

New Testament History, Literature, and Theology

Session 9: Introduction to Mark

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This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in his New Testament History, Literature and Theology course. Lecture number 9. Finishing up the book of Matthew and beginning the introduction on the person of mark.

A. Review of Matthew [00:00-3:46]

Welcome back to New Testament History, Literature and Theology course. This is the third presentation we're doing on the book of Matthew and we'll be finishing the story of Matthew today. Just to review a little bit where we've been. We talked about Matthew as being methodical. We talked about intertextual relationships between Matthew and Luke, gathering up what Luke scatters. We said Mark expands the miracles of Jesus and the works of Jesus while Matthew expands the words of Jesus. Then we did a slight comparison between James and Matthew for the Matthew is methodical and James has an intertextual relationship with Matthew. We talked about apostling and discipleship, the cost of discipleship. We talked about righteousness, obedience, true and false disciples that are portrayed in the book of Matthew. Then we talked about the theology of Christ, his deity, his humanity, Christ as king in the book of Matthew, and the emphasis on the kingship of Christ. We talked about time: past, present and future. We said that Matthew was most likely written to a Jewish community, and therefore he refers over 40 times to references to the Old Testament. All different types of contexts fulfilling the Old Testament, but the fulfillments come in all sorts of ways: from a direct fulfillment to an echo where it is echoing through Scripture and is echoed through the book of Matthew. Adumbrations, foreshadowing, various ways the Old Testament was fulfilled. That was the past. The present would be his five major discourses that we talked about: The Sermon on the

Mount, the Sending of the Twelve, the Parables of the Kingdom, the Church Discourses in chap 18, and the Olivet Discourse in chapters 24 and 25. And then the future, we looked at the Olivet Discourse and the coming kingdom, and the “already but not yet,” the “here but there,” coming kingdom in the future.

Today we want to look at, the Hebrew orientation of the book. We said that it was probably written to Jewish folks, and so we want to say: what are the indications of who the audience is? In a lot of the books here, my general methodology is to work both with the author--and I know some New Testament people downplay the authorship--but I want to deal with the authors, especially when we get into the book of Mark. We want then also to ask about the audience--the author and the audience. What type of problems, what types of things sparked the writing of this gospel or this epistle, between the author and that audience? So we are going to say the Hebrew orientation to it, we are going to talk about why there is a Hebrew orientation. There seems to be this non-Jewish aspect of it, that is really pushed in the book of Matthew. So we'll pick up that theme as well. Then the grand theme in the book of Matthew, beginning and end, the witness going out into all the world. Finally, we'll pick up some things on style. There's one thing that I want to highlight in terms of style, and we'll talk of that in terms of hyperbole later.

B. The Hebrewness of Matthew—Language [3:46-7:40]

We're trying to establish the Hebrew background or the Hebrew audience, Jewish audience of the book of Matthew. One of the things that we talked about before, is what is called the gematria principle. You have in Matthew, the genealogy of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham. So you can see how it jumps from Jesus to David, who's about 1000 BC, to Abraham, who's about 2000 BC. So it goes, Jesus Christ the son of David, 1000 BC, Son of Abraham, 2000 BC. Then with both David and Abraham we have this great Davidic covenant where David is the king of Israel (in 2 Samuel 7), there's this

great promise concerning David and his descendent. David was a man after God's own heart. Then God said "David, I'm going to build you a house" and by that he meant he was going to build him a dynasty and that one of David's descendants would sit on the throne of Israel forever. And that's 2 Samuel 7 when David wanted to build the temple. Then with Abraham you have the great Abrahamic covenant, the land, the seed, and that he would be a blessing to all nations. So what you see in the book of Matthew is this kind of breaking out fulfilling of the Abrahamic covenant as the gospel spreads to the all nations. So David and Abraham are key figures. That's how the book starts, both major Jewish players. Now the gematria, in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1, it goes down fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from generation from David to the exile to Babylon in 586 BC. And then there are fourteen generations between the exile to Babylon and the birth of Jesus. But when you actually look at that, and you look at chapter 1 verse 8, you find that Matthew has actually skipped three of the kings of Judah. There is a list of the kings of Judah in the book of kings, we know who follows whom. So we've got a complete list of the kings, and we know that three of the names we skipped. If you go over to 1 Chronicles you can compare the parallel passage from Chronicles to Matthew 1:8. So he does that in order to make it work out and make it fit fourteen. We said in ancient times, they use the alphabet as their number system, where as in English we have a separate alphabet and a separate number system (1, 2, 3 and we've got a, b, c two different systems). They used their alphabet so that A would be 1, B would be 2, C would be 3, D would be 4. And if you do that in Hebrew, it comes out that this number fourteen could well stand for DVD. D is the number 4, V is the number 6, D is the number 4. If you put those together, DVD is the number 14. So it's been suggested, through this gematria principle working with numbers and letters, that Matthew is trying to say Jesus Christ: fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to exile, fourteen from the exile to Jesus, that Jesus Christ is the son of David, working off that principle.

Again, if you weren't Jewish, you wouldn't know the DVD. DVD, we said that the Jews were not putting in the vowels, so you just have only consonants, so that's why its DVD. Now also in the book of Matthew, he does "eloi, eloi, lama sabachathanai" "My god, my god, why have you forsaken me?" He has that in Aramaic. He uses the word "behold" a lot, which is the Hebrew word *hineh*.

C. Hebrewness—prophecy fulfillment and Exclusive Jewish Message

[7:40-12:00]

He also uses the prophecy fulfillment motif. We looked at this already when we were talking about time, and talking about Matthew quoting the Old Testament. You've got for example, Matthew chapter 1, Jesus Christ is born of the virgin at *parthenos*. Mary is the virgin; Joseph is puzzling over what to do. Then it quotes that passage from Isaiah chapter 7: "behold the virgin will conceive and bring forth the child." So then you get this connection between what's going on in Isaiah chapter 7 with what's going on with Jesus and the virgin conceiving. This connection between Micah and Bethlehem, that he would be born in Bethlehem of Judea. So they go down into Bethlehem and there is not room for them in the place they were staying, possibly with relatives in Bethlehem.

"They go down into Egypt" and we said that was from Hosea 11. That was a little different "Out of Egypt I called my son." And there you get Jesus as a new Israel. We said, the book of Matthew, portrays Jesus as a new Moses. So both of- -this new Israel thing, "out of Egypt I called my son" as Joseph and Mary go down into Egypt and as they come back, those references also connect Jesus to Israel. Jesus is the new Israel, Jesus is the new Moses, and gives five discourses. So the use of Old Testament then is one of those indicators that it's a very Jewish connected book. Matthew 5:17, Jesus said, "I did not come to destroy the law of the prophets but to fulfill them." So you get Jesus as the climax, the fulfillment of the destiny of the law of the prophets.

Now, there appear a couple of interesting ones I think in terms of this

Jewishness of Matthew, and the exclusiveness of the Jewish mission when Jesus sends out the twelve in Matthew chapter 10, he sends out the disciples, and he gives the disciples explicit instructions. This is what he says, and only Matthew contains these instructions. He says to the disciples as he sends them out in Matthew chapter 10:5 and following, he says “go nowhere among the gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans.” Jesus tells them, “don’t go to the Gentile, don’t go to the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” So, Jesus tells his disciples, when he sends them out, “no, you don’t go out to all the world at this point, you go strictly to the house of Israel, not even to the Samaritans or the Gentiles, focus strictly on the lost sheep of Israel.” So in one sense, Israel gets first dibs--the gospel message comes first to them. Then we are going to see a rejection largely from the Jewish community, and then after the rejections, the gospel goes out to the Samaritans. So, this is a very interesting, exclusive statement there, only to the Jewish people when he sends out the twelve.

Another one that comes up here that is interesting, is the Syro-Phoenician woman, or the Canaanite woman. She comes to Jesus and she wants Jesus to heal her daughter in Syro-Phoenicia which is the Lebanon area just north of Israel. Jesus says to her, “I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel.” He says it is not right to take the children’s food to feed it to the dogs. The woman comes up and says, “Well, even the dogs eat from the food under the table.” This is from Matthew chapter 15:24. So this woman comes back and Jesus says, “Wow, I haven’t seen such faith in Israel.” He says “Go, your child is healed.” But Jesus first puts hesitancy there, saying, “I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel.” Then she responds that way. You get these kind of exclusive Jewish statements, both with the Canaanite woman and with the sending of the twelve, which would indicate an Jewish audience is being highlighted here.

D. Hebrewness of Jewish Customs and Thought [12:00-16:25]

Now, if you are writing to Jewish folks, you don't need to explain Jewish customs. So what you have here is a couple interesting examples. Mark 7:3 compared to the parable in Matthew 15:2. Matthew 15:2, comparing it with Mark 7:3. Let me first read Matthew, you will see how short and concise this is: “‘why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders,’ the Pharisees complained. ‘They don’t wash their hands before they eat’.” End of discussion. “Your disciples, Jesus, aren’t following the traditions of the elders.” In their critique, there is no explanation; it is just assumed that the people know that the Pharisees and the others wash their hands. So it just says simply, “‘why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders, they don’t wash their hands before they eat.’” Period. End of discussion.

