

Jesus is a Kingdom Oriented Jew

“Whether one accepts it or not, it is a fact attested by the Gospels... that to his final hour Jesus did not stop practicing the basic rites of Judaism.”¹

“Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.” (Matthew 4:23).

Jesus is a First Century Jew

Some evangelicals ignore Jesus’ Jewishness in an attempt to appropriate a Jesus more familiar to our contemporary context. Other evangelicals denigrate or misunderstand Jesus teaching because they do not understand it within a second Temple (450 B.C.-135 A.D.) Jewish context. This chapter and the whole book is trying to understand Jesus in His context. Part of this second Temple Jewish expectation is conveyed by the Qumran *Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)*, which presents the character of the hoped for Messianic teacher as echoing Isaiah 61:1.

[for the heav]ens and the earth will listen to his anointed one, [and all] that is in them will not turn away from the precepts of the holy ones. Strengthen yourselves, you who are seeking the Lord, in his service! Will you not in this encounter the Lord, all those who hope in their heart? For the Lord will consider the pious, and call the righteous by name, and his spirit will hover upon the poor, and will renew the faithful with his strength. For he will honor the pious upon the throne of everlasting Kingdom, freeing prisoners, giving sight to the blind, and in his mercy...the Lord will perform marvelous acts such as have not existed, just as he sa[id for] he will heal the badly wounded and will make the dead live, he will proclaim good news to the poor.²

Such a Messianic expectation hopes for a Jewish King who is a healer, a teacher, and a rescuer of the needy.

Luke’s genealogy runs straight from Jesus back to Adam, the son of God. On its own, this would simply identify Jesus human lineage through Mary and the father whom many thought Jesus had, Joseph. Placed as it is after John’s baptism and the pronouncement by God the Father, “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased,” the Lukan genealogy further supports that Jesus is the Son of God, empowered from an appropriate lineage for Jesus’ Sonship ministry (Lk. 3:22–23, 38). Matthew’s genealogy by its stylized breaks,³ especially identifies Jesus through Joseph as of

¹ Jules Isaac, *Jesus and Israel* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 46.

² *4Q521*, frag. 2, col. 2, vs. 1–12.

³ The text does not provide a rationale for the fourteen generation breaks except to set up different sections which connect Jesus with key points like from Abraham, the Davidic Son, and from the captivity. To make these groups of fourteen perhaps Matthew is following the tradition that there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David (1 Chr. 1–2; *Exod. Rab.* on Ex. 12:2). To make the fourteens continue deletions are made (in Mt. 1:8 three evil kings are left out, from Mt. 1:11 Jehoiachim is left out, and Matthew 1:13–15 has half the names that Luke 3:23–27 has for the same period) which is permitted in genealogies (Gen.

Abraham, and of David, and of a line that also suffered the Babylonian captivity (Mt. 1:1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 17). This emphasis identifies Jesus as a royal Jew. The Davidic aspect supports that He is Davidic and thus could be legitimately the Messianic King in the kingly line.⁴ However, the Abrahamic and captivity aspect of the genealogy identify Him as a Jew, with both the Abrahamic heritage and the problem of Gentile domination since the Babylonian captivity. Such a captivity reference likely shows the longing for the eschatological Kingdom resolution in tension with this Gentile domination.

Mary's hope in meeting with Elizabeth (her pregnant cousin) was for the long awaited Kingdom that both their sons will work toward. Mary responded with joy and the expressed hopes of a poor Jewish woman, longing for Messiah's coming kingdom. These Jewish hopes include eschatological reversal, in which the proud and mighty will be destroyed in order for the hungry, poor and humble to be lifted up and filled (Lk. 1:51–55).⁵ Such eschatological mercy is rooted in the Abrahamic hopes for blessing in a land that is Israel's own, not dominated by external powers.

