Jesus's humanity is fully engaged — his will must actively submit.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 75:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 51:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 25:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. Jesus addresses Peter specifically — the one who had pledged to die with him (v. 35) cannot even stay awake. The question carries more grief than anger. The plural ischysate ('could you [all] not?') extends the rebuke beyond Peter to all three. The 'one hour' (mian hōran) is a small ask compared to the death Peter had promised to face.
41. The imperative pair grēgoreite kai proseuchesthe ('stay awake and pray') links vigilance with prayer — one without the other is insufficient. The peirasmon ('testing, trial, temptation') refers to the coming crisis that will test their loyalty. The maxim to men pneuma prothymon hē de sarx asthenēs ('the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak') acknowledges the gap between intention and capacity — precisely the gap Peter will experience. This is not a philosophical dualism but a pastoral observation.
42. The second prayer shifts from conditional ('if it is possible') to acceptance ('if this cannot pass unless I drink it'). The closing genēthētō to thelēma sou ('your will be done') echoes the Lord's Prayer (6:10) — Jesus practices what he taught. The movement from first to second prayer shows the process of submission: not instantaneous capitulation but a wrestling that arrives at obedience.
43. The participle bebarēmenoi ('weighed down, heavy') describes exhaustion that overcomes willpower. The repeated discovery of sleeping disciples intensifies Jesus's isolation — he faces the crisis alone. There is no recorded rebuke this time.

44. The threefold prayer (ek tritou, 'for the third time') parallels the threefold denial that Peter will soon make (vv. 69-75). Where Jesus prays three times and submits to God's will, Peter will deny three times and fail. The phrase *ton auton logon* ('the same word/statement') indicates that the prayer did not change — the repetition is not rote but persistence.
45. The Greek *katheudete to loipon kai anapauesthe* can be read as a command ('sleep on and rest' — resigned permission), a question ('are you still sleeping?'), or ironic ('go ahead and sleep, if you can — it's too late'). We render it as a question, following the likely tone given the urgency of what follows. The phrase *hē hōra* ('the hour') is the decisive moment Jesus has been anticipating. The present tense *paradidotai* ('is being handed over') indicates the betrayal is happening now.
46. The imperatives *egeisthe* ('rise, get up') and *agōmen* ('let us go') are not flight but advance — Jesus walks toward his betrayer, not away from him. The participle *ho paradidous* ('the one handing over, the betrayer') identifies Judas without naming him. The verb *eggiken* ('has drawn near, is at hand') is the same verb used for the kingdom of heaven being near (4:17) — an ironic echo.
47. The phrase *eti autou lalountos* ('while he was still speaking') emphasizes the immediacy — Jesus barely finishes speaking before Judas appears. The repeated identification *heis tōn dōdeka* ('one of the Twelve') drives home the betrayal's origin. The *ochlos polys* ('large crowd') with swords (*machairōn*) and clubs (*xylōn*) suggests a mixed force: temple police with swords and perhaps hired assistants with wooden clubs.
48. The pre-arranged signal (*sēmeion*, 'sign') uses the act of friendship — a kiss (*philēsō*, from *phileō*, 'to love, to show affection') — as the instrument of betrayal. The cruel inversion of an intimate gesture into a marker for arrest is universally recognized as one of history's most treacherous acts. The imperative *kratēsate* ('seize him, arrest him') reveals Judas directing the arrest operation.
49. The greeting *chaire* ('greetings, hail, rejoice') and the address *rhabbi* ('Rabbi') maintain the pretense of respect. The verb *katēphilēsen* ('kissed') is intensified with the prefix *kata-*, suggesting an emphatic or prolonged kiss — making certain the crowd identifies the right person. Once again Judas addresses Jesus as 'Rabbi' rather than 'Lord' (cf. v. 25).
50. The address *hetaire* ('friend, companion') is the same ominous word used in 20:13 and 22:12 — a term of address that acknowledges the relationship while confronting the violation. The phrase *eph' ho parei* is notoriously difficult to translate: it could be a question ('why have you come?'), a command ('do what you came for'), or a statement ('this is why you have come'). We follow the imperatival reading, which fits the context of Jesus actively accepting his fate. The arrest (*ekratēsān*, 'they seized') follows immediately.
51. Matthew does not identify the swordsman (John 18:10 names him as Peter). The action is impulsive: *ekteineas* ('stretching out his hand'), *apespasen* ('drew'), *pataxas* ('struck'). The *doulos tou archierōs* ('servant of the high priest') is named Malchus in John's account. The *ōtion* ('ear') could mean the entire ear or the earlobe. The act of violence represents the disciples' instinct to fight — the very response Jesus will reject.
52. The command *apostrepson* ('put back, return') rejects armed resistance. The proverbial statement *pantes hoi labontes machairan en machairē apolountai* ('all who take up the sword will perish by the sword') functions as a principle of reciprocal violence — those who initiate violence will meet violence. Jesus refuses to be defended by force even when his life is at stake.
53. A Roman legion (*legiōn*) consisted of approximately 6,000 soldiers, so twelve legions would be over 72,000 angels. The number twelve may correspond to the twelve disciples — one legion for each. Jesus's point is not military calculation but the voluntary nature of his suffering: he has access to overwhelming supernatural force but chooses not to use it. The verb *parakalesai* ('to call alongside, to appeal to, to ask') indicates that help is available for the asking.
54. The rhetorical question reveals Jesus's interpretive framework: the Scriptures (*hai graphai*) require (*dei*, 'it is necessary') that events unfold this way. Jesus's submission to arrest is not weakness but obedience to the scriptural plan. The verb *plērōthōsin* ('be fulfilled') connects to Matthew's fulfillment theology throughout the Gospel.
55. The word *lēstēs* ('bandit, rebel, insurrectionist') is the same word used for the men crucified alongside Jesus (27:38) and for those who made the temple a 'den of bandits' (21:13). Jesus points out the absurdity: he was publicly available every day in the temple, but they come at night with weapons as if he were a dangerous revolutionary. The contrast between his public teaching and their covert arrest exposes the injustice of the proceedings.
56. The fulfillment formula (*hina plērōthōsin*) appears here for the last time in the passion narrative. The statement *hoi mathētai pantes apentes auton ephygon* ('the disciples all, having left him, fled') fulfills both Jesus's prediction (v. 31) and Zechariah's prophecy (13:7). The word *pantes* ('all') is emphatic — no exceptions, despite the pledges of verses 33-35.
57. The verb *apēgagon* ('led away') implies forcible removal. Caiaphas the high priest is the same figure from verse 3 — the plot has reached its execution. The scribes (*grammateis*) and elders (*presbyteroi*) assembled at night suggests a hastily convened council, likely not a full formal Sanhedrin session but an irregular hearing.
58. The phrase *apo makrothen* ('from afar, at a distance') captures Peter's conflicted state — close enough to follow, too afraid to stand with Jesus. The word *hypēretōn* ('attendants, guards, officers') refers to the temple police. The phrase *idein to telos* ('to see the end/outcome') is poignant — Peter wants to know what will happen but is powerless to affect it.
59. The word *synedrion* ('council, Sanhedrin') refers to the Jewish ruling body. Matthew's description — they sought *pseudomartyrian* ('false testimony') — characterizes the trial as predetermined: they are not seeking truth but seeking a basis for execution. The verb *thanatōsōsin* ('they might put to death') reveals the goal from the outset.

