

# JESUS THE CHRIST

*A Study of the Messiah and His Mission according to  
Holy Scriptures both Ancient and Modern*

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Commentary (Indented Italics), Underlining and Bolding by  
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## **PREFACE**

The scope of the subject presented in this work is expressed on the title page. It will be readily seen that the author has departed from the course usually followed by writers on the Life of Jesus Christ, which course, as a rule, begins with the birth of Mary's Babe and ends with the ascension of the slain and risen Lord from Olivet. The treatment embodied in these pages, in addition to the narrative of the Lord's life in the flesh comprises the Antemortal existence and activities of the world's Redeemer, the revelations and personal manifestations of the glorified and exalted Son of God during the apostolic period of old and in modern times, the assured nearness of the Lord's second advent, and predicted events beyond—all so far as the Holy Scriptures make plain.

It is particularly congruous and appropriate that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the only Church that affirms authority based on specific revelation and commission to use the Lord's Holy Name as a distinctive designation—should set forth her doctrines concerning the Messiah and His mission.

The author of this volume entered upon his welcome service under request and appointment from the presiding authorities of the Church; and the completed work has been read to and is approved by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. It presents, however, the writer's personal belief and profoundest conviction as to the truth of what he has written. The book is published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A characteristic feature of the work is the guidance afforded by modern scriptures and the explication of the Holy Writ of olden times in the light of present day revelation, which, as a powerful and well directed beam, illumines many dark passages of ancient construction.

The spirit of the sacredness inherent in the subject has been a constant companion of the writer throughout his pleasing labor, and he reverently invokes the same as a minister to the readers of the volume.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.  
Salt Lake City, Utah,  
September, 1915.

## **PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION**

The second edition of this work appeared in December, 1915, and the third in March, 1916. The third edition presented several minor alterations in wording and contained additional notes and references. Succeeding issues, including the fifth which was printed on India paper, and the present edition are practically uniform with the third.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.  
Salt Lake City, Utah,  
October, 1922.

## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 30 - JESUS RETURNS TO THE TEMPLE DAILY

A leafy but fruitless fig tree cursed – Second clearing of the temple – Children shout Hosanna – Christ's authority challenged by the rulers – Parable of the two sons Of the Wicked Husbandmen – The rejected Stone to be head of the corner – Parable of the Royal Marriage Feast – The wedding garment lacking

### CHAPTER 31 - THE CLOSE OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

Pharisees and Herodians in conspiracy – Cæsar to have his due – The image on the coin – Sadducees and the resurrection – Levirate marriages – The great commandment – Jesus turns questioner – Scathing denunciation of scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! – Lamentation over Jerusalem – The widow's mites – Christ's final withdrawal from temple – Destruction of temple predicted

### CHAPTER 32 - FURTHER INSTRUCTION TO THE APOSTLES

Prophecies relating to destruction of Jerusalem and the Lord's future advent – Watch! – Parable of Ten Virgins – Of the Entrusted Talents – The inevitable judgment – Another and specific prediction of the Lord's impending death

# 30

## JESUS RETURNS TO THE TEMPLE DAILY

### AN INSTRUCTIVE INCIDENT ON THE WAY [1080]

On the morrow, which, as we reckon, was Monday, the second day of Passion Week, Jesus and the Twelve returned to Jerusalem and spent the greater part of the day at the temple. The start from Bethany was an early one, and Jesus hungered by the way. Looking ahead He saw a fig tree that differed from the rest of the many fig trees of the region in that it was in full leaf though the season of fruit had not yet come.[1081] It is well known that the fruit-buds of a fig-tree appear earlier than do the leaves, and that by the time the tree is in full foliage the figs are well advanced toward maturity. Moreover, certain species of figs are edible while yet green; indeed the unripe fruit is relished in the Orient at the present time. It would be reasonable, therefore, for one to expect to find edible figs even in early April on a tree that was already covered with leaves. When Jesus and His party reached this particular tree, which had rightly been regarded as rich in promise of fruit, they found on it nothing but leaves; it was a showy, fruitless, barren tree. It was destitute even of old figs, those of the preceding season, some of which are often found in spring on fruitful trees. Jesus pronounced upon that tree the sentence of perpetual barrenness. "**No man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever**" He said according to Mark's account; or, as Matthew records the judgment, "**Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.**" The latter writer tells us in immediate sequence that "**presently the fig tree withered away**"; but the former makes it appear that the effect of the curse was not observed until the following morning, when, as Jesus and the apostles were once again on the way between Bethany and Jerusalem, they saw that the fig tree had withered and dried from the roots up. Peter called attention to *the blasted tree*, and, addressing Jesus, exclaimed: "**Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.**"

*There is a later comment about this fig tree: My first thoughts were, because the fig tree at first appeared to be real, or producing fruit, and then proved to be fake, the Lord took away its value and destroyed it. The moral to the story would be to "be real" and don't fake your position, wealth, education, personality, spirituality, etc., in life, or the consequences could destroy one's personal spirit and chances to enter the Kingdom.*

*...It's a bit humorous that Talmage referred to this fig tree as "the blasted tree".*

Applying the lesson of the occasion, Jesus said, "**Have faith in God**"; and then He repeated some of His former assurances as to the power of faith, by which even mountains may be removed, should there be need of such miraculous accomplishment, and through which, indeed, any necessary thing may be done. The blighting of a tree was shown to be small in comparison with the greater possibilities of achievement through faith and prayer. But to so achieve one must work and pray without reservation or doubt, as the Lord thus made plain: "**Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.**" Prayer must be acceptable unto God to be effective; and it follows that he who desires to accomplish any work through prayer and faith must be fit to present himself before the Lord in supplication; therefore Jesus again instructed the apostles saying: "**And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.**"[1082]

The blighting of the barren fig tree is regarded by many as unique among the recorded miracles of Christ, from the fact that while all the others were wrought for relief, blessing, and beneficent purposes generally, this one appears as an act of judgment and destructive execution, Nevertheless in this miracle the Lord's purpose is not hidden; and the result, while fatal to a tree, is of lasting blessing to all who would learn and profit, by the works of God. If no more has been accomplished by the miracle than the presenting of so impressive an object lesson for the instructions that followed, that smitten tree has proved of greater service to humanity than have all the fig orchards of Bethphage.[1083] To the apostles the act was another and an indisputable proof of the Lord's power over nature, His control of natural forces and all material things, His jurisdiction over life and death. He had healed multitudes; the wind and the waves had obeyed His words; on three occasions He had restored the dead to life; it was fitting that He should demonstrate His power to smite and to destroy. In manifesting His command over death, He had mercifully raised a maiden from the couch on which she had died, a young man from the bier on which he was being carried to the grave, another from the sepulchre in which he had been laid away a corpse; but in proof of His power to destroy by a word He chose a barren and worthless tree for His subject. Could any of the Twelve doubt, when, a few days later they saw Him in the hands of vindictive priests and heartless pagans, that did He so will He could smite His enemies by a word, even unto death? Yet not until after His glorious resurrection did even the apostles realize how truly voluntary His sacrifice had been.

But the fate that befell the barren fig tree is instructive from another point of view. The incident is as much parable as miracle. That leafy tree was distinguished among fig trees; the others offered no invitation, gave no promise; "**the time of figs was not yet**"; they, in due season would bring forth fruit and leaves; but this precocious and leafy pretender waved its umbrageous limbs as in boastful assertion of superiority. For those who responded to its ostentatious invitation, for the hungry Christ who came

seeking fruit, it had naught but leaves. Even for the purposes of the lesson involved, we cannot conceive of the tree being blighted primarily because it was fruitless, for at that season the other fig trees were bare of fruit also; it was made the object of the curse and the subject of the Lord's instructive discourse, because, having leaves, it was deceptively barren. Were it reasonable to regard the tree as possessed of moral agency, we would have to pronounce it a hypocrite; its utter barrenness coupled with its abundance of foliage made of it a type of human hypocrisy.

*...As before mentioned; a fake and a hypocrite.*

The leafy, fruitless tree was a symbol of Judaism, which loudly proclaimed itself as the only true religion of the age, and condescendingly invited all the world to come and partake of its rich ripe fruit; when in truth it was but an unnatural growth of leaves, with no fruit of the season, nor even an edible bulb held over from earlier years, for such as it had of former fruitage was dried to worthlessness and made repulsive in its worm-eaten decay. The religion of Israel had degenerated into an artificial religionism, which in pretentious show and empty profession outclassed the abominations of heathendom. As already pointed out in these pages, the fig tree was a favorite type in rabbinical representation of the Jewish race, and the Lord had before adopted the symbolism in the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree, that worthless growth which did but cumber the ground.[1084]

## SECOND CLEARING OF THE TEMPLE [1085]

Within the temple grounds Jesus was filled with indignation at the scene of tumult and desecration which the place presented. Three years before, at Passover time, He had been wrought up to a high state of righteous anger by a similar exhibition of sordid chaffering within the sacred precincts, and had driven out the sheep and oxen and forcibly expelled the traders and the money-changers and all who were using His Father's house as a house of merchandise.[1086] That was near the beginning of His public labor, and the vigorous action was among the first of His works to attract general attention; now, within four days of the cross, He cleared the courts again by casting out all "them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves"; nor would He suffer any to carry their buckets and baskets through the enclosure, as many were in the habit of doing, and so making the way a common thoroughfare. "Is it not written," He demanded of them in wrath, "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves." On the former occasion, before He had declared or even confessed His Messiahship, He had designated the temple as "**My Father's house**"; now that He had openly avowed Himself to be the Christ, He called it "My house." The expressions are in a sense synonymous; He and the Father were and are one in possession and dominion. The means by which the later expulsion was accomplished are not stated; but it is plain that none could withstand His authoritative

command; He acted in the strength of righteousness, before which the forces of evil had to give way.

His wrath of indignation was followed by the calmness of gentle ministry; there in the cleared courts of His house, blind and lame folk came limping and groping about Him, and He healed them. The anger of the chief priests and scribes was raging against Him; but it was impotent. They had decreed His death, and had made repeated efforts to take Him, and there He sat within the very area over which they claimed supreme jurisdiction, and they were afraid to touch Him because of the common people, whom they professed to despise yet heartily feared – **"for all the people were very attentive to hear him."**

The rage of the officials was further aggravated by a touching incident, which seems to have accompanied or to have immediately followed His merciful healing of the afflicted folk at the temple. Children saw what He did; with their innocent minds yet unsullied by the prejudice of tradition and their sight yet undarkened by sin, they perceived in Him the Christ, and burst forth into praise and worship in a hymn that was heard by the angels: "Hosanna to the son of David." With ill-concealed anger the temple officials demanded of Him: "Hearest thou what these say?" They probably expected Him to disclaim the title, or possibly hoped that He would reassert His claim in a manner that would afford excuse for legal action against Him, for to most of them the Son of David was the Messiah, the promised King. Would He clear Himself of the blasphemy that attached to the unjustified acknowledgment of so awful a dignity? Jesus answered, with an implied rebuke for their ignorance of the scriptures: "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"[1087]

It was now Monday evening; Jesus left the city and retired again to Bethany, where He lodged. This course was a prudent one, in view of the determination of the rulers to get Him into their power provided they could do so without arousing the people. This they could not accomplish by day, for wherever He appeared He was the center of a multitude; but had He remained in Jerusalem over night the vigilant emissaries of the hierarchy might have succeeded in taking Him, unless He withstood them by some miraculous action. Near as was His hour, it had not yet struck; and He would be made captive only as He permitted Himself, a voluntary victim, to be taken into the hands of His enemies.

## **CHRIST'S AUTHORITY CHALLENGED BY THE RULERS [1088]**

On the following day, that is on Tuesday, He returned to the temple with the Twelve, passing the withered fig tree on the way and impressing the moral of the combined miracle and parable as we have already seen. As He taught in the sacred place, preaching the gospel to all who would hear, the chief priests with a number of scribes and elders came upon Him in a body. They had been debating about Him over night,

and had resolved on at least one step; they would challenge His authority for what He had done the day before. They were the guardians of the temple, both the material structure and the theocratic system for which the holy edifice stood; and this Galilean, who permitted Himself to be called the Christ and defended those who so acclaimed Him, had for the second time ignored their authority within the temple walls and in the presence of the common people over whom they lorded so arrogantly. So this official deputation, with plans matured, came to Him saying: "**By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?**" This action was doubtless a preliminary step in a preconcerted attempt to suppress the activities of Jesus, both of word and deed, within the temple precincts. It will be remembered that after the first cleansing of the temple, the Jews had angrily demanded of Jesus a sign by which they might judge the question of His divine commission;[1089] and it is significant that on this latter occasion no sign was asked, but instead thereof, a specific avowal as to the authority He possessed and by whom it had been given Him. A three years' course of miracle and teaching was known to them; on the yesterday blind and lame had been healed inside the temple walls; and Lazarus, the living testimony of the Lord's power over death and the grave was before them. To ask a further sign would have been to flagrantly expose themselves to the ridicule of the people.