Circumcision was the first Jewish ceremony that a Jewish male experienced. A discharge of blood during the birth rendered both Mary and Jesus unclean, requiring purification (Lev. 12:2–8). On the eighth day, circumcision must be performed, accompanying the purifying of the child. Mary would remain unclean for thirty three days (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3–4). Perhaps, Luke or the Jews at that time have conflated the eight days for Jesus' purification and circumcision with the thirty three for Mary into *their* purification on the eighth day (Lk. 2:22). Being a poor woman, Mary sacrifices two turtle doves instead of a one year old lamb. This law indicates that the two sacrifices are for a purification⁶ offering and a burnt offering, each contributing to the separation of this Israelite from her uncleanness. Since Jesus was also their first born, he would need to be redeemed according to the law of the redemption of the first born (Ex. 13:12–16). This redemption process reminds the Jews of the generosity of God, Who rescued the Israelites when the death angel passed over them, thus beginning the exodus. Joseph and Mary were in the Temple with Jesus to carry out for Him the custom of the Jewish Law (Lk. 2:27).

When Jesus purification is taking place, two Jews come up to baby Jesus, and express Jewish aspirations for Him (Lk. 2:25–38). The first, Simeon, was righteous and devout. He was looking for the consolation of Israel that is the Kingdom.⁷ The Holy

46:21/ 1 Chr. 8:1–4; Josh. 7:1, 24/ 1 Chr. 2:50; 4:1; 6:7–9/ Ezra 7:3; 5:1/ Zech. 1:1; Josephus, *Vita* 1–5; *Apoc. Abr.* Pertinent is the rabbinic principle, the sons of the sons are sons (*b. Qidd.* 4a). Additionally, W. D. Davies and Dale Allison (*The Gospel According to Matthew* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988], v. 1, p. 165) conjecture that David's name has the value of fourteen thus a further point is being made for Jesus' Kingship as David's Son.

⁴ Hegeppus reports a tradition that Roman authorities interrogated Jesus' brothers' grandsons for Davidic descent (Eusebius, *H. E.* 3.20) Julius Africanus attests Jesus' relatives claimed Davidic descent (*Letter to Aristides*), which corroborates the Biblical account. No non-Christian Jewish polemicist bothers to refute this Davidic claim (Craig Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], p. 75. Matthew opens and closes the genealogy with the title Jesus Christ.

⁵ Cf. Pss. 37:19; 107:5–9; 132:15; Isa. 25:6–8; 32:1, 16–17; 49:10–13; 55:1–2; 65:13; *1 En.* 58.4; 62.14; 2 *Bar.* 29.6; *Par. Jer.* 9.20; *1QS_a*; *T. Levi* 13.5.

⁶ The Hebrew texts develop this as purification, though the LXX and N.T. call it "sin offering;" cf. chapter "Jesus as Sacrifice."

⁷ The Abrahamic Covenant promised an abundant land as Israel's possession (Gen. 15:13–21) which was embraced within the Mosaic Covenant promise for peace and blessing of renewal in the land (e.g., Deut.

Spirit was upon him, and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. He took Jesus into his arms and blessed the sovereign God for letting him see the salvation personified by Jesus, Who will bring Kingdom glory to Israel and extend such light of revelation even to Gentiles (Lk. 2:29–32). He then blessed the family and pointed out that Jesus will reveal the hearts of men, so as to split Israel so that some fall, while others rise (Lk. 2:34–35). The other, Anna the Jewish prophetess, also gave thanks to God and spoke of the redemption of Jerusalem as to be accomplished in Jesus' Kingship (Lk. 2:36–38).

Jesus was from Nazareth, a backwater Jewish village in Galilee (Mt. 13:53–58; Lk. 1:26–27; 2:39, 51). Many would consider Nazareth a kind of *hicksville* and despise Jesus for it (Jn. 1:46; 7:42, 52; Acts 24:5). However, Matthew reminds us that the prophets predicted that the Messiah will be despised (e.g., Isa. 53:3–8; Pss. 22:6–8, 13; 69:8, 20–21).⁸ In contrast, Jesus grew strong, increasingly filled by divinely gracious wisdom,⁹ and favor with God and men (Lk. 2:52).

