

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

+ THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

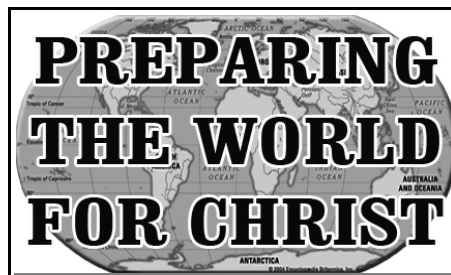
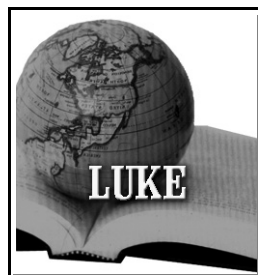
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #19

COMMENTARY ON: 5:27-39

MATTHEW PREPARES A FEAST FOR JESUS

While Levi, more commonly referred to as Matthew, was on the job, sitting at the seat of customs, Jesus called him: *"Follow Me."* Immediately, Matthew left all, got up, and followed Jesus. This is now the fifth man who has been so called, and immediately followed – the others being Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Confirming his thanksgiving Matthew prepared a great feast for Jesus, inviting others to come. Some of the scribes and Pharisees asked why Jesus was eating with the kind of people who were there. Jesus answered by saying whom He had come to call to repentance, and who had need of what He came to give. To this very day, His answer remains misunderstood by many. The men then asked Jesus why his disciples did not fast like the disciples of John the Baptist and the followers of the Pharisees, who also had disciples. In a veiled, but poignant, manner, Jesus taught them about old and new things, how they were incompatible with one another, and how men tended to prefer one over the other. It was another full day of holy activity.

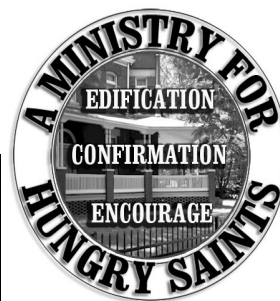


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 6/26/2015

Lesson Number 19



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1959), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

MATTHEW PREPARES A FEAST FOR JESUS

LUKE 5:27¹¹ And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. ²⁸ And he left all, rose up, and followed Him. ²⁹ And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. ³⁰ But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? ³¹ And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. ³² I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. ³³ And they said unto Him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but Thine eat and drink? ³⁴ And He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵ But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. ³⁶ And He spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. ³⁷ And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. ³⁹ No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better."

..... Luke 5:27-39

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

While Levi, more commonly referred to as Matthew, was on the job, sitting at the seat of customs, Jesus called him: "Follow Me." Immediately, Matthew left all, got up, and followed Jesus.

This is now the fifth man who has

been so called, and immediately followed Jesus – the others being Peter, Andrew, James, and John.

Confirming his thanksgiving Matthew prepared a great feast for Jesus, inviting others to come.

Some of the scribes and Pharisees asked why Jesus was eating with the

kind of people who were there. Jesus answered by saying that He had come to call sinners to repentance, who had need of what He came to give. No one, of course, is by nature excluded from that category

To this very day, His answer remains misunderstood by many. The men then asked Jesus why His disciples

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did not fast like the disciples of John the Baptist and the followers of the Pharisees, who also had disciples. In a veiled, but poignant, manner, Jesus taught them about old and new things, how they were incompatible with one another, and how men tended to prefer one over the other. It was another full day of holy activity.

WHAT JESUS CAME TO EARTH TO DO

As we peruse the life of Jesus, we must ever keep before us why Jesus came to earth. There was an ultimate reason, and the necessary things that led up to it. The ultimate reason was to lay down His life and take it up again. In one grand statement, Jesus provided an overview of His objectives. *"As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd. Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man*

taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John 10:15-18).

This is a concentrated view of Christ's death. Through Christ's death, all sin – *"the sin of the world"* – was taken away (John 1:29). When, through His death, Jesus *"put away sin,"* it was all sin (Heb 9:26). No single sin could be remitted until all sin was judged and taken away.

However, the grand objective of Christ's death was very focused.

- ⇒ To present the saints *"holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight"* (Col 1:21-22).
- ⇒ To purchase *"the church of God"* (Acts 20:28).
- ⇒ So that men could partake of His life (John 6:51).
- ⇒ He gave His life *"for the sheep"* (John 10:11,15).
- ⇒ That He might bring *"other sheep"* that of them and *"the sheep"* He might make *"one fold"* (John 10:16).
- ⇒ For the nation of Israel, and to gather together the scattered children of God (John 11:51-52).
- ⇒ So that He might draw men unto Himself (John 12:32).
- ⇒ For the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God (Rom 3:24-25).
- ⇒ That God might be Just and the Justifier of those believing in Jesus (Rom 3:26).
- ⇒ To reconcile God's enemies unto Him (Rom 5:10).
- ⇒ To condemn sin in the flesh [of Christ] (Rom 8:3).
- ⇒ That *"He might be Lord both of the living and the dead"* (Rom 14:9).

- ⇒ *"And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."* (2 Cor 5:15)
- ⇒ That *"we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Cor 5:21).
- ⇒ That we *"through His poverty might be made rich"* (2 Cor 8:9).
- ⇒ To *"deliver us from this present evil world"* (Gal 1:4).
- ⇒ To redeem us *"from the curse of the Law"* (Gal 3:13).
- ⇒ That we *"might receive the adoption of sons"* (Gal 4:4).
- ⇒ To bring us *"nigh"* unto God (Eph 2:13).
- ⇒ To reconcile Jews and Gentiles together in one body (Eph 2:16).
- ⇒ He gave Himself for the church, *"That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* (Eph 5:26-27).
- ⇒ To *"spoil principalities and powers, making a show of them openly"* (Col 2:15).
- ⇒ That we should *"live together with Him"* (1 Thess 5:10).
- ⇒ He *"gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."* (1 Tim 2:6).
- ⇒ *"That He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* (Titus 2:14).
- ⇒ To *"destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* (Heb 2:14-15).

- ⇒ To obtain *“eternal redemption”* for us (Heb 9:12).
- ⇒ To purge our *“conscience from dead works to serve the living God”* (Heb 9:14).
- ⇒ *“To put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”* (Heb 9:26).
- ⇒ That we might be sanctified through *“The offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”* (Heb 10:10; 13:12).
- ⇒ To *“perfect forever them that are sanctified”* (Heb 10:14).
- ⇒ That we might have *“boldness to enter into the holiest”* (Heb 10:19).
- ⇒ To *“consecrate for us”* a *“new and living way”* (Heb 10:20).
- ⇒ To redeem us from our *“vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers”* (1 Pet 1:18-19).
- ⇒ That we should *“live unto righteousness”* (1 Pet 2:24).
- ⇒ That He might *“bring us to God”* (1 Pet 3:18).
- ⇒ *“To be the propitiation for our sins.”* (1 John 4:10).
- ⇒ That He might make us *“kings and priests unto God and His Father”* (Rev 1:5-6; 5:9-10).