60. The failure to find consistent testimony (ouch heuron, 'they did not find') despite many volunteers indicates that the witnesses contradicted each other — Deuteronomy 19:15 required at least two agreeing witnesses. The word hysteron ('finally, at last') suggests a prolonged and frustrating process for the council.
60. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 19:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
61. The accusation distorts something Jesus apparently said (cf. John 2:19, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up'). The shift from 'destroy this temple' (a challenge to others) to 'I am able to destroy' (a threat by Jesus) is the crucial distortion. The verb *katalysai* ('to destroy, to tear down') and *oikodomēsai* ('to build, to construct') frame the claim as both demolition and reconstruction — an absurd claim if taken literally about Herod's temple.
62. The high priest's rising (*anastas*) is a dramatic gesture of authority. The double question — first about Jesus's silence, then about the testimony — presses for a response. The verb *katamartyrosin* ('testify against') uses the prefix *kata-* ('against'), making the adversarial nature of the testimony explicit.
63. Jesus's silence (*esiōpa*, 'was silent') fulfills Isaiah 53:7 ('like a sheep before its shearers is silent'). The high priest escalates to a formal oath-adjunction: *exorkizō se kata tou theou tou zōntos* ('I adjure you by the living God'). Under this oath, silence would constitute contempt of court. The question combines two titles — *ho Christos* ('the Christ/Messiah') and *ho huios tou theou* ('the Son of God') — forcing Jesus to make an explicit claim.
63. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
64. The response *sy eipas* ('you have said it') is affirmative but nuanced — Jesus accepts the titles but redefines them on his own terms. The *plēn* ('but, moreover') introduces a counter-declaration. Jesus combines Psalm 110:1 (seated at the right hand) with Daniel 7:13 (coming on the clouds) — the two most important messianic texts in early Christianity. 'Power' (*tēs dynamēōs*) is a circumlocution for God — 'the right hand of Power' means 'God's right hand.' The phrase *ap' arti* ('from now on') suggests that the exaltation begins immediately.
64. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
64. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
65. The tearing of robes (*dierrhēxen ta himatia*) was the prescribed response to hearing blasphemy (cf. Mishnah, Sanhedrin 7:5). Ironically, the high priest was prohibited from tearing his garments (Leviticus 21:10) — though some interpret this prohibition as applying only to mourning, not to judicial response. The charge of *blasphemia* ('blasphemy') rests on Jesus's claim to sit at God's right hand — a claim to divine status that, if false, constitutes the gravest offense against God.
65. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 21:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
66. The phrase *enochos thanatou* ('liable to death, deserving of death, guilty of a capital offense') is a formal legal verdict. The sentence is passed without formal vote procedure as described in the Mishnah — another irregularity in the proceedings.
67. The progression of abuse — spitting (*eneptusam*, fulfilling Isaiah 50:6), punching (*ekolaphisan*, 'struck with fists'), and slapping (*erapisan*, 'struck with open hand') — constitutes deliberate humiliation. The spitting in the face was the most degrading insult in the ancient world (cf. Numbers 12:14, Deuteronomy 25:9).
67. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 50:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
67. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 12:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
67. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 25:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
68. The taunt 'prophesy!' (*prophēteuson*) is ironic on multiple levels: Jesus has just prophesied about the Son of Man's exaltation, and the very events unfolding fulfill his earlier prophecies. The game — blindfolding someone and asking them to identify who struck them — mocks his claim to supernatural knowledge. The title *Christe* ('Christ') is used mockingly.
69. The scene shifts to the courtyard (*aulē*) where Peter sits with the guards (v. 58). The first accuser is a *paidiskē* ('servant girl, female slave') — the lowest-status person in the household. The identification 'Jesus the Galilean' (*Iēsou tou Galilaiou*) marks Jesus as an outsider, a northern provincial. Peter's denial before the least threatening accuser makes his cowardice more stark.
70. The first denial. The verb *ērēsato* ('denied') is the same root as *aparnēsē* ('you will deny') from Jesus's prediction in verse 34. The phrase *emprosthen pantōn* ('before all') makes the denial public. Peter's response *ouk oida ti legeis* ('I do not know what you are saying') is evasive rather than a direct denial — a strategy of feigned ignorance.

71. Peter retreats from the courtyard to the gateway (pylōna) — attempting to distance himself physically from the identification. A second servant girl (allē) makes the accusation to bystanders rather than to Peter directly, broadening the circle of awareness. The identification shifts from 'the Galilean' to 'of Nazareth' (tou Nazōraiou).
72. The second denial escalates — meta horkou ('with an oath') means Peter swears. This is deeply ironic given Jesus's teaching against oath-taking in 5:33-37. The phrase ouk oida ton anthrōpon ('I do not know the man') depersonalizes Jesus — 'the man' rather than 'Jesus' — creating verbal distance from the relationship.
73. The third accusation comes from multiple bystanders (hoi hestōtes, 'those standing by'). The evidence is now Peter's lalia ('speech, accent, dialect') — his Galilean accent was distinctive and recognizable (cf. the Shibboleth test, Judges 12:6). The adverb alēthōs ('truly, certainly') indicates growing confidence in the identification. Peter can no longer hide.
73. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Judges 12:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
74. The third denial reaches maximum intensity: katathematizein ('to invoke curses upon oneself') means Peter calls down divine punishment if he is lying — but he is lying. The verb omnuein ('to swear') adds formal oath-taking. Peter's denial has progressed from evasion (v. 70) to oath (v. 72) to self-cursing (v. 74). The rooster's crow (alektōr ephōnēsen) fulfills Jesus's exact prediction from verse 34 with devastating precision.
75. The verb emnēsthē ('remembered') marks the moment of devastating recognition — memory and reality collide. The adverb pikrōs ('bitterly') describes the quality of Peter's weeping — not gentle tears but anguished, bitter sobbing. Unlike Judas (27:3-5), Peter's response to failure is grief rather than despair. This is the last we see of Peter until the resurrection, and Matthew leaves him weeping — the restoration will come later (cf. John 21).