Jesus grew up learning the trade of his father, which could be considered a carpenter or a builder, since a τέκτων usually works in wood, but can also work in stone or metal (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3).¹⁰ However, if this is dependent upon the Aramaic *nagger* (craftsman), the *Talmud* later takes this to be 'scholar' or 'learned man,' that is, a rabbi.¹¹ Such a later Talmudic meaning would place Jesus within a rabbinically schooled family but there seems to be some surprise among Jewish priests, at the level of Jesus' intellectual development (Lk. 2:46–49) that it is more likely to take the word as a 'carpenter' or 'builder' or 'day laborer.' So others knew Him as the carpenter and the son of the carpenter.

As a devout Jew, the young Jesus would have yearly visited the Temple at Passover time. Not all Jews would do this. Additionally, *m. Abot* 5.21 describes that as a boy, Jesus would have probably attended some schooling to study the Scriptures from about age five till about twelve. When He was twelve on the yearly Passover trip to Jerusalem, Jesus missed his extended family's caravan to return home and was not missed among his extended family until they had traveled a one day journey away from Jerusalem. His family went back looking for him in Jerusalem, only to find Him on the

28:1–14; 30:1–30). The Davidic Covenant added the element of Kingship into this hope (developed in the chapter on "Messianic King"). The prophets develop this Kingdom era with the wonderful transforming benefits that will accrue especially to Israel (Jer. 31:27–33:26). For example, in a context of Gentile domination, Isaiah 9 speaks of the birth of a king that will enlighten a new Kingdom era for Israel, bringing peace to the world. Second Temple Judaism hungers and longs for this hope.

⁸ This is a better way of taking this statement than confusion with branch (*neser*; Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8), or Nazirite, which is outright denied (compare Num. 6:3 and Lk. 7:34).

⁹ Luke often uses a verb and the two nouns connected by "and" to describe the same thing, "gracious wisdom," not separate qualities (Lk. 2:40; cf. Acts 6:3, 5), unless those qualities go in different directions, as in Luke 2:52, increasing in wisdom and stature or increasing favor with God and men.

¹⁰ John Meier (*A Marginal Jew* [New York: Doubleday, 1991], vol. 1, pp. 278–85) explores Jesus' profession of wood worker as a constructor or day laborer who does not own land and is thus poor, getting by from day to day; cf. Colin Brown, ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), vol. 1, p. 279; C. C. McCown, "O TEKTWN", in *Studies in Early Christianity*, ed. S.J. Case (New York: The Century Co., 1928), p. 176; Ken Campbell, "What Was Jesus' Occupation?" a paper presented in 2004 to the Oxford Society of Scholars.

¹¹ *y Yeb.* 9b; *y Kid.* 66a; *bAZ* 50b; Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 21–22.

third day in the midst of the Jewish teachers, listening and asking questions, “All who heard Him were amazed at His understanding, and His answers” (Lk. 2:46–47).¹² One example was in His recognition of greater levels of authority and intimacy: God over parents (Lk. 2:48–49). In the comment, Jesus acknowledged that God was His Father in such a manner that Jesus needed the Father’s house. This unusual comment identified Jesus purpose with God and the Temple, and may be an early expression of Messianic consciousness. Mary treasured these sayings in her heart. Jesus continued to be involved with Temple worship throughout His ministry during Jewish festivals such as Passover (Mt. 26:17–19; Mk. 14:12–16; Lk. 22:7–13; Jn. 2:23; 5:1; 12:1; 13:1), and Hanukkah (Jn. 10:22).

John Fisher reminds us that Jesus continued to reflect His Jewish heritage.

