



# THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

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## **PART 8: THE COMPASSIONATE KING (MATTHEW CHAPTERS 14-17)**

In these chapters we read how Jesus not only performed miraculous healings, giving proof that he is who he says he is, but also they show his great compassion for those who are hurting. Compassion is feeling the suffering of others and doing something tangible about it. Here Jesus expresses his love for those suffering by healing the lame, the blind, the mute, and many others. Jesus is indeed the compassionate King!

### **I. MATTHEW CHAPTER 14**

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#### **A. The death of John the Baptist (14:1-12)**

John the Baptist had previously confronted Herod for marrying Herodias, the wife of Herod's brother. Herod then had John executed at the request of Herodias's daughter Salome.

#### **B. Jesus feeds the five thousand (14:13-21)**

Jesus knew they did not have enough food to feed the crowd, so when he said to the disciples, "you feed them" he wanted the disciples to know that a miracle by his power had occurred.

### **C. Jesus walks on water (14:22-36)**

Jesus already knew that a storm would come up and would be a trial for increasing their faith. By this time the disciples' boat was a long way from land and was being beaten by the waves from high winds.

During the 4th watch of the night (3 am-6 am) when they saw Jesus walking on the water. The Roman military divided the night into four watches of 3 hours each from 6 pm to 6 am.

At first, they were terrified, thinking it was a ghost, but Jesus spoke and said, "do, not be afraid." Peter asks to come to Jesus, which he did, but when he saw the wind, he became afraid and began to sink. "*Lord, if it's you,*" *Peter replied,* should read "...since *it is you*" (14:28). Jesus reached out his hand and asked Peter, why did you doubt having little faith?

## **II. MATTHEW CHAPTER 15**

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### **A. Jesus teaches about inner purity (15:1-20)**

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for breaking the commandment to honor their father and mother. He is referring to the tradition of Corban ("devoted to God as a gift," Mark 7:11) where the Pharisees withheld the financial support of their parents because they were holding the money back as an offering to God (which they never gave to God).

The 'traditions of the elders' refers to the body of extrabiblical law that existed then in oral form and only since the time of the Babylonian captivity (605-538 BC).

In answer to the Pharisees' question, Jesus told them that they had rejected the commandment of God in order to keep their own tradition (Mark 7:6-9). Jesus gives the proof of their corruption of the Law by citing their use of "Corban." Moses had instructed God's people to "honor their father and mother" (Exodus 20:12), but the Pharisees negated that command by teaching that they could give money to the temple in lieu of helping their parents in need. Whatever money might have been used to provide for aging parents could be dedicated to the temple treasury instead. Saying, "It is Corban" would exempt a person from his responsibility to his parents. In other words, the Pharisees took a legitimate Corban offering and used it in an illegitimate and devious way to defraud their parents (and enrich themselves). Thus, the Law of God was nullified.

Jesus explained how words of evil, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, etc., that come out of the mouth defile a person with an evil heart.

### **C. The faith of a Gentile woman (15:21-28)**

A Gentile (Canaanite) woman asked Jesus to free her daughter from the oppression of a demon, but the disciples asked Jesus if they could send her away because she was bothering them.

Jesus replied that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Later, through the apostles, the gospel is to go to the Gentiles (Acts 1:8; 22:21; 26:17-18, 23), but at this point, before Israel rejects Jesus as its king, the focus is on the Jews and their spiritual needs.

The Canaanite woman pleads with Jesus saying that even dogs<sup>1</sup> will eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. Because of the Canaanite woman's faith, Jesus healed the Canaanite's daughter.

#### **D. Jesus heals many people (15:29-31)**

After returning to the Sea of Galilee, the crowd brought many people to Jesus to be healed. After healing them they praised the God of Israel. The Pharisees were repulsed by seeing sick people touching Jesus. They believed people were sick because they disobeyed the Mosaic Law (Deut. 28:21-22).

#### **E. Jesus feeds four thousand (15:32-39)**

The disciples asked Jesus where could we get enough bread? No wonder our Lord calls them men of little faith when they ask such a question after he had recently fed the 5000.