There are thirty-eight Divinely established reasons for Jesus laying

down His life, **and there are more.** They confirm that we must thrust from us simplistic views of the death of Christ. There is a multiplicity of Divine objectives, gathered together in one grand *“eternal purpose”* (Eph 3:11) that required the Word to be made flesh, come into the world in a humbled state, and finally *“accomplish”* His appointed death (Lk 9:31).

The point I wish to stress here is that everything in Christ’s ministry was directly associated with achieving the purpose for which He came. That is precisely why everything He said and did was in strict accord with the will

affairs or family problems.

⇒ He never assisted anyone in meeting their personal non-religious ambitions.

⇒ He never intervened in legal matters, or sides with governmental trends.

I do not think this necessarily proves that He has no interest at all in such matters. **This was not, however, the focus of His attention, and therefore such things must not become our focus.**

Life in this world can be fully and

Life in this world can be fully and adequately addressed within the context of life in the Son of God.

and directives of His Father (John 8:28,38; 12:50; 14:10). It is simply not possible to exploit the work of Jesus for personal gain.

Consider things in which there is no record of Jesus becoming involved.

⇒ Jesus never was involved in political or governmental affairs.

⇒ He did not deal with social trends outside of the Jewish people.

⇒ There is no record of Him making an attempt to intervene in domestic

adequately addressed within the context of life in the Son of God. As we fellowship with Christ (1 Cor 1:9), walk in the light (1 John 1:7), live by faith (Heb 10:38), walk in the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:15,25), and live unto Him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor 5:15), **we will be able to satisfactorily address any facet of life.** Also, the fact that we are living in concert and fellowship with the Lord brings His infinite wisdom and superior power to bear on the entirety of our lives. Salvation is large in scope, and thoroughly adequate and effective in this world. That needs to be proclaimed with conviction and power.

JESUS CALLS MATTHEW

LUKE 5:27 ***“And after these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow Me. ²⁸ And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.”***

AFTER THESE THINGS
“And after these things . . .”

Other versions read, *“after that,”* NASB *“after this,”* NIV *“Afterward,”* CEB *“Later”* CJB *“When he went out after this,”* NJB and *“Later on.”* LIVING

This language reflects the manner of the Kingdom – particularly as it was lived out by Christ Jesus. **We are not being exposed to a daily diary, but to a**

report of how Jesus went about doing the will of God, speaking what His Father told Him to say, and doing what His Father told Him to do.

“These Things”
“These things” include the following:

- ⇒ Jesus had been teaching (Lk 5:17a).
- ⇒ Pharisees and doctors of the Law had been present, coming *“out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem”* (Lk 5:17b).
- ⇒ The power of the Lord *“was present to heal them”* (Lk 5:17c).
- ⇒ Four men had brought in a palsied man, and were unable to find a way to get him to Jesus (Lk 5:18).
- ⇒ These men dismantled the roof, and lowered the man before Jesus (Lk 5:19).
- ⇒ Jesus *“saw their faith,”* and said to the palsied man, *“Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.”* (Lk 5:20).
- ⇒ The scribes and Pharisees began to reason, thinking that Jesus was a blasphemer, and concluding, *“Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”* (Luke 5:21).
- ⇒ Jesus *“perceived their thoughts”* and asked them to answer: *“Whether is easier, to say: ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?’”* (Luke 5:22-23).
- ⇒ He then added, *“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house”* (Luke 5:24).
- ⇒ *“And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God”* (Luke 5:25).
- ⇒ There was an amazed multitude, God being glorified, great fear coming on the people, and the admission they had been *“strange”* and unusual things (Lk 5:26).

Now, so far as men are concerned, any of *“these things”* would be considered significant – **headlines**, so to speak. They involved the effective teaching of Jesus, the passing interest

of religious dignitaries, the presence of miraculous power, the announcement of forgiven sins, the critique of religious officials, a miraculous healing before all of the people, a healed man glorifying God, and an amazed and fearful multitude.

Yet, all of these things were really incidental. They represented some of the involvements of doing the will of God, which was the focus of our Lord.

This presents to us the manner in which we also are to live – with the will of the Lord being the center of our attention. As we live, there will be both friendly and hostile responses. We may face what appears to be impossible, and our motives may be questioned. **However, we cannot be drawn aside to such things, becoming embroiled in them.** Rather, we must be absorbed with *“the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God”* (Rom 12:1-2).

HE SAW A PUBLICAN

“ . . . He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. . . ”

INFORMATION ON PUBLICANS

A “PUBLICAN” WAS “ONE WHO FARMED THE TAXES (E.G., ZACCHAEUS, LUKE 19:2) TO BE LEVIED FROM A TOWN OR DISTRICT, AND THUS UNDERTOOK TO PAY TO THE SUPREME GOVERNMENT A CERTAIN AMOUNT. IN ORDER TO COLLECT THE TAXES, THE PUBLICANS EMPLOYED SUBORDINATES (5:27; 15:1; 18:10), WHO, FOR THEIR OWN ENDS, WERE OFTEN GUILTY OF EXTORTION AND PECULATION. IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THESE TAXES WERE PAID TO THE ROMANS, AND HENCE WERE REGARDED BY THE JEWS AS A VERY HEAVY BURDEN, AND HENCE ALSO THE COLLECTORS OF TAXES, WHO WERE FREQUENTLY JEWS, WERE HATED, AND WERE USUALLY SPOKEN OF IN VERY OPPROBRIOUS TERMS. JESUS WAS ACCUSED OF BEING A “FRIEND OF PUBLICANS AND SINNERS.”

EASTON BIBLE DICTIONARY

Other versions read, *“a tax collector,”* ^{NKJV} *“tax-gatherer,”* ^{NASB} and *“tax-farmer.”* ^{BBE}

Jesus mentioned the *“publicans”* as a group with certain traits. *“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even **the publicans** the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what*

*do ye more than others? do not even **the publicans** so?”* (Matt 5:46-47).

On another occasion, when teaching concerning one *“brother”* trespassing against another, He said the offended party should *“go and tell him his fault ‘between thee and him alone.’”* If he did not repent, the offended party was to take *“one or two more”* to establish the matter in the mouth of two or three witnesses. If the offending party still did not give heed, Jesus said *“tell it unto the church.”* If he still refused to give heed, the Lord said, *“let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a **publican**”* (Matt 18:17).

During the ministry of John the Baptist, it is written that *“the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John”* (Luke 7:29).

When Jesus was preaching, it is written, *“Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him”* (Luke 15:1).

Zacchaeus, who extended himself to see Jesus, and was rewarded by Jesus coming to his house, is described as *“the chief among the publicans, and he was rich”* (Luke 19:2).

Publicans, then, were ordinarily not at all commendable. Yet, many of them were more aware of their sinful condition than many of the elite among Jewish leadership. Matthew was one of these distinguished publicans.

Although men are fond of doing this, we dare not judge people by those with whom they are formally identified. Each person must be evaluated according to their personal response to the Lord Jesus Christ.