Like in his childhood, his later life was also stamped by his Jewish heritage. He respected the Temple and its worship, expecting his followers to offer the usual sacrifices (Mt. 5:23, 24) and going out of his way to pay the Temple tax (Mt. 17:24–27). Like the devout Jews of his day he attended synagogue regularly on the Sabbath (Lk. 4:16 *et al.*), first being taught there as a child, and later doing the teaching himself. He consistently observed the Jewish festivals and holidays and used these occasions to indicate how they highlighted his mission (Jn. 2:13; 5:1; 7:2, 10, 37–39; 8:12; 10:22–23; 13:1–2).¹³

Jesus’ dress was that of a Jew. Obviously this means first that he wore an inner tunic and outer garment or cloak (e.g., Mt. 5:40). However, He went further to wear the tassels, with a cord of blue on the four corners of His robes, commemorating obedience to all the Law that the Holy God commanded of Jews (Num. 15:38–41; Deut. 22:12). This is evident in the account of the hemorrhaging woman, who reached out and grabbed one of these tassels on Jesus’ robe and was healed, and others who wished to do the same (Mt. 9:20; 14:36; Mk. 6:56; Lk. 8:44; compare with LXX Num. 15:38–41 and Deut. 22:12). That is, the term for tassel (κράσπεδα) used here commonly translates the Hebrew commanded tassels (תַּשְׂבָּעִים/ṣṣṣṣṣṣ). With regard to the size of this tassel, Jesus sided with the school of Hillel to not make these externals the issue, in opposition to the school of Shammai which wanted to broaden the tassel and the phylacteries for pride of show before men (Mt. 23:5).¹⁴

In contrast to this externalizing of Judaism for show of place, sectarian Judaism demanded a greater internal purity and obedience. This purifying of Judaism is consistent with the Mosaic Covenant that God made with Israel, especially from the perspective of the Mosaic Covenant as a Suzerainty treaty binding Israel in a relationship that offers blessing or curse dependent upon their obedience.¹⁵ For example, Israel is already

¹² There is no hint that he taught the teachers here as the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* portrays.

¹³ Rabbi John Fisher, “Jesus through Jewish Eyes: A Rabbi Examines the Life and Teachings of Jesus,” a paper presented at ETS, Nov, 2003. Novel second century tales of Jesus boyhood are contained in *The Infancy Gospel of Thomas* but these accounts do not have significant corroboration so I consider them to be unhistorical inventions to satisfy those who would like to know about the years the Bible does not mention.

¹⁴ *Menahot* 41b.

¹⁵ G. E. Mendenhall, “Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition,” *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 17:3(1954): 50–76; K. Baltzer, *Das Bundesformular. Seine Ursprung und Seine Verwendung im AT*. Wiss. Monograph. 2.

blessed in a covenant relationship with Yahweh. This relationship is expressed as coming from the exodus and heading toward the Promised Land and the Kingdom. Furthermore, if Israel obeyed all the Law then they would be wonderfully blessed, enabling Kingdom to come (Deut. 28:1–14; 30:8–20). However, if Israel disobeyed then they will be horribly cursed (Deut. 28:15–30:20). This sets up a narrow way of blessing and a broad way of wrath. The prophets call Israel back from their wandering ways to the narrow way of covenant faithfulness (e.g., 1 Kgs. 19:10; Jer. 21:8; Ezek. 9:8–10). This message will be explained further in the chapter on “Mosaic Teacher of the Law.” However, these two ways (one of blessing and the other of curse) are also evident in the wisdom tradition, for wisdom calls the wise to follow in a narrow way, fitting into the patterns of creation, in contrast to the many broad ways of the fool that lead to destruction. In this approach, wisdom is vindicated in one showing a consistency to the narrow way of the wise, in contrast to the broad way of the fool (Pr. 28:6; Mt. 7:24–27; 11:19; Lk. 7:35). This message will be elaborated more within the chapter on “Jesus the Sage.” These revelational approaches, covenant and wisdom, have come together through a two ways expression in the wisdom and torah psalms (e.g., Pss. 1:6; 119:29–32; 139:24). This two ways orientation is embraced even more in sectarian purifying Judaism of the second Temple period, like Qumran and the Essenes.¹⁶ The continuation of the domination of Israel by Gentile powers indicated in this Deuteronomist approach that Israel had repeatedly chosen the way of disobedience (Deut. 9:7; 28:15–30:20; 2 Kgs. 17:23; Neh. 9:32; Isa. 9:1–2; Ezek. 21:3; 20:31; Mic. 5:3–4).¹⁷ Their precarious condition before wrathful Yahweh was confessed by *Baruch* 1.18–19.