27

Summary: *Matthew 27 narrates the crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus. The chapter opens with the council's formal decision to hand Jesus to Pilate, Judas's remorse and suicide, and the trial before Pontius Pilate. Pilate offers to release either Jesus or Barabbas; the crowd demands Barabbas and calls for Jesus's crucifixion. After scourging, mocking, and the journey to Golgotha, Jesus is crucified between two criminals. Darkness covers the land for three hours, and Jesus cries out in Aramaic from Psalm 22. At his death, the temple curtain tears, the earth quakes, and tombs open. Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus in a new tomb, and the chief priests secure the tomb with a guard.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Matthew's passion narrative contains several elements unique to this Gospel: Judas's return of the silver and suicide (vv. 3-10), Pilate's wife's dream (v. 19), Pilate's hand-washing (v. 24), the crowd's cry 'His blood be on us and on our children' (v. 25), the earthquake and resurrection of the saints at Jesus's death (vv. 51-53), and the posting of the guard at the tomb (vv. 62-66). The Zechariah fulfillment citation (vv. 9-10) is attributed to Jeremiah, a well-known difficulty. The tearing of the temple curtain (v. 51) symbolizes the removal of the barrier between God and humanity.*

Translation Friction: *Verse 25 ('His blood be on us and on our children') has been weaponized throughout history to justify antisemitic violence and persecution. This is a misreading: the verse records the words of a specific crowd in a specific moment, not a divine curse on all Jewish people for all time. We render the Greek as given and note the historical misuse. The Barabbas episode raises historical questions — was the custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover a regular practice? The evidence is thin outside the Gospels. We render the narrative as given.*

Connections: *Judas's thirty silver coins and the potter's field connect to Zechariah 11:12-13 (and possibly Jeremiah 18-19, 32:6-9). The Barabbas release echoes the Day of Atonement scapegoat ritual (Leviticus 16). Jesus's cry from Psalm 22:1 connects to the entire psalm, which moves from abandonment to vindication. The torn curtain connects to Exodus 26:33 and the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). The darkness echoes Amos 8:9-10. The burial by Joseph of Arimathea fulfills Isaiah 53:9 ('with a rich man in his death'). The guard at the tomb sets up the resurrection narrative of chapter 28.*

¹When the daybreak was come, all the leading priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. ²They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. ³Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus had been condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and

elders, ⁴Indeed, declaring, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. Then they stated, What is that to us? see you to that. ⁵He threw the silver coins into the temple sanctuary and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. ⁶The chief priests picked up the silver coins and said, "It is not lawful to put this into the temple treasury, since it is blood money." ⁷After conferring together, they used the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹Then what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, ¹⁰Offered them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. ¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many charges they are bringing against you?" ¹⁴But he did not answer him, not even a single word, so that the governor was greatly amazed. ¹⁵Now at the festival the governor had a custom of releasing to the crowd one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you — Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him: "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered greatly today because of a dream about him." ²⁰But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus destroyed. ²¹The governor answered them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" They said, "Barabbas." ²²Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³He said, "Why? What crime has he committed?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" ²⁴When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was starting instead, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your responsibility." ²⁵All the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶Then he released Barabbas to them, and after having Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified. ²⁷Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's headquarters and gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹Following they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand — then they bowed the knee prior to him, and mocked him and stated, Hail, King of the Jews! ³⁰They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹When they had finished mocking him, they stripped him of the robe, put his own clothes back on him, and led him away to crucify him. ³²As they were going out, they found a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they forced him to carry Jesus's cross. ³³When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴They offered him vinegar to drink mingled with gall — and following he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. ³⁵After they crucified him, they divided his garments among themselves by casting lots. ³⁶Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸Then two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰Declaring, you that destroyest the sanctuary, and buildest it in three period, rescue thyself. If you be the Descendant of God, come down from the cross. ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴²"He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the King of Israel — let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God — let God rescue him now, if he wants him! For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴The rebels who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. ⁴⁵From noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶About three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" — that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a reed, and held it up for him to drink. ⁴⁹But the rest said, "Leave him alone! Let us see if Elijah comes to save him." ⁵⁰Then Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and breathed his last. ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³They came out of the tombs after his resurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to many. ⁵⁴When the centurion and those with him who were keeping watch over Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" ⁵⁵Many women were there watching from a distance — those who had followed Jesus

from Galilee, serving him. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. ⁵⁷When evening came, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph arrived — he himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰Placed it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock — then he rolled a remarkable stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there, facing the tomb. ⁶²The next day — that is, the day after the Day of Preparation — the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³Declaring, Sir, we remember that that deceiver stated, while he was yet alive, following three days I will rise again. ⁶⁴So give the order for the tomb to be secured until the third day. Otherwise his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶So they went and secured the tomb by sealing the stone and posting a guard.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The morning session (prōias, 'early morning') may represent the formal ratification of the nighttime verdict, since Jewish law required capital sentences to be confirmed during daylight. The phrase symbolion elabon ('took counsel, reached a decision') indicates a formal resolution. The purpose clause hōste thanatōsai ('so as to put to death') confirms the death sentence from 26:66.
2. The verb dēsantes ('having bound') indicates Jesus was physically restrained for transfer. The verb paredōkan ('handed over') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal — the chain of 'handing over' continues from Judas to the council to Pilate. The Greek hēgemoni ('governor, prefect') is the general term for a Roman provincial administrator. Pontius Pilate served as prefect of Judea from approximately 26-36 AD.
3. The verb metamelētheis ('having felt regret, having changed his mind') is distinct from metanoō ('to repent'). Metamelētheis describes emotional regret over consequences, not the spiritual turning (teshuvah/metanoia) that leads to restoration. Judas regrets the outcome but does not seek reconciliation with God or Jesus. The act of returning (estrepseis) the silver attempts to undo the transaction but cannot undo the betrayal.
4. Judas's confession hēmarton ('I have sinned') and his acknowledgment of haima athōon ('innocent blood') are genuine recognitions of guilt. The priests' response — ti pros hēmas ('what is that to us?') — is chillingly dismissive: having used Judas, they discard him. The phrase sy opsē ('you will see to it,' or 'that is your concern') places all responsibility back on Judas.
5. The word naon ('temple sanctuary') refers specifically to the inner sanctuary, not the outer courts — Judas threw the money into the sacred space itself. The verb apēxato ('hanged himself') describes suicide by hanging. Acts 1:18 gives a different account of Judas's death (falling and bursting open); the two accounts have been harmonized in various ways throughout church history. We render Matthew's account as given.
6. The irony is devastating: the priests who paid for innocent blood now scruple about the ritual propriety of depositing that payment. The word korbān ('treasury,' from the Hebrew qorban, 'offering') refers to the temple treasury where offerings were deposited. The phrase timē haimatos ('price of blood') acknowledges what they paid for — they know they have purchased a man's life.
7. The 'potter's field' (agron tou kerameōs) was apparently a tract of land associated with pottery-making, perhaps where potters dug clay. Its purchase as a burial ground for xenois ('foreigners, strangers') — non-Jews who died in Jerusalem — ironically connects to Zechariah 11:13 (silver thrown 'to the potter').
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 11:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The name Agros Haimatos ('Field of Blood') corresponds to the Aramaic Akeldama (Acts 1:19). The phrase heōs tēs sēmeron ('until today') is an etiological formula indicating that the name persisted into Matthew's own time, connecting past event to present landmark.
9. The attribution to Jeremiah (Jeremiou) when the quotation primarily derives from Zechariah 11:12-13 is a well-known difficulty. Several explanations have been proposed: (1) Jeremiah was named because the quotation also draws on Jeremiah 18:1-4 (the potter) and 32:6-9 (buying a field); (2) Jeremiah stood first in the prophetic scroll and could refer to the entire collection; (3) a scribal error. We render the text as given and note the difficulty.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 11:12-13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 18:1-4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The quotation freely adapts Zechariah 11:13 with elements from Jeremiah. The phrase katha synetaxen moi kyrios ('as the Lord directed me') indicates that the disposal of the blood money was under divine sovereignty — even the priests' solution for the tainted silver fulfills prophecy.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 11:12-13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