HE LEFT ALL ROSE UP, AND FOLLOWED HIM

“ . . . And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.”

As Peter, Andrew, James and John before him, Matthew immediately responded to the call of Jesus, leaving all, and following Him. Matthew writes concerning Matthew’s response, *“And*

he arose, and followed Him" (Matt 9:9). Mark reports the same (Mk 2:14).

This also describes what many have called an "effectual call." That is, the call was accompanied by Divine power, often referred to "drawing" (John 6:44; 12:32). It also indicates

that Divine drawing-power and the will of God were mingled with the call. **Human decision was involved, but it was not the principle part.** In things pertaining to God, He is always the preeminent Worker. As the one who is being saved, man cannot be the primary person. For some, this is very difficult

to receive.

It is good to remember that when the decisions of men are required and involved, they do not stand by themselves. That is, "the will of man" is not the determining factor (John 1:13; 2 Pet 1:2). Unless that will is the result of Divine power (Psa 110:3), it is futile.

LEVI MADE JESUS A FEAST

"²⁹ And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them."

LEVI MADE HIM A FEAST

"And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house . . ."

Other versions read, "And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house," ^{NASB} "Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house," ^{NIV} "made a great entertainment for Him in his house," ^{DARBY} "held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor," ^{NLT} and "gave a big dinner for Jesus." ^{CEV}

MATTHEW'S ACCOUNT

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples." (Mat 9:9-10)

MARK'S ACCOUNT

*"And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him. And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples: **for there were many, and they followed Him**" (Mark 2:14-15).*

Putting It All Together

- ⇒ Jesus saw Matthew sitting at the seat of customs.
- ⇒ Jesus said to Matthew, "Follow Me."
- ⇒ Matthew immediately arose, left his seat, and followed Jesus.
- ⇒ Matthew made a great feast in honor of Jesus.
- ⇒ Jesus and His disciples were there.
- ⇒ A great company of publicans and others were also there.

A GREAT COMPANY SAT DOWN WITH THEM

" . . . and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them."

Other versions read, "a great number of tax collectors," ^{NKJV} "a great crowd of tax-gatherers, and other people who were reclining at the table with them," ^{NASB} "a great multitude of publicans and others," ^{ASV} "a great number of tax farmers and others," ^{BBE} "Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests," ^{NLT} "Everybody was there, tax men and other disreputable characters as guests at the dinner." ^{MESSAGE}

Matthew was obviously unashamed of his new association with Jesus of Nazareth. The feast, Luke appries us, was made for Jesus (verse 29), and the others were invited to it. Jesus was the honored Guest, while the others were visiting friends and associates.

Apparently, the thought of possibly offending his friends by having Jesus and His disciples in his house did not occur to Matthew. His feast was apparently one of thanksgiving and appreciation for being called by Christ.

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES MURMUR AGAINST THE DISCIPLES

"³⁰ But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?"

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

"But their scribes and Pharisees. . ."

Other versions read, "the Pharisees and their scribes," ^{NASB} "the Pharisees and the teachers of the law," ^{NIV} "The Pharisees and their legal experts," ^{CEB} "The P'rushim and their Torah-teachers," ^{CJB} "their scribes and the Pharisees," ^{DARBY} "they that were Scribes and Pharisees," ^{GENEVA} "the Pharisees and teachers of the

Law," ^{LIVING} "The Pharisees and those men who taught the law," ^{IE} "the Pharisees and Scribes of their party," ^{WEYMOUTH} "The Pharisees and some of their teachers of the Law of Moses," ^{CEV} "Some Pharisees and some teachers of the Law," ^{GNB} "The Pharisees and their religion scholars." ^{MESSAGE}

PHARISEE

1. He would set apart all the sacred tithes on the produce of the land, and refrain from eating anything which had not been tithed, or about the tithing of which there was any doubt; and
2. He would scrupulously observe the most essential laws of purity which so materially affected the eating of food and all family affairs.

McKNIGHT & STRONG'S

"There was much that was sound in their creed, yet their system of religion was a form and nothing more. Theirs was a very lax morality (Matthew 5:20; 15:4, 8; 23:3, 14, 23, 25; John 8:7). On the first notice of them in the New Testament (Matthew 3:7), they are ranked by our Lord with the Sadducees as a "generation of vipers." They were noted for their self-righteousness and their pride (Matthew 9:11; Luke 7:39; 18:11,12). They were frequently rebuked by our Lord (Matthew 12:39; 16:1-4)."

EASTON'S BIBLE DICTIONARY

The "scribes" and the "Pharisees" are mentioned together fourteen times (Matt 5:20; 15:1; 23:13-15,23,25, 27,29; Mk 2:16; Lk 5:30; 6:7; 11:44; John 8:3). **They are never mentioned in a favorable light.** In the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, Jesus pronounced seven woes against them (Matt 23:13,14,15,23,25,27,29). With few exceptions (John 12:42), they were aligned against Christ Jesus.

"THEIR SCRIBES"

It is of interest that the scribes are referred to as "**their** scribes." They were the teachers of the people (Matt 7:29; 17:10; Mk 9:11; 12:35). This custom was established of old time (Neh 8:1,9,13; Jer 36:10). In Jeremiah's day there was a "*principle scribe who, mustered the people of the land*" (Jer 52:25).

On one occasion Jesus warned His disciples, "*And He said unto them in his doctrine, **Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation***" (Mark 12:38-40).

The Mentioning of Scribes Under the Law

While there is no mention of the

SPECIAL NOTES CONCERNING SCRIBES

Pharisees in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, there are fifty-three references to scribes from Second Samuel thru Jeremiah. Here are some.

- ⇒ *Seraiah* (2 Sam 8:17).
- ⇒ *Sheva* (2 Sam 20:25)
- ⇒ "*The king's scribe*" (2 Kgs 12:10; 2 Chron 24:11; Esth 3:12; 8:9).
- ⇒ *Shebna* (2 Kgs 18:18,37; 19:2; Isa 36:3,22; 37:2)
- ⇒ *Shaphan* (2 Kgs 22:3,8,9,10,12; 2 Chron 34:15,18,20; Jer 36:10)
- ⇒ "*The principle scribe*" (2 Kgs 25:19)
- ⇒ *Shavsa* (1 Chron 18:16).
- ⇒ *Shemaiah* (1 Chron 24:6).
- ⇒ *Jonathan, David's uncle* (1 Chron 27:32).
- ⇒ *Jeiel* (2 Chron 26:11).
- ⇒ *Shimshai* (Ezra 4:8,9,17,23).
- ⇒ *Ezra* (Ezra 7:6,11,12; 8:1,4,9,13; 12:26,36).
 - A ready scribe in the law of Moses (Ezra 7:6).
 - A scribe of the law of the God of heaven (Ezra 7:12,21).
- ⇒ *Zadok* (Neh 13:13).
- ⇒ *Elishama* (Jer 36:12,20).
- ⇒ *Baruch* (Jer 36:26,32).
 - Jeremiah's scribe (Jer 36:32).
- ⇒ *Jonathan* (Jer 37:15,20).
- ⇒ *The principle scribe of the host* (Jer 52:25).