We have disobeyed Him, and have not heeded the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the statutes of the Lord that he set before us. From the time when the Lord brought our ancestors out of the land of Egypt to this day.

So while Judaism hoped for the Kingdom, their domination by Gentiles reminded them that they were disobedient, repeatedly choosing the broad way of rebellion.

However, God promised that He would transform Israel into a Kingdom which would have them responsive to Him (Deut. 30:1–6; Jer. 31:33–34). Within second Temple Judaism, the hope of the Messianic Kingdom coming was great. This hope included the tribes of Israel to be regathered in covenant blessing (Isa. 40; Jer. 31:27–28; 32:6–33:26).¹⁸ It also included the expectation that Gentiles would be converted,

A. und N.T. 4 (Neukirchen, 1960); Meredith G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King. The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963).

¹⁶ *Sir.* 2.12; 15.11–17; 21:10–14; *Wisd.* 5.6–7 2 *Esdr.* 7:6–14; 30.15; 42.10; *Ps. Sol.* 9.5; 14.10; 3 *Macc.* 5.51; 2 *Bar.* 59.10; 85.13; 4 *Ezra* 7.3–9, 48, 82, 129, 137; *Sib. Or.* 2.150; *b. Ber.* 28b; *m’Abot* 2.9; Philo, *Sacr. AC* 2; *Agric.* 103–104; *ARN* 14, 18, 25; *T. Asher* 1:3, 5; 6.3; *T. Jacob* 2.17; *Pesq. R.* 179b; *t. Sota* 7.11; *t. Sanh.* 14.4; *b. Ber.* 28b; *b. Hag.* 3b; *b. ‘Erub.* 19a; *Mek.* on Ex. 14:28; *Sipre* on Deut. 11:26; *IQS* 3:13–4.26; *Apoc. Zeph.* 3.9. The early church continued in this two ways teaching: *Did.* 1–6; *Barn.* 18–20; *Herm. m.* 6, s. 9.12.5; *Ps.-Clem. Hom.* 3.52.2; 5.7; *T. Abr.* 10–11; *Apos. Const.* 1–5; cf. Doug Kennard, “The Two Ways Christian Life View: A Historical Sketch” a paper presented at ETS, March, 1998; N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 313–314.

¹⁷ *1 Esdr.* 8.73–74; *2 Esdr.* 9.7; *Bar.* 1.13, 18–19; 2.6.

¹⁸ *Sir.* 35.11; 48.10; *Bar.* 4.37; 5.5; 2 *Macc.* 1.27; 2.18; *Jub.* 1.15; *Ps. Sol.* 11.2; 8.34; 17.50; 17.28–31; *IQM* 2.2, 7; 3.13; 5.1; *11QT* 8.14–16; 57.5; Philo, *Rewards* 164.

destroyed or subjugated (Isa. 60:10–14; Dan. 2:44–45; 7:14).¹⁹ The Jewish hope for Jerusalem was that it will be made glorious, with the Temple rebuilt and purified (Ezek. 40–47; Jer. 33:18–22).²⁰ In this time of the Kingdom, worship would be pure and the people would be righteous.²¹

John the Baptist's Kingdom Ministry

First, John would have been the Elijah, who prepared Israel for Jesus, if the people had accepted his testimony about Jesus being their coming King. Malachi predicted “Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.” (Mal. 4:5–6 [3:23–24 MT]). Judaism anticipated Elijah to come at the end of the age to prepare Israel for the coming Kingdom.²² John did not wish to identify himself as the Prophet or Elijah (Jn. 1:21). However, the angel Gabriel identified John as this Elijah.

He will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the Fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. (Lk. 1:16–17).