Mark, on the other hand, we’re going to show, is probably writing to a Roman audience. So Mark says this: “some saw his disciples eating food with what were unclean, that is unwashed hands”. And then in brackets in your NIV it will say, “the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders, when they come in from the marketplace unless they wash and they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.” So you have in Mark this long explanation, that the Jews, when they go out to the marketplace, they come in, they wash as a tradition. Not only do they wash their hands but they wash the kettles, the pitchers, and the cups, when they come in. So Mark, because he is writing to a Roman audience, he has to explain what this tradition is that the Pharisees are catching Jesus on here, with his disciples not washing hands. So Mark elaborates on much more than Jesus’ and the Pharisees’ interaction. The side comment that Mark makes to his Roman audience is much longer than the interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees. It is interesting here, that the customs are explained in Mark but not in Matthew.

The same type of thing is true with the kingdom of heaven. Matthew refers to the kingdom of heaven, rather than the kingdom of God. Many people see that

as a statement that Matthew is referring to the Jewish folks, and so he doesn't want to use the word "God." So he uses the circumlocution "heaven." That way there is no sense of blasphemy in using the kingdom of heaven.

Now, here is another one that is pretty fascinating. Jesus in Matthew 5:43, talks about hating ones enemy. "You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbor, but then hate your enemy.'" In Matthew 5:43, he quotes: "you have heard it said, hate your enemy." But there is nowhere in the Old Testament that says hate your enemy. But actually it turns out, what that's probably coming from--and people do notice that maybe its not coming from it directly, but it's reflecting the general ethos of the Jewish community at that time. It is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea scrolls do "have hate your enemy." So the Dead Sea scrolls have "hate your enemy." In other words, what Jesus is quoting is not the Old Testament, but he is quoting something that was prevalent at the time in Judaism. The Dead Sea Scrolls actually have something recorded like this, and so it is very interesting that in the book of Matthew, Jesus is shown to be very, very Jewish. Not just the Old Testament citations, but here he seems to be citing things that were prevalent at the time that were recorded in the Dead Sea Scrolls. So he seems to be aware of--I'm not saying that he is aware of the Dead Sea Scrolls and their quotation of that, but what I'm saying is that the Dead Sea Scrolls may have been reflecting a broader cultural phenomenon that was going on at the time. So again, that would reflect a Jewish focus.

E. Hebrewness—knowledge of the Sadducees [16:25- 18:50]

Same type of thing, a little different but similar to that, is the deal with the Sadducees. The Sadducees don't believe in two things: they don't believe that there is a resurrection from the dead, and they also don't believe that there are angels. The Sadducees, as we said before were a wealthy group, and the Pharisees were actually much more esteemed in Judaism. The people respected the Pharisees. The Pharisees were actually viewed as strict Jews, whereas the

Sadducees were seen as wealthy and Hellenistic. They have adapted to Greek culture, and therefore they were, in a certain sense moving over towards that more liberal perspective in integrating with Hellenism. Now, what happens with the Sadducees? The Sadducees come to Jesus and they say, “Jesus we have this problem.” They are setting him up obviously, and so they say to him “There was this woman, and she was married to a man. They had no children and the man dies. Well, as the Levirate marriage comes, there is the second brother must marry the woman and raise the seed of the first son. Well, the brother marries her and they don’t have any children and he dies as well. Finally, all seven brothers marry this woman and they all die. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be?” In other words, at the resurrection, she’s been married to seven men, what is the deal in heaven? Is there polygamy, where one woman has seven men? You can see all sorts of overtones there.

Then Jesus responds absolutely brilliantly as always. Jesus says, “You don’t know the power of God, you don’t know the Scripture. Because, in the resurrection, they will be like the angels; neither marrying or given in marriage.” And this freaks the Sadducees out because they don’t believe in angels either. So Jesus uses that which they have denied to answer the question, saying, “No wonder why you can’t understand the resurrection, you don’t believe in angels that would solve your problem just like that.” So Jesus puts it back onto them, using their own lack of understanding about angels, and uses that against them. So, again, that is an in-house fighting. Jesus knew what the Sadducees position was, so he uses that and turns it on them. So again, that is a Jewish context, the conflict between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Jesus is very well aware of that.

F. Hebrewness—Kingdom of Heaven and Jewish Rumors [18:50-22:28]

Now, next, let’s look at the kingdom of heaven contra the kingdom of God. We said that many parallel passages in Matthew have “kingdom of heaven,” and when you go over to Mark and other places, they will say “kingdom of God.”

There is a difference in the use of the word God in that kind of a context. Now, Israel is actually used twelve times in the book of Matthew, but six times are unique to the book of Matthew. So he seems to highlight Israel and six of the twelve times that he uses it, it is unique to the book of Matthew which again would show a Jewish orientation, that he is highlighting “Israel.” Where the other gospel writers didn’t put Israel in there, Matthew has that. So that’s another evidence of a Jewish orientation there.

Now this is one that I think is really very good. From Matthew 28:11-15. And what we have here is a Jewish rumor. Matthew picks up this Jewish rumor. This is after the resurrection. Jesus has been crucified, dead and buried, he is risen again, he tells his disciples and brother “Go up to Galilee,” and it says, “while the women were on their way, some guards went into the city and reported to the chief priest everything that had happened. When the chief priest met with the elders and devised a plan. They gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, ‘you are to say “his disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.” If this report gets to the governor, we’ll cover your back. ‘If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.’ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story have been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.” Now Matthew is probably writing well after 60 AD. So this is about 30 years after Jesus had died and risen from the dead, and he says “and this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.” So Matthew seems to be aware of, and picks up on this Jewish rumor, that was spread, that the guards had been paid off to say that the disciples stole the body. So, again, Jewish rumor inside the Jewish community, that rumor was spread. So Matthew puts that rumor to bed and says “Hey, this is what happened: those guys were paid off to say that.”

Now, there is a tradition that Jesus was a sorcerer in the rabbinic traditions. Jesus is portrayed as a sorcerer, a magician of sorts. Even in the book of Matthew 12:24f, they say Jesus is casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

So this idea that Jesus is a sorcerer is already brought up in the book of Matthew. It is believed that maybe Matthew is trying to short circuit some of the Jewish criticism that Jesus was a sorcerer. Jesus then refutes that saying, “If I cast out by Beelzebub, then Beelzebub is opposing himself, that doesn’t make sense.” He then asks “Then who do your disciples cast them out by?” So, anyways, working with these Jewish concepts, the book of Matthew seems to be very bent towards Judaism.

G. Christianity as a Jewish Sect [22:28-26:53]

While the book features Jewish rumors and Jewish means of expression in various ways, it also has this really strong extensiveness, where it kind of breaks Christianity out of Judaism. It may be that the early church was initially Jewish, that Christianity started in Jerusalem, that Jesus rose from the dead there, and then Pentecost comes. Pentecost takes place in the temple area there, and Jesus going up on Mount of Olives and ascending to heaven from the Mount of Olives, which is just outside Jerusalem to the East. So it is a very Jewish thing, and the early church was actually considered to be a sect called the Nazarenes. You had the Pharisees, you had the Sadducees, and now you had the Nazarenes, those who followed Jesus of Nazareth. So Christianity was initially a sect within Judaism, and then what happened was persecution came and the Christians had this separation. But how did the Christians separate from Judaism? They were forced to separate because they were killed. James was killed, and Stephen was killed (Acts 7), and Paul was involved in some of that. So the early Christians, in one sense, are having a major identity crisis of sorts because they were Jewish. Jesus was Jewish, the twelve apostles were Jewish. So there is a very Jewishness to the early church.

Now they are being forced out, and in one sense, what is this connection with their identity? In one sense they weren’t Jewish anymore. So you get this connection: “yes, we are Jewish but we are supposed to spread the gospel to the

whole world.” So you get this tension then. In what sense did the Gentiles come in? Did the Gentiles have to become Jews before they become Christians? So this becomes a tension, and in the early church, persecution came because once, when the church was considered a sect of Judaism, the Jews had a special dispensation from the Romans. The Jews were allowed to be the Jews, and the Jews served one God and didn't serve the gods of Rome. So the Jews basically got a break from the Romans and weren't persecuted that bad.