The Peculiar Role of Scribes

Of old time, the "scribes" were established to:

- ⇒ **Document the workings of God and activities of the people of God.** Some examples of this kind of writing include First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Jeremiah.
- ⇒ **Read and teach the Law** to the people (Neh 8:1-8).
- ⇒ **Record revelations** given to the prophets (Jer 36:4,26).
- ⇒ **Record and retain critical evidence**

THE SCRIBES

"These scribes (Hebrew, *sopherim*), under this appellation, first appear after the Exile. Their occupation was to copy and to expound the Law. They were the recognized teachers of the Jews, and seem to have succeeded that great and influential class or order, the "sons of the prophets," originally founded by Samuel. These "sons of the prophets" are repeatedly mentioned in the books of the Old Testament which treat of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The scribes were succeeded, in the year 300 B.C., by the *tanaim* (repeaters), under which name the scribes were officially, though apparently not popularly, known until A.D. 220, after which date these scribes were termed *amoraim*."

PULPIT COMMENTARY

(Jer 32:12).

Scribes taught the people, expounding the Law to them (2 Kgs 22:8,10; 2 Chron 34:18; Neh 8:9; Jer 36:10).

SOME CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING ORDAINED SPIRITUAL CULTURE

- ⇒ **KNOWLEDGE.** Among God's people a noticeable effort to retain a record of the words and workings of God was developed and maintained.
- ⇒ **PIVOTAL THINKING.** The idea of relevancy centered in what the Lord had said and done, which was not confined to a particular age or segment of history.
- ⇒ **UNDERSTANDING.** There was a certain accent on understanding what the Lord had said and done.
- ⇒ **THE DISADVANTAGE OF IGNORANCE.** Ignorance concerning what God had said and done was not allowed.
- ⇒ **AWARENESS.** What God had said and done was never regarded as mere history.
- ⇒ **KNOWLEDGEABLE LEADERS.** A leader of the people was to be kept apprised of what the Lord had said and done among His people. A failure to have such knowledge was consistently represented as a disadvantage (2

Kgs 22:8-13).

⇒ **CULTURE OF THE MIND.** In keeping with the Law, the mind was to be cultured with a love and preference for the Living God (Deut 6:5).

they only mirror the wants of the people, who have gathered such men to themselves to pacify them in their state of alienation from God. Such men were wrong when Jesus walked among men. They are even more wrong now that He

action also confirms they had no genuine respect for Jesus of Nazareth.

WHY DO YE EAT AND DRINK WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS?

" . . . , saying, *Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*"

Matthew records: "*And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth **your Master** with publicans and sinners?*" (Matt 9:11). Mark records: "*How is it that **He** eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?*" (Mark 2:16).

In Israel, a time came when the office of a scribe was corrupted. By the time when Jesus walked among men, the scribes were exploiting the function for personal advantage.

AN OBSERVATION

In Israel, a time came when the office of a scribe was corrupted. By the time when Jesus walked among men, the scribes were exploiting the function for personal advantage. They had turned the spotlight on themselves, and loved the accolades of men, and to be publically recognized (Mk 12:3-40). Their teaching was more academic, lacking the power that comes from a proper focus (Matt 7:29; Mk 1:22).

They retained positions of leadership, but ceased to be true leaders.

It is not mere coincidence that precisely the same thing has taken place within the professed church. It is now filled with preachers and teachers without understanding, who are delighting in human recognition and special privileges. Such men are not noted for causing the people to have an acute awareness of what the Lord has said and done. Instead, we have a battery of men who are self-professed experts in human behavior. In some segments of Christendom, like the scribes of old, they have special clothing that identifies them (Lk 20:46). With all of their professed credentials,

is exalted, seated at the right hand of God, and is Head over all things (Eph 1:22).

MURMURED AGAINST HIS DISCIPLES

" . . . murmured against His disciples . . . "

Other versions read, "*complained against,*" ^{NKJV} "*grumbling at,*" ^{NASB} "*complained to,*" ^{NIV} "*made protests against,*" ^{BBE} "*protested indignantly against his talmidim,*" ^{CJB} "*complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples,*" ^{NLT} "*to expostulate with His disciples,*" ^{WEYMOUTH} "*came to his disciples greatly offended.*" ^{MESSAGE}

The word translated "*murmured*" [gogguzo] has the following lexical meaning: "TO MURMUR, MUTTER, GRUMBLE, SAY ANYTHING IN A LOW TONE; HENCE, OF THOSE WHO CONFER TOGETHER SECRETLY; OF THOSE WHO DISCONTENTEDLY COMPLAIN, ^{THAYER} "AS EXPRESSING DISSATISFACTION GRUMBLE, COMPLAIN, MURMUR; AS EXPRESSING SKEPTICISM OR SPECULATION ABOUT SOMEONE." ^{FRIBERG}

The action depicted is a low-tone conversation of a critical nature. They were complaining because the disciples were doing something that contradicted their self-developed tradition. Their

The Tradition

The traditions they held were as follows: "A COMPANION, OR FRIEND, WHO BECOMES THE KING'S COLLECTOR, OR A "PUBLICAN", OR THE LIKE, THEY DRIVE HIM FROM SOCIETY WITH THEM: IF HE ABSTAINS FROM HIS EVIL WORKS, THEN HE IS AS ANY OTHER MAN . . . WHEN THE KING'S COLLECTORS ENTER INTO A HOUSE TO DWELL, ALL THAT ARE IN THE HOUSE ARE DEFILED . . . MOREOVER, IT IS SAID, THAT "THE FORMER SAINTS ATE THEIR COMMON FOOD WITH PURITY, I.E. WITH THEIR HANDS WASHED, AND TOOK CARE OF ALL DEFILEMENTS EVERY DAY; AND THESE WERE CALLED PHARISEES; AND THIS SECT WAS EXCEEDINGLY HOLY, AND WAS THE WAY OF PIETY; FOR SUCH A MAN WAS SEPARATED, AND HE ABSTAINED FROM THE REST OF THE PEOPLE, AND HE DID NOT TOUCH THEM, NOR DID HE EAT AND DRINK WITH THEM . . . IT WAS A GENERAL RULE WITH THEM, THAT A CLEAN PERSON OUGHT NOT TO EAT WITH AN UNCLEAN, AS THEY JUDGED THE COMMON PEOPLE TO BE; NAY, THAT A PHARISEE, WHO WAS UNCLEAN HIMSELF, MIGHT NOT EAT WITH ANOTHER PERSON THAT WAS SO, AND WHICH THEY BOAST OF, AS A GREAT DEGREE OF HOLINESS." ^{JOHN GILL}

Note, the basis of their accusation was their own traditions, which they held in high regard, not the Law of God. **To this very day this kind of tradition holds men captive.**

THOSE WHO NEED A PHYSICIAN

" ³¹ *And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.*"

JESUS ANSWERING

"*And Jesus answering said unto them . . .*"

Other versions read, "*Jesus replied to them,*" ^{CSB} "*Jesus said to them in reply.*" ^{NJB}

Matthew and Mark record, "when Jesus heard that, He said unto them," (Matt 9:12).