11. The charge has shifted from the religious 'Christ/Son of God' (26:63) to the political 'King of the Jews' (basileus tōn Ioudaiōn) — the formulation relevant to Roman authority. Pilate's concern is political sedition, not theological heresy. Jesus's response *sy legeis* ('you say so') is the same ambiguous affirmation given to Caiaphas (26:64) and Judas (26:25).
12. Jesus's silence before accusers again evokes Isaiah 53:7. The verb *katēgoreisthai* ('to be accused') is a legal term from which 'category' derives. The phrase *ouden apekritnato* ('he answered nothing') emphasizes total silence despite multiple accusations.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Pilate's question reveals his expectation: a defendant should respond to accusations. The verb *katamartyrosin* ('testify against') and *posa* ('how many') suggest numerous charges. Roman legal procedure allowed the accused to defend himself.
14. The phrase *pros oude hen rhēma* ('not even one word') emphasizes the completeness of Jesus's silence. The governor's amazement (*thaumazein lian*) indicates this was extraordinary behavior — defendants typically fought for their lives. Jesus's silence is an active choice, not passive resignation.
15. The custom (*eiōthei*, 'was accustomed') of releasing a prisoner at Passover is not independently attested outside the Gospels, though analogous prisoner releases are documented in other Roman contexts. The phrase *hon ēthelon* ('whom they wanted') gives the crowd a choice — the mechanism that Pilate will attempt to use in Jesus's favor.
16. The adjective *episēmon* ('notable, notorious, well-known') suggests Barabbas was a famous criminal. The name Barabbas (Barabbas) means 'son of the father' (*bar-abba*) in Aramaic — a striking irony given that Jesus is the Son of the Father. Some manuscripts include the first name 'Jesus Barabbas' (*Iēsoun Barabban*), which, if original, would make the choice between two men named Jesus even more pointed.
17. Pilate's question frames the choice as a binary: Barabbas or Jesus. The phrase *ton legomenon Christon* ('the one called Christ') uses the title without committing to its truth — Pilate reports the title attributed to Jesus. Pilate's strategy is transparent: he expects the crowd to choose Jesus, the less dangerous of the two.
18. The narrator provides Pilate's internal assessment: *dia phthonon* ('because of envy') — the chief priests' motivation was jealousy of Jesus's popularity and authority, not genuine concern about blasphemy or sedition. This editorial note reveals Pilate's political awareness — he understands the real dynamics at play.
19. This episode is unique to Matthew. Pilate's wife (tradition names her Claudia Procula) sends a message from outside the proceedings. The phrase *tō dikaiō ekeinō* ('that righteous man') provides an external witness to Jesus's innocence. Dreams in Matthew carry divine significance (1:20, 2:12, 2:13, 2:19, 2:22) — this is yet another dream-warning that the Roman authorities choose to ignore.
20. The verb *epeisan* ('persuaded, convinced') reveals active manipulation: the crowd's demand for Barabbas is not spontaneous but orchestrated by the religious leaders. The verb *apolesōsin* ('they should destroy') is stark — they do not merely want Jesus released or exiled but destroyed.
21. Pilate repeats his question, perhaps expecting a different answer. The crowd's single-word response — *ton Barabban* ('Barabbas') — is decisive. The brevity conveys the crowd's settled determination.
22. Pilate's question *ti oun poiēsō* ('what then should I do?') reveals his loss of control over the situation. The unanimous response — *legousin pantes* ('they all say') — and the passive imperative *staurōthētō* ('let him be crucified!') is the crowd's explicit demand for Roman execution. Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment but a Roman one, reserved for slaves, rebels, and the lowest criminals.
23. Pilate's question *ti gar kakon epoiēsen* ('what evil has he done?') is his third attempt to prevent the execution. The comparative *perissōs* ('more exceedingly, all the more') indicates the crowd's response is escalating beyond reason — they are not answering his question but repeating their demand with increasing volume.
24. Pilate's hand-washing (*apenipsato tas cheiras*) is unique to Matthew and evokes the Deuteronomic ritual for unsolved murder (Deuteronomy 21:6-7), where elders wash their hands and declare innocence of blood. Whether a Roman governor would adopt a Jewish ritual is debated — this may be Matthew's theological interpretation of Pilate's attempt to deflect blame. The phrase *athōos eimi* ('I am innocent') uses the same word Judas used for Jesus's blood in verse 4. Pilate's *hymeis opsesthe* ('you will see to it') echoes the priests' dismissal of Judas in verse 4 — a chain of responsibility shifting.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:6-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. This verse has been the most misused text in the history of Jewish-Christian relations, weaponized to justify centuries of antisemitic persecution. The text records the words of a specific crowd (*pas ho laos*, 'all the people' present) at a specific moment, incited by specific leaders (v. 20). It is not a divine curse on all Jewish people for all time — such a reading contradicts the entire prophetic tradition and Paul's teaching in Romans 9-11. The phrase *haima autou eph' hēmas* ('his blood upon us') is a legal formula accepting responsibility for a death (cf. Joshua 2:19, 2 Samuel 1:16). We render the Greek as given.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 2:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Samuel 1:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