And the Christians, as long as the Christians were under that umbrella, the Christians were protected in that way. But when the Christians become a kind of a separate unit, the early Christians were condemned and were persecuted for basically three things. First, one they were condemned as atheists, because the Christians worshiped a god you couldn't see. So therefore the other gods they had statues of them and various things, the Christians were condemned as atheists. One of the early Christians, as he was dying on the fire that was going to burn him to death, was condemned as an atheist and Polycarp said, “away with the atheists.” Saying you guys are the atheists, because you believe in things that aren't really God. So the church was condemned for being atheist because they believed in a God you couldn't see. Secondly, they were condemned because they were cannibals. They were condemned for cannibalism, because they ate his body and drank his blood. So you see the early Eucharist and the Lord's Supper were used then, they said “whoa, they are eating his body and drinking his blood, these people are cannibals.” Therefore they were condemned as cannibals. And lastly, they were condemned for incest because they married their brothers and sisters; they married within their own little groups. So they married their brothers and sisters but they didn't realize that they were talking about spiritual brothers and sisters which didn't mean you are actually physically related to them.

So for incest, for cannibalism, and for atheism, the early Christians then were persecuted. Then probably a big thing and my good friend Dave Mathewson brings up so well in his lectures that you can watch online, is the emperor worship.

Then various regional aspects of that, where regional folks are trying to show their allegiance to the emperor by demanding that the Christians and others then show their allegiance to the emperor by emperor worship. Then when the Christians don't do that, that becomes a problem. So, this is the extension, breaking out of Judaism, and moving to the Gentiles.

I. Foreigners in Christ's Genealogy—Tamar and Rahab [26:53-31:27]

And so, I want to talk through Matthew chapter 1 as that genealogy. I know that when you talk about genealogy everybody goes to sleep. It's "this is really boring, we don't do genealogy. You have to be at least seventy before you do genealogy". But let's think about the genealogy in Matthew chapter 1. Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the sons of Israel, twelve tribes. Then the twelve tribes coming down to Judah, and Judah begot Peres and Zerah and coming down like that. So what you've got is this list then through Judah down to David, and David's descendants after him, Solomon, David's son, and then all the way down to Joseph. Matthew chapter 1 gives the genealogy of Joseph, Jesus' legal line so that he could sit on the throne of David, as being the son of David.

What's interesting is that, while it lists all the kings of Israel who are very, very, very Jewish, there are four women who are mentioned here. In the genealogy of Christ there are four women, and I want to go through them because I think it's absolutely fascinating.

The first is Tamar. It says that Judah bore Perez and Zerah of this woman named Tamar. Well, who is Tamar? We know who Tamar was. This is back in Genesis chapter 38. It talks about Tamar and here's basically the story: Judah had a son, who married Tamar, she was a Canaanite; she was not Jewish. His son Er married her. Er died. So then what happened? He had another son named Onan, and he gives his other son to her. He spills the seed (and I don't want to get into the details) and basically God smites Onan. So now Judah's older son who was

married to her died, and his second son, because he failed to fulfill the Levirate marriage, God smites him. Now he has his youngest son, and there is no way in the world that he is going to give his youngest son to this woman. Everybody this woman touches dies.

Then Judah's wife dies, so now Judah is without a wife and he is going out to shear sheep. He is going out, he is walking along the way and guess who he meets on the way? Tamar is out there realizing that she is not going to get the youngest son. So she dresses up as a prostitute, and Judah comes up to her and she gets his signet ring in return for sexual relations. She wants his signet ring as a temporary payment until he brings a goat. She ends up finding out that she is pregnant. Judah wants her stoned to death, and then she pulls out his ring and says, "Hey, Judah, you remember this? I got your visa number here man, your done." And then Judah says, "you're more righteous than I am." The significance is what is Tamar? Tamar is the Canaanite woman who played the prostitute.

As soon as I say Rahab, what comes to mind? Well, Rahab the what? Rahab is a prostitute, a harlot. Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute that we know from Joshua when they were going in to take the land. They crossed the Jordan River, and they were going to fight against Jericho. They sent spies out, the spies went to the house of Rahab the harlot, she was a prostitute, she would know everything that was going on in the city. She hid the spies to deceive the king of Jericho. Then it turns out that Rahab the prostitute from Jericho, she is in the Messianic line. She is the great, great, great grandmother of David. She is in the line of Jesus Christ as is Tamar. So what did both of these woman have in common? Well, they both have in common that they are Canaanites. They're not Jewish. So here you have this beautiful, pure, Jewish genealogy, and four women are stuck in there. And the first two are not Jewish at all. They are not Jewish women.

J. Foreigners in Christ's Genealogy—Uriah's wife and Ruth [31:27-34:43]

Now, what's very interesting to me, is the reference here to Uriah's wife. Solomon is going to come from whom? Solomon is going to come from Bathsheba. Everybody knows David and Bathsheba, the story is famous even till this day. But notice in Matthew's genealogy, he does not mention Bathsheba's name. Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, Bath-sheva—daughter of the oath). Good Jewish name, good Jewish woman. She's got a problem with David. But at least she is largely Jewish. But when Matthew does the genealogy, he does not say Bathsheba, what he says is: "she has been Uriah's wife." That's one of the reason I have trouble with the NLT translation. The NLT gives you the name Bathsheba, largely they do that because everybody knows who Bathsheba is. If they say the one who had been Uriah's wife, nobody knows who Uriah is. He's the husband who was killed. David killed this guy so that he could steal his wife. Uriah was a what? Uriah was a Hittite. So notice, Matthew does not mention Bathsheba even though that name is more popular and everybody would have know Bathsheba. Instead he mentions Uriah, that she is Uriah's wife, Uriah the Hittite. So again, its this foreign association in the genealogy, and this is actually David having relations with Bathsheba and producing Solomon. So Solomon's mother is Bathsheba, who had been Uriah's wife. Matthew mentions it as Uriah's wife, Uriah the Hittite.

And the last one that is really famous, the fourth woman, is Ruth. What was Ruth's moniker? Her name goes Ruth the Moabitess. And we've got a whole book, one of the beautiful books in the Old Testament about Ruth and Naomi and Boaz, and the story there, Elimelech and how they went to Moab and all the men died. Then Ruth ends up marrying Boaz. But Ruth is a Moabitess. She marries Boaz and they are then the great, great grandparents of David.

So what I'm suggesting here: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife, those are all associated then with these non-Jewish people, people who are Gentiles, outsiders. So already in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter 1: Yes, sure, Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham, but you get this breaking out in

the genealogy, the four women that are mentioned there. There are only four women that are mentioned, every one of them has these foreign connections. In one sense, this is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Where the Abrahamic covenant would be that, “Abraham, your descendants will be a blessing to all nations.” So you can see already, this kind of moving out from strict Judaism to all nations, fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant, in kind of an incipient way.

K. Extensiveness—universal mission and the Wise men [34:43-42:55]

A very famous passage at the end of the book, this is from Matthew chapter 1, we see the breaking out of Judaism, but then in Matthew chapter 28:18, you get this statement, and again, this is the Great Commission: “Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him but some doubted.” We know John tells us about doubting Thomas and others. I don’t like that name, Doubting Thomas, by the way, but we’ll cover that when we get into John. “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore,’ and this is what is called the Great Commission, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.” So this idea of basically going and making disciples (Do you see how that pulls in the discipleship theme?) of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. So the book begins with this breaking out with these Gentile women, and it ends with them making disciples of the all nations. And so that is at the beginning and end of the book, and actually, what’s kind of interesting too, notice the wise men only in the book of Matthew do the wise men come. Mark doesn’t record the story, Luke doesn’t, John doesn’t, only Matthew records the wise men. Again, the wise men seem to be this adumbration, this foreshadowing that the gospel goes

beyond Judaism, and here the first people, where is he that is born king of the Jews, the first people to realize that he is the king of the Jews. Remember how the story ends with this sign above Jesus head, the king of the Jews. And here you have the magi coming from Mesopotamia, saying, “where is he that has been born the king of the Jews?.” Again, the story begins and ends with this king of the Jews. Who is the first one that recognizes it, it is not the Jewish peoples, it is the Gentiles coming in, these magi, these magicians, or astrologers from Mesopotamia. So that’s significant and interesting, in that regard in terms of breaking out.

Now, here are some things you get with this rejections of Israel. In Matthew 8 you get the Roman centurion. Chapters 8 and 9 in Matthew are a lot about miracles that Jesus did. Chapter 13 is the parables of the kingdom. In chapters 8 and 9 there are a lot of miracles. One of the miracles is this guy who is a centurion, he is a Roman centurion over a hundred people. He comes to Jesus and notice the centurion is concerned about his servant. So you have this beautiful image of this guy who is very high up the totem pole over 100 people of the legion, a very distinguished position and yet he is concerned about his servant. He comes to Jesus, and he says to Jesus, “would you heal my servant, my servant is paralyzed, he has really got problems, would you heal him.” And Jesus says “okay, I’ll go with you.” Thinking he would go to this centurion’s home and he’s got this big centurion home, with all these servants. The guy says, “I’m not worthy to come under my roof”. The centurion says to Jesus, Jesus is this peasant Jew, “I’m not worthy to have you peasant Jew, come under my roof”. He says, “I know what it is like to be under authority.” He said, “I speak a word and my servants go do what I say. I am a man under authority.” He said, “just speak the word, you just speak the word and my servant will be healed.” And Jesus says, “Wow, I’ve not found such faith in all of Israel... Not found such great faith from anyone in Israel.” In one sense, he is rebuking Israel, that here is this Gentile centurion. A lot of folk wanted Jesus to be the messiah to throw off the Roman

yoke, to be a zealot and say “no, we have to get rid of the Romans, I am the king of the Jews, I am the son of David, I am going to sit on the throne.” Jesus doesn’t say that, instead, he says “here is a Roman centurion who is a model of faith, better than what I have found in all of Israel.” So again, he is breaking outside that strict Jewish kind of way of doing things.