They had asked the disciples, but Jesus is the one who delivered an answer to them. It is good to answer objections based upon tradition with a Word of God – from the Scriptures.

THEY ARE WHOLE MEED NOT A PHYSICIAN

"... They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick."

Other versions read, "When Jesus heard it, He said to them, *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick,"* ^{NKJV} *"And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick"* ^{NASB}, *"On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."* ^{NIV}

Some have taken this to mean reaching sinners takes the precedence over edifying the body of Christ. Therefore the saying has been popularized, "We need to get things out of these four walls." **Actually, however, especially in our time, the truth really has to get inside the four walls.**

Jesus was speaking to them according to their own folly. As Solomon said, *"Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit"* (Prov 26:5). Those critics thought they were superior to the others, but they were not. In fact, on another occasion Jesus said to the scribes, *"Verily I say unto you, That the*

publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him" (Matt 21:32). The reason for this circumstance – the publicans and harlots knew they needed forgiveness and a Savior, but the scribes and the Pharisees saw no such need in themselves.

AN EFFECT OF BABYLON THE GREAT

One of the effects of Babylon the Great is that of leading those within it to think they are acceptable to God, even though unacceptable traits are found in them. Their purported evangelistic fervor has actually led them to neglect their own soul, and to have a lower regard for the saints of God than

churches (Rev 1:4,11). This priority will continue as long as we are in the world, and is largely owing to the frailty and inimical influence of our bodies, and the focused attention of the devil and his hordes upon the household of faith.

When it came to needing a Savior, the remission of sins, and justification, the scribes and the Pharisees were no different than the publicans and harlots. There are those who have, by the grace of God been made *"whole."* However, these are not the people to whom, Jesus refers. He is addressing those who, by their own will and works, imagine they have made themselves whole. This kind of person is depicted by Jesus in a certain parable: *"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I*

When it came to needing a Savior, the remission of sins, and justification, the scribes and the Pharisees were no different than the publicans and harlots.

is consistently required by Jesus and the apostles (John 13:35; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 14:26; Eph 4:11-16; 1 Pet 5:2). Such people conveniently forget that Jesus spent **all** of His quality time with His disciples, and **all** of the inspired letters were written to those in Christ. The book of the Revelation was written to the

am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:10-12). That Pharisee was comparing himself with other men, when he ought to have been comparing himself with God. If he had done so, then Jesus would have had a ministry to him.

CALLING, NOT THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

"³² I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

I CAME NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS TO REPENTANCE

"I came not to call the righteous... to repentance."

Other versions read, *"I have come, not to get the upright,"* ^{BBE} *"I didn't come to call righteous people,"* ^{CEB} *"not to call people who think they have God's approval,"* ^{GWN} *"I have come to call not those who think they are righteous,"* ^{NLT} *"not to spend My time with those who think themselves*

already good enough," ^{LIVING} *"I have not come to ask 'righteous' people to change their hearts,"* ^{IE} *"It is not upright . . . that I have come to invite to repentance,"* ^{WILLIAMS} *"I have not come to invite the pious,"* ^{GOODSPEED} *"I'm here inviting outsiders, not insiders – an invitation to a changed life,"* ^{MESSAGE} *and*

"I have not come to arouse and invite and call the righteous." AMPLIFIED

The Word did not become flesh to confirm that men were righteous, but to reassert that *"There is none righteous, no, not one"* (Rom 3:10). It is quite true that there were some who were comparatively righteous—i.e. *"Righteous"* in comparison with the ungodly (Deut 25:1; 1 Kgs 8:32; Psalms 1:5; Isaiah 57:1; Mal 3:18).

The Kind of Righteousness Possessed

Generally speaking, prior to Jesus, those who were considered *"righteous"* were those whose lives were **outwardly** holy, and who did what they were commanded to do.

- ⇒ Abel – Matt 23:35/Heb 11:4
- ⇒ Noah – Gen 6:9; 7:1).
- ⇒ Job – Job 1:1,8
- ⇒ Zacharias and Elizabeth – Lk 1:6

Thus, the Scriptures often refer to *"the righteous man"* (Psalms 37:16; Proverbs 10:11; Ezekiel 3:10), *"the godly"* (Psalms 4:3; 12:1), and he *"upright"* (2 Sam 22:26).

Viewed correctly, such tender souls did not have to be *"called to repentance."* They lived close enough to the Lord to be aware of their need simply by exposure to the presence of the Lord.

Illustrated in Daniel

When Daniel was exposed to as heavenly messenger, without a summons to repent, he testified, *"Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength"* (Dan 10:8).

Illustrated in Peter

Prior to the events recorded in this text, Peter became aware that Jesus of Nazareth was more than a mere man. Witnessing the miracle of a large catch of fish *"he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord"* (Luke 5:8).

Approaches to the Experience of Repentance

There are different ways of looking at repentance. These represent various perspectives of repentance.

⇒ **SINNERS CALLED TO REPENTANCE.** *"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* (Luke 5:32; Matt 9:13; Mk 2:17).

⇒ **THE GOODNESS OF GOD LEADING TO REPENTANCE.** *"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"* (Rom 2:4).

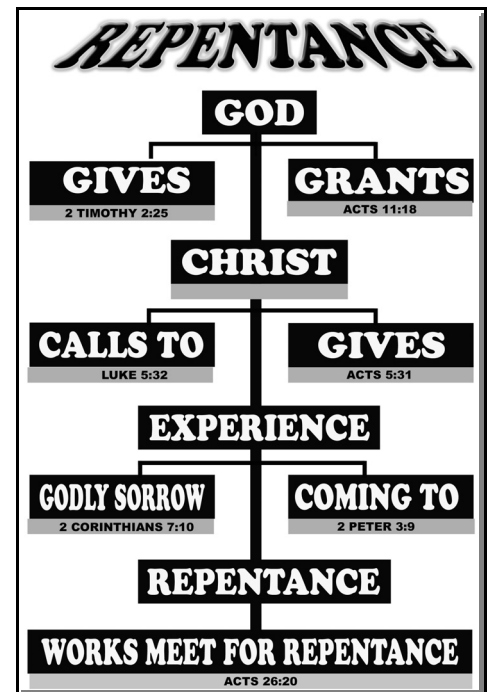
⇒ **GOD GIVING REPENTANCE.** *"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth"* (2 Tim 2:25).

⇒ **THE EXALTED CHRIST GIVING REPENTANCE.** *"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins"* (Acts 5:31).

⇒ **GOD GRANTING REPENTANCE.** *"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."* (Acts 11:18).

⇒ **SORROWING UNTO REPENTANCE, OR GODLY SORROW WORKING REPENTANCE.** *"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death"* (2 Cor 7:9-10).

⇒ **COMING TO REPENTANCE.** *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet 3:9).