Zacharias identified his son John “will be called the prophet of the Most High; for [John] will go before the Lord to prepare His ways; to give His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins” (Lk. 1:76–77). God mercifully provided a revelatory entrance for John to “guide our feet into the way of peace” (Lk. 1:79). Jesus also identified John as this greatest prophet, Elijah, by quoting the Malachi text above (Mt. 11:7–11; 17:10–12; Lk. 7:24–28). However, Jesus identified that John would be Elijah conditioned upon the people accepting John’s testimony.

Second, John the Baptist as an Elijah figure, attempts to purify Judaism. Luke records that John’s ministry took place beginning 25 A.D. and continuing until 29 A.D. (Lk. 3:1–2).²³ John came to the wilderness district of the Jordan dressed like Elijah, in a poor man’s camel’s hair robe, with a rope as a belt.²⁴ John came in an Elijah like role,

¹⁹ *Sir.* 36.1–9; *Jub.* 24.29; *1 En.* 90.19; *Ps. Sol.* 17.24, 31; *T. Mos.* 10.7; *IQM*; *CD* 14.6; *Sib. Or.* 3; Philo, *Rewards* 93–97, 164.

²⁰ *Tob.* 13.16–18; 14.5; *1 En.* 90.28; 91.13; *Jub.* 1.17, 27, 29; 25.21; *11QT* 29.8–10; *Ps. Sol.* 8.12; 17.30; *Sib. Or.* 3.657–709; 5.420–425; Philo, *Rewards* 168.

²¹ *Jub.* 33.11, 20; *War* 2.7; *IQSa* 2.3–10; *IQM* 7.5; *11QT* 45.11–17; *Ps. Sol.* 17.26; *Sib. Or.* 3.756–81.

²² *Sir.* 48.10; *2 Esdr.* 6.26.

²³ The beginning date of 25 A.D. is indicated by the fifteenth year of Tiberias Caesar, whereas, the ending date of John’s ministry would be 29 A.D., since Jesus needs to emerge in 28 A.D. and establish his ministry before John is killed (Mt. 14:1–12; Mk. 6:14–29; Lk. 9:7–9; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.116–9). Agreeing with these dates: N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), p. 147; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. vol. 1. The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), pp. 372–433.

²⁴ This is the common Bedouin rough desert clothing, Epiphanius, *Haer.* 30.13, 4–5; Josephus, *Bell.* 1.480. Likewise, his diet of locusts is kosher and a common Bedouin food (Lev. 11:21–22; *Hullin* 3.7; *Shab.* 9.7; *Berakoth* 6.3).

preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins (2 Kgs. 1:8 LXX; Mt. 3:1–17; 11:14; 17:11–13; Mk. 1:2–11; Lk. 3:2–22).²⁵ Extending this, Luke records that John’s offer of salvation is for all flesh, presumably Gentiles²⁶ (Lk. 3:6). John called Jews to repent for the Kingdom is at hand, which as a ministry focus prepares or makes Israel ready for Jesus’ ministry to follow,²⁷ by turning the hearts of each generation to the other (Mal. 4:6; Lk. 1:15; 16:16).²⁸ This was a ministry that John identified as preparing for the new exodus from dispersion to re-gather into the Kingdom (Isa. 40:3 in 40:1–31 context; Jn. 1:23). Public confession was to occur among the people and in better times it did occur (Lev. 5:5; 16:21; 26:40; Num. 5:6–7; Ps. 32:5; Pr. 28:13; Neh. 9:2–3). When the Jews publically confessed their sins, then they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Many of the Jewish people were baptized by John (Mt. 21:26; Mk. 11:32; Lk. 7:29; 20:6). When the religious leaders came out to investigate, John called the whole group to the Jewish approach which teaches that right conduct is the expectation for God’s acceptance of their repentance (Mt. 3:8–10). This included that much of Israel is already under sentence of judgment, with the axe at the root of the trees, ready to be cut down and be thrown into the fire. John emphasized that the way unto Kingdom was to be described instead by virtues of generosity and social justice (Lk. 3:10–14). God was just in judging Israel through John the Baptist, because: 1) the religious leaders and many of the people rejected him as having a demon and 2) Herod had him imprisoned and killed for calling down Herod’s sin (Mt. 2:3–12; 11:18; 21:25–27, 32; Mk. 6:14–29; 11:30–33; Lk. 3:19–20; 7:33).