There is a famous quote in Matthew 11: “woe unto you Chorazin. Woe unto you Bethsaida. If the miracles who had been done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon.” Now where are Tyre and Sidon? Tyre and Sidon are up in Lebanon. They are not Jewish, they are Gentile. He said, “Woe unto you Chorazin, woe unto you Bethsaida.” Those are two places that are right along the seashore of Galilee. They are Jewish, totally Jewish, and he says, “If the miracles that had been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented a long time ago.” So he is commending Tyre and Sidon over what had been happening, and condemning the lack of faith and the rejection that he received and Chorazin and Bethsaida, these two Jewish cities.

Then there is the parable of the wicked tenants. When you are dealing with parables too, I know when I was taught parables earlier the parable of the sower: The sower goes out to sew seeds, some fall on the path, some falls on the rocky soil, some falls among thorns and weeds, and they drowned out, and some falls on good soil and it produces abundant crop. I was told that parables were always something that was very natural and very normal, that parables were things that happened in every day life. I want to question that a little. I think sometimes the parables stories are things that are somewhat unrealistic, and sometimes they are unrealistic to make a point. You have one here with the tenants. So this farmer has got his land, and what he does is, the farmer then goes out and he rents out his land to these tenant farmers. So these tenets are going to farm his land and then the deal is that he lets them use their land, they produce crops and they give him a cut of that, and he gets a percentage of it. So what happens is, the tenants do it, he sends out his servants to collect the rent from these tenant farmers. What the guys

do is, they catch his servants and they beat up some and then he sends more and they actually beat up and kill some of his servants that he is sending down to these farmers.

Finally, he says they will reverence and respect my son. I think that this is a little unrealistic. If you sent out servants to these tenants and were thinking that they were going to pay, and they end up beating up your servants and killing some of them, you wouldn't send your son out, you'd probably go yourself and blow them away. But anyway, he sends out his son, and you get the imagery here. This is God the Father sending his son out to Israel, and Israel, like the prophets, is rejecting and beating the prophets. So now he is going to send his son, Jesus. He sends his son, and the tenant farmers look at the son and they say, "Whoa, this is the son, if we put him to death, we will get the inheritance." So they decide, "let's kill the son." So they kill the son. "What then would the father do?" the question comes afterwards. So what happens is that in chapter 21:43, it says this:

"therefore, I tell you, that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit." It will be taken from you, tenant farmers, who didn't produce the fruit, didn't give it to the master, but it is going to be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit, i.e. the Gentiles. So this is again this notion of the Jews are given the first offer, they misuse that, and so now the gospel is spreading out to the Gentiles. This is the parable of the wicked tenants. The narrator notes that the Pharisees figured out that he was talking about them. They got the clue from that apparently.

L. The Twelve Thrones and Witness [42:55-47:05]

Now, couple of things that work with this extensiveness thing: one that is interesting, he tells the disciples that they will sit on twelve thrones. This is Matthew 19:28: "truly I tell you that at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory." Now notice the Son of Man, we are going to talk about him in Mark in our next presentation about the Son of Man and

what that term means. Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man. That's how Jesus self-identifies himself as the son of man. "The son of man is seated on the throne of his glory, and you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So the disciples basically are going to see this kind of convergence where it's not going to be the twelve patriarchs of Israel, it's not going to be Judah and Joseph and Benjamin and Naphtali and Zebulon. It's not going to be those who sit and judge Israel, it is going to be the twelve apostles. So what you've got is a combining of two communities: the Jewish community and the ones that disciples will sit over on twelve thrones judging the folks of Israel.

And then, just quickly, on this witness: So we talked about its Hebrew orientation and we showed how it broke out of the Hebrew mindset, to an extensive one onto include the Gentiles. Then, here, just quickly, is the witness, Matthew's story is about the witnesses. The first people that come as witnesses are the magi coming from the East in chapter 2. Jesus is also sending the twelve out to be a witness for him within Israel. Then he gives them instructions in Matthew chapter 10, sending the twelve to be witnesses. Then the lament for Jerusalem, where Jesus comes over the Mount of Olives. Some of you looked at the Get Lost In Jerusalem program and you go to that Dominus Fleuit church. They've got a church on the Mount of Olives now. You kind of come down the Mount of Olives and the Kidron Valley and up the other side and that is where the temple mount is. So the temple mount is here, Mount of Olives is here, and as you come down the mountain a way, there is a church that is a shaped architecturally like a tear. This is where Jesus lamented over Jerusalem: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I would have gathered you as a mother hen gathers her chicks but you would not." Jesus then weeps for Jerusalem. He realizes just a few days hence, they are going to kill him. Anyway, this is the lament for Jerusalem. Again, the witness are going out and the gospel spreading. We looked at this last time, I believe, when we were talking about the Olivet Discourse. How do you know when the end will come?

The end will come when the gospel spreads to the ends of the world. So that is the indicator. When the gospel spreads to the ends of the world, then the end will come. We said, some of the Wycliffe Bible translators are taking the gospel to all the tribes of the world right now, so it's kind of interesting in that way.

Lastly, of course, is the Great Commission. The Great Commission just one more time, and this is the verse that everyone should memorize. A person I used to work with, the great commission was his theme song. He saw everything in the Bible always came back to this great commission. He was a very evangelistic type of person, especially with young people. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations." So we are to be disciple makers, and that can be done in all sorts of ways. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I am with you always." So you get this Immanuel concept: God with us. "I am with you always, to the very end of the age." So, the book starts with these witnesses. Middle, chapter 10, he sends out the twelve to Israel, and it ends then sending them out to all nations, this final witness.

M. Matthew's Story—Style [47:05-49:41]

I want to go through some of Matthew's style. Style of writing and let's just do this briefly because I don't think this is so significant. Matthew's fondness for repetition: "Truly, truly I say unto you." He says that in chapter 5 verse 18, and it occurs about 31 times. "Truly, truly I say unto you." And "You have heard it said of old but I say unto you." You remember reading that in the Sermon on the Mount several times. "You have heard it said but I say unto you," that kind of thing. So, Matthew seems to like to repeat things. So he uses these forms.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God, blessed are you. So when you look at the Sermon on the Mount, blessed are the..., blessed are the..., blessed are the beatitudes. All lined up there in a row starting with the word for the Hebrew word *ashre*, the

Greek word *makarios*. Matthew, because he is Jewish, will understand that a lot of the Hebrew poetry is written in parallelism. So a lot of time he'll say "heaven and earth," "the law and the prophets," "the scribes and the Pharisees." So he'll use these repetitions. "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Can you see the parallelism there? "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." He is saying the same thing twice. It's a poetic way of saying it to the Jewish mind. This is the idea of parallelism, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew gives you the teachings of Jesus and these five great discourses. We said the five discourses; people parallel those to the Pentateuch or the Torah--Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy--the first five books. So the five discourses are: the Sermon on the Mount, the Olivet discourse, the sending of the twelve, the parables of the kingdom, and the teachings on the church in Matthew chapter 18. So that is all part of Matthew's style. There are over forty quotes from the Old Testament. Again, that is part of the style Matthew and we said probably because of the Jewish connection that that is what he does. In terms of vocabulary, he uses "then" quite a bit, "behold," and "the kingdom of heaven". That is typical of Matthew.

N. Interpretation—Hermeneutics of Hyperbole [49:41-53:25]

Now, what I want to do is I want to talk about this thing with hyperbole. Matthew uses, it seems to me, hyperbole. It seems to me that people don't know or understand, how to interpret hyperbole. A hyperbolic statement, how do you interpret it? Let me just tell you something. I used to teach at the same institution as this person and they always said that "all" in the Bible always means all, and that's all that all means. "All always means all." Now when you say something always means one thing, I just want to tell you, and your gut should tell you, that's not right. We use words in so many different ways, so that one word does not always mean one thing. "All" doesn't always mean "all." So for example, we just use that thing with brothers and sisters. How do we use brothers and sisters? Well,

you use it in your family as brothers and sisters. Then you go to church and people greet each other as brothers and sisters, so it's obviously very different in terms of how you conceptualize that. So what I'm saying is be careful about this notion.