Calling sinners to repentance is a Divine perspective of repentance. It shows us that, in the sense of our text, true repentance does not take place independently of Jesus Christ. Even after He ascended into heaven and was seated at the right hand of God, He continues to call men to repentance through the Gospel. When men are subjected to the *"record God has given of His Son"* (1 John 5:10-11), they will sense the call for sinners to repent. It is true that some will ignore this call, quenching the Spirit, but they must exert themselves to do so. This is not limited alien sinners, or those who are not *"in Christ"* (2 Cor 5:17). There is time when a believer who has in some way *"sinned,"* is exposed to the preaching of Christ, which will make them aware of their sin and urge them to repent.

I CAME TO CALL SINNERS TO REPENTANCE

"I came not to call . . . sinners to repentance."

Other versions read, *"so that they may be turned from their sins,"* BBE *"to change their hearts and lives,"* CEB *"to turn to God from their sins,"* CJB *"to change the way they think and act"* GWN

"to turn from their sins," ^{LIVING} *"to change their hearts,"* ^{IE} *"to turn to God,"* ^{CEV} *"an invitation to a changed life, changed inside and out,"* ^{MESSAGE} *"to reformation,"* ^{YLT} *and "to change their minds for the better and heartily to amend their ways, with abhorrence of their past sins]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

In a nutshell, so to speak, Jesus is calling men into a place where He can bless, teach, and guide them. **A call to**

repentance is a call away from the self-centered life. It is a call out of the devil's domain, and into the place Divine fellowship and blessing. It is a call to sorrow and regret that our lives were not being lived for the Lord. **To be sure, it is a summons to live and think, properly, but that is in order that the individual can truly profit from the ministry of Jesus.** A person cannot walk, with Jesus while living in darkness and thinking like the world.

The blessing of God cannot be experienced while a person is immersed in the domain that is ruled by Satan. **The Lord Jesus will not direct a person whose attention is not fixed upon Him.** If a person can comprehend the call to repentance, it will answer a lot of questions that will otherwise remain unanswered. **The call of Jesus to repentance must not be rejected!** Until it is answered, there will be no blessing.

A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

³³ ***And they said unto Him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but Thine eat and drink?"***

THEY SAID UNTO HIM
"And they said unto Him . . ."

Other versions read, *"Some people said to Jesus,"* ^{CEB} *"Next they said to him,"* ^{CJB} *"Then they said to Him,"* ^{CSB} *"They then said to him,"* ^{NJB} *"One day some people said to Jesus,"* ^{NLT} *"Their next complaint was,"* ^{LIVING} *"Then people said to him,"* ^{PHILLIPS} *and "But they said to Him."* ^{LITV}

The different versions present different depictions of this occasion. Some set forth the picture of **some other people** asking this question. ^{CEB,NLT,PHILLIPS} Others present this question being asked on another day. ^{NLT} Still others set forth what I see as

the correct view, that **the same people** who had just asked Jesus a question proceeded to ask Him another one. ^{CJB,NJB,LIVING,WEYMOUTH, WILLIAMS, LITV}

The questioners completely ignore what Jesus had already said, proceeding just as though He had not replied to their initial inquiry to the disciples: *"Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?"* (Luke 5:30). **They were not asking questions to learn, but to find a reason to reproach Jesus and justify their rejection of what He was teaching.** That is one of Satan's tactics in diverting men's attention away from Jesus – to hurl a plethora of questions designed to justify their insubordination to the Lord. This is a wicked thing to do, and yet it is common among, what might be called, "churched people."

WHY DO THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN AND THE PHARISEES

"...Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees..."

Other versions read, *"often fast and offer prayers,"* ^{NASB} *"often fast and pray,"* ^{NIV} *"frequently fast and pray,"* ^{NRSV} *"fast often, and make supplications,"* ^{ASV} *"frequently go without food, and make prayers,"* ^{BBE} *"constantly going without food, and praying,"* ^{LIVING} *"rigidly practice fasting and offering up prayers,"* ^{WILLIAMS} *"are well-known for keeping fasts and saying prayers,"* ^{MESSAGE} *and "practice fasting often and offer up prayers of [special] petition."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

They are **not** asking for Jesus to explain why the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees fast frequently and make prayers. **They are rather asking why Jesus disciples were, at that time, conducting themselves differently.** Their assumption is that the conduct of Christ's disciples was wrong because it did not comport with the conduct of others, whose conduct on this matter they approved. Assuming they will be able to cast down any arguments Jesus presents, they ask this trick question to malign Jesus, as though His disciples were not as serious and devoted as those of John the Baptist and the Pharisees.

Even though these hypocritical questioners grouped John's disciples with those of the Pharisees, that is not how John viewed the matter – and he

They are rather asking why Jesus disciples were, at that time, conducting themselves differently. Their assumption is that the conduct of Christ's disciples was wrong because it did not comport with the conduct of others, whose conduct on this matter they approved.

was full of the Holy Spirit. On one occasion John said to the Pharisees and the Sadducees who came to him to be baptized, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt 3:7).

Their inquiry was not an honest one, but an effort to justify their own bigoted views.

BUT THINE EAT AND DRINK?

"... but Thine eat and drink?"

Other versions read, "but Yours go on eating and drinking," ^{NIV} "but your disciples are **always** eating and

drinking," ^{CEB} "Why are your disciples **always** eating and drinking?" ^{NLT} "Why are yours wining and dining?" ^{LIVING} "but your followers **are always** eating and drinking!" ^{IE} "But your disciples keep right on eating and drinking," ^{ISV} "But you seem to **spend most of your time at parties**. Why?" ^{MESSAGE}

In other words, it appeared to these Pharisees that the disciples of Jesus were having a continual party without ever taking time to fast and pray as they did. Their's was a religion of harsh discipline. Jesus said of their fasting, "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad

countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matt 6:16).

In his record of this event (Matt 9:11-13), Matthew adds the following: "**Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?**" (Matt 9:14). The answer now recorded was probably addressed more to John's disciples than to the Pharisees. It is an answer that merits considerable thought and meditation. It carries a message that is not at all common in our time.

NOT WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM IS PRESENT!

"³⁴ And He said unto them, **Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them?**"

THE CHILDREN OF THE BRIDECHAMBER

"And He said unto them, **Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast . . .**"

Other versions read, "the friends of the bridegroom," ^{NKJV} "the attendants of the bridegroom," ^{NASB} "guests of the bridegroom," ^{NIV} "wedding guests," ^{NRSV} "sons of the bride-chamber," ^{ASV} "friends of the newly-married man," ^{BBE} "children of the bridegroom," ^{DOUAY} "guests of the nuptial chamber," ^{MRD} "the bridal party," ^{WEYMOUTH} "the groomsmen," ^{EMTV} and "when you're celebrating a wedding." ^{MESSAGE}

We are largely dependent upon Jewish history for the details of a Jewish marriage. Some details are provided in Scripture, but they are few, and tend to be very general.