They knew what authority the Lord claimed; their question was of sinister purpose. Jesus did not condescend to voice an answer in which they could possibly find further excuse for antagonizing Him; but He availed Himself of a method very common among themselves – that of countering one question with another. "**And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?**" They consulted among themselves as to what answer would best serve to extricate them from an embarrassing position; no mention is made of any attempt to ascertain the truth and reply accordingly; they were thoroughly nonplussed. Should they answer that John's baptism was of God, Jesus would probably demand of them why then they had not believed in the Baptist, and why they did not accept John's testimony concerning Himself. On the other hand, should they aver that John had no divine authority to preach and baptize, the people would turn against them, for the martyred Baptist was revered by the masses as a prophet. In spite of their boasted learning, they answered as puzzled school-boys might do when they perceive hidden difficulties in what at first seemed but a simple problem. "**We cannot tell**" said they. Then Jesus replied "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

*The Saviour outwitted these Priest and Scribes at every turn – it's almost humorous.*

Chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people were outwitted and humiliated. The tables were completely turned upon them; Jesus, whom they had come to question, became the examiner; they a class of cowed and unwilling listeners. He the ready instructor, and the multitude interested observers. With little likelihood of immediate

interruption the Master proceeded in calm deliberation to relate to them a series of three splendid stories, each of which they felt applied to themselves with incisive certainty. The first of the narrations we call the Parable of the Two Sons.

**"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, 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."**[1090]

The opening sentence, "**But what think ye?**" was a call to close attention. It implied a question soon to follow; and that proved to be: Which of the two sons was the obedient one? There was but one consistent answer, and they had to give it, however loath. The application of the parable followed with convicting promptness. They, the chief priests, scribes, Pharisees and elders of the people, were typified by the second son, who, when told to labor in the vineyard answered so assuringly, but went not, though the vines were running to wild growth for want of pruning, and such poor fruit as might mature would be left to fall and rot upon the ground. The publicans and sinners upon whom they vented their contempt, whose touch was defilement, were like unto the first son, who in rude though frank refusal ignored the father's call, but afterward relented and set to work, repentantly hoping to make amends for the time he had lost and for the unfilial spirit he had shown.[1091] Publicans and sinners, touched in their hearts by the clarion call to repentance, had flocked to the Baptist in the wilderness with the earnest inquiry: "**Master, what shall we do?**"[1092] John's call had been to no particular class; but while self-confessed sinners had repented and sought baptism at his hands, those very Pharisees and elders of the people had rejected his testimony and had hypocritically sought to ensnare him.[1093] Through the parable Jesus answered His own question as to whether the baptism of John was of God or of man. The Lord's affirmation, "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," was condemnatory of the corrupt though sanctimonious polity of the hierarchy throughout. It was not wholly without intimation of possible reformation, however. He did not say that the repentant sinners should enter, and the priestly hypocrites stand forever excluded; for the latter there was hope if they would but repent, though they would have to follow, not lead, in the glorious procession of the redeemed. In a continuation of the same discourse the Lord presented the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, as follows:

**"Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it**

out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." [1094]

Again the Jews were compelled to make answer to the great question with which the parable dealt, and again by their answer they pronounced judgment upon themselves. The vineyard, broadly speaking, was the human family, but more specifically the covenant people, Israel; the soil was good and capable of yielding in rich abundance; the vines were choice and had been set out with care; and the whole vineyard was amply protected with a hedge, and suitably furnished with winepress and tower. [1095] The husbandmen could be none other than the priests and teachers of Israel, including the ecclesiastical leaders who were then and there present in an official capacity. The Lord of the vineyard had sent among the people prophets authorized to speak in His name; and these the wicked tenants had rejected, maltreated, and, in many instances, cruelly slain. [1096] In the more detailed reports of the parable we read that when the first servant came, the cruel husbandmen "beat him and sent him away empty"; the next they wounded "in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled"; another they murdered and all who came later were brutally mistreated, and some of them were killed. Those wicked men had used the vineyard of their Lord for personal gain, and had rendered no part of the vintage to the lawful Owner. When the Lord sent other messengers, "more than the first," or in other words, greater than the earlier ones, the most recent example being John the Baptist, the husbandmen rejected them with evil determination more pronounced than ever. At last the Son had come in person; His authority they feared as that of the lawful heir, and with malignity almost beyond belief, they determined to kill Him that they might perpetuate their unworthy possession of the vineyard and thenceforward hold it as their own.

Jesus carried the story without break from the criminal past to the yet more tragic and awful future, then but three days distant; and calmly related in prophetic imagery, as though already fulfilled, how those evil men cast the well beloved Son out of the vineyard and slew Him. Unable to evade the searching question as to what the Lord of the vineyard would naturally and righteously do to the wicked husbandmen, the Jewish rulers gave the only pertinent answer possible – that He would surely destroy those wretched sinners, and let out His vineyard to tenants who were more honest and worthy.

Suddenly changing the figure, "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."[1097] There could be no misapprehension as to the Lord's meaning; the rejected Stone which was eventually to have chief place, "**the head of the corner,**" in the edifice of salvation, was Himself, the Messiah. To some that Stone would be a cause of stumbling; wo unto them, for thereby would they be broken, and only through repentance and works of righteousness could they even in part recover; but upon others, those who would persist in their opposition, the Stone would fall in judgment; and wo, wo to them, for beneath it they would be destroyed as though ground to powder.[1098] From them, the leaders, and from the people who followed their unholy precepts and foul example, the kingdom of God was about to be taken, and would in time be given to the Gentiles, who, the Lord affirmed, would prove more worthy than Israel had been. We gather from Luke's account that in contemplation of this awful penalty, "they," whether priestly rulers or common people we are not told, exclaimed in despair, "God forbid!"

As the chief priests and Pharisees realized the completeness of their discomfiture and the extent of the humiliation to which they had been subjected in the eyes of the people, they were incensed beyond measure, and even attempted to lay hold on Jesus there in the temple; but the sympathies of the multitude were so unmistakably in His favor that the angry ecclesiasts desisted. The people in general, while not prepared to openly proclaim Him as the Christ, knew that He was a prophet of God, and their dread of official displeasure and possible penalty did not deter them from friendly demonstrations.

Jesus resumed His teaching by relating the Parable of the Royal Marriage Feast.

**"And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the**

**highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests."**[1099]

The invitation of a king to his subjects is equivalent to a command. The marriage feast was no surprise event, for the selected guests had been bidden long aforetime; and, in accordance with oriental custom were notified again on the opening day of the festivities,[1100] which, according to Hebrew customs, would be understood as extending over a period of seven or fourteen days; in this case of a marriage in the royal family the greater duration would be assumed. Many of the bidden guests refused to come when formally summoned; and of the tolerant king's later and more pressing message they made light and went their ways, while the most wicked turned upon the servants who brought the royal summons, mistreated them cruelly, and some of them they killed. It is plainly evident that the refusal to attend the king's feast was a deliberate rebellion against the royal authority and a personal indignity against both the reigning sovereign and his son. It was as much a duty as an honor for loyal subjects to attend the marriage festival of the prince, whom we cannot err in regarding as the lawful heir to the throne, and therefore the one who might someday reign over them. The turning away by one man to his farm and by another to his merchandize is in part an evidence of their engrossment in material pursuits to the utter disregard of their sovereign's will; but it signifies further an effort to deaden their troubled consciences by some absorbing occupation; and possibly also a premeditated demonstration of the fact that they placed their personal affairs above the call of their king. The monarch executed a terrible retribution upon his rebellious subjects. If the parable was intended to be an allegorical presentation of actual events, it passes at this point from the story of the past to that of the future, for the destruction of Jerusalem postdates by several decades the death of Christ. Finding the guests who had some claim on the royal invitation to be utterly unworthy, the king sent out his servants again, and these gathered in from the highways and cross-roads, from the byways and the lanes, all they could find, irrespective of rank or station, whether rich or poor, good or bad; "and the wedding was furnished with guests."

The great feast by which the Messianic reign was to be ushered in was a favorite theme of jubilant exposition in both synagog and school; and exultation ran high in the rabbinical dictum that none but the children of Abraham would be among the blessed partakers. The king in the parable is God; the son whose marriage was the occasion of the feast is Jesus, the Son of God; the guests who were bidden early, yet who refused to come when the feast was ready, are the covenant people who rejected their Lord, the Christ; the later guests, who were brought in from the streets and the roads, are the Gentile nations, to whom the gospel has been carried since its rejection by the Jews; the marriage feast is symbolical of the glorious consummation of the Messiah's mission.[1101]

All students of the subject must have noted the points of resemblance by which this parable is related to that of the great supper;[1102] fewer perhaps have considered the differences between the two. The earlier story was told in the house of one of the chief Pharisees, probably in some town in Perea; the later one was related within the temple, after Pharisaic opposition to Christ had reached its height. The first is of simpler plot and of gentler climax. The neglect of the invited guests in the first story was accompanied by excuses in which some approach to polite apology appears; the refusal of those bidden in the second parable was markedly offensive, and was coupled with outrageous abuse and murder. The host in one instance was a wealthy though private citizen, in the other the giver of the feast was a king. In the first, the occasion was one of ordinary though abundant entertainment; in the second, the determining time was that of the appointed marriage of the royal heir. Retribution in the first instance was limited to exclusion from the banquet; in the latter the individual punishment was death, which was followed by the punitive example of the city's destruction.

Our account of the royal marriage feast is not yet complete; the story already considered is supplemented by the following:

**"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."**

The lessons embodied in this section of the parable may be advantageously considered apart from those of the first division. As was befitting his dignity, the king came into the banquet hall after the guests had taken their places in orderly array. His immediate detection of one who was without the prescribed garment implies a personal scrutiny of the guests. One may be led to inquire, how, under the circumstances of hurried summoning, the several guests could have suitably attired themselves for the feast. The unity of the narrative requires that some provision had been made whereby each one who properly applied was given the garment prescribed by the king's command, and in keeping with the established custom at court. That the unrobed guest was guilty of neglect, intentional disrespect, or some more grievous offense, is plain from the context. The king at first was graciously considerate, inquiring only as to how the man had entered without a wedding garment. Had the guest been able to explain his exceptional appearance, or had he any reasonable excuse to offer, he surely would have spoken; but we are told that he remained speechless. The king's summons had been freely extended to all whom his servants had found; but each of them had to enter the royal palace by the door; and before reaching the banquet room, in which the king would appear in person, each would be properly attired; but the deficient one, by some means had entered by another way; and not having passed the attendant sentinels at the portal, he

was an intruder, of a kind with the man to whom the Lord had before referred as a thief and a robber because, not entering by the door, he had climbed up some other way.[1103] The king gave a command, and his ministers[1104] bound the offender and cast him forth from the palace into outer darkness, where the anguish of remorse caused weeping and gnashing of teeth.

As summary and epilogue of the three great parables constituting this series, the Lord spake these words of solemn import: "**For many are called, but few are chosen.**"[1105] Each of the parables has its own wealth of wisdom; and the three are as one in declaring the great truth that even the children of the covenant will be rejected except they make good their title by godly works; while to the heathen and the sinners the portals of heaven shall open, if by repentance and compliance with the laws and ordinances of the gospel they shall merit salvation.

The story of the royal marriage feast was the last of our Lord's parables delivered publicly to a mixed audience. Two others were spoken to the apostles, as they sat in solemn converse with the Lord on the Mount of Olives after the public ministry of Christ had been brought to a close.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 30

**1. Fig Tree** – "The fig tree is very common in Palestine (Deut. 8:8). Its fruit is a well known and highly esteemed article of food. In the East this is of three kinds; (1) the early fig, ripening about the end of June; (2) the summer fig, ripening in August; (3) the winter fig, larger and darker than No. 2, hanging and ripening late on the tree, even after the leaves were shed, and sometimes gathered in the spring. The blossoms of the fig tree are within the receptacle or so-called fruit, and not visible outwardly; and this fruit begins to develop before the leaves. Hence the fig tree which had leaves before the usual time might naturally have been expected to have also some figs on it (Mark 11:13); but it was not true to its pretensions." (Smith's *Comp. Bible Dict.*)

**2. The Two Sons in the Parable** – Although this excellent parable was addressed to the chief priests, scribes, and elders, who had come in hostile spirit to demand of Christ the credentials of His authority, its lesson is of universal application. The two sons are yet alive in every human community – the one openly boastful of his sin, the other a hypocritical pretender. Jesus did not commend the rough refusal of the first son of whom the father made a righteous demand for service; it was his subsequent repentance attended by works that made him superior to his brother who had made fair promise but had kept it not. There are many today who boast that they make no profession of religion, nor pretense of godly life. Their frankness will not mitigate their sins; it simply shows that a certain species of hypocrisy is not prominent among their numerous offenses; but that a man is innocent of one vice, say that of drunkenness, in

no wise diminishes his measure of guilt if he be a liar, a thief, an adulterer, or a murderer. Both the sons in the parable were grievous sinners; but the one turned from his evil ways, which theretofore he had followed with flagrant openness, while the other continued in dark deeds of sin, which he sought to cover by a cloak of hypocrisy. Let no man think that because he becomes intoxicated at the public bar he is any the less a drunkard than is he who swallows the "beverage of hell" in comparative privacy, though the latter be both drunkard and hypocrite. For these sins, as for all others, genuine repentance is the only saving antidote.