Now what is a hyperbole and how does this work? In Matthew 3:5, it says "all Jerusalem went out to see John the Baptist." Well, when it says "all" there, does it mean every last person in Jerusalem went out to see John the Baptist? John the Baptist was down 20-30 miles, downhill. Then you've got to come back up. Is that really what happened, that "all Jerusalem went out to see John the Baptist"? What I want to suggest to you is: No. Actually, let me just tell you, there's one person who didn't go down there. There was a man that John records who had been crippled for 38 years and sat by the pool of Bethesda there, and Jesus is going to come up to this guy. And this guy is going to say, "Hey, I can't get into the water fast enough" and Jesus is going to say, "Get up and walk" and the guy is going to get up and walk into the temple. So that guy had been crippled for 38 years. There is no way he went down to see John the Baptist and got baptized by him. So when it says all Jerusalem went down to see John the Baptist, it's meaning all, the same way we say "everybody went to the basketball game." When you say everybody, all Gordon College was at the basketball game, that's a hyperbole, it's an overstatement.

Let me just define what a hyperbole is. A hyperbole is an overstatement for emphasis. We do that all the time. That was a corny joke. "We do that all the time." I really don't do hyperbole all the time, so it's an overstatement itself. So you have to be careful with hyperboles. What I'm going to suggest here is that Jesus teaches with hyperbole. Not just in terms of "all." Now you have to be careful with the hyperbole.

When Paul says, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," when Paul says, "all have sinned," does he mean every last person? Yes. In that case, all means all. So, what determines meaning? What determines the meaning

of the word “all”? Whether it means absolutely all, or whether it means, in a hyperbolic sense, that most of the people were there. Context determines meaning. That’s one of the things that I really try to push in this course. What does the word mean? You can’t take a word out of context and tell what it means. You have to look at a word in its context. And so “all” sometimes will mean absolutely all with no question. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” At other times “all Judea went down to John the Baptist,” that is a hyperbole, an overstatement for emphasis. So you have to be careful with this.

O. Don’t Universalize Scripture—Gouge Out Your Eye [53:25-56:38]

Now let me push this a little bit further. I worry sometimes that people take the Sermon on the Mount and they absolutize the statements from the Sermon on the Mount. They say, “Whoa, this is what Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount” and then they absolutize those statements out of Scripture. This is what Jesus said and then all the rest of Scripture gets put on hold and put in the background while this one statement is absolutized. What I’m saying is you can’t do that. That is an illegitimate way of interpreting the Bible. You have to interpret every passage in Scripture in light of the other passages in Scripture. You can’t just take one verse out of context and then make that be your theme song for the whole bible. Let me just give you an example. Matthew 5:29. This is from the Sermon on the Mount. And what I want to suggest to you is this is not meant to be absolutized. Matthew 5:29 as soon as I read it you’ll all recognize it. “You have heard it said, do not commit adultery, but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has committed adultery with her in his heart.” Then he says this, “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for you whole body to be thrown into hell.” So if your eye is going to cause you sin, and you’re going to look and lust after women, gouge out your eye. I know for most guys then are going to have one eye or less. So is this meant to be take as an absolute statement: “gouge out your

eye”? “And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.” If your eye offends you cut it out. If your hand offends you cut it off. Well what about your head? Your head and your heart affect you. What are you going to do cut out your heart, and cut off your head. In other words, these are not meant to be taken literally. They are hyperbolic statements; they are overstatement for emphasis. He is not meaning for us to gouge out our eyes. By the way, if you gouge out your eye, can your head still lust? Yes, because lust goes in much deeper than the eye. He is just stating the importance of this by “gouging out the eye.” So what I’m suggesting here, is that this is a hyperbolic statement, an overstatement for emphasis. By the way, some people in the early church did, in fact, gouge out their eyes. They actually did this. What I’m saying is you have to use your head. You can’t be taking it and universalizing it. You can’t take a statement out of the Sermon on the Mount and try to universalize all the statements. You can’t universalize this: to gouge out your eye when your eye offends you. You have to be very careful.

P. Don’t universalize Scripture—Anger and Fools [56:38-59:49]

Let me push this a little bit further. Jesus said, if a person is angry with his brother, he has committed murder already in his heart. “You’ve heard it said, do not commit murder, but I say whoever is angry at their brother...” So that would be one thing. So you are not supposed to be angry with your brother because that’s the force behind the Cain and Able murder. But then what do you do with that? Then you try to absolutize that. Anger is bad. Jesus said anger is bad. Well, is Jesus really saying anger is bad? Can you universalize that statement? You say, “Well, no, Jesus didn’t say anger is bad. He said anger without a cause” and then you try to qualify it a little bit. But there is this tendency to universalize. Then what you find in Mark 3:5 is, guess what? The Pharisees are around and this guy has a withered hand. This guy with the withered hand comes up to Jesus. The

Pharisees ask “are you going to heal this guy’s hand on the Sabbath?” And so the Pharisees are trying to trap Jesus using this poor fellow that has a withered hand. It says “Jesus looked at them in anger” because they were using this guy to set him up, to see whether he would violate the Sabbath or not. Jesus said, “If you guys have a sheep that fell into a pit, you would pick the sheep up. How much better then is a man than the sheep? It is right to do good on the Sabbath.” He rebukes them, but it says that he “looked at them in anger.” So Jesus himself had anger. The Bible explicitly tells us. So you have to be really careful with universalizing these kinds of statements.

Here is another one. Jesus said don’t call anybody fool. You can make all sorts of little distinctions: “It’s not this kind of fool, it’s that kind of fool” and try to play games with the words. But I think you are mincing words there. Jesus said “don’t call anyone a fool” and I think you have to understand that, but yet Jesus himself says what? In chapter 23: “Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, and you who are foolish, slow to believe.” What about the apostle Paul who says in Galatians chapter 3:1, he says, “O foolish Galatians.” Then you try to say, “well he didn’t really say fool,” and you try to make all sorts of excuses for it. But what I’m saying is don’t take Jesus, when he said—he’s not saying to people that there is some magic formula that you shouldn’t say this magic word, this one word you can’t use on people. You’re missing the point of what he is saying. Paul will say, “O foolish Galatians” because what they are doing is wrong, and he points that out. Jesus will look at people and see them and call them hypocrites and other types of terms. He labels people for what they are. So you have to try to understand these things rather than taking a statement out of context and universalizing it.

Q. Universalizing Scripture—Judging Others [59:49-62:38]

The same type of thing happens with this one. “Judge not, that you be not judged.” I swear, it used to be 30 years ago, if you asked a Christian person, what

was the chief verse in the Bible that people knew, they would say, “for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life,” John 3:16, would be the key verse. Even Tim Tebow puts it under his eyes now. However, I would maintain that if you ask people today, what is the most famous verse in all the Bible? Most people would say, “Judge not, that you be not judged.” Now, does that mean then, we are not supposed to judge anybody? They you try to say, “Well, that means we’re not to make judgment calls on anybody.” But what about that? What about down in 7:15, when Jesus himself warns his disciples about false teachers? He warns them about false teachers, that they have to judge between true teachers and false teachers. They have to make that judgment call. So when you take this statement and say, “Judge not, that you be not judged,” does that mean we just accept everybody, everybody is just good? No. Jesus says that there are false teachers out there and you better distinguish between true and false teachers.

Now, you don’t have, obviously, the big judgment call at the end of all times with that. But you have to be careful about taking this statement, “Judge not, that you be not judged,” and universalizing its statement. Because Jesus himself says there are true and false teachers. Jesus himself, in Matthew 23, goes up to the Scribes and Pharisees and says, “you hypocrites.” Is Jesus making a judgment call? Yes, he is calling them hypocrites, and he is labeling them for what they are. So be careful, you can’t take these statements and universalize them. “Don’t cast your pearls before swine,” Jesus said in chapter 7:6. That’s in the same Sermon on the Mount, “don’t cast your pearls before swine.” Doesn’t that mean you have to make a judgment call on who is swine and on who is not swine? So what I’m saying is, you have to be careful about absolutizing these things, turning off your brain and saying “this is my theme song: Judge not that you be not judged.” Most of the time when I’ve heard people say it, it’s when they are doing something wrong and somebody called their bluff on it. And they say, “Judge not, you

shouldn't be judging me." They're not judging you, they're trying to help you, and they're pointing out that you have a problem here.

So what happens is that we can't point out a problem that a brother is having. Well, Paul did that. Remember that guy who was in chapter 5 in 1 Corinthians; he's committing incest. Paul says throw the guy out of the church. He says, "I've made a judgment, now kick him out of the church." So you have to be real careful, about absolutizing these statements, it can be a real problem.