- 26.** The verb phragellōsas ('having flogged, having scourged') describes the Roman flagellum — a whip with leather thongs embedded with bone or metal fragments. This was not a light beating but a severe punishment that often left victims near death. Pilate's action — releasing a criminal and scourging an innocent man — epitomizes the injustice of the proceedings. The verb paredōken ('handed over') completes the chain: Judas handed Jesus to the priests, the priests to Pilate, and now Pilate to the executioners.
- 27.** The praitōrion ('praetorium, governor's residence') was likely the Herodian palace on the western side of Jerusalem or the Antonia Fortress near the temple. The speira ('cohort') was a Roman military unit of 600 soldiers, though the entire cohort may not have been present — 'whole' (holēn) may be hyperbolic.
- 28.** The chlamyda kokkinēn ('scarlet cloak') was a Roman military cloak, used here as a mock royal robe (Mark and John describe it as purple). The mockery takes the form of a parody investiture — dressing Jesus as a king to ridicule the charge of kingship.
- 29.** The mock investiture includes three elements: a crown (stephanon ex akanthōn, 'crown from thorns' — painful and parodic), a scepter (kalamon, 'reed' — a flimsy imitation of royal authority), and obeisance (gonypetēsantes, 'kneeling'). The greeting chaire basileu tōn Ioudaiōn ('Hail, King of the Jews!') parodies the imperial salute Ave Caesar. The soldiers' mockery, intended as cruelty, unwittingly proclaims the truth.
- 30.** The imperfect etyton ('they kept striking') indicates repeated blows. Striking his head would drive the thorns deeper. The spitting (emptysantes) reprises the abuse at the Jewish trial (26:67). The reed given as a mock scepter is now used as a weapon — the symbols of kingship become instruments of torture.
- 31.** The re-dressing in Jesus's own clothes (ta himatia autou) before the crucifixion procession was standard procedure — the condemned carried their crossbeam through the streets as a public deterrent. The verb apēgagon ('led away') begins the final journey.
- 32.** The verb ēngareusan ('they compelled, they pressed into service') is a Persian loanword for requisitioning — Roman soldiers had the legal right to conscript civilians for temporary service (cf. 5:41, 'if anyone forces you to go one mile'). Cyrene was a city in North Africa (modern Libya) with a large Jewish community. Simon may have been a Jewish pilgrim in Jerusalem for Passover. The stauros ('cross') he carried would have been the crossbeam (patibulum), not the entire cross.
- 33.** Golgotha (Golgotha) is Aramaic for 'skull' (gulgalta). The Latin equivalent Calvaria gives us the English 'Calvary.' The name may refer to the shape of the hill or to its use as an execution site. The location was outside the city walls (Hebrews 13:12) but near enough for public visibility.
- 34.** The Greek cholēs ('gall, bile') may refer to a bitter substance (Matthew changes Mark's 'myrrh' to 'gall' to echo Psalm 69:21). A drugged wine was sometimes offered to condemned prisoners as a mild sedative. Jesus tastes it (geusamenos) but refuses (ouk ēthelēsen) — he will face the crucifixion fully conscious.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 69:21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The act of crucifixion itself is stated in a single participle — staurōsantes ('having crucified') — with no description of the physical process. The Gospel writers consistently avoid graphic details of the crucifixion itself. The division of garments (diemerisanto ta himatia) fulfills Psalm 22:18. The soldiers' share of the condemned person's clothing was a legal perquisite. The SBLGNT does not include the explicit Psalm 22 quotation found in some manuscripts and the KJV.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 22:18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The verb etēroun ('they were watching, they were guarding') indicates the soldiers' duty to prevent rescue attempts or premature removal. Their sitting (kathēmenoi) while Jesus hangs creates a stark visual contrast — bored guards and a dying man.
- 37.** The titulus (aitian, 'charge, accusation') was a placard stating the crime, carried ahead of the condemned or fixed to the cross. The inscription houtos estin Iēsous ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn ('This is Jesus the King of the Jews') states the political charge — sedition by claiming kingship. Each Gospel records the inscription slightly differently; Matthew's version is the longest. Like the soldiers' mockery, the inscription proclaims what it intends to ridicule.
- 38.** The Greek lēstai ('bandits, rebels, insurrectionists') is the same word from 26:55 — not mere thieves (kleptai) but violent criminals or political revolutionaries. Crucifixion between two criminals fulfills Isaiah 53:12 ('he was numbered with the transgressors'). The positions 'right and left' recall the request of James and John in 20:21 — the positions of honor in the kingdom are filled by criminals at the cross.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 39.** The verb eblasphēmoun ('they were blaspheming, they were reviling') is the same word used for the charge against Jesus (26:65) — now passersby commit the very act Jesus was condemned for. The head-shaking (kinountes tas kephalas) fulfills Psalm 22:7 and echoes Lamentations 2:15.
- 39.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 22:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 39.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Lamentations 2:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 40.** The taunt recycles the distorted testimony from 26:61. The conditional ei huios ei tou theou ('if you are the Son of God') echoes Satan's temptation in 4:3, 6 — the same structure, the same challenge. The demand sōson seauton ('save yourself') misunderstands the nature of Jesus's mission: he saves others precisely by not saving himself.