**3. Israel Symbolized by Vineyard and Vines**— The aptness of our Lord's representation of Israel as a vineyard could not have escaped the perception of the Jews, to whom Old Testament similes of analogous form were familiar figures. Notable among others is the striking picture presented by Isaiah (5:1-7), in which the well provided vineyard is shown as producing wild grapes only, for which grievous disappointment of his expectations the owner determined to break down the wall, remove the hedge, and leave the vineyard to its fate of abandonment. The explication of the parable voiced by Isaiah is thus given: "**For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.**" The worthlessness of a vine save only for its fruit was set forth by the Lord through His prophet Ezekiel (15:2-5); and truly it is so, that the wood of the grape plant is fit for nothing but burning; the whole vine as wood is inferior to a branch from a forest tree (verse 3). And Israel is represented as such a vine, precious if but fruitful, otherwise nothing but fuel and that of poor quality. The psalmist sang of the vine that Jehovah had brought out of Egypt and which, planted with care and hedged about, had flourished even with goodly boughs; but the favor of the Lord had been turned from the vine, and it had been left desolate (Psalm 80:8-16). For further allusions see Isa. 27:2-6; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1.

**4. The Call to the Marriage Feast**— The calling of the guests who had been bidden aforetime is thus commented upon by Trench (*Parables*, pp. 175-6): "This summoning of those already bidden, was, and, as modern travelers attest, is still, quite in accordance with Eastern manners. Thus Esther invites Haman to a banquet on the morrow (Esth. 5:8), and when the time has actually arrived, the chamberlain comes to usher him to the banquet (6:14). There is, therefore, no slightest reason why we should make '*them that were bidden*' to mean them that were now *to be bidden*; such an interpretation not merely violating all laws of grammar, but the higher purpose with which the parable was spoken; for our Lord, assuming that the guests had been invited long ago, does thus remind His hearers that what He brought, if in one sense new, was in another a fulfillment of the old; that He claimed to be heard, not as one suddenly starting up, unconnected with aught which had gone before but as Himself 'the end of the law,' to which it had been ever tending, the birth with which the whole Jewish dispensation had been pregnant, and which alone should give a meaning to it all. In His words, '*them that*

*were bidden,*' is involved the fact that there was nothing abrupt in the coming of His kingdom, that its rudiments had a long while before been laid, that all to which His adversaries clung as precious in their past history was prophetic of blessings now actually present to them in Him. The original invitation, which had now come to maturity, reached back to the foundation of the Jewish commonwealth, was taken up and repeated by each succeeding prophet, as he prophesied of the crowning grace that should one day be brought to Israel (Luke 10:24; 1 Pet. 1:12), and summoned the people to hold themselves in a spiritual readiness to welcome their Lord and their King."

**5. Servants and Ministers** – According to good philological authority, "ministers" or "ministering attendants" is a more literal rendering of the original than "servants" in Matt. 22:13. In the earlier verses 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, of the same chapter, "servants" or "servitors" best expresses the meaning of the original. The distinction is significant, as it implies an important difference of station between the servants who were sent out to bid the people to the feast, and the ministers in immediate attendance upon the king. The first are typical of God's servants who proclaim His word in the world; the latter symbolize the angels who shall execute His judgments on the wicked by gathering out from His kingdom all things that offend. Compare Matt. 13:30, 39, 41; Doc. and Cov. 86:5.

**6. The Called and the Chosen** – Edersheim's reflections upon this subject follow in part (vol. ii, pp. 429, 430): "The King entered to see His guests, and among them he descried one who had not on a wedding garment... As the guests had been travelers, and as the feast was in the King's palace, we cannot be mistaken in supposing that such garments were supplied in the palace to all who sought them. And with this agrees the circumstance, that the man so addressed 'was speechless.' His conduct argued utter insensibility as regarded that to which he had been called – ignorance of what was due the King, and what became such a feast. For, although no previous state of preparedness was required of the invited guests, all being bidden, whether good or bad, yet the fact remained that, if they were to take part in the feast they must put on a garment suited to the occasion. All are invited to the gospel feast; but they who will partake of it must put on the King's wedding garment of evangelical holiness. And whereas it is said in the parable that only one was descried without this garment, this is intended to teach, that the King will not only generally view His guests, but that each will be separately examined, and that no one – no, not a single individual – will be able to escape discovery amidst the mass of guests, if he has not the wedding garment. In short, in that day of trial, it is not a scrutiny of churches, but of individuals in the Church.... The call comes to all; but it may be outwardly accepted, and a man may sit down to the feast, and yet he may not be chosen to partake of the feast, because he has not the wedding garment of converting, sanctifying grace. And so, one may be thrust even from the marriage board into the darkness without, with its sorrow and anguish. Thus, side by side, yet wide apart, are these two – God's call and God's choice. The connecting link between them is the wedding garment, freely given in the Palace. Yet,

we must seek it, ask it, put it on. And as here also, we have, side by side, God's gift and man's activity. And still, to all time, and to all men, alike in its warning, teaching, and blessing, is it true: 'Many are called, but few chosen!' Many words of related meaning, both Hebrew and Greek, are translated 'garment' in our English Bible. The Greek original in the mention of the wedding garment is *enduma*; this does not occur in other Bible passages as the original of 'garment.' The noun is related to the Greek verb *enduein*, 'to put on, as a garment.' Compare Luke 24:49, 'until ye be endued with power from on high.'"

## FOOTNOTES

[1080] Matt. 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-26.

[1081] Note 1, end of chapter.

[1082] See chapter 17 herein.

[1083] "Bethphage," the name of a village close to Bethany, and therefore near to the Mount of Olives, means "house of figs." See mention, Matt. 21:1; Mark 11:1; Luke 19:29. "Bethany" signifies "house of dates." For "house" in the literal translation we may read "place."

[1084] Luke 13:6-9; See chapter 26 herein.

[1085] Matt. 21:12, 13; Mark 11:15-17; Luke 19:45, 46.

[1086] John 2:14-17; See chapter 12 herein.

[1087] Matt. 21:16; compare Psalm 8:2; see also Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:27.

[1088] Matt. 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8.

[1089] John 2:18-21; See chapter 12 herein.

[1090] Matt. 21:28-32.

[1091] Note 2, end of chapter.

[1092] Luke 3:12; compare 7:29; see chapter 10 herein.

[1093] Matt. 3:7.

[1094] Matt. 21:33-41; compare Mark 12:1-9; Luke 20:9-16.

[1095] Note 3, end of chapter.

[1096] Compare Luke 11:47, 48; Matt. 23:29-33.

[1097] Matt. 21:42-44; see also Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17, 18; compare Psalm 118:22; Isa. 28:16; Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6, 7.

[1098] Compare Dan. 2:44, 45; Isa. 60:12.

[1099] Matt. 22:1-10.

[1100] Note 4, end of chapter.

[1101] Compare Matt. 25:10; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:32; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9.

[1102] Luke 14:16-24; See chapter 27 herein.

[1103] See chapter 25 herein.

[1104] Note 5, end of chapter.

[1105] Matt. 22:14; compare 20:16; see chapter 27 herein. Note 6, end of chapter.

# 31

## THE CLOSE OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY

### A CONSPIRACY OF PHARISEES

### AND HERODIANS [1106]

The Jewish authorities continued unceasingly active in their determined efforts to tempt or beguile Jesus into some act or utterance on which they could base a charge of offense, under either their own or Roman law. The Pharisees counseled together as to "how they might entangle him in his talk"; and then, laying aside their partisan prejudices, they conspired to this end with the Herodians, a political faction whose chief characteristic was the purpose of maintaining in power the family of the Herods,[1107] which policy of necessity entailed the upholding of the Roman power, upon which the Herods depended for their delegated authority. The same incongruous association had been entered into before in an attempt to provoke Jesus to overt speech or action in Galilee; and the Lord had coupled the parties together in His warning to the disciples to beware of the leaven of both.[1108] So, on the last day of our Lord's teaching in public, Pharisees and Herodians joined forces against Him; the one watchful for the smallest technical infringement of the Mosaic law, the other alert to seize upon the slightest excuse for charging Him with disloyalty to the secular powers. Their plans were conceived in treachery, and put into operation as the living embodiment of a lie. Choosing some of their number who had not before appeared in personal antagonism to Jesus, and who were supposed to be unknown to Him, the chief conspirators sent these with instructions to "feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor."

This delegation of hypocritical spies came asking a question, in pretended sincerity, as though they were troubled in conscience and desired counsel of the eminent Teacher. "Master," said they with fawning duplicity, "**we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.**" This studied tribute to our Lord's courage and independence of thought and action was truthful in every word; but as uttered by those fulsome dissemblers and in their nefarious intent, it was egregiously false. The honeyed address, however, by which the conspirators attempted to cajole the Lord into unwariness, indicated that the question they were about to submit was one requiring for its proper answer just such qualities of mind as they pretendingly attributed to Him.

"**Tell us therefore,**" they continued, "**What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?**" The question had been chosen with diabolic craft; for of all acts attesting compulsory allegiance to Rome that of having to pay the poll-tax was most offensive to the Jews. Had Jesus answered "Yes," the guileful Pharisees might have inflamed the multitude against Him as a disloyal son of Abraham; had His answer been "No," the scheming Herodians could have denounced Him as a promoter of sedition against the Roman government. Moreover the question was unnecessary; the nation, both rulers and people had settled it, however grudgingly, for they accepted and circulated among themselves the Roman coinage as a common medium of exchange; and it was a criterion of recognition among the Jews that to make current the coins of any sovereign was to acknowledge his royal authority. "**But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?**" All their artful expressions of false adulation were countered by the withering epithet "**hypocrites.**" "**Shew me the tribute money,**" He commanded, and they produced a penny – a Roman denarius bearing the effigy and name of Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome. "**Whose is this image and superscription?**" He asked. They answered "Cæsar's." "**Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.**"[1109]

The reply was a masterly one by whatever standard we gage it; it has become an aphorism in literature and life. It swept away any lingering thought or expectation that in the mind of Him who had so recently ridden into Jerusalem as King of Israel and Prince of Peace, there was even the semblance of aspiration for earthly power or dominion. It established for all time the one righteous basis of relationship between spiritual and secular duties, between church and state. The apostles in later years builded upon this foundation and enjoined obedience to the laws of established governments.[1110]

One may draw a lesson if he will, from the association of our Lord's words with the occurrence of Cæsar's image on the coin. It was that effigy with its accompanying superscription that gave special point to His memorable instruction, "**Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.**" This was followed by the further injunction: "**and unto God the things that are God's.**" Every human soul is stamped with the image and superscription of God, however blurred and indistinct the lines may have become through the corrosion or attrition of sin;[1111] and as unto Cæsar should be rendered the coins upon which his effigy appeared, so unto God should be given the souls that bear His image. Render unto the world the stamped pieces that are made legally current by the insignia of worldly powers, and give unto God and His service, yourselves – the divine mintage of His eternal realm.

Pharisees and Herodians were silenced by the unanswerable wisdom of the Lord's reply to their crafty question. Try as they would, they could not "take hold of his words," and they were put to shame before the people who were witnesses to their

humiliation. Marveling at His answer, and unwilling to take the chance of further and possibly greater embarrassment, they "**left him, and went their way.**" Nevertheless these perverted Jews persisted in their base and treacherous purpose, as appears nowhere more glaringly evident than in their utterly false accusation before Pilate — that Jesus was guilty of "forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King."[1112]

## SADDUCEES QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION [1113]

Next, the Sadducees tried to discomfit Jesus by propounding what they regarded as an involved if not indeed a very difficult question. The Sadducees held that there could be no bodily resurrection, on which point of doctrine as on many others, they were the avowed opponents of the Pharisees.[1114] The question submitted by the Sadducees on this occasion related directly to the resurrection, and was framed to discredit the doctrine by a most unfavorable and grossly exaggerated application thereof. "**Master,**" said the spokesman of the party, "**Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.**" It was beyond question that the Mosaic law authorized and required that the living brother of a deceased and childless husband should marry the widow with the purpose of rearing children to the name of the dead, whose family lineage would thus be legally continued.[1115] Such a state of affairs as that presented by the casuistical Sadducees, in which seven brothers in succession had as wife and left as childless widow the same woman, was possible under the Mosaic code relating to levirate marriages; but it was a most improbable instance.

Jesus stopped not, however, to question the elements of the problem as presented to Him; whether the case was assumed or real mattered not, since the question "Whose wife shall she be?" was based on an utterly erroneous conception. "**Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.**" The Lord's meaning was clear, that in the resurrected state there can be no question among the seven brothers as to whose wife for eternity the woman shall be, since all except the first had married her for the duration of mortal life only, and primarily for the purpose of perpetuating in mortality the name and family of the brother who first died. Luke records the Lord's words as follows in part: "**But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.**" In the resurrection there will be no marrying nor giving in marriage; for

all questions of marital status must be settled before that time, under the authority of the Holy Priesthood, which holds the power to seal in marriage for both time and eternity.[1116]

From the case presented by His treacherous questioners, Jesus turned to the actuality of the resurrection, which was involved in and implied by the inquiry. "**But as touching the resurrection of the dead,**" said He, "**have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**" This was a direct assault upon the Sadducean doctrine of negation concerning the literal resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees were distinctively the zealous upholders of the law, wherein Jehovah affirms Himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;[1117] yet they denied the possible resurrection of these patriarchs, and made the exalted title, under which the Lord had revealed Himself to Moses, valid only during the brief mortal existence of the progenitors of the Israelitish nation. The declaration that Jehovah is not the God of the dead but of the living was an unanswerable denunciation of the Sadducean perversion of scripture; and with solemn finality the Lord added: "Ye therefore do greatly err." Certain of the scribes present were impressed by the incontrovertible demonstration of the truth, and exclaimed with approbation: "Master, thou hast well said." The proud Sadducees were confuted and silenced; "and after that they durst not ask him any question at all."