R. Universalizing Scripture—Turn the Other Cheek [62:38-66:08]

Now, here's another one. This is from Matthew 5:39, "if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him also the left." Don't resist the evil person. Well, how do you understand that? I'm never supposed to resist an evil person, and if somebody strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the left also. Does that mean then--how do you understand that verse, Matthew 5:39? This has been a big one for pacifistic type people, who say turn the other cheek. And I've always said that the pacifistic people need somebody to protect them. Somebody has got to face the evil so they can be protected, so that they can turn the other cheek. But I want you to think about this. Actually, my son raised this issue the other day. Suppose a ten-year-old kid comes up to his father and the ten-year-old kid slaps his father across the face. The father being a Christian says, "Turn the other cheek." So the father takes the child and turns the other cheek and the son slaps the other side of his face. When the mother gets home, what have you just taught that kid? Oh, turn the other cheek. Go slap mom in the face, dad didn't do anything, I'm going to go slap mom in the face. So you've just taught this kid to slap someone in the face. Question: is that the way you want to rear your children? Something should go off in your head. Something should go off in your gut, saying this isn't right. A child slaps his father, there should be discipline. The Old Testament said that the kid would have really big problems in the Old

Testament if he didn't honor his father and his mother. You are not doing that by slapping them across the face. So are you training your kids to do that?

The classic story for me is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. We've mentioned him before in terms of the cost of discipleship and that great book that he did, and the life that he lived. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a pacifist; turn the other cheek kind of person. When Hitler took over, he came to America. He was out of the environment; he chose to go back into that environment. He went back into that environment in Germany, even though he was a pacifist. He basically plotted; he was in on the plot to kill Hitler. What I'm saying is, when he was faced with the evil of the magnitude of Hitler and killing of millions and millions of people, even Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was a "theoretic pacifist," when he is faced with that kind of evil, realized somebody has got to stop this guy. So he took matters into his own hands at the peril and cost of his life.

So, what I'm saying is, you have to be very careful with absolutizing these statements. You have to say, "are there contexts where it is really inappropriate?" Somebody comes up and is going to do some damage to my wife or my children and I turn the other cheek and then they suffer because I am not man enough to stand up to it. Sorry for using the term "man enough" but that is exactly what I mean. So, in other words, I am a father of a house and something very deep within me is to protect my children and my family. So, to turn the other cheek, yes, in certain contexts it is appropriate to turn my cheek. But in other contexts, it means I am a coward. So what I'm saying is you can't take this statement and universalize it.

S. Understanding the Other Cheek [66:08-70:56]

My TA this year made some great suggestions too in terms of understanding the other cheek. What he pointed out was, that's really interesting, this turning the other cheek comes up... This "eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" thing comes up in Deuteronomy. In Matthew chapter 19, verses 16 and following

it talks about this eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth law. And there it is in the context of a malicious witness. In other words, it is about a witness who is going before a court and is lying in the court. It's saying that whatever that witness does, it should be done to him; whatever he is trying to get done, the false witness that is testifying in court, is trying to get somebody else, sue them for something whatever he was trying to do to that other person, it should be done to him. This comes up, and what happens is, that the suggestion here is that the person, it says, "Whoever strikes you on the right cheek."

Now when you strike someone on the right cheek, most people are right handed, what cheek are they going to strike? They are going to strike the left cheek. To strike the right cheek, is the person going to be using the back of their hand? They are going to be using the back of their hand. The issue here is not defending yourself, the issue is one of humiliation and shame. So one slaps one's cheek in terms of shaming the person, and our honor should be found not in ourselves but in Christ. If you go over to lamentations, it's interesting. Lamentation 3:30, it talks about striking the cheek as being a sign of disgrace. We as Christians should not--we will bear disgrace because we are Christians, as our master suffered and died on a cross, we as Christians will suffer disgrace. Its not talking about, don't defend your family, don't defend your country, don't defend--you know you have to be careful about universalizing that. There is going to be a time for what?

Ecclesiastes 3, famous passage, the Byrds made it famous in their song "Turn, Turn, Turn": "There is a time for peace and there is a time for war." What I'm saying is you can't just take a statement out of Jesus and say this is the way it should be. This universalizes the statement. You know you have statements in Scripture that say what? God is a warrior. Look at Exodus 15. God is a warrior. "There is a time for peace, there is a time for war," Ecclesiastes 3.

By the way, what about the book of Revelation? When Jesus comes back, the meek and mild peace-loving Jesus, when he comes back, what is it? It's the

battle of Armageddon. Who is leading the charge in the battle of Armageddon, the struggle between good and evil? It is Jesus leading the battle. So you can't universalize these statements. You have to understand that these statements have to be taken--there are times and places these statements need to be employed. So there needs to be a time where someone slaps me across the face (because I'm a Christian) that I turn the other cheek. There needs to be a time and a place for that. That's not out of weakness, and that's not out of cowardice. But it's out of strength. I need to defend my family. I need to, at certain points, depending on the level of evil, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer who will go back to Germany and plot the death of Hitler, because he is trying to destroy evil. So I think that there is a time and a place, and the person has to figure out, it is a very complex thing. You can't just take one verse and mandate it onto all situations.

So, again, what I'm working on here is a thing called hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is how you interpret the Bible. Hermeneutics is the study of the interpretation of the Bible. What I'm suggesting here is that you have to be very careful, in the Sermon on the Mount, that you don't take a statement that says "gouge out your eye if it offends you," and say, "Well, I should gouge out my eye." It's a hyperbolic statement; it's an overstatement for emphasis. You have to be really careful about taking these statements and universalizing them. That's the major point I wanted to make in terms of interpreting these things, because I think they have been taken so many times out of context. So be careful about universalizing or absolutizing "gouge out your eye" or "turn the other cheek" or "judge not, that you be not judge." All of those things are meant to be understood. And you have to explore the meanings and the nuances of them, and when they should be applied and when they shouldn't be applied. So you've got to really work with that.

Mark [70:56-74:45]

T. Introduction to Mark---Jesus An Amazing Servant of the Lord

I believe that's what we wanted to do in the book of Matthew. No, what I'd like to do is jump over to the book of Mark. We want to transition now over to the book of Mark. We just want to introduce, initially here, the character of Mark and talk about him as a person. Mark is going to be, as Matthew was Jesus Christ is king and the kingdom of heaven, Mark is going to be the amazing servant of the Lord. And so, in Mark, the servant theme is going to be big. The amazing part of it is kind of neat--the amazing servant. So you have people being amazed at Jesus. In the book of Mark, it highlights this idea of people being amazed at Jesus. Mark 2:22 and following says, "People were amazed at his teaching because he taught them as one who had authority and not as teachers of the law." Down to verse 27, "the people were so amazed, they asked each other 'What is this new teaching and with authority he gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him?'" So the people are amazed at Jesus. So it's this amazing servant.

What's interesting to me is, that Jesus, at a certain point, he is amazed back at the people. Jesus is amazed at the people. Chapter 6:6 it says, "He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith." So you get Jesus as the amazing servant, but he himself is amazed at their lack of faith.

Now, I want to go into the authorship of the book, and kind of play the background of the authorship and then we'll work with this today. What kind of person was Mark? And you say, "Matthew was a disciple, he was one of the twelve. Matthew was a tax collector." Matthew or Levi was his other name. Matthew or Levi was a tax collector and one of the twelve apostles. Mark is not a tax collector at all. So how is it that Mark gets to write a book? Well, first of all, he seems to have been a young kid at the time the disciples were there. Since he is inspired, does it make any difference who he was? You say, "Well, the guy was inspired, we don't really need to be concerned about the authors of these things, and actually the authors names are not on these books, and so it's totally irrelevant." I am not trying to suggest, it does make a difference who the author is.

You learn something of the person by what they write. You learn something about what they write by who wrote it. If you know the background of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and then you read the book *Cost of Discipleship*, you knew that this guy went back to Germany after he was free and could have fled. He went back into Germany and did what he did and then died for his faith. When you read that and you know that about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and you read the *Cost of Discipleship*, and you know this man put his life down. In other words, the book speaks his life. So what I'm trying to say is authors are important. So yes, it does make a difference. What kind of personal trail does the writer leave in the text that he or she writes? And how do you see the person in the book that they write?

U. Authorship—Who was John Mark? [74:45-77:07]

Now, John Mark was his name. His actual Hebrew name is John, his Greek name is Mark. So Acts 12:12 tells us that this name is John Mark. Two different names... Simon Peter: Simon was his Jewish name, Peter (upon this rock) his Greek name. So you get this kind of thing with Simon Peter as well. Many of them had a couple names, one in Greek, one in Hebrew. Even today, when we have a lot of folks coming in internationally into America in our schools, many of the students I've had, their name in their own culture is this, and they come into sitting in my class and they call themselves Peter, but that's not really their name. That's a name that they have adopted while they are here in America. So you get that kind of thing going on with the two names between cultures. Whenever you have two cultures interface, you get this dual name issue coming up.

A couple things about him: apparently in Acts 12, it says here, let me just read it, Acts 12:12. Peter is in prison, the Christians are gathering to pray for Peter. Where do the Christians gather? "They gather at Mark's house." Now what does that tell us about Mark's house? If the Christians are gathering there, is it a large house or small house? If it's a small house, they probably wouldn't gather there. So Mark is from a large house, my guess is then that he is from a wealthy family.