### **III. MATTHEW CHAPTER 16**

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#### **A. Pharisees and Sadducees demand a miraculous sign (16:1-4)**

It was during this time that the Pharisees and Sadducees tested Jesus by demanding he perform a miraculous sign from heaven. Jesus again rebuked them and gave them the sign of Jonah, referring to his three-day death, burial, and resurrection.

#### **B. Jesus' warning about becoming like the Pharisees and Sadducees (16:5-12)**

Here the leaven of the Pharisees is their hypocrisy. They were too concerned with externals and ceremonies and the way things appear and not concerned enough with matters of the heart. Jesus rebukes them for their hypocrisy again and again.

#### **C. Peter's declaration about Jesus (16:13-20)**



When Jesus asked Peter who do people say I am Peter said you are the Messiah the son of the living God. Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The word for "Peter," *Petros*, means a small stone. Jesus used a play on words here using *petra*, which means a foundation boulder. The words "this rock" have been the source of much controversy. It is best to see them as referring to either Jesus Himself (perhaps Jesus gesturing to Himself as He said this) or as referring to Peter's confession of who Jesus is.

Peter is given the authority to admit entrance into the Kingdom through preaching the gospel, and authority that is subsequently granted to all who are called to proclaim the gospel. Note

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<sup>1</sup> The Jews frequently called non-Jews, such as Canaanites, "dogs."

the contrast with the scribes and Pharisees who shut out the kingdom in people's faces people.

#### **D. Jesus predicts his death (16:21-28)**

From that time on Jesus begins to prepare his disciples for his death. The harsh rebuke appears to contrast sharply with Christ words of commendation in verses 17 through 19. Jesus implies that Peter is being a mouthpiece for Satan.

### **IV. MATTHEW CHAPTER 17**

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#### **A. The transfiguration (17:1-13)**

Jesus undergoes a dramatic change in appearance so the disciples can behold him in his glory. Moses and Elijah represent the law and the prophets, respectively, both of which foretold Jesus's death. In 17:5 Peter makes the mistake of placing Moses and Elijah on the same level as Christ.

#### **B. Jesus heals a demon-possessed boy (17:14-20<sup>2</sup>)**

When Jesus healed the demon-possessed boy the disciples were surprised that they could not do the same thing. The reason why the disciples couldn't do the same thing was because of their failure to make God rather than their own gifts the object of their confidence.

#### **C. Jesus again predicts his death (17:22-23)**

After returning to Galilee Jesus told his disciples that he would be killed but three days later he would be raised from the dead and his disciples were filled with grief.

#### **D. Payment of the temple tax (17:24-27)**

The temple tax was 1/2 shekel tax the equivalent to about two days wages which was collected annually from every Jewish male over 20 for the upkeep of the temple. as kings did not tax their own sons Jesus as God's son was exempt from the tax. But to avoid offence he pays on behalf of himself and Peter.

### **V. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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1. (14:17) How does Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 with only "five loaves of bread and two fish" encourage you when you feel you have little or nothing to offer him? In what ways might this be applied in your own life?
  
2. (14:25-31) What can you learn about faith and action where Peter went out to

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<sup>2</sup> Some manuscripts add verse 21.

meet Jesus on the water? How can you apply this to your own life?

3. (15:1-3) Upon what source were the Pharisees and scribes basing their beliefs? How did this affect their understanding of the scriptures ("commandment of God")?
4. (16:1-4) The Pharisees tested Jesus by asking for a sign from heaven. Does this mean it is wrong to ask God for a sign when seeking his will? Explain your answer.
5. (16:12) What do you suppose was "the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees"?
6. (16:18) Why is it important to understand who the "rock" is in 16:18?
7. (17:23) Jesus told his disciples that he would be killed but that he will be raised on the third day, yet his disciples were distressed. Why do you suppose they were distressed even though Jesus told them he would be raised on the third day?
8. In this study, we see how Jesus is such a compassionate King. What is one of the reasons why Jesus is so compassionate? (Hint: see Hebrews 4:15-16).
9. Optional leader's question(s).