Third, from the Jewish framework of the “two ways,” the prophet John pointed toward Jesus as the Son of God, the chosen One,²⁹ greater than John was in rank³⁰ and pre-existing before John’s birth³¹ (Mt. 3:10–12; Lk. 3:9, 16–17; Jn. 1:6–8, 30–34; 5:33; 10:41). This prophetic voice extends the Scriptural voice of Isaiah 40:3 which defines

²⁵ Jewish tradition expected Elijah to precede the Messiah and still does (Mal. 3:23–24; *Ben Sir.* 48.9–11; *B. Sanh.* 97b; *Pes. Rab.* 161a; *Eccl. Rab.* 4.1; *Yalqut Shim’oni*, par. 771; *M. ‘Eduyot* 8.7; *B. Menahot* 45a; Maharil, *Hilkbot Shabbat*, end; Ma’ase diR. Y’hosu’a ben Levi, *BhM* 2.49–50, 125; *Seder ‘Olam Rabba*, [identified by the *Talmud* to be 2nd century], ch. 17; *Yemenite Midrash*, pp. 349–50; *Seder ‘Avodat Yisrael* [The Order of the Service of Israel] standard Jewish prayer book arranged by Yitzhaq ben Arye Yosef Ber [New York: Schocken, 1937], pp. 310–11. Sometimes Jewish tradition develops Elijah as doing those things normally associated as Messianic, while not being the Messiah, like: 1) providing manna and oil (*Mekh. diR. Yism’el*, p. 80), 2) awakening the dead (*M. Sota* 9.15; *Y. Sheqalim* 47c bot.; *Ma’ase Daniel* in Y’huda Ibn Sh’muel, *Midr’she G’ula* [Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik-Massada, 1954], pp. 225–26), and 3) redeeming the Kingdom people (*B. Sukka* 52b; *Pes. Rab.* p. 13a; *Mid Haser w’Yater*, pp. 16, 42; *Rashi ad Lev.* 26.42). Jewish tradition retains a sense that many will not recognize Elijah when he comes (*Mid. Zuta, Shir haShirim* 2.8; *Seder ‘Olam Rab.* ch. 17) and unfortunately that was true of John.

²⁶ This is a Lukan emphasis (e.g., Lk. 2:32). However, the *Mishnah* identifies that Elijah will act as judge to settle all remaining disputes and resurrect the dead (*Eduyyoth* 8.7; *Sotah* 9.15).

²⁷ The MT Isa. 40:3 prepares, whereas all the gospels follow the LXX “make ready,” even John self description in John 1:23.

²⁸ *Sir.* 48.10.

²⁹ Such a description in John 1:34 is similar to that of *4Q534* but there is no messianic development in the Qumran text, as there is in John.

³⁰ John identified that he was not even worthy to perform the Gentile slave’s task of loosing Jesus’ sandal (*b. Ketub.* 96a; *b. Qidd.* 22b; *b. Pesah.* 4a; *Sipre* on Num. 15:41; Plautus, *Trin.* 2.1; Eusebius, *H.E.* 4.15.30).

³¹ That is, though Jesus was born after John, Jesus as God existed before John (Jn. 1:1–3, 30 and implied in Jn. 1:6–8).