He is from Jerusalem. The real estate is high there, he's got a big house in Jerusalem. It seems to be close by. So this guy is from a wealthy family, with a big home. "When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary..." So his mother's name is Mary, "...the mother of John, also called Mark." So Mary was the mother. There are a lot of Marys in the New Testament and so here is another Mary, John Mark's mother. Where many people had gathered and were praying and Peter knocks on the door and they think it's his ghost at the door. This is at John Mark's house. So John Mark seems to have been in the hub of the early Christian church at Jerusalem. They are at his house, praying for Peter in Acts 12:12.

V. Mark writing Himself into the Gospel [77:07-80:57]

Some people suggest that Mark puts himself into the book. I actually buy this suggestion, because it is not found in the other gospel writers, and kind of fits the young person. This is in the context of the Lord's Supper. Jesus sends his disciples and he says, "Hey, we're going to do the Lord's Supper, we're going to do the Passover. So we need to have a place to have dinner and set up the Passover. "So go into the city," he says. So Jesus is setting this up. It says, "He sent two of his disciples telling them, 'Go into the city and a man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him and say to the owner of the house he enters "the teacher asked 'where is my guestroom (notice the guest room) that I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'"'" Now, he's got what? Twelve disciples, and himself, that's thirteen. "And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." Many suggest that this person, this man carrying the water jar, is the John Mark. "And go to his house"... It's got an upper room, and it is large and furnished. It's got to have what? Jesus, his disciples, that's thirteen. You see, thirteen plus their family, so you're talking what--twenty to thirty people? You put twenty to thirty people, do you need a fairly good size house to have twenty or thirty people, to be feeding them and all

that kind of stuff. So, that is John Mark's house, possibly, putting himself in his own Gospel in chapter 14:30, as the one carrying the water jar. And then what we are suggesting here is that the Lord's Supper, the Passover meal, where Jesus is going to wash the disciples' feet. He is going to break the bread, drink the cup, and do Lord's Supper, the Eucharist. This takes place at John Mark's house. So, again, closely associated with the apostles as well as giving us a personal touch.

Here is another one. This is conjecture as well. But I think it makes sense. Again, this is not found in any of the other gospels but it is in the book of Mark and it would be one of those things that you would remember the rest of your life. So, I think that it is very likely that this occurs. Mark being a young person and gives some other things here as well. Let me put this into context. This is the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is going to be at the Garden of Gethsemane over the Mount of Olives. So what is going to happen is, as the crowd gathering, these thugs are going to go over and arrest Jesus. The disciples are all going to flee, and Jesus is going to be left. He is praying in the Garden of gethsemane, and then these people come and they are going to capture and arrest, and take him off to trial. It says there, in Mark 14:51-52, it says, "there was a young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. And when they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind." So you get this image of this young kid, following. Who's a young kid at the time? John Mark. By the way, is it very possible that the crowds came to John Mark's house first to capture Jesus at John Mark's house and then he says, "Whoa, I better follow these people down." He followed them to where Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Then, they catch him, this young kid. They grab onto his garment. He sheds his clothes and streaks through the streets of Jerusalem, trying to get home, leaving his garment behind naked. And that's something that you would remember the rest of your life, I assume. Only Mark mentions that, which leads me to think, that I wonder if this is John Mark, and this is one of his signs. This is how he puts himself into his own gospel. It makes sense. I actually think it is accurate. But anyway, it is conjecture.

W. Mark, Peter's Secretary & Friend [80:57-89:49]

One of the problems the Gospel of Mark has is that Mark was not an Apostle. In the early church, when they ask: what books get into the Bible and out of the Bible? We've looked at this before, in terms of which books are canonical? They were usually associated with an apostle. So Matthew was an apostle, John was an apostle, Paul was an apostle (he is going to write the epistles), James was a brother of Jesus, then Jude was the brother of Jesus. Those were questioned a little bit. What about this one with Mark? It turns out that Mark, while he was not an apostle, was associated very early with the apostles. Papias, one of the early church fathers says that this, let me read it, from the early second century, "Mark, having become the interpreter or translator of Peter, wrote down accurately, however not in order, all that he had recalled of what was either said or done by the Lord. For he had neither heard nor followed the Lord. But later they said, he followed Peter, who used to adapt his instructions to the needs of you, to make an orderly account of the Lord's sayings, the *logia*. And this statement from Papias is recorded for us in Eusebius. Eusebius was an early church father who was a historian. Eusebius was the early historian of the church, right around 325 AD, I believe if I'm not mistaken. Eusebius, the church historian records Papias' saying, that Peter was John Mark's mentor.

By the way, the scriptures confirm that. If you look over to 1 Peter 5:13, I've got it written down here, so let me just read it from the paper here, it says: "She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends greetings and so does my son Mark." Now when he says, "my son Mark," this isn't talking about his literal son, this is talking about John Mark. Where is Peter? This is Peter at the end of his life. Peter is in Rome. Peter is going to be crucified in Rome, probably under the Neronian persecutions. Nero was the emperor there. You remember, if I'm not mistaken, that Nero burned down parts of Rome that he was wanting to remodel. As he burned down parts of Rome, he had to blame it on somebody. It is kind of like--whenever you get an executive figure, it is like it is supposed to be their

fault. Well, it's never their fault, they take credit for everything, but who's fault is it? The fingers always go like that, pointing out it was their fault: the former administration, the senator, and the congressman. It is always somebody else's fault. They take blame for nothing. They take credit for everything. Anything goes good, they take credit, and if that's bad, they blame it on somebody else. So, you get this kind of thing going on here.

“She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends greetings and so does my son Mark.” So Peter is in Rome, and he says my son Mark. Mark is his son, his spiritual son. And notice it uses the code word Babylon. The people in Babylon send greetings. Where is Babylon? Peter is in Rome. What's happening in Rome? Nero is burning the city down and then he blames it on the Christians. So what he does is, he dips the Christians in certain type of flammable material, puts them on poles, and he burns Christians alive. He said that the Christians burning were lighting up Rome, as Nero was burning Christians alive. It was really wicked.

Now Peter is going to be crucified. The rumor from church history has it, that when Peter was going to be crucified, he said to the people who were crucifying, “I'm not worthy to be crucified like Jesus was.” Normally you are crucified with your hands and feet nailed up. He said, “I am not worthy to.” So they crucified Peter upside down. I can't imagine that. But anyway, they crucified him upside down because he said “I'm not worthy to die like my Lord.” Now, Paul, on the other hand, was a Roman citizen, so when Paul died, they beheaded him. They could not crucify Paul because Paul was a Roman citizen. So Paul would have been beheaded. Peter was crucified upside down, as far as church goes. But he says, “I'm at Babylon and my son Mark sends greeting.” Peter and Mark were in Rome together. Babylon is a code word for Rome.

Now that is important later on, when we look at the book of Revelation and we see the word Babylon again. Babylon is the code word for Rome. You would

understand that Peter uses it here in reference to his relationship with Mark. So that is a cool thing. So Peter and Mark are close. Peter calls him his son.

Now, there is a problem here. Barnabas, it turns out, is John Mark's older cousin. Paul says in Colossians 4:10, "my fellow prisoner, Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas." Now, who is Barnabas? Barnabas was a wealthy guy from Cyprus, who went out on the first missionary journey. Bar-na-bas: *bar* means "son of," *nabas* means "consolation." Barnabas is an encouraging person in the early church. He's a wealthy person who is from Cyprus. Barnabas and Paul go on the first missionary journey together. Barnabas wants to take whom? He wants to take John Mark with them on their first missionary journey. So it says in Acts 12:25, "John Mark goes with Barnabas and Paul to Antioch." Antioch is north of Jerusalem in Syria. Antioch is where Christians were first called Christians, and the three missionary journeys of the apostle Paul (the first missionary journey, second missionary journey, and third missionary journey) are all going to start from Antioch in Syria.

So they go there and John Mark goes with them and it says, "When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned to Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark." Yes, there it is, down in chapter 13 when they go out on their first missionary journey. Barnabas and Paul being commissioned to go on that missionary journey, and chapter 13:5, it says, "When they, Paul and Barnabas, arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues (as was their custom, they always started with the Jewish synagogues). John was with them as their helper." So, John Mark apparently went with Paul and Barnabas in the first missionary journey. They went to Cyprus. Cyprus was Barnabas' home. Then they headed up to Turkey. They wanted to cross over to Turkey. Turkey is where Paul was from: Tarsus.

So what happens? The problem is John Mark quits. On the first missionary journey, John Mark quits. It says, "from Pathos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga, and then Pamphilia, where John left them and returned to Jerusalem."

Now, in the text, it doesn't say anything really negative about John Mark at that point. But later on, we find out that there was a rift between Paul and John Mark. Paul actually broke up his relationship with Barnabas, they were together on the first missionary journey. On the second missionary journey, when they come back and they are in Antioch again, and Barnabas says, "Hey, let's take John Mark again and let's go out again. You know Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark. Let's go like the three of us did before." Paul says, "Over my dead body. I'm not taking that kid anywhere." So Paul is really so upset with John Mark that Barnabas and Paul split. Paul takes Silas on his second missionary journey, and Barnabas takes John Mark and goes off back to Cyprus, where Barnabas was from. So you have this division between Paul and Barnabas.