## THE GREAT COMMANDMENT [1118]

The Pharisees, covertly rejoicing over the discomfiture of their rivals, now summoned courage enough to plan another attack of their own. One of their number, a lawyer, by which title we may understand one of the scribes who was distinctively also a professor of ecclesiastical law, asked: "**Which is the first commandment of all?**" or, as Matthew states the question: "**Master, which is the great commandment in the law?**" The reply was prompt, incisive, and so comprehensive as to cover the requirements of the law in their entirety. With the imperative call to attention with which Moses had summoned Israel to hear and heed,[1119] the very words of which were written on the phylacteries[1120] which the Pharisees wore as frontlets between their eyes, Jesus answered: "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." Matthew's wording of the concluding declaration is: "**On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**"

The philosophic soundness of the Lord's profound generalization and comprehensive summarizing of the "**law and the prophets**"[1121] will appeal to all students of human nature. It is a common tendency of man to reach after, or at least to inquire after and

marvel about, the superlative. Who is the greatest poet, philosopher, scientist, preacher or statesman? Who stands first and foremost in the community, the nation, or even, as the apostles in their aspiring ignorance asked, in the kingdom of heaven? Which mountain overtops all the rest? Which river is the longest or the largest? Such queries are ever current. The Jews had divided and subdivided the commandments of the law, and had supplemented even the minutest subdivision with rules of their own contriving. Now came the Pharisee asking which of all these requirements was the greatest.[1122] To love God with all one's heart and soul and mind is to serve Him and keep all His commandments. To love one's neighbor as one's self is to be a brother in the broadest and, at the same time, the most exacting sense of the term. Therefore the commandment to love God and man is the greatest, on the basis of the simple and mathematical truth that the whole is greater than any part. What need of the decalog could there be if mankind would obey this first and great and all-embracing commandment? The Lord's reply to the question was convincing even to the learned scribe who had acted as spokesman for his Pharisaic colleagues. The man was honest enough to admit the righteousness and wisdom on which the reply was grounded, and impulsively he voiced acceptance, saying, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus was no whit less prompt than the well-intending scribe in acknowledging merit in the words of an opponent; and to the man He gave the encouraging assurance: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." As to whether the scribe remained firm in purpose and eventually gained entrance into that blessed abode, the scriptural record is silent.

## JESUS TURNS QUESTIONER [1123]

Sadducees, Herodians, Pharisees, lawyers, and scribes, all had in turn met discomfiture and defeat in their efforts to entangle Jesus on questions of doctrine or practice, and had utterly failed to incite Him to any act or utterance on which they could lawfully charge Him with offense. Having so effectually silenced all who had ventured to challenge Him to debate, either covertly or with open intent, that "**no man after that durst ask him any question,**" Jesus in turn became the aggressive interrogator. Turning to the Pharisees, who had clustered together for greater facility in consultation, Jesus began a colloquy which proceeded as follows:

"**What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?**" The Lord's citation of David's jubilant and worshipful song of praise, which, as Mark avers, Jesus said was inspired by the Holy Ghost, had reference to the Messianic psalm[1124] in which the royal singer

affirmed his own reverent allegiance, and extolled the glorious reign of the promised King of kings, who is specifically called therein "**a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**"[1125] Puzzling as was the unexpected question to the erudite Jews, we fail to perceive in it any inexplicable difficulty, since to us, less prejudiced than they who lived in expectation of a Messiah who would be David's son only in the sense of family descent and royal succession in the splendor of temporal rule, the eternal Godship of the Messiah is a fact demonstrated and undeniable. Jesus the Christ is the Son of David in the physical way of lineage by which both Jesus and David are sons of Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, and Adam. But while Jesus was born in the flesh as late in the centuries as the "meridian of time"[1126] He was Jehovah, Lord and God, before David, Abraham, or Adam was known on earth.[1127]

### **WICKED SCRIBES AND PHARISEES DENOUNCED [1128]**

The humiliating defeat of the Pharisaic party was made all the more memorable and bitter by the Lord's final denunciation of the system, and His condemnation of its unworthy representatives. Addressing Himself primarily to the disciples, yet speaking in the hearing of the multitude, He directed the attention of all to the scribes and Pharisees, who, He pointed out, occupied the seat of Moses as doctrinal expounders and official administrators of the law, and who were therefore to be obeyed in their authoritative rule; but against their pernicious example the disciples were forcefully warned. "**All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do,**" said the Lord, "**but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.**" Distinction between due observance of official precept and the personal responsibility of following evil example, though it be that of men high in authority, could not have been made plainer. Disobedience to law was not to be excused because of corruption among the law's representatives, nor was wickedness in any individual to be condoned or palliated because of another's villainy.

In explanation of the caution He so openly blazoned against the vices of the rulers, the Lord continued: "**For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.**" Rabbinism had practically superseded the law in the substitution of multitudinous rules and exactions, with conditional penalties; the day was filled with traditional observances by which even the trivial affairs of life were encumbered; yet from bearing these and other grievous burdens hypocritical officials could find excuse for personal exemption.

Their inordinate vanity and their irreverent assumption of excessive piety were thus stigmatized: "**But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries,[1129] and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.**" The high-sounding title, Rabbi, signifying

Master, Teacher, or Doctor, had eclipsed the divinely recognized sanctity of priesthood; to be a rabbi of the Jews was regarded as vastly superior to being a priest of the Most High God.[1130] **"But be not ye called Rabbi,"** said Jesus to the apostles and the other disciples present, **"for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ."**[1131]

Those upon whom would rest the responsibility of building the Church He had founded were not to aspire to worldly titles nor the honors of men; for those chosen ones were brethren, and their sole purpose should be the rendering of the greatest possible service to their one and only Master. As had been so strongly impressed on earlier occasions, excellence or supremacy in the apostolic calling, and similarly in the duties of discipleship or membership in the Church of Christ, was and is to be achieved through humble and devoted service alone; therefore said the Master again, "he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

From the mixed multitude of disciples and unbelievers, comprising many of the common people who listened in glad eagerness to learn,[1132] Jesus turned to the already abashed yet angry rulers, and deluged them with a veritable torrent of righteous indignation, through which flashed the lightning of scorching invective, accompanied by thunder peals of divine anathema.

**"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."** The Pharisaic standard of piety was the learning of the schools; one unversed in the technicalities of the law was accounted as unacceptable to God and veritably accursed.[1133] By their casuistry and perverted explications of scripture they confused and misled the "common people," and so stood as obstacles at the entrance to the kingdom of God, refusing to go in themselves and barring the way to others.

**"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."**[1134] The avarice of the Jewish hierarchy in our Lord's lifetime was an open scandal. By extortion and unlawful exaction under cover of religious duty the priestly rulers had amassed an enormous treasure,[1135] of which the contributions of the poor, and the confiscation of property, including even the houses of dependent widows, formed a considerable proportion; and the perfidy of the practice was made the blacker by the outward pretence of sanctity and the sacrilegious accompaniment of wordy prayer.

**"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of**

**hell than yourselves."** It is possible that this woe was directed more against the effort to secure proselytes to Pharisaism than that of converting aliens to Judaism; but as the latter was thoroughly degraded and the former disgustingly corrupt, the application of our Lord's denunciation to either or both is warranted. Of the Jews who strove to make proselytes it has been said that "out of a bad heathen they made a worse Jew." Many of their converts soon became perverts.

**"Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon."** Thus did the Lord condemn the infamous enactments of the schools and the Sanhedrin concerning oaths and vows; for they had established or endorsed a code of rules, inconsistent and unjust, as to technical trifles by which a vow could be enforced or invalidated. If a man swore by the temple, the House of Jehovah, he could obtain an indulgence for breaking his oath; but if he vowed by the gold and treasure of the Holy House, he was bound by the unbreakable bonds of priestly dictum. Though one should swear by the altar of God, his oath could be annulled; but if he vowed by the corban gift or by the gold upon the altar,[1136] his obligation was imperative. To what depths of unreason and hopeless depravity had men fallen, how sinfully foolish and how willfully blind were they, who saw not that the temple was greater than its gold, and the altar than the gift that lay upon it! In the Sermon on the Mount the Lord had said "**Swear not at all**";[1137] but upon such as would not live according to that higher law, upon those who persisted in the use of oaths and vows, the lesser and evidently just requirement of strict fidelity to the terms of self-assumed obligations was to be enforced, without unrighteous quibble or inequitable discrimination.

**"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."** The law of the tithe had been a characteristic feature of the theocratic requirements in Israel from the days of Moses; and the practice really long antedated the exodus. As literally construed, the law required the tithing of flocks and herds, fruit and grain,[1138] but by traditional extension all products of the soil had been included. The conscientious tithing of all one's possessions, even pot-herbs and other garden produce, was approved by the Lord; but He denounced as rank hypocrisy the observance of such requirements as an excuse for neglecting the other duties of true religion. The reference to "**the weightier**

**matters of the law**" may have been an allusion to the rabbinical classification of "light" and "heavy" requirements under the law; though it is certain the Lord approved no such arbitrary distinctions. To omit the tithing of small things, such as mint leaves, and sprigs of anise and cummin, was to fall short in dutiful observance; but to ignore the claims of judgment, mercy, and faith, was to forfeit one's claim to blessing as a covenant child of God. By a strong simile, the Lord stigmatized such inconsistency as comparable to one's scrupulous straining at a gnat while figuratively willing to gulp down a camel.[1139]

**"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."**[1140] Pharisaic scrupulosity in the ceremonial cleansing of platters and cups, pots and brazen vessels, has been already alluded to. Cleanliness the Lord in no wise depreciated; His shafts of disapprobation were aimed at the hypocrisy of maintaining at once outward spotlessness and inward corruption. Cups and platters though cleansed to perfection were filthy before the Lord if their contents had been bought by the gold of extortion, or were to be used in pandering to gluttony, drunkenness or other excess.

**"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."** It was an awful figure, that of likening them to whitewashed tombs, full of dead bones and rotting flesh. As the dogmas of the rabbis made even the slightest contact with a corpse or its cerements, or with the bier upon which it was borne, or the grave in which it had been lain, a cause of personal defilement, which only ceremonial washing and the offering of sacrifices could remove, care was taken to make tombs conspicuously white, so that no person need be defiled through ignorance of proximity to such unclean places; and, moreover, the periodical whitening of sepulchres was regarded as a memorial act of honor to the dead. But even as no amount of care or degree of diligence in keeping bright the outside of a tomb could stay the putrescence going on within, so no externals of pretended righteousness could mitigate the revolting corruption of a heart reeking with iniquity. Jesus had before compared Pharisees with unmarked graves, over which men inadvertently walked and so became defiled though they knew it not;[1141] on the occasion now under consideration He denounced them as whitened tombs, flauntingly prominent, but sepulchres nevertheless.

**"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of**

**them which killed the prophets.**" National pride, not wholly unlike patriotism, had for centuries expressed itself in formal regard for the burial crypts of the ancient prophets, many of whom had been slain because of their righteous and fearless zeal. Those modern Jews were voluble to disavow all sympathy with the murderous deeds of their progenitors, who had martyred the prophets, and ostentatiously averred that if they had lived in the times of those martyrdoms they would have been no participators therein, yet by such avouchment they proclaimed themselves the offspring of those who had shed innocent blood.

With scorching maledictions the Lord thus consigned them to their fate: **"Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation."** To their sanctimonious asseverations of superiority over their fathers who had slain Jehovah's envoys, Jehovah Himself replied by predicting that they would dye their hands in the blood of prophets, wise men, and righteous scribes, whom He would send amongst them; and thus would they prove themselves literal sons of murderers, and murderers themselves, so that upon them should rest the burden of all the righteous blood that had been shed for a testimony of God, from righteous Abel to the martyred Zacharias.[1142] That dread fate, outlined with such awful realism, was to be no eventuality of the distant future; every one of the frightful woes the Lord had uttered was to be realized in that generation.

### **THE LORD'S LAMENTATION OVER JERUSALEM [1143]**

Concerning scribes, Pharisees, and Pharisaism, Jesus had uttered His last word. Looking from the temple heights out over the city of the great King, soon to be abandoned to destruction, the Lord was obsessed by emotions of profound sorrow. With the undying eloquence of anguish He broke forth in such a lamentation as no mortal father ever voiced over the most unfilial and recreant of sons.