41. The religious leaders who orchestrated Jesus's arrest and trial now come to witness and mock his execution. The presence of chief priests (archiereis), scribes (grammateōn), and elders (presbyterōn) — the full complement of the Sanhedrin — makes this an institutional act of rejection.
42. The taunt allous esōsen heauton ou dynatai sōsai ('he saved others, himself he cannot save') is theologically profound in ways the speakers do not intend — it states the precise logic of the atonement. The promise pisteusomen ('we will believe') is conditional on a sign (katabatō, 'let him come down') — the same demand Jesus consistently refused (12:39, 16:4).
43. This taunt directly echoes Psalm 22:8 ('He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him'). The leaders unknowingly recite the very psalm that Jesus is living out on the cross. The conditional ei thelei auton ('if he wants him') questions whether God actually cares about Jesus — the deepest possible taunt against a man of faith.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 22:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Matthew records both criminals joining in the mockery (unlike Luke 23:39-43, where one repents). The verb ōneidizon ('reviled, insulted, reproached') indicates verbal abuse. Jesus is mocked from every quarter — passersby, leaders, and fellow condemned.
45. The sixth hour (hektēs hōras) is noon; the ninth hour (enatēs) is 3:00 PM. The three hours of darkness (skotos) during midday echoes Amos 8:9 ('I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight') and the ninth plague on Egypt (Exodus 10:21-23). The Greek gēn can mean 'land' (of Israel) or 'earth' (the whole world) — the scope is ambiguous.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Amos 8:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 10:21-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
46. Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1, partially in Aramaic (lema sabachthani) and partially in Hebrew (Eli, Eli — 'my God'). Matthew preserves the Semitic words and provides a Greek translation. This is the only saying from the cross recorded in Matthew. The cry expresses the experience of divine abandonment — whether as a genuine theological crisis, as the opening line of a psalm that ends in vindication, or as both, is a question the text does not resolve. The depth of this cry resists systematic theological explanation.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 22:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
47. The confusion between Eli ('my God') and Ēlian ('Elijah') may be genuine (the words sound similar, especially in a cry of anguish) or deliberate mockery. The popular expectation that Elijah would return before the Messiah (Malachi 4:5) gives the misidentification a theological edge — they wonder if the dying man is calling for supernatural rescue.
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 4:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
48. The oxos ('sour wine, vinegar') was the cheap wine (posca) that Roman soldiers drank. The act may be compassionate (offering liquid to a dying man) or cruel (prolonging consciousness to extend suffering). The sponge on a reed (kalamō) was necessary to reach Jesus's mouth on the cross. The scene echoes Psalm 69:21 ('for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink').
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 69:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
49. The bystanders' response — aphes idōmen ('let us see') — treats Jesus's dying cry as entertainment. The phrase ei erchetai Ēlias sōsōn auton ('whether Elijah comes to save him') expresses mocking curiosity rather than genuine expectation. Even at the moment of death, the watching crowd is more interested in spectacle than compassion.
50. The second loud cry (kraxas phōnē megalē) is not identified with specific words in Matthew. The phrase aphēken to pneuma ('released the spirit') is unique to Matthew — the other Gospels say he 'breathed out' (exepneusen) or 'handed over' (paredōken) the spirit. Matthew's choice of aphēken ('released, let go, sent away') implies volition: Jesus did not have his life taken but actively gave it up.
51. The katapetasma tou naou ('curtain of the temple sanctuary') most likely refers to the inner curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:33) — the barrier that only the high priest could pass through, once a year, on the Day of Atonement. The tearing ap' anōthen heōs katō ('from top to bottom') indicates divine action — it was torn from God's side, not from below. The accompanying earthquake (hē gē eseisthē) and splitting rocks (hai petrai eschisthēsan) represent cosmic responses to Jesus's death, echoing theophanic language from the Old Testament.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 26:33. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. This event is unique to Matthew and is one of the most enigmatic episodes in the Gospels. The phrase kekoimēmenōn hagiōn ('saints who had fallen asleep') uses the standard metaphor of death as sleep. The passive ēgerthēsan ('were raised') is a divine passive — God raised them. The relationship between these resurrections and Jesus's own resurrection (detailed in the next verse) is theologically complex.
53. The phrase meta tēn egersin autou ('after his resurrection') creates a chronological puzzle: if the tombs opened at Jesus's death (v. 52) but the saints emerged after his resurrection, what happened in between? Various solutions have been proposed. The 'holy city' (tēn hagian polin) is Jerusalem.

The verb *enephanisthēsan* ('appeared, became visible to') implies recognizable manifestations to multiple witnesses (*pollois*, 'many').

54. The confession comes from Gentile soldiers — the centurion (*hekatontarchos*, commander of 100 men) and his squad. The evidence that convinces them is the *seismon* ('earthquake') and *ta genomena* ('the things that happened'). The declaration *alēthōs theou huios ēn houtos* ('truly this was God's Son') echoes the disciples' confession in 14:33. The absence of the article before *theou huios* ('Son of God') might allow the reading 'a son of God' (i.e., a divine man), but in Matthew's narrative context the full Christological meaning is intended. The first people to confess Jesus as Son of God after his death are pagan soldiers.
55. The women who remained at the cross after all the male disciples had fled (26:56) are now named as witnesses. They watched *apo makrothen* ('from a distance') — the same phrase used for Peter's distant following in 26:58. The participle *diakonousai* ('serving, ministering to') uses the root of 'deacon' — these women had been active supporters of Jesus's ministry, a detail often overlooked.
56. Three women are named: Mary Magdalene (from Magdala on the Sea of Galilee), Mary the mother of James and Joseph (possibly Jesus's mother, since James and Joseph are brothers of Jesus in 13:55, though this identification is uncertain), and the mother of Zebedee's sons (James and John, who requested seats of honor in 20:20-21). These women become the essential witnesses who link the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.
57. Evening (*opsias*) signals urgency: the Sabbath begins at sunset, and bodies must be buried before then (Deuteronomy 21:22-23). Joseph's wealth (*plousios*) is significant — it fulfills Isaiah 53:9 ('with a rich man in his death'). Arimathea is probably Ramathaim (1 Samuel 1:1). The verb *emathēteuthē* ('had become a disciple') indicates secret discipleship, now made public by this bold act.
57. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
57. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
57. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 1:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
58. Requesting the body of an executed criminal required courage and status — a crucified person's body could be denied burial as additional punishment. The verb *ētēsato* ('requested, asked for') and Pilate's prompt order (*ekeleusen*, 'commanded') suggest Joseph had sufficient standing to make the request successfully.
59. The *sindoni kathara* ('clean linen cloth') was used for Jewish burial wrapping. The adjective *kathara* ('clean, pure') indicates both physical cleanliness and ritual purity — Joseph ensures proper, respectful burial. The wrapping (*enetylixen*, 'wound around, wrapped') was the first step of Jewish burial preparation.
60. The tomb was *kainō* ('new') and *autou* ('his own') — Joseph donated his personal tomb. Rock-cut tombs (*elatomēsen en tē petra*, 'hewn in the rock') were expensive, consistent with Joseph's wealth. The large stone (*lithon megan*) was a disc-shaped stone rolled in a channel to seal the entrance — these are well-attested archaeologically in first-century Jerusalem.
61. Two of the women from verse 55-56 remain as witnesses to the burial location. Their presence establishes continuity — the same women who saw Jesus die now see where he is buried, and they will be the first to discover the empty tomb (28:1). The phrase *kathēmenai apenanti* ('sitting opposite') indicates a vigil of grief.
62. The chronological note identifies the day: the day after Preparation (*paraskeuen*), which is the Sabbath. The chief priests and Pharisees approach Pilate on the Sabbath — an action that reveals the urgency of their concern about the tomb. This episode (vv. 62-66) is unique to Matthew and sets up the guard at the tomb.
63. The address *kyrie* ('sir, lord') is politely deferential. They call Jesus *ekeinos ho planos* ('that deceiver') — *planos* means 'wanderer, deceiver, impostor.' Their quotation *meta treis hēmeras egeiromai* ('after three days I rise/am raised') shows they understood Jesus's resurrection predictions even though the disciples apparently did not (cf. 16:21, 17:23, 20:19).
64. The request *asphalīsthēnai* ('to be made secure') leads to the guard posting. The fear of body-snatching (*klepsōsin*, 'they might steal') by the disciples reveals that the leaders took the resurrection claim seriously enough to guard against it. The phrase *hē eschatē planē cheirōn tēs prōtēs* ('the last deception worse than the first') identifies the 'first deception' as Jesus's ministry and the feared 'last deception' as a resurrection claim. Ironically, Matthew includes this episode to show that the authorities themselves ensured the tomb was under guard — making the resurrection that much harder to explain away.
65. The phrase *echete koustōdian* could be imperative ('take a guard') or indicative ('you have a guard' — i.e., use your own temple police). The *koustōdia* is a Latin loanword (*custodia*) for a military guard unit. Pilate's response is terse and slightly dismissive — *asphalisasthe hōs oidate* ('secure it as you know how') leaves the details to them.
66. The verb *sphragisantes* ('having sealed') indicates that a seal — probably a cord with a wax or clay seal impression — was placed across the stone, so that any tampering would be immediately evident. The combination of a sealed stone and an armed guard represents the maximum human effort to prevent the resurrection from being claimed. Matthew's narrative irony is that these very precautions will become evidence that the resurrection was genuine: when the tomb is found empty despite a sealed stone and armed guard, natural explanations become far more difficult.