The parents were to consent to the marriage of their daughter (Ex 22:17). Often there were nuptial feasts (Judges 14:12). The bridegroom was exempt from military duty for one year, and was not to be charged with any

business (Deut 24:5).

"CHILDREN OF THE BRIDECHAMBER"

"Jewish wedding culture tells us that, once the betrothal with the bride has been made, the groom goes to prepare a habitation, a "bridechamber", for them to reside in. Traditionally, the friends of the bridegroom assist in that preparation until, "like a thief in the night" the groom comes for his bride to take her away to the place prepared for them. When the friends of the bridegroom hear the voice of the bridegroom, they know the wedding feast has begun (see Betrothal Customs)."

– <http://hethathasanear.com/Betrothal.html>

Harold Smith, Jerusalem, Israel

This the extent of the information I will share concerning Jewish marriages. The amount of information that can be obtained from Jewish tradition does not justify the investment of a lot of time. I will simply allow the text to speak for itself, believing that, being spoken by the Lord Himself, it reflects the truth our Lord is affirming. These are those who in some way related to, or were close to, the bridegroom. This also depicts a time of joy while final preparations are being made for he marriage.

WHILE THE BRIDEGROOM IS WITH

THEM

"... while the Bridegroom is with them?"

The question Jesus asks is this: "And He said to them, **Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?**" ^{NKJV}

Is not the time of preparation one of joyful participation? But, alas, those who are driven by Law, or their own customs, will find it is not conducive to joyfulness. Law and human tradition, such as practiced by the Pharisees, are often a form of regimentation that would not otherwise take place. Fasting, for example, is generally driven by a need for something more than is being experienced.

When men are sitting with Jesus, enjoying His Presence, and rejoicing in the truth being opened to them, that is no time for fasting, or other forms of lifeless regimentation. When Jesus is at the table, that is the time to concentrate on listening, not fulfilling some routine that is void of life. It is the time for feasting, not fasting. **When true joy is experienced, one easily does more than is required.**

This by no means suggests that fasting is always out of order. Married couples are said to refrain from marital

activities to give themselves to a season of fasting (1 Cor 7:5). There are also wicked spirits that can only be expelled through fasting and prayer (Mk 9:29). Even in these cases, however, enjoying the fellowship of Christ, and

walking in the Spirit may very well accomplish the same thing – at least at certain times and places.

Jesus is simply saying, “This is not the time to be fasting – not now,

when I am present among My disciples, eating with them and speaking the truth to them. This is a time for rejoicing, thanksgiving, and the kind of alertness that accompanies such things.” O, the blessedness of such occasions.

THE DAYS WILL COME

³⁵ *But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.*”

THE DAYS WILL COME
“But the days will come . . .”

Other versions read, “the time will come,” ^{NASB} “someday,” ^{NLT} , and then shall they fast in those days” But a time for this will come,” ^{WEYMOUTH} “there is coming a day.” ^{MONTGOMERY}

This is a prophecy – something that was on the Divine calendar – the fulfillment of something God had purposed. This was not simply seeing something taking place in the future – foreseeing, or prescience. **Foreseeing things in the future is the work of prognosticators** (Isa 47:13), **fortune tellers, stargazers** (Isa 47:13), and **diviners** (Deut 18:14) – **not of God**. Strictly speaking, God “foreknows” as compared with “foresees.” The Scriptures are said to “foresee” (Gal 3:8) – i.e., they are written with what was determined to happen in mind.

This is not a reference to Christ’s ascension, when He returned back to heaven. Rather, it is a veiled reference to His death, and is the very first time He has alluded to that death. The prophecy of this taking away was delivered by Isaiah: “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken” (Isa 53:8). The following versions read “taken away” – ASV, NASB, NIV, RSV, NRSV, CEB, CJB, CSB, DOUAY, ESV, ERV, BRENTON, ISV, JPS, AMPLIFIED

The contemporary English Version reads, “He was condemned to death.” ^{CEV} That is the sense in which Jesus was “taken away.” We know this is the case, because after He had ascended to heaven in the sight of His disciples, they did not fast. It is written, “And it came to pass, while He blessed them, **He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen**” (Luke 24:51-53).

Other versions read, “they will go without food.” ^{BBE}

The word translated “fast” [nesteuo] has the following lexical meaning: “TO ABSTAIN AS A RELIGIOUS EXERCISE FROM FOOD AND DRINK: EITHER ENTIRELY, IF THE FAST LASTED BUT A SINGLE DAY; OR FROM CUSTOMARY AND CHOICE NOURISHMENT, IF IT CONTINUED SEVERAL DAYS.” ^{THAYER}

As it is used in Scripture, fasting was quite often associated with sackcloth and ashes, tokens of deep sorrow (Neh 9:1; Psa 35:13; Dan 9:3), and with weeping, and even mourning (Psa 69:10; Joel 2:12). This was doubtless the kind of fasting to which Jesus referred.

After Jesus died, thinking that this was the end of their association with Jesus, the disciples were in a state of despair. Suddenly, within less than a week, the entire landscape of their lives was changed, as they were seemingly left alone. Mary went to the tomb and wept when she found it empty (John 20:11). She later found the disciples mourning and weeping (Mark 16:10). The disciples were behind closed doors where they “were assembled for fear of the Jews” (John 20:19). The two on the road to Emmaus were also in a state of despair. Not knowing they were talking to the risen Christ they said, “But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; And when they found not His body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that He was alive. And

This is not a reference to Christ’s ascension, when He returned back to heaven. Rather, it is a veiled reference to His death, and is the very first time He has alluded to that death.

THE BRIDEGROOM WILL BE TAKEN FROM THEM
“ . . . when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them . . .”

THEY SHALL THEY FAST
“ . . . and then shall they fast in those days.”

certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not" (Luke 24:21-24).

The Bridegroom had been taken from them! They failed to recall His words as He was with them on the night of the Passover: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:20).*

Now, however, at the time of our text, Jesus was with the disciples, and they were enjoying a feast with Him at the house of Matthew, whom the Lord had called to Himself.

Only those who have enjoyed the sweetness of Divine fellowship know how it feels to not be able to sense His refreshing presence. There are times when the Lord hides Himself (Isa 45:15). Elsewhere Isaiah the prophet said of Him, *"And I will wait upon the*

LORD, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him" (Isa 8:17). The Psalmist observed the affliction of Israel and cried out to God, *"Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression? For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake" (Psa 44:24-26).* Who has not experienced what is like to wrestle during the night, seemingly all alone.

HE SPAKE A PARABLE TO THEM

"³⁶ And He spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old."

HE SPAKE A PARABLE UNTO THEM

"And He spake also a parable unto them . . ."

The parable has two parts, and is a single parable. Both parts teach the incompatibility of the Old and New Covenants. The New Covenant is not an enhancement of the Old Covenant, and the Old Covenant will not blend with the New Covenant. Practices ordained under the Old cannot be transported over to the New.