**"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."** Had Israel but received her King, the world's history of post-meridian time would never have been what it is. The children of Israel had spurned the proffered safety of a protecting paternal wing; soon the Roman eagle would swoop down upon them and slay. The stupendous temple,

which but a day before the Lord had called "My house," was now no longer specifically His; "Your house," said He, "is left unto you desolate." He was about to withdraw from both temple and nation; and by the Jews His face was not again to be seen, until, through the discipline of centuries of suffering they shall be prepared to acclaim in accents of abiding faith, as some of them had shouted but the Sunday before under the impulse of an erroneous conception, **"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."**

### **A WIDOW'S GIFT [1144]**

From the open courts Jesus moved over toward the colonnaded treasury of the temple, and there He sat, seemingly absorbed in a reverie of sorrow. Within that space were thirteen chests, each provided with a trumpet-shaped receptacle; and into these the people dropped their contributions for the several purposes indicated by inscriptions on the boxes. Looking up, Jesus observed the lines of donors, of all ranks and degrees of affluence and poverty, some depositing their gifts with evident devoutness and sincerity of purpose, others ostentatiously casting in great sums of silver and gold, primarily to be seen of men. Among the many was a poor widow, who with probable effort to escape observation dropped into one of the treasure-chests two small bronze coins known as mites; her contribution amounted to less than half a cent in American money. The Lord called His disciples about Him, directed their attention to the poverty-stricken widow and her deed, and said: **"Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."**

In the accounts kept by the recording angels, figured out according to the arithmetic of heaven, entries are made in terms of quality rather than of quantity, and values are determined on the basis of capability and intent. The rich gave much yet kept back more; the widow's gift was her all. It was not the smallness of her offering that made it especially acceptable, but the spirit of sacrifice and devout intent with which she gave. On the books of the heavenly accountants that widow's contribution was entered as a munificent gift, surpassing in worth the largess of kings. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." [1145]

*According to Webster's Dictionary, munificent means liberality and generosity*

### **CHRIST'S FINAL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TEMPLE**

Our Lord's public discourses and the open colloquies in which He had participated with professionals and priestly officials, in the course of His daily visits to the temple during the first half of Passion week, had caused many of the chief rulers, beside others,

to believe on Him as the veritable Son of God; but the fear of Pharisaic persecution and the dread of excommunication from the synagog[1146] deterred them from confessing the allegiance they felt, and from accepting the means of salvation so freely offered. **"They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."**[1147]

It may have been while Jesus directed His course for the last time toward the exit portal of the one-time holy place that He uttered the solemn testimony of His divinity recorded by John.[1148] Crying with a loud voice to priestly rulers and the multitude generally, He said: "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me." Allegiance to Himself was allegiance to God; the people were plainly told that to accept Him was in no degree a weakening of their adherence to Jehovah, but on the contrary a confirmation thereof. Repeating precepts of earlier utterance, He again proclaimed Himself the light of the world, by whose rays alone mankind might be delivered from the enveloping darkness of spiritual unbelief. The testimony He left with the people would be the means of judgment and condemnation to all who willfully rejected it. **"For,"** said He in solemn finality, **"I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."**

## **DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE PREDICTED [1149]**

As Jesus was departing from the enclosure wherein stood what once had been the House of the Lord, one or more of the disciples called His attention to the magnificent structures, the massive stones, the colossal columns, and the lavish and costly adornment of the several buildings. The Lord's answering comment was an unqualified prophecy of the utter destruction of the temple and everything pertaining to it. "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Such was the definite and dire prediction. Those who heard were dumbfounded; neither by question nor other response did they attempt to elicit more. The literal fulfillment of that awful portent was but an incident in the annihilation of the city less than forty years later.

With the Lord's final departure from the temple, which probably occurred in the afternoon of the Tuesday of that last week, His public ministry was brought to its solemn ending. Whatever of discourse, parable, or ordinance was to follow, would be directed only to the further instruction and investiture of the apostles.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 31

**1. The Image on the Coin** – The Jews had an aversion for images or effigies in general, the use of which they professed to hold as a violation of the second commandment. Their scruples, however, did not deter them from accepting coins bearing the effigies of kings, even though these monarchs were pagans. Their own coins bore other devices, such as plants, fruits, etc., in place of a human head; and the Romans had condescendingly permitted the issue of a special coinage for Jewish use, each piece bearing the name but not the effigy of the monarch. The ordinary coinage of Rome was current in Palestine, however.

**2. Submission to Secular Authority** – Governments are instituted of God, sometimes by His direct interposition, sometimes by His permission. When the Jews had been brought into subjection by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the Lord commanded through the prophet Jeremiah (27:4-8) that the people render obedience to their conqueror, whom He called His servant; for verily the Lord had used the pagan king to chastise the recreant and unfaithful children of the covenant. The obedience so enjoined included the payment of taxes and extended to complete submission. After the death of Christ the apostles taught obedience to the powers that be, which powers, Paul declared "are ordained of God." See Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; see also 1 Peter 2:13, 14. Through the medium of modern revelation, the Lord has required of His people in the present dispensation, obedience to and loyal support of the duly established and existing governments in all lands. See Doc. and Cov. 58:21-22; 98:4-6; and section 134 throughout. The restored Church proclaims as an essential part of its belief and practice: **"We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."** See *Articles of Faith*, xxiii.

**3. Marriage for Eternity** – Divine revelation in the dispensation of the fullness of times has made plain the fact, that contracts of marriage, as indeed all other agreements between parties in mortality, are of no validity beyond the grave, except such contracts be ratified and validated by the duly established ordinances of the Holy Priesthood. Sealing in the marriage covenant for time and eternity, which has come to be known as celestial marriage, is an ordinance established by divine authority in the restored Church of Jesus Christ. See the author's treatment of this subject in *Articles of Faith*, xxiv, 18-24; and *House of the Lord*, under "Sealing in Marriage," pp. 101-109.

**4. Divisions and Subdivisions of the Law** – "The Rabbinical schools, in their meddling, carnal, superficial spirit of word-weaving and letter-worship, had spun large accumulations of worthless subtlety all over the Mosaic law. Among other things they had wasted their idleness in fantastic attempts to count, and classify, and weigh, and measure all the separate commandments of the ceremonial and moral law. They had come to the sapient conclusion that there were 248 affirmative precepts, being as many

as the members in the human body, and 365 negative precepts, being as many as the arteries and veins, or the days of the year: the total being 613, which was also the number of letters in the decalog. They arrived at the same result from the fact that the Jews were commanded (Numb. 15:38) to wear fringes (*tsitsith*) on the corners of their *tallith*, bound with a thread of blue; and as each fringe had eight threads and five knots, and the letters of the word *tsitsith* make 600, the total number of commandments was, as before 613. Now surely, out of such a large number of precepts and prohibitions, all could not be of quite the same value; some were 'light' (*kal*), and some were 'heavy' (*kobhed*). But which? and what was the greatest commandment of all? According to some Rabbis, the most important of all is that about the *tephillin* and the *tsitsith*, the fringes and phylacteries; and 'he who diligently observes it is regarded in the same light as if he had kept the whole Law.'

"Some thought the omission of ablutions as bad as homicide; some that the precepts of the Mishna were all 'heavy'; those of the Law were some 'heavy' and some 'light.' Others considered the *third* to be the greatest commandment. None of them had realized the great principle, that the willful violation of one commandment is the transgression of all (James 2:10), because the object of the entire Law is the spirit of *obedience to God*. On the question proposed by the lawyer the Shammaites and Hillelites were in disaccord, and, as usual, both schools were wrong: the Shammaites, in thinking that mere trivial external observances were valuable, apart from the spirit in which they were performed, and the principle which they exemplified; the Hillelites, in thinking that *any* positive command could in itself be unimportant, and in not seeing that great principles are essential to the due performance of even the slightest duties." – Farrar, *Life of Christ*, chap. 52.

**5. Phylacteries and Borders** – Through a traditional interpretation of Exo. 13:9 and Deut. 6:8, the Hebrews adopted the custom of wearing phylacteries, which consisted essentially of strips of parchment on which were inscribed in whole or in part the following texts: Exo. 13:2-10 and 11-17; Deut. 6:4-9, and 11:13-21. Phylacteries were worn on the head and arm. The parchment strips for the head were four, on each of which one of the texts cited above was written. These were placed in a cubical box of leather measuring from 1/2 inch to 1-1/2 inches along the edge; the box was divided into four compartments and one of the little parchment rolls was placed in each. Thongs held the box in place on the forehead between the eyes of the wearer. The arm phylactery comprised but a single roll of parchment on which the four prescribed texts were written; this was placed in a little box which was bound by thongs to the inside of the left arm so as to be brought close to the heart when the hands were placed together in the attitude of devotion. The Pharisees wore the arm phylactery above the elbow, while their rivals, the Sadducees, fastened it to the palm of the hand (see Exo. 13:9). The common people wore phylacteries only at prayer time; but the Pharisees were said to display them throughout the day. Our Lord's reference to the Pharisees' custom of

making broad their phylacteries had reference to the enlarging of the containing box, particularly the frontlet. The size of the parchment strips was fixed by rigid rule.

The Lord had required of Israel through Moses (Numb. 15:38) that the people attach to the border of their garment a fringe with a ribbon of blue. In ostentatious display of assumed piety, the scribes and Pharisees delighted to wear enlarged borders to attract public attention. It was another manifestation of hypocritical sanctimoniousness.

**6. Ecclesiastical Titles** – Our Lord severely condemned the seeking after titles as insignia of rank in His service. Nevertheless He named the Twelve whom He chose, Apostles; and in the Church founded by Himself the offices of Evangelist, High Priest, Pastor, Elder, Bishop, Priest, Teacher, and Deacon were established (see *Articles of Faith*, xi:1-4). It was the empty man-made title that attached to the individual, not the authorized title of office to which men were called through authoritative ordination, to which the Lord affixed the seal of His disapproval. Titles of office in the Holy Priesthood are of too sacred a character to be used as marks of distinction among men. In the restored Church in the current dispensation, men are ordained to the Priesthood and to the several offices comprised within both the Lesser or Aaronic, and the Higher or Melchizedek Priesthood; but though one be thus made an Elder, a Seventy, a High Priest, a Patriarch or an Apostle, he should not court the usage of the title as a mere embellishment of his name. (See "The Honor and Dignity of Priesthood" by the author in *Improvement Era*, Salt Lake City, March, 1914.)

Chas. F. Deems, in *The Light of the Nations*, pp. 583-4, says in speaking of the irreverent use of ecclesiastical titles: "The Pharisees loved also the highest places in the synagogues, and it gratified their vanity to be called Teacher, Doctor, Rabbi. Against these Jesus warned His disciples. They were not to love to be called Rabbi, a title which occurs in three forms, *Rab*, Teacher, Doctor; *Rabbi*, My Doctor or Teacher; *Rabboni*, My great Doctor. Nor were they to call any man 'Father,' in the sense of granting him any infallibility of judgment or power over their consciences.... 'Papa,' as the simple Moravians call their great man, Count Zinzendorf; 'Founder,' as Methodists denominate good John Wesley; 'Holy Father in God,' as bishops are sometimes called; 'Pope,' which is the same as 'Papa'; 'Doctor of Divinity,' the Christian equivalent of the Jewish 'Rabbi,' are all dangerous titles. But it is not the employment of a name which Jesus denounces, it is the spirit of vanity which animated the Pharisees, and the servile spirit which the employment of titles is apt to engender. Paul and Peter spoke of themselves as spiritual fathers. Jesus teaches that positions in the societies of his followers, such as should afterward be formed, were not to be regarded as dignities, but rather as services; that no man should seek them for the honor they might confer, but for the field of usefulness they might afford; and that no man should lead off a sect, there being but one leader; and that the whole body of believers are brethren, of whom God is the Father."

The writer last quoted very properly disparages aspirations, stimulated by vanity and self-righteous assumption, to the use of the title "Reverend" as applied to men.

**7. Seven or Eight Woes?** – Some of the early Mss. of the Gospels omit verse 14 from Matt. 23. Such omission reduces the number of specific utterances beginning "Woe unto you" from eight to seven. There is no question as to the appearance in the original of the passages in Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47, which are one in meaning with Matt. 23:14.

**8. The Temple Treasure** – In connection with the incident of the widow's mites, Edersheim (vol. ii, pp. 387-8) writes: "Some might come with appearance of self-righteousness, some even with ostentation, some as cheerfully performing a happy duty. 'Many that were rich cast in much' – yes, very much, for such was the tendency that a law had to be enacted forbidding the gift to the Temple of more than a certain proportion of one's possessions. And the amount of such contributions may be inferred by recalling the circumstance, that at the time of Pompey and Crassus, the Temple treasury, after having lavishly defrayed every possible expenditure, contained in money nearly half a million, and precious vessels to the value of nearly two million sterling." See also Josephus, Antiquities xiv, 4:4; 7:1, 2.

**9. Zacharias the Martyr** – In referring to the martyrs of ante-meridian time the Lord is recorded as having used the expression "**from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar**" (Matt. 23:35). The Old Testament as at present compiled, contains no mention of a martyr named Zacharias son of Barachias, but does chronicle the martyrdom of Zechariah son of Jehoiada (2 Chron. 24:20-22). "Zechariah" and "Zacharias" are equivalent names. It is the opinion of most Bible scholars that the Zacharias referred to in Matthew's record is Zechariah son of Jehoiada. In the Jewish compilation of Old Testament scriptures, the murder of Zechariah appears as the last recorded martyrdom; and the Lord's reference to the righteous men who had been slain, from Abel to Zechariah or Zacharias, may have been a sweeping inclusion of all the martyrs down to that time, from first to last. However, we have a record of Zechariah son of Berechiah (Zech. 1:1, 7), and this Berechiah was the son of Iddo. Then again, Zechariah son of Iddo is mentioned (Ezra 5:1); but, as is elsewhere found in the older scriptures, the grandson is called the son. The Old Testament does not number this Zechariah among the martyrs, but traditional accounts (Whitby's citation of the Targum) say that he was killed "in the day of propitiation." That the Lord referred to a late and probably the latest of the recorded martyrdoms is probable; and it is equally evident that the case was well known among the Jews. It is likely that a fuller account appeared in scriptures current among the Jews at the time of Christ but since lost. See Note 4, Chapter 9.