28

Summary: *Matthew 28, the final chapter of the Gospel, narrates the resurrection of Jesus and its immediate aftermath. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb at dawn and encounter an angel who announces that Jesus has risen. They meet the risen Jesus himself on their way to tell the disciples. The chief priests bribe the guards to spread the lie that the disciples stole the body. The chapter — and the entire Gospel — culminates with the Great Commission on a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus claims all authority in heaven and on earth and sends his disciples to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching, with the promise of his presence until the end of the age.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Great Commission (vv. 18-20) is Matthew's theological climax. The Gospel that began with 'Emmanuel — God with us' (1:23) ends with 'I am with you always' (28:20) — the entire narrative is framed by divine presence. The Trinitarian baptismal formula ('in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit') is the most explicit Trinitarian statement in the Gospels. The universal scope — 'all nations' (panta ta ethnē) — fulfills the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3) and the trajectory that began with the Magi (2:1-12). The guards' bribery (vv. 11-15) represents Matthew's engagement with the competing narrative circulating in his day: the claim that the disciples stole the body.*

Translation Friction: *The guard story (vv. 11-15) is unique to Matthew and is often seen as apologetic — a response to Jewish counter-claims about the empty tomb. The phrase 'this story has been spread among the Jews to this day' (v. 15) reflects the tension between Matthew's community and the broader Jewish community. The Great Commission's Trinitarian formula has been questioned by some scholars as reflecting later liturgical development rather than Jesus's exact words. We render the Greek as given. The note that 'some doubted' (v. 17) at the resurrection appearance is a remarkably honest admission that even among the eleven, faith was not unanimous.*

Connections: *The angel's appearance echoes Daniel 10:5-6 and connects to the angel at Jesus's birth (1:20). The earthquake parallels 27:51-54. The mountain setting for the Great Commission recalls the mountain of the Sermon on the Mount (5:1), the Transfiguration (17:1), and ultimately Sinai/Horeb. The promise of universal presence ('I am with you always') echoes the divine name revealed at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14) and the Emmanuel prophecy (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23). The phrase 'the end of the age' (synteleias tou aiōnos) connects to the Olivet Discourse (24:3).*

¹After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²Suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, came and rolled back the stone, and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was white as snow. ⁴The guards shook with fear of him and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has been raised, just as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and look — he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him.' See, I have told you." ⁸So they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." ¹¹While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹²After the chief priests had assembled with the elders and devised a plan, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³Declaring, Say you, His followers arrived by night, and stole him away while we slept. ¹⁴If this reaches the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵The soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jewish people to this day. ¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they noticed him, they worshipped him — but some doubted. ¹⁸Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰Teaching them to observe all matters whatsoever I have