A NEW PIECE ON AN OLD GARMENT

Here the depiction is that of enhancing, or updating, the Old. All of the basic will be kept, but some new things will be added to it to make it more effective. That of course, presumes that the old and New are really compatible – that they really do fit together. **However, this is emphatically not the case.**

For example, if you try and add grace to Law, Law is spoiled, and grace loses its efficacy. A new piece of cloth would not have been washed and conditioned to make a garment. If it was sewed on an old garment, to cover up a hole or a tear, when the garment is washed, the new pieces would shrink, tearing the garment and making a larger

hole or separation.

If we take the New Mediator, and employ Him under the system of Law. It will compound man's problem, not help it. In such a case, transgressions would be worse, because they were committed in greater light. Grace and Law cannot work together to make men acceptable to God. They will, under such an endeavor, become **more** alienated from God, **more** separated from Him, **more** disobedient, and **more** worldly. If people can see it, this is precisely what happened in much of the modern church. They have attempted to mingle grace with a system of Law, and it simply has not worked. Men should listen to what Jesus is saying in this sterling text.

THE OLD AND THE NEW CANNOT BE MIXED

"³⁷ And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved."

NEW WINE INTO OLD BOTTLES

"And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish . . ."

Commencing with John the Baptist, a new era began to dawn. Jesus said, *"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16).* Prior to John, no one had ever **"preached"** the Kingdom of God. John came preaching, *"And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2).* Jesus, for whom John prepared the way, also *"began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the*

kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 4:17). Mark and Luke say both John and Jesus came preaching, *"the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15).* This concerned the same Kingdom. One word emphasized its Headquarters: *"the Kingdom of heaven."* The other emphasized its Owner: *"the Kingdom of God."*

Now, Jesus is teaching that things from the *"old"* order could not be transferred to the new order. The

"new" had a different sacrifice (Eph 5:2), a different altar (Heb 13:10), a different High Priest (Heb 6:20; 7:26; 1:10:21), different sanctifying blood (Heb 12:24, and a different Mediator (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15). It had *"better promises"* (Heb 8:6) that made perfect, whereas the *"Law made nothing perfect"* (Heb 7:19). God was not pleased with the sacrifices under the old order (Heb 2:6). However, when God saw the travail of Christ's soul on the cross, He was *"satisfied"* (Isa 53:11).

Generally speaking, fasting fit better into the Old Covenant than it does into the New. That is why neither Jesus nor the Apostles commanded those in Christ to fast, although the option was open to them.

The writings of the apostles contains no doctrine on fasting.

The New Covenant Scriptures do contain examples of people who fasted.

- ⇒ Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:9).
- ⇒ Cornelius (Acts 10:30).
- ⇒ The brethren in Antioch of Syria (Acts 13:1-2).
- ⇒ When Paul and Silas ordained elders (Acts 14:23).
- ⇒ Paul said part of his sufferings included *"fastings often"* (2 Cor

11:27). These were imposed fastings, where circumstances and sufferings did not allow him to eat. It was not *"fasting"* in the ordinary sense of the word.

⇒ Paul spoke of married people

Covenant arose, it rendered the Old Covenant, as a covenant, obsolete – like the glory of the sun removes the glory of the moon and the stars.

This is why such things as the distinction of clean and unclean meats

Generally speaking, fasting fit better into the Old Covenant than it does into the New. That is why neither Jesus nor the Apostles commanded those in Christ to fast, although the option was open to them.

refraining from marital involvements in order to give themselves to *"fasting and prayer."* They were to *"come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontineny"* (1 Cor 7:5; 6:5).

NEW WINE MUST BE PUT INTO NEW BOTTLES

" . . . But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved."

In apostolic doctrine, the coming of the new presumes the removal of the old. When, for example, you *"put on the new man,"* you must also *"put off the old man"* (Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:9-10). When the glory of the New

became obsolete when the New Covenant commenced. The more precise teaching of the New Covenant is that *"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean"* (Rom 14:14). The thing being taught under the Law did not pertain to healthy habits. Rather, it was teaching people that God has a right to tell them what they should do, and what they should not do – especially to make distinctions. For Peter, it was to show him that when God cleansed people, it was all right to have associations with them – no matter who they were – especially in sacred and ordained matters. (Acts 10:15.28-29). It was a major lesson for Peter.

THE ASSESSMENT THAT THE OLD WINE IS BETTER

"³⁹ No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better." Other versions read, *"And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better,'"* ^{NKJV} *"And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough,'"* ^{NASB} *"And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, 'The old is good,'"* ^{NRSV} *"The old is more profitable,"* ^{GENEVA} *"No one who*

has been drinking old wine wants new wine. He says, 'The old wine is better!'" ^{GWN} *"The old is the delicious,"* ^{MRD} *"the old is pleasanter,"* ^{TNT} *"The old ways are best, they say."* ^{LIVING}

MEN BY NATURE PREFER LAW

By nature, men prefer Law over grace. It seems more sure to them, and definitely does not require the heart and soul of a man. When viewed through the eyes of the flesh, the Law suggests

that men are more capable than they really are. Climbing out of the pit is preferred to being lifted out of it – but only because the deceived do not see the jeopardy of being in the pit.

The person choosing to live under Law cannot imagine being in total agreement with the Law. They cannot conceive of the righteousness of the Law being fulfilled in them willingly and with satisfaction. As it is written, *"For*

*what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit***" (Rom 8:3-4).

Jesus is telling these people that unless they are born again, they will not be able to see the superiority of the New Covenant. They will think of grace as lacking in power, and only like a thin blanket that is thrown over the rebel.

But this is not the way it is at all. A New Covenant is being implemented

in an environment of newness of life: a "new heart" (Ezek 36:26), a "new spirit" (Ezek 11:19), a "renewed mind" (Rom 12:2), a "new man" (Eph 4:24), a "new lump" (1 Cor 5:7), a "new creature" (2 Cor 5:17), a "new and living way" (Heb 10:20), and a "new Jerusalem" (Rev 21:2). Men walk in "the newness of life" (Rom 6:4), and "serve in newness of Spirit" (Rom 7:6).

But those who are enamored of the Law become a slave to it – for it is not made for freemen, but "for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim 1:9-10).

Grace only sounds good to those who are convicted of sin – convinced of their guilt by the Holy Spirit – which guilt relates to them not believing on Christ (John 16:9). **Such people will respond to a humanly devised recovery program before they will submit to a Savior.** Such programs make more sense to them. They prefer the bit and the bridle to being guided by the Lord's eye (Psa 32:8-9).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 7/10/15. We will continue our series of lessons in the Gospel of Luke. The twentieth lesson will cover verses 1 thru 12 of chapter 6: "A WALK IN THE FIELD AND THE MAN WITH THE WITHERED HAND." On the second Sabbath after the first, Jesus and His disciples went through the corn fields. As they walked, the disciples plucked some of the grain, rubbed it in their hands, and ate it. Certain Pharisees asked Jesus why His disciples broke the Sabbath day, which prompted Him to say the Son of Man was Lord of the Sabbath. On another Sabbath day, He entered into a synagogue, and there confronted a man with a withered hand. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.