**10. Destruction of the Temple** – "For thirty or more years after the death of Christ, the Jews continued the work of adding to and embellishing the temple buildings. The elaborate design conceived and projected by Herod had been practically completed; the

Temple was well-nigh finished, and, as soon afterward appeared, was ready for destruction. Its fate had been definitely foretold by the Savior Himself. Commenting on a remark by one of the disciples concerning the great stones and the splendid buildings on the Temple hill, Jesus had said, '**Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**' (Mark 13:1, 2; see also Matt. 24:1, 2; Luke 21:5, 6.) This dire prediction soon found its literal fulfillment. In the great conflict with the Roman legions under Titus, many of the Jews had taken refuge within the Temple courts, seemingly hoping that there the Lord would again fight the battles of His people and give them victory. But the protecting presence of Jehovah had long since departed therefrom and Israel was left a prey to the foe. Though Titus would have spared the Temple, his legionaries, maddened by the lust of conflict, started the conflagration and everything that could be burned was burned. The slaughter of the Jews was appalling; thousands of men, women and children were ruthlessly butchered within the walls, and the temple courts were literally flooded with human blood. This event occurred in the year 70 A.D.; and according to Josephus, in the same month and on the same day of the month as that on which the once glorious Temple of Solomon had fallen a prey to the flames kindled by the king of Babylon. (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, vi, 4:5, 8. For a detailed and graphic account of the destruction of the Temple see chapters 4 and 5 in their entirety.) Of the Temple furniture the golden candlestick and the table of shewbread from the Holy Place were carried by Titus to Rome as trophies of war; and representations of these sacred pieces are to be seen on the arch erected to the name of the victorious general. Since the destruction of the splendid Temple of Herod no other structure of the kind, no Temple, no House of the Lord as the terms are used distinctively, has been reared on the eastern hemisphere." — *The House of the Lord*, pp. 61, 62.

*This book was written in the early 1900's. Today there are Temples in the Eastern hemisphere, erected by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; however, there are no temples in Jerusalem or in the Mediterranean Muslim dominated countries.*

Josephus ascribes the destruction of the Temple of Herod to the anger of God, and states that the devouring flames "took their rise from the Jews themselves, and were occasioned by them." The soldier who applied the torch to the Holy House, which had remained intact while fire raged in the courts, is regarded by the historian as an instrument of divine vengeance. We read (Wars, vi, 4:5): "One of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round the Holy House, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward the Jews made a great clamor, such as so mighty an affliction required."

## FOOTNOTES

- [1106] Matt. 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:19-26.
- [1107] See chapter 6 herein.
- [1108] Mark 3:6; 8:15.
- [1109] Note 1, end of chapter.
- [1110] Note 2, end of chapter.
- [1111] See chapter 2 herein.
- [1112] Luke 23:2. See chapter 34 herein.
- [1113] Matt. 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38.
- [1114] See chapter 6 herein.
- [1115] Deut. 25:5.
- [1116] Note 3, end of chapter.
- [1117] Gen. 28:13; Exo. 3:6, 15.
- [1118] Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34.
- [1119] Deut. 6:4, 5.
- [1120] Note 5 chapter 31.
- [1121] See chapter 17 herein.
- [1122] Note 4, end of chapter.
- [1123] Matt. 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44.
- [1124] Psalm 110.
- [1125] Psalm 110:4; compare Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21.
- [1126] Chapter 6.
- [1127] Chapters 4 and 5.
- [1128] Matt. 23; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47; compare Luke 11:39-52.
- [1129] Note 5, end of chapter.
- [1130] See chapter 6 herein.
- [1131] Note 6, end of chapter.
- [1132] Mark 12:37.
- [1133] John 7:49; compare 9:34.
- [1134] Note 7, end of chapter.
- [1135] Note 8, end of chapter.
- [1136] See chapter 22 herein.
- [1137] Matt. 5:33-37; See chapter 17 herein.
- [1138] Lev. 27:30; Numb. 18:21; Deut. 12:6; 14:22-28. See also the author's "The Law of the Tithe"; 20 pp., 1914.
- [1139] The revised version, generally admitted the more nearly correct, reads "strain out the gnat" instead of "strain at a gnat."
- [1140] Compare Luke 11:39, 40; Mark 7:4; See chapter 26 herein.
- [1141] Luke 11:44.
- [1142] Note 9, end of chapter.
- [1143] Matt. 23:37-39; compare Luke 13:34, 35.
- [1144] Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4.
- [1145] 2 Cor. 8:12.
- [1146] John 12:42; compare 7:13; 9:22.
- [1147] John 12:43; compare 5:44.
- [1148] John 12:44-50.

[1149] Matt. 24:1, 2; Mark 13:1, 2; Luke 21:5, 6. Note 10, end of chapter.

# 32

## FURTHER INSTRUCTION TO THE APOSTLES

### PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE LORD'S FUTURE ADVENT [1150]

In the course of His last walk from Jerusalem back to the beloved home at Bethany, Jesus rested at a convenient spot on the Mount of Olives, from which the great city and the magnificent temple were to be seen in fullest splendor, illumined by the declining sun in the late afternoon of that eventful April day. As He sat in thoughtful reverie He was approached by Peter and James, John and Andrew, of the Twelve, and to them certainly, though probably to all the apostles, He gave instruction, embodying further prophecy concerning the future of Jerusalem, Israel, and the world at large. His fateful prediction – that of the temple buildings not one stone would be left upon another – had caused the apostles to marvel and fear; so they came privately requesting explanation. "Tell us," said they, "**when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?**" The compound character of the question indicates an understanding of the fact that the destruction of which the Lord had spoken was to be apart from and precedent to the signs that were to immediately herald His glorious advent and the yet later ushering in of the consummation commonly spoken of then and now as "**the end of the world.**" An assumption that the events would follow in close succession is implied by the form in which the question was put.

The inquiry referred specifically to time – when were these things to be? The reply dealt not with dates, but with events; and the spirit of the subsequent discourse was that of warning against misapprehension, and admonition to ceaseless vigilance. "**Take heed that no man deceive you**" was the first and all-important caution; for within the lives of most of those apostles, many blaspheming imposters would arise, each claiming to be the Messiah. The return of Christ to earth as Lord and Judge was more remote than any of the Twelve realized. Before that glorious event, many wonderful and appalling developments would be witnessed, among the earliest of which would be wars and rumors of wars, caused by nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom, to the dread accompaniment of famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in many places; yet all these would be but the beginning of the sorrow or travail to follow.

They, the apostles, were told to expect persecution, not only at the hands of irresponsible individuals, but at the instance of the officials such as they who were at that moment intent on taking the life of the Lord Himself, and who would scourge them in the synagogs, deliver them up to hostile tribunals, cite them before rulers and kings, and even put some of them to death – all because of their testimony of the Christ. As they had been promised before, so again were they assured, that when they would stand before councils, magistrates, or kings, the words they should speak would be given them in the hour of their trial, and therefore they were told to take no premeditative thought as to what they should say or how they should meet the issues confronting them; **for**, said the Master, **"it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."**[1151] Even though they found themselves despised and hated of men, and though they were to suffer ignominy, torture, and death, yet as to their eternal welfare they were promised such security that by comparison they would lose not so much as a hair of their heads. In consoling encouragement the Lord bade them possess their souls in patience.[1152] In face of all trials and even the direst persecution, it was incumbent upon them to persevere in their ministry, for the divine plan provided and required that the gospel of the kingdom be preached amongst all nations. Their labors would be complicated and opposed by the revolutionary propaganda of many false prophets, and differences of creed would disrupt families, and engender such bitterness that brothers would betray one another, and children would rise against their parents, accusing them of heresies and delivering them up to death. Even among those who had professed discipleship to Christ many would be offended and hatred would abound; love for the gospel would wax cold, and iniquity would be rampant among men; and only those who would endure to the end of their lives could be saved.

From this circumstantial forecast of conditions then directly impending, the Lord passed to other developments that would immediately precede the destruction of Jerusalem and the total disruption of the Jewish nation. **"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place,"** said He, according to Matthew's account, and virtually so also as stated by Mark, or **"when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies"** as Luke writes, **"then know that the desolation thereof is nigh."** This was a specific sign that none could misunderstand. Daniel the prophet had foreseen the desolation and abominations thereof, which comprised the forcible cessation of temple rites, and the desecration of Israel's shrine by pagan conquerors.[1153]

The realization of Daniel's prophetic vision was to be heralded by the encompassing of Jerusalem by armies. Then all who would escape should make haste; from Judea they should flee to the mountains; he who was on the housetop would have no time to take his goods, but should hasten down by the outer steps and flee; he who was in the field would better leave without first returning to his house even for his clothes. Terrible, indeed, would that day be for women hampered by the conditions incident to approaching maternity, or the responsibility of caring for their suckling babes. All

would do well to pray that their flight be not forced upon them in winter time; nor on the Sabbath, lest regard for the restrictions as to Sabbath-day travel, or the usual closing of the city gates on that day, should diminish the chances of escape. The tribulations of the time then foreshadowed would prove to be unprecedented in horror and would never be paralleled in all their awful details in Israel's history; but in mercy God had decreed that the dreadful period should be shortened for the sake of the elect believers, otherwise no flesh of Israel would be saved alive. Multitudes were to fall by the sword; other hosts were to be led away captive, and so be scattered amongst all nations; and Jerusalem, the pride and boast of degenerate Israel, should be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." In every frightful detail was the Lord's prediction brought to pass, as history avouches.[1154]

After the passing of those terrible times, and thence onward for a period of unspecified duration, Satan would deceive the world through false doctrines, spread by evil men masquerading as ministers of God, who would continue to cry "Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there"; but against all such the Twelve were put on their guard, and through them and other teachers, whom they would call and ordain, would the world be warned. Deceiving prophets, emissaries of the devil, would be active, some alluring people into the deserts, and impelling them to hermit lives of pernicious asceticism, others insisting that Christ could be found in the secret chambers of monastic seclusion; and some of them showing forth through the power of Satan, such signs and wonders as "to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect"; but of all such scheming of the prince of evil, the Lord admonished His own: "**Believe it not**"; and added, "**take ye heed; behold I have foretold you all things.**"[1155]

In the day of the Lord's advent in glory and vengeance, no man shall be in doubt; there shall be no chance of conflicting claims by contending sects, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."[1156] The gathering of Israel in the last days was pictured as the flocking of eagles to the place where the body of the Church would be established.[1157]

The chronological order of the predicted occurrences so far considered in this wonderful discourse on things to come, is clear; first there was to be a period of virulent persecution of the apostles and the Church of which they would be in charge; then the destruction of Jerusalem, with all the horrors of merciless warfare was to follow; and this in turn was to be succeeded by a long period of priestcraft and apostasy with bitter sectarian dissension and cruel persecution of the righteous. The brief reference to the non-localized, universal phenomena, by which His advent is to be signaled, is a parenthetical demonstration of the false claims as to where Christ would be found; later the Lord passed to distinctive and unquestionable reference to the circumstances of His then and yet future advent. Following the age of man-made creeds, and unauthorized ministry characteristic of the great apostasy, marvelous occurrences are to be

manifested through the forces of nature, and the sign of the Son of Man shall ultimately appear, one accompanying feature of which shall be the completion of the gathering of the elect from all parts of the earth to the places appointed.

The duty that Jesus enjoined upon the apostles as of first importance throughout all the coming scenes of sorrow, suffering and turmoil, was that of vigilance. They were to pray, watch, and work, diligently and with unwavering faith. The lesson was illustrated by a masterly analogy, which, under the broadest classification, may be called a parable. Directing their attention to the fig tree and other trees which flourished on the sunny slopes of Olivet, the Master said: "Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Of the fig tree in particular the Lord remarked: "**When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.**" This sign of events near at hand was equally applicable to the premonitory conditions which were to herald the fall of Jerusalem and the termination of the Jewish autonomy, and to the developments by which the Lord's second advent shall be immediately preceded.

The next declaration in the order of the evangelical record reads: "**Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.**" This may be understood as applying to the generation in which the portentous happenings before described would be realized. So far as the predictions related to the overthrow of Jerusalem, they were literally fulfilled within the natural lifetime of several of the apostles and of multitudes of their contemporaries; such of the Lord's prophecies as pertain to the heralding of His second coming are to brought to pass within the duration of the generation of some who witness the inauguration of their fulfillment. The certainty of fulfillment was emphasized by the Lord in the profound affirmation: "**Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.**"[1158]

All speculation concerning the time of the Lord's appearing, whether based on assumption, deduction, or calculation of dates, was forestalled by Christ's averment: "**But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.**"[1159] That His advent in power and glory is to be sudden and unexpected to the unobserving and sinful world, but in immediate sequence to the signs which the vigilant and devout may read and understand, was made plain by comparison with the prevailing social conditions of Noah's time, when in spite of prophecy and warning the people had continued in their feasting and merry-making, in marrying and giving in marriage, until the very day of Noah's entrance into the ark, "And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

In the last stages of the gathering of the elect, the ties of companionship shall be quickly severed; of two men laboring in the field, or of two women engaged side by side in

household duties, the faithful one shall be taken and the sinner left. "Watch therefore," was the solemn behest, "for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." In explication of this admonishment, the Lord condescended to compare the suddenness and secrecy of His coming to the movements of a night-prowling thief; and pointed out, that if a householder had certain knowledge as to the time of a burglar's predetermined visit, he would remain on vigilant watch; but because of uncertainty he may be found off his guard, and the thief may enter and despoil the home.