Now think about how close Paul and Barnabas were. Paul and Barnabas did their first missionary journey together, spending all that time travelling. Then Paul was stoned and left for dead. He was beat up how many times? Barnabas was there with him that whole time. It would be like almost coming close to death with somebody, you get close. Like the Band of Brothers idea. These guys were really close. They've seen a lot of hardship together. And yet, because of this conflict between Paul and John Mark, Paul won't take John Mark the second time. There is a big problem there and Paul rejects John Mark then.

X. Why Did Paul Reject Mark? [89:49-92:34]

Now, what are some of the suggestions? Why did John mark quit? And again, this is total speculation, but just something to think about. Some people say that John Mark, when they hit Turkey; this is saying that John Mark is from Jerusalem, having a very provincial perspective on life. This is the first time he has been away from home like this. So some people say that he got home sick when he hit Turkey, and he said, "Whoa, this is getting too far" and he wanted to go home because he was home sick. That is possible. Other people think that there was a tension with Paul. In Cyprus, Barnabas would be the big guy, because

Barnabas was from Cyprus and knew the ins and outs of Cyprus. When they hit Turkey, Paul starts to take over and Barnabas, his older cousin kind of figure, comes under Paul. When that shift of power shifts from Barnabas being the leader, to Paul being the leader, it upset John Mark. He was saying, “My cousin should be the leader here,” and then Paul took over. That would explain then some of the tension, possibly, between Paul specifically and John Mark. Other people suggest that it was because Paul started preaching to the Gentiles, and this was going beyond where John Mark was. So John Mark really starts thinking about, “I’m going to stop preaching to the Gentiles.” So he bails out when they start doing that. So, either of these is possible, these three are possible: the homesick, Paul, or the Gentiles. What happens? Paul and John Mark, this goes on.

Can godly folk disagree with each other so much so that they split up? Here you have Barnabas, who is a really, really good guy, and Paul, who is Paul the apostle, who is going to write a huge chunk of the New Testament. The rift between them over John Mark was so strong that it broke their friendship up. They go separate ways. Paul takes Silas, and Barnabas takes John Mark and goes to Cyprus. Paul takes Silas and goes on the second missionary journey. Apparently, disagreements happen among godly people. Peter’s affirmation comes in 1 Peter 5:13. We looked at this before. Peter says, “hey, the folks in Babylon send their greetings, as do I and my son Mark.” So, Peter and Mark have seemed to hit it off. And again, Peter and Mark were in Rome now. But Peter would have known Mark because he stayed at his house. When Peter gets out of prison and the angel sets him free from prison, where is the first place he goes? He goes to Mark’s house. So they would have had the Lord’s Supper there. Peter would have known John Mark and the family that would have been around the house for quite a while. So, Peter affirms him as “my son.” This is at the end of Peter’s life.

Y. Reconciliation Between Paul and Mark [92:34-94:52]

Now, do people ever change over time? Do people ever regret what they did earlier in life? And how do you work that out in terms of some of these things? Well, here's Paul at the end of his life. Paul is going to write, and this is in 2 Timothy 4:11. He knows he is going to die. Now Paul knows what's coming and he knows he is going to die. Paul writes, after the big rift over John Mark, this is how Paul ends his life: "For Demas, because he loved this world has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me." Do you remember Luke? He writes the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Luke was a doctor. So Paul got beat up so many times that you can imagine it was nice having a doctor there to patch him up. But he says, "only Luke is with me," and then he tells Timothy--This is 2 Timothy 4. Paul knows he is going to die and he says, "Get Mark and bring him with you because he is helpful for me in my ministry." So here is Paul at the end of his life, realizing that there is this huge rift between himself and Mark. At the end of his life, as he is facing death, he writes "Timothy, go get Mark. Bring him here. He is profitable for me and for my ministry." So you get this reconciliation happening between two people that went on the first missionary journey. And, after all these years, a couple decades later, you get this reconciliation where Paul is going to die in about 68 AD. This is the verse we just read, "For Demas, because he loved this world..." and says, "Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you because he is helpful for me in my ministry." There is this reconciliation.

Z. A Personal Example of Reconciliation [94:52-101:29]

I just want to close with this in terms of our first discussion with Mark here. Once upon a time, I taught at a very conservative school in the Midwest. Great place, great people. I worked for probably a decade in what was a maximum-security prison,. It was in Michigan City, Indiana. It was a maximum-security prison, and was built in the 1800's it was built so the walls were 40 feet high and about 10 feet thick with barbwire and guards. It was a massive prison, maximum-

security prison. It's where all the big boys go. Murder, rape, all the big crimes were there, guys with life sentences. One of my friends in there had eleven life sentences against him. Some of the guys have been on death row. This is where the big boys were. I traveled up there and back. I would teach during the day at this college, and then in many of the evenings, once or twice a week then, we'd travel up. It was an hour and a half drive up to this prison. We'd go through seven gates going in. You would go in, and when that last gate closed behind you, you knew you were in the prison. There was no way to get out of there. You were in. Then we would go teach, and I'd teach biblical studies, and computers, and various things in the prison. This friend, then, and I would travel an hour and a half on the way up and an hour and a half on the way back. When you travel in a car with somebody every week and you do this for years, going every week. As you travel twice, 3 hours a day you are in the car with the person. AS well as listening to them teach and various things, you get very close. This friend that I'll name Charlie, was a very very close friend of mine. He was my best friend. We dreamed together, we talked together, our families meshed together. When his uncle died, he actually contacted me and I got to wear his uncle's clothes and basically, instead of taking them to Goodwill, they gave them to us. We were like part of the family.

It turned out, that after a while he started some dalliance kind of thing with some of the co-eds on the campus, and I was involved in the discussion they were seeking about disciplining him. He had a hard time acknowledging it. We had so much data, it was really clear he was doing things that he shouldn't have been doing with the college co-eds, hitting on them. So I was supposed to be his friend, but as a result, I was involved in some of the disciplinary actions. He refused to talk to me. We were really close, best of friends, and then all of sudden over this-- he had been disciplined; he lost his job at this college. From his side it was: "I never want to speak to you again." I remember being in Wal-Mart, walking in Wal-Mart and his wife was coming my way. She walked within six inches of me

and would not even look at me. So I lost this friend. This was a big deal because I loved him a lot, and he was a really dear friend.

About, probably 15 years later I moved schools. I moved here to Massachusetts to teach at Gordon College in Wenham Massachusetts. I'm sitting in my office in Frost Hall, and all of a sudden one day I get a phone call. I hear, and he just says "Hi Ted" and I know immediately who it is, because I haven't heard that voice in fifteen years. I just remember, it is like your brother calling. He says, "Hey, do you know anything about the Bennet Center?" It turns out that the Bennet Center is the gymnasium at Gordon College. He says, "yeah", and I say, "Ken, is that you?" "Yeah." He says, "I'm over here at this place called the Bennet Center, can we get together?" I said, "yeah." And so I zipped out of my office, ran over to the Bennet center and there is my good friend. He comes up to me, and the first thing he says to me is "I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry." He gave me a hug that I'll never forget for the rest of my life.

Have you ever seen people that the relationship has fallen away? Families where there is tension in the families between brothers or sisters or parents and child. It's gone on for decades and the people aren't able to talk. All of a sudden, with my friend, we came back together, and he asked for forgiveness, which I-- and I still love him to this day and I consider him like a brother. We're back being friends again. It was wonderful. I went out that day from the Bennet Center and guess who was out in the parking lot? Yeah, his wife was out in the car. I jumped in the car and we probably talked for half an hour, to an hour in the car. It was just like having a burden lifted... people reconciliation.

So what you have with John Mark here, and I think why this is significant-- at the end of Paul's life, you have this kid, who probably made some really bad decisions in his younger days. It broke his relationship with Paul. Here you have Paul now facing death, who does Paul ask for? He is facing death, who does he ask for? He says, "get John Mark, bring him here, he is profitable for me for my ministry." At the end of their lives, the two of them, whether they got back

together or not I don't know, but Mark was at Rome so I would hope they would have gotten together. So it is a beautiful thing. Reconciliation after a period of tension after years, it's wonderful.

So that is kind of an orientation to John Mark and a history of his life. He's going to pen the Gospel of Mark, and as Papias said, he is basically Peter's interpreter. So John Mark, to say it in another way, (this is kind of crass), but John Mark is going to write Peter's gospel. So a lot of the things Peter is going to tell John Mark, John Mark is going to write it down. So we get kind of a flavor of Peter from John Mark.

Well, let's call it quits there. I want to take a little break and when we come back we are going to look at a couple of major themes from the book of Mark.

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