commanded you — and, lo, I am with you always, indeed to the end of the world. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *opse sabbatōn* ('late on the Sabbath' or 'after the Sabbath') combined with *tē epiphōskousē eis mian sabbatōn* ('as it was dawning toward the first of the week') describes the early morning of Sunday. The two Marys are the same women who witnessed the burial (27:61). The verb *theōresai* ('to see, to observe') suggests they came to visit the tomb, not expecting resurrection. Mark adds that they brought spices for anointing.
2. The second earthquake (*seismos megas*, cf. 27:51) accompanies divine action. The angel (*angelos kyriou*, 'angel of the Lord') descends from heaven (*katabas ex ouranou*) — the same phrase used for divine agents throughout Matthew. The angel rolls away the stone not to let Jesus out (he has already risen) but to show the women the empty tomb. The detail that the angel sat (*ekathēto*) on the stone conveys sovereign composure — the guards' seal and the massive stone are trivial obstacles.
3. The description echoes Daniel 7:9 (the Ancient of Days with garment 'white as snow') and Daniel 10:6 (face like lightning). The combination of *astrapē* ('lightning') and *chiōn* ('snow') — brilliant light and pure whiteness — are the standard biblical markers of heavenly beings. The word *eidea* ('appearance, form') occurs only here in the New Testament.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 10:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The verb *eseisthēsan* ('they shook, they were shaken') uses the same root as *seismos* ('earthquake') — the guards experience their own personal earthquake of terror. The phrase *egenēthēsan hōs nekroi* ('they became as dead men') describes paralysis from fear — ironic, since they were guarding a dead man who is now alive, and the living guards appear dead.
5. The emphatic *hymeis* ('you,' as opposed to the guards) distinguishes the women from the soldiers — the women need not fear because they come seeking (*zēteite*, 'you are seeking') Jesus. The perfect participle *estaurōmenon* ('the crucified one') keeps the crucifixion in view even at the moment of resurrection — the risen Jesus is still the crucified Jesus.
6. The announcement *ouk estin hōde* ('he is not here') is the empty tomb's testimony. The passive *ēgerthē* ('he was raised') is a divine passive — God raised Jesus. The phrase *kathōs eipen* ('just as he said') links the resurrection to Jesus's own predictions (16:21, 17:23, 20:19). The invitation *deute idete* ('come, see') makes the women eyewitnesses of the empty tomb. The SBLGNT does not include 'the Lord' (*ho kyrios*) before 'lay,' which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV.
7. The command is urgent: *tachy poreutheiasai* ('going quickly'). The women are commissioned as the first witnesses and messengers of the resurrection — apostles to the apostles. The phrase *proagei hymas eis tēn Galilaian* ('he goes ahead of you to Galilee') fulfills Jesus's promise in 26:32 and uses the shepherd imagery of going ahead of the flock. The closing *idou eipon hymin* ('see, I have told you') functions as a formal charge — the message has been entrusted.
8. The combination *meta phobou kai charas megalēs* ('with fear and great joy') captures the complex emotional state of encountering the divine — the two emotions are not contradictory but complementary. Fear at the angel's presence and joy at the news coexist. The verb *edramon* ('they ran') conveys urgency — they do not walk to deliver this message.
9. The greeting *chairete* ('Rejoice! Greetings!') is the ordinary Greek salutation, but in this context it carries its full weight — 'Rejoice!' The women's response — *kratēsan autou tous podas* ('they grasped his feet') — demonstrates both physical reality (the risen body can be touched) and devotion (clasping the feet is a posture of worship). The verb *prosekynēsan* ('they worshiped') is the same word used for worship of God throughout Matthew — applied to the risen Jesus without reservation.
10. Jesus repeats the angel's command (*mē phobeisthe*, 'do not be afraid') and the instruction about Galilee. Remarkably, he calls the disciples *tois adelphois mou* ('my brothers') — the men who abandoned him (26:56) are not disowned but claimed as family. This is the first word of the risen Jesus to his followers: reassurance and reconciliation, not rebuke.
11. The narrative shifts to the guards' report. The phrase *tines tēs koustōdias* ('some of the guard') suggests that not all the guards came — some may have fled in different directions. They report to the chief priests (*archiereusin*), not to Pilate — indicating that these were temple guards, not Roman soldiers, or that the priests were their primary employers. The word *hapanta* ('all things') means they gave a complete account of the earthquake, the angel, and the empty tomb.
12. The verb *synachthentes* ('having assembled') and *symbolion labontes* ('having taken counsel') mirror the conspiracy of 27:1 — the same group that plotted Jesus's death now plots to suppress his resurrection. The phrase *argyria hikana* ('sufficient silver, a large sum') repeats the pattern of financial corruption: first they paid Judas (26:15), now they pay the guards. Money is the weapon of choice.
13. The fabricated story is internally contradictory: if the guards were sleeping (*koimōmenōn*, 'while we were sleeping'), how would they know who took the body? The fact that sleeping on guard duty was a capital offense in the Roman military makes the story even less plausible — no soldier would voluntarily confess to this. Matthew includes this detail to expose the alternative explanation as absurd.

14. The priests promise protection: *peisomen auton* ('we will persuade him') and *hymas amerimous poiēsomen* ('we will make you free from worry/care'). The word *amerimous* ('without anxiety, free from concern') assures the soldiers that the political consequences of admitting they slept on duty will be handled. The priests are confident in their ability to manage Pilate — a confidence consistent with their political influence throughout the narrative.
15. The phrase *diephēmisthē ho logos houtos* ('this story was spread abroad') indicates that the stolen-body theory was actively circulated and had currency in Matthew's time. The phrase *para Ioudaiois* ('among the Jews') reflects the distinction between Matthew's community and the broader Jewish community — a distinction that had sharpened by the time of writing. The phrase *mechri tēs sēmeron hēmeras* ('until the present day') is an authorial aside placing Matthew's writing at some distance from the events described.
16. The number 'eleven' (*hendeka*) is a permanent reminder of Judas's absence. The mountain (*to oros*) is not identified but connects to Matthew's mountain theology — major revelations occur on mountains (5:1, 17:1). The verb *etaxato* ('had directed, had appointed') indicates a prearranged meeting place, showing that the resurrection appearance was not random but planned.
17. The response is divided: *prosekynēsan* ('they worshiped') from some and *edistasan* ('they doubted, they hesitated') from others. The verb *distazō* ('to doubt, to waver, to hesitate') appears only twice in the New Testament — here and in 14:31 (Peter sinking in the water). Matthew's honesty about doubt within the resurrection community is remarkable — even a direct encounter with the risen Jesus does not compel unanimous faith. The 'some' (*hoi de*) who doubted may be a smaller group, but their presence is not hidden.
18. The claim *edothē moi pasa exousia* ('all authority has been given to me') is the most comprehensive authority claim in the New Testament. The passive *edothē* ('was given') indicates the Father as the source. The scope — *en ouranō kai epi tēs gēs* ('in heaven and on earth') — is total and universal. This fulfills Daniel 7:14, where the Son of Man receives authority, glory, and sovereign power from the Ancient of Days. The word *exousia* ('authority, right, power') has been a key theme in Matthew from the beginning (7:29, 9:6, 9:8, 10:1, 21:23-27).
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The main imperative is *mathēteusate* ('make disciples') — not merely 'go' (*poreuthentes* is a participle). The task is disciple-making, not just traveling. The scope *panta ta ethnē* ('all nations/peoples') breaks open the Jewish-focused mission of 10:5-6 ('do not go to the Gentiles') into universal mission. The Trinitarian baptismal formula *eis to onoma tou patros kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos* ('into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit') is unique in the Gospels. The singular 'name' (*onoma*) governing three persons is theologically significant — one name, three persons. This formula became the standard baptismal rite of the early church.
20. The second participle *didaskontes* ('teaching') defines discipleship: it involves instruction in *panta hosa eneteilamēn* ('everything I commanded') — the entire ethical and theological teaching of Jesus recorded in Matthew. The closing promise *egō meth' hymōn eimi pasas tas hēmeras* ('I am with you all the days') is the Gospel's final and climactic statement. It echoes the Emmanuel prophecy of 1:23 ('God with us'), forming an inclusio that frames the entire Gospel with the theme of divine presence. The phrase *heōs tēs synteleias tou aiōnos* ('until the completion of the age') connects to the eschatological language of 13:39-40, 49 and 24:3. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen' (*amēn*) at the end, which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV. Matthew's Gospel ends not with a period but with a promise — the open-ended assurance of Christ's continuing presence.