Again likening the apostles to duly appointed stewards in a great household,[1160] the Lord spoke of Himself as the householder, saying: "**The Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.**" But if the steward grow negligent because of his master's long absence, and give himself up to feasting and unlicensed pleasure, or become autocratic and unjust toward his fellow-servants, his lord shall come in an hour when least expected, and shall consign that wicked servant to a place among the hypocrites, where he shall weep bitter tears of remorse, and gnash his teeth in impotent despair.[1161]

## THE NEED OF WATCHFULNESS AND DILIGENCE ILLUSTRATED BY PARABLES

To more indelibly impress upon the apostles, and, through their subsequent ministry, upon the world, the absolute need of unceasing watchfulness and unwavering diligence in preparation for the coming of the Lord in judgment, Jesus depicted in parables the prospective condition of mankind in the last times. The first of these illustrative portrayals is the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The only report of it we have is that given by Matthew,[1162] as follows:

**"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.**

**Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."**

The story itself is based on oriental marriage customs, with which the Lord's attentive listeners were familiar. It was and yet is common in those lands, particularly in connection with marriage festivities among the wealthy classes, for the bridegroom to go to the home of the bride, accompanied by his friends in processional array, and later to conduct the bride to her new home with a larger body of attendants composed of groomsmen, bridesmaids, relatives and friends. As the bridal party progressed, to the accompaniment of gladsome music, it was increased by little groups who had gathered in waiting at convenient places along the route, and particularly near the end of the course where organized companies came forth to meet the advancing procession. Wedding ceremonies were appointed for the evening and night hours; and the necessary use of torches and lamps gave brilliancy and added beauty to the scene.

In the parable ten maidens were waiting to welcome and join in with the bridal company, the time of whose arrival was uncertain. Each had her lamp attached to the end of a rod so as to be held aloft in the festal march; but of the ten virgins five had wisely carried an extra supply of oil, while the other five, probably counting on no great delay, or assuming that they would be able to borrow from others, or perchance having negligently given no thought at all to the matter, had no oil except the one filling with which their lamps had been supplied at starting. The bridegroom tarried, and the waiting maidens grew drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, the forerunners of the marriage party loudly proclaimed the bridegroom's approach, and cried in haste: "**Go ye out to meet him.**" The ten maidens, no longer sleepy, but eagerly active, set to work to trim their lamps; then the wise ones found use for the oil in their flasks, while the thoughtless five bewailed their destitute condition, for their lamps were empty and they had no oil for replenishment. They appealed to their wiser sisters, asking a share of their oil; but these declined; for, in a time of such exigency, to give of their store would have been to render themselves unfit, inasmuch as there was oil enough for their own lamps only. Instead of oil they could impart only advice to their unfortunate sisters, whom they directed to go to the nearest shop and buy for themselves. While the foolish virgins were away in quest of oil, the wedding party passed into the house wherein the feast was provided, and the door was shut against all tardy comers. In time the unwise maidens, too late to participate in the processional entry, called from without, pleading for admittance; but the bridegroom refused their request, and disclaimed all acquaintanceship with them, since they had not been numbered among his attendants or those of the bride.

The Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus; the marriage feast symbolizes His coming in glory, to receive unto Himself the Church on earth as His bride.[1163] The virgins typify those who profess a belief in Christ, and who, therefore, confidently expect to be included among the blessed participants at the feast. The lighted lamp, which each of the

maidens carried, is the outward profession of Christian belief and practice; and in the oil reserves of the wiser ones we may see the spiritual strength and abundance which diligence and devotion in God's service alone can insure. The lack of sufficient oil on the part of the unwise virgins is analogous to the dearth of soil in the stony field, wherein the seed readily sprouted but soon withered away.[1164] The Bridegroom's coming was sudden; yet the waiting virgins were not held blamable for their surprise at the abrupt announcement, but the unwise five suffered the natural results of their unpreparedness. The refusal of the wise virgins to give of their oil at such a critical time must not be regarded as uncharitable; the circumstance typifies the fact that in the day of judgment every soul must answer for himself; there is no way by which the righteousness of one can be credited to another's account; the doctrine of supererogation is wholly false.[1165] The Bridegroom's condemnatory disclaimer, "I know you not," was equivalent to a declaration that the imploring but neglectful ones, who had been found unready and unprepared, did not know Him.[1166]

*Supererogation means: Doing more than duty or necessity requires*

*Each of us stands on our own record and for our own actions. I like the statement that we are accountable for our own righteousness and we can't depend on what others do to be "credited" to our account.*

The application of the parable and its wealth of splendid suggestion are summarized in a masterly manner by the Lord's impressive adjuration: **"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."** The fulfillment of the predictions enshrined in this precious parable is yet future, but near. In 1831 the Lord Jesus Christ revealed anew the indications by which the imminence of His glorious advent may be perceived. Through the mouth of His prophet Joseph Smith He thus spake: **"And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins: for they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived; verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day, and the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation, for the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their King and their Lawgiver."**[1167]

Still discoursing in solemn earnestness to the apostles as the evening shadows gathered about the Mount of Olives, the Lord delivered the last of His recorded parables. We call it the Parable of the Entrusted Talents. [1168]

**"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and**

straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Some of the resemblances between this parable and that of the Pounds[1169] appear on even a casual reading; significant differences are discovered by comparison and study. The earlier parable was spoken to a mixed multitude in the course of our Lord's last journey from Jericho to Jerusalem; the later one was given in privacy to the most intimate of His disciples in the closing hours of the last day of His public preaching. The two should be studied together. In the story of the Pounds, an equal amount of capital is given to each of the servants, and men's diverse ability to use and apply, with commensurate results in reward or penalty, is demonstrated; in that of the Entrusted Talents, the servants receive different amounts, "**every man according to his several ability**"; and equal diligence, though shown in one instance by great gain and in the other by small but proportionate increase, is equally rewarded. Unfaithfulness and negligence are condemned and punished in both.

In the parable now under consideration, the master is presented as delivering his wealth into the hands of his own servants, literally, bondservants;[1170] they, as well as the possessions held by them in trust were his. Those servants had no rights of actual ownership, nor title of permanent proprietorship in the treasure committed to their care; all they had, the time and opportunity to use their talents, and they themselves, belonged to their lord. We cannot fail to perceive even in the early incidents of the story

that the Master of the servants was the Lord Jesus; the servants, therefore, were the disciples and more particularly the apostles, who, while of equal authority through ordination in the Holy Priesthood, as specifically illustrated by the earlier parable of the Pounds, were of varied ability, of diverse personality, and unequal generally in nature and in such accomplishments as would be called into service throughout their ministry. The Lord was about to depart; He would return only "after a long time"; the significance of this latter circumstance is in line with that expressed through the parable of the Ten Virgins in the statement that the Bridegroom tarried.

At the time of reckoning, the servants who had done well, the one with his five talents, the other with his two, reported gladly, conscious as they were of having at least striven to do their best. The unfaithful servant prefaced his report with a grumbling excuse, which involved the imputation of unrighteousness in the Master. The honest, diligent, faithful servants saw and revered in their Lord the perfection of the good qualities which they possessed in measured degree; the lazy and unprofitable serf, afflicted by distorted vision, professed to see in the Master his own base defects. The story in this particular, as in the other features relating to human acts and tendencies, is psychologically true; in a peculiar sense men are prone to conceive of the attributes of God as comprising in augmented degree the dominant traits of their own nature.

Both the servant who had been entrusted with five talents and he who had received but two were equally commended, and, as far as we are told, were equally recompensed. The talents bestowed upon each were the gift of his Lord, who knew well whether that servant was capable of using to better advantage one, two, or five. Let no one conclude that good work of relatively small scope is less necessary or acceptable than like service of wider range. Many a man who has succeeded well in business with small capital would have failed in the administration of vast sums; so also in spiritual achievements **"there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."**[1171] Of the man endowed with many talents greater returns were expected; of the one-talented man relatively little was required, yet in that little he failed.[1172] At the least he could have delivered the money to the bank, through which it would have been kept in circulation to the benefit of the community, and would have earned interest meanwhile. Likewise, in the spiritual application, a man possessed of any good gift, such as musical ability, eloquence, skill in handicraft, or the like, ought to use that gift to the full, that he or others may be profited thereby: but should he be too neglectful to exercise his powers in independent service, he may assist others to profitable effort, by encouragement if by nothing more.

Who can doubt in the spirit of the Lord's teaching, that had the man been able to report the doubling of his single talent, he would have been as cordially commended and as richly recompensed as were his more highly endowed and faithful fellows? It is notable that to the charge of unrighteousness made by the unfaithful servant, the Lord deigns no refutation; the spirit of the reply was the same as that expressed in the earlier

parable: "**Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.**"[1173] The unworthy man sought to excuse himself by the despicable but all too common subterfuge of presumptuously charging culpability in another, and in this instance, that other was his Lord. Talents are not given to be buried, and then to be dug up and offered back unimproved, reeking with the smell of earth and dulled by the corrosion of disuse. The unused talent was justly taken from him who had counted it as of so little worth, and was given to one, who, although possessing much, would use the additional gift to his own profit, to the betterment of his fellows, and to the glory of his Lord.

### **THE INEVITABLE JUDGMENT [1174]**

The Lord had uttered His last parable. In words of plainness, though suffused with the beauty of effective simile, He impressed upon the listening disciples the certainty of judgment by which the world shall be visited in the day of His appearing. Then shall the wheat be segregated from the tares,[1175] and the sheep divided from the goats. "**When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.**" Unto those on His right hand the King shall give commendation and blessing, bestowing a rich recompense for their good works, as attested by the hungry they had fed, the thirsty to whom they had given drink, the stranger they had lodged, the naked they had clothed, the sick to whom they had ministered, the prisoners they had visited and encouraged, all of which mercies are accredited to them as having been rendered to their Lord in person. The blessed company, overwhelmed by the plenitude of the King's bounty, of which they regard themselves as undeserving, will fain disclaim the merit attributed to them; "**And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**"

Unto them who wait on the left in terrified expectancy, the King shall recount their several deficiencies, in that they had given Him neither food nor drink, shelter nor clothing despite His need; neither had they visited Him though ill, nor ministered unto His wants when He lay in a prison cell. In the desperation of anguish these shall ask when and where they had had such opportunity of comforting Him, and He shall answer, "**Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.**" The righteous shall be welcomed with "Come ye blessed of my Father"; the wicked shall hear the awful sentence, "Depart from me ye cursed." Eternal life is the inestimable reward; everlasting punishment the unfathomable doom.[1176]

Viewing as one discourse the two parables and the teaching that directly followed, we find in it such unity of subject and thoroughness of treatment as to give to the whole

both beauty and worth beyond the sum of these qualities exhibited in the several parts. Vigilant waiting in the Lord's cause, and the dangers of unreadiness are exemplified in the story of the virgins; diligence in work and the calamitous results of sloth are prominent features of the tale of the talents. These two phases of service are of reciprocal and complementary import; it is as necessary at times to wait as at others to work. The lapse of a long period, as while the Bridegroom tarried, and as during the Master's absence in "**a far country**,"[1177] is made plain throughout as intervening between the Lord's departure and His return in glory. The absolute certainty of the Christ coming to execute judgment upon the earth, in the which every soul shall receive according to his deserts, is the sublime summary of this unparalleled discourse.

## ANOTHER SPECIFIC PREDICTION OF THE LORD'S DEATH

Following the instructions to the apostles at the resting place on Olivet, and probably in the course of the continued walk toward Bethany that evening, Jesus reminded the Twelve of the awful fate awaiting Him, and specified the time of His betrayal and the manner of His death. "Ye know," He said, "that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."[1178]

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 32

**1. Early Fulfillment of the Lord's Prophecies** – As to the literal fulfillment of the Lord's predictions relating to the times immediately following His ascension and down to the destruction of Jerusalem, the student must be referred to scriptural and other history. Only a brief summary of the most notable events can be attempted here.

On the matter of wars and rumors or threats of wars, see Josephus, Antiquities xviii, ch. 9, and Wars, ii, ch. 10. The latter reference is to the account of the decree issued by Caligula that his statue be set up and duly revered in the temple, in consequence of which the Jews protested so strenuously that war was declared against them, but was averted by the death of the emperor. Concerning the death of Caligula, Josephus remarks that it "happened most happily for our nation in particular, which would have almost utterly perished, if he had not been suddenly slain." Other threats of war against the Jews were severally made by the emperors Claudius and Nero.

Nation rose against nation, as for example, in the assault of Greeks and Syrians upon the Jews, in the course of which 50,000 Jews were slain at Selucia on the Tigris, and 20,000 at Cæsarea, 13,000 at Scythopolis, and 2,500 at Ascalon. Famine and its attendant pestilence prevailed during the reign of Claudius, (41-54 A.D.) and such had been specifically predicted by inspiration, through Agabus (Acts 11:28). The famine was very severe in Palestine (Josephus, Antiquities, xx, ch. 2). Earthquakes were of alarming frequency and of unusual severity, between the death of Christ and the destruction of

Jerusalem, particularly in Syria, Macedonia, Campania, and Achaia. See Tacitus, *Annals*, books xii and xiv; and for account of violent seismic disturbances at Rome, see Suetonius in his *Life of Galba*. Josephus (*Wars* iv, ch. 4) records a particularly severe earthquake that disrupted parts of Judea, and was accompanied by "amazing concussions and bellings of the earth—a manifest indication that some destruction was coming upon men." The portent of "fearful sights and great signs" from heaven, as recorded by Luke was realized in the phenomenal events chronicled by Josephus (Preface to "Wars").

Of the persecution that befell the apostles and others, and of their arraignment before rulers, Dr. Adam Clarke, in his commentary on passages in Matt 24, says: "We need go no farther than the Acts of the Apostles for the completion of these particulars. Some were delivered to councils, as Peter and John (Acts 4:5). Some were brought before rulers and kings, as Paul before Gallio (18:12); before Felix (ch. 24); before Festus and Agrippa (ch. 25). Some had utterance and wisdom which their adversaries were not able to resist; so Stephen (6:10), and Paul who made even Felix himself tremble (24:25). Some were imprisoned, as Peter and John (4:3). Some were beaten, as Paul and Silas (16:23). Some were put to death, as Stephen (7:59); and James the brother of John (12:2). But if we look beyond the book of the Acts of the Apostles, to the bloody persecutions under Nero, we shall find these predictions still more amply fulfilled; in these, numberless Christians fell, besides those two champions of the faith, Peter and Paul. And it was, as says Tertullian, a war against the very name of Christ; for he who was called Christian had committed crime enough in bearing the name to be put to death. So true were our Savior's words that they should be hated of all men for His Name's sake."

Among the false prophets, and men who claimed to be the duly accredited ministers of Christ, were Simon Magus who drew many people after him (Acts 8:9, 13, 18-24; see also *The Great Apostasy*, 7:1, 2), Menander, Dositheus, and Theudas, and the false apostles referred to by Paul (2 Cor. 11:13) and others, such as Hymeneus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17, 18). Dummelow's *Commentary* applies here the record by Josephus concerning "a body of wicked men, who deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, who prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, pretending that God would there show them the signals of victory." Compare 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:18; 4:1. That the love of many did wax cold, both before and after the destruction of Jerusalem, is attested by the facts of the world-wide apostasy, which was the result of corruption within and persecution from without the Church (see *The Great Apostasy*, chaps. 3-9).

The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom "in all the world" was no less truly an essential characteristic of the apostolic period than it is of the current or last dispensation. The rapid spread of the gospel and the phenomenal growth of the Church under the direction of the apostles of old, is recorded as one of the marvels of history (*Great Apostasy*, 1:21, and citation of Eusebius). Paul, writing about thirty years after

Christ's ascension, affirms that the gospel had already been carried to every nation, and "preached to every creature under heaven" (Col. 1:23, compare verse 6).

The "abomination of desolation" cited by the Lord from the prophecy by Daniel was strictly fulfilled in the investment of Jerusalem by the Roman army (compare Luke 21:20, 21). To the Jews the ensigns and images of the Romans were a disgusting abomination. Josephus (Wars vi, ch. 6) states that the Roman ensigns were set up inside the temple and that the soldiery offered sacrifices before them.

The warning to all to flee from Jerusalem and Judea to the mountains when the armies would begin to surround the city was so generally heeded by members of the Church, that according to the early Church writers not one Christian perished in the awful siege (see Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, book iii, ch. 5). The first siege by Gallus was unexpectedly raised, and then, before the armies of Vespasian arrived at the walls, all Jews who had faith in the warning given by Christ to the apostles, and by these to the people, fled beyond Jordan, and congregated mostly at Pella (compare Josephus, Wars ii, ch. 19).

As to the unprecedented horrors of the siege, which culminated in the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, see Josephus, Wars vi, chaps. 3 and 4. That historian estimates the number slain in Jerusalem alone as 1,100,000 and in other cities and rural parts a third as many more. For details see Josephus, Wars ii, chaps. 18, 20; iii, 2, 7, 8, 9; iv, 1, 2, 7, 8, 9; vii, 6, 9, 11. Many tens of thousands were taken captive, to be afterward sold into slavery, or to be slain by wild beasts, or in gladiatorial combat in the arena for the amusement of Roman spectators.

In the course of the siege, a wall was constructed about the entire city, thus fulfilling the Lord's prediction (Luke 19:43), "thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee," in which, by the admittedly better translation, "bank" or "palisade" should appear instead of "trench". In September A.D. 70 the city fell into the hands of the Romans; and its destruction was afterward made so thorough that its site was plowed up. Jerusalem was "trodden down of the Gentiles", and ever since has been under Gentile dominion, and so shall continue to be "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke 21:24.)

**2. In the Deserts and in Secret Chambers**—The 24th chapter of Matthew, and its parallel scriptures in Mark 13 and Luke 21, may be the more easily understood if we bear in mind that the Lord therein speaks of two distinct events, each a consummation of long ages of preparation, and the first a prototype of the second. Many of the specific predictions are applicable both to the time preceding or at the destruction of Jerusalem, and to developments of succeeding time down to the second coming of Christ. The passage in Matt. 24:26 may be given this two-fold application. Josephus tells of men leading others away into the desert, saying under pretended inspiration that there should they find God; and the same historian mentions a false prophet who led many into the secret chambers of the temple during the Roman assault, promising them that

there would the Lord give them deliverance. Men, women, and children followed this fanatical leader, and were caught in the holocaust of destruction, so that 6,000 of them perished in the flames (Josephus, Wars vi, ch. 5). Concerning an application of the Lord's precepts to later times and conditions, the author has elsewhere written (*The Great Apostasy*, 7:22-25): One of the heresies of early origin and rapid growth in the Church was the doctrine of antagonism between body and spirit, whereby the former was regarded as an incubus and a curse. From what has been said this will be recognized as one of the perversions derived from the alliance of Gnosticism with Christianity. A result of this grafting in of heathen doctrines was an abundant growth of hermit practices, by which men sought to weaken, torture, and subdue their bodies, that their spirits or "souls" might gain greater freedom. Many who adopted this unnatural view of human existence retired to the solitude of the desert, and there spent their time in practices of stern self-denial and in acts of frenzied self-torture. Others shut themselves up as voluntary prisoners, seeking glory in privation and self-imposed penance. It was this unnatural view of life that gave rise to the several orders of recluses, hermits, and monks.

*Religions of all kinds do this – Muslim do “flogging” which is, rhythmically swinging a strap to the back from side to side.*

*There is also an emotional reason that people would torture themselves. Teenagers, as an example will “cut” themselves to release “stress” and people with eating disorder will starve or purge themselves.*

Think you not that the Savior had such practices in mind, when, warning the disciples of the false claims to sanctity that would characterize the times then soon to follow, He said: **"Wherefore if they shall say unto you. Behold he [Christ] is in the desert, go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not"?**

**3. The Time of Christ's Advent Not Known** – The Lord's statement that the time of His advent in glory was unknown to man, and that the angels knew it not, "neither the Son", but that it was known to the Father only, appears plain and unambiguous notwithstanding many and conflicting commentaries thereon. Jesus repeatedly affirmed that His mission was to do the will of the Father; and it is evident that the Father's will was revealed to Him from time to time. While in the flesh He laid no claim to omniscience; though whatever He willed to know He learned through the medium of communication with the Father. Christ had not asked to know what the Father had not intimated His readiness to reveal, which, in this instance, was the day and hour of the Son's appointed return to earth as a glorified, resurrected Being. We need not hesitate to believe that at the time Jesus delivered to the apostles the discourse under consideration, He was uninformed on the matter; for He so states. In the last interview between Christ and the apostles immediately before His ascension (Acts 1:6, 7) they asked "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said

**unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."** Nor has the date of the Messianic consummation been since revealed to any man; though even now, the fig tree is rapidly putting forth its leaves, and he who hath eyes to see and a heart to understand knows that the summer of the Lord's purpose is near at hand.

**4. The False Doctrine of Supererogation** – Among the pernicious fallacies promulgated as authorized dogmas by the apostate church during the long period of spiritual darkness following the close of the apostolic ministry, was the awful enormity known as the doctrine of supererogation. As stated by Mosheim (*Eccl. Hist. Cent. xii, part ii, ch. 3:4*) the dreadful doctrine was formulated in the thirteenth century as follows: "That there actually existed an immense treasure of merit, composed of the pious deeds and virtuous actions which the saints had performed beyond what was necessary for their own salvation, and which were therefore applicable to the benefit of others; that the guardian and dispenser of this precious treasure was the Roman pontiff, and that of consequence he was empowered to assign to such as he thought proper a portion of this inexhaustible source of merit, suitable to their respective guilt, and sufficient to deliver them from the punishment due to their crimes." Concerning the fallacy of this doctrine the author has written (*The Great Apostasy, 9:15*), in this wise: "This doctrine of supererogation is as unreasonable as it is unscriptural and untrue. Man's individual responsibility for his acts is as surely a fact as is his agency to act for himself. He will be saved through the merits and by the atoning sacrifice of our Redeemer and Lord; and his claim upon the salvation provided is strictly dependent on his compliance with the principles and ordinances of the gospel as established by Jesus Christ. Remission of sins and the eventual salvation of the human soul are provided for; but these gifts of God are not to be purchased with money. Compare the awful fallacies of supererogation and the blasphemous practice of assuming to remit the sins of one man in consideration of the merits of another, with the declaration of the one and only Savior of mankind: 'But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.'" If conclusions as to doctrine may be drawn from our Lord's parables, the parable of the Ten Virgins affords refutation of the Satanic suggestion that one man's sin may be neutralized by another's righteousness. We know no supererogation but that of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whose merits salvation is placed within the reach of all men.

**5. "This Generation"** – Consult any reliable unabridged dictionary of the English language for evidence of the fact that the term "generation," as connoting a period of time, has many meanings, among which are "race, kind, class." The term is not confined to a body of people living at one time. Fausett's *Bible Cyclopaedia, Critical and Expository*, after citing many meanings attached to the word, says: "In Matthew 24:34 'this generation shall not pass (viz. the Jewish race, of which the generation in Christ's days was a sample in character; compare Christ's address to the "generation," 23:35, 36, in

proof that "generation" means at times the whole Jewish race) till all these things be fulfilled' – a prophecy that the Jews shall be a distinct people still when He shall come again."

## FOOTNOTES

[1150] Matt. 24:3-51; Mark 13:3-37; Luke 21:5-35. Compare P. of G.P., Joseph Smith, 1.

[1151] Mark 13:11; compare Matt. 10:19, 20; Luke 12:11, 12; 21:14, 15.

[1152] Luke 21:19; compare Doc. and Cov. 101:38.

[1153] Dan. 9:27.

[1154] Note 1, end of chapter.

[1155] Note 2, end of chapter.

[1156] Matt. 24:27; compare Luke 17:22-24.

[1157] The "body," as that of the Church, is rendered "carcase" in both authorized and revised versions. For the application of the figure – of eagles gathering about a carcase – to the assembling of scattered Israel, see P. of G.P., Joseph Smith, 1:27, where we read: "so likewise shall mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the earth." Among Bible scholars, a favorite interpretation of the passage, "For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together," is that Christ was likening unto eagles (revised version "vultures") the angels that shall come with Him to execute judgment upon mankind, and unto a carcase the corruption of sin. See Matt. 24:28; compare Luke 17:37.

[1158] Matt. 24:35; compare 5:18; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; compare 16:17; see also Heb. 1:10, 11; 2 Peter 3:7-10; Rev. 21:1. Note 5, end of chapter.

[1159] This is Mark's version; in the parallel passage Matt. 24:36, the words "neither the Son" are not found in the King James text, but do appear in the revised version. See Note 3, end of chapter.

[1160] See chapter 26 herein.

[1161] Matt. 24:45-51; Mark 13:34-37; Luke 21:34-36, compare 12:35-48.

[1162] Matt. 25:1-13.

[1163] Compare Rev. 21:2, 9; 22:17; see also Matt. 9:15; John 3:29.

[1164] See Parable of the Sower, Matt. 13:5, 6, 20, 21; see chapter 19 herein.

[1165] Note 4, end of chapter.

[1166] Compare John 10:14.

[1167] Doc. and Cov. 45:56-59; see also 63:53, 54.

[1168] Matt. 25:14-30.

[1169] Luke 19:12-27; see chapter 29 herein.

[1170] Margin, revised version.

[1171] 1 Cor. 12:4; study the entire chapter.

[1172] Luke 12:48.

[1173] Luke 19:22; compare Matt. 12:37.

[1174] Matt. 25:31-46.

[1175] Matt. 13:24-30; see chapter 19 herein.

[1178] See chapter 19 herein.

[1177] The revised version reads "another country" instead of "a far country," in Matt. 25:14.

[1178] Matt. 26:2.