John's preparatory ministry for Jesus' to follow (Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:2–3; Lk. 3:4–6). Jesus comes with a distinctive baptism which immerse the Kingdom bound people in Spirit, while immersing the unrepentant in judgment fire of damnation.³² Thus Jesus' baptism will effect the outcome in both of the two ways. Only one of the two-ways saves (that which eschatologically identifies with the Holy Spirit [Ezek. 36:25–27; Joel 3:1–5])³³, the other damns. In light of Jesus' ministry extending that of John, Jesus submitted to John's baptism, identifying with the Kingdom way and "to fulfill all righteousness," not because He had any sins to repent from.³⁴ That is, Jesus submitted to the total will of God as the righteous Messiah (Jer. 23:5–6; 33:15; Zech. 9:9).³⁵

Surrounding Jesus' baptism, God indicated His approval for Jesus in a series of ways that could be broadly recognized: Scripture affirmed (as developed above, Isa. 40:3; Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:2–3; Lk. 3:4–6), the prophet John affirmed (as developed above, Mt. 3:10–12; Lk. 3:9, 16–17; Jn. 1:6–8, 30–34; 5:33; 10:41), heavens opened, Spirit descended and the heavenly voice approved (Mt. 3:16–17; Mk. 1:10–11; Lk. 3:21–22). The description of the heavens opening reflects Biblical language of God's revelation and eschatological deliverance which then affirms Jesus as the divinely approved (Isa. 64:1 [LXX 63:19]; Ezek. 1:1; Hag. 2:6, 21; Job 14:12 LXX; Ps. 102:26).³⁶ The dove presentation of the Spirit, Keener takes to be a harbinger of the new era, as after the flood.³⁷ However, the Spirit's presence upon Jesus empowers His ministry for prophecy and Kingship (Isa. 11:1–5; Lk. 1:15; 4:1). Finally, the heavenly voice, the *bath qol* (daughter of a voice), which in second Temple Judaism serves as a secondary substitute for the Spirit of prophecy, in this instance joins with John's and Jesus' prophetic voice to affirm the intimate relationship that Jesus has with God and the divine approval as well.³⁸ The Sonship of Jesus here probably especially indicates Jesus' role as King (and will thus be developed more in that chapter).

³² Notice that in the context, fire is clearly that of judgment (not an allusion to Pentecost "tongues of fire"), so that Jesus baptism brings about the two ways outcomes (Mt. 3:10–12; Lk. 3:9, 16–17). Fire was the traditional Jewish instrument of eschatological judgment (Isa. 66:24; Joel 2:30; Mal. 4:1; *Jdt.* 16.17; *4 Macc.* 9.9; *Jub.* 9.15; *1QpHab.* 10.5, 13; *1 En.* 10.6; 54.1–2; 90.24–25; 100.9; *Ps. Sol.* 15.4–5; *Sib. Or.* 3.53–54; *4 Ezra* 7.36–38; 13.10–11; *2 Bar.* 37.1; 44.15; 59.2; *T. Zeb.* 10.3; *Apoc. Abr.* 31). In fact, fire and water combine in Jewish literature to become an eschatological flood of fire (Ps. 66:10–12; Isa. 30:27–28; 43:2; 66:15–16; Dan. 7:10; Rev. 20:10–15; *Sib. Or.* 2.196–205, 252–254; 3.54, 84–87, 689–92; *1 En.* 17.5; *2 En.* 10.2; *4 Ezra* 13.10–11; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.70; *T. Isaac* 5.21).

³³ *Jub.* 1:23; *1QS* 4.21.

³⁴ The Biblical texts indicating Jesus submits to John's baptism is corroborated by *The Gospel of the Ebionites* 1–4 (frag. 3) as recorded by Epiphanius (*Panarion* 30.13.3–6; 30.14.3), unlike *The Gospel of the Nazareans* 9 (frag. 2) as reported by Jerome (*Against the Pelagians* 3.2) which has Jesus protest to John that He has not done any sins so that a baptism for the remission of sins would be inappropriate.

³⁵ *Ps. Sol.* 17.26–34; *T. Jud.* 24.1; *Pesiq. R.* 36.

³⁶ *Sib. Or.* 3.82; 8.233, 413; *2 Bar.* 22.1; *T. Abr.* 7; *Herm.* 5.1.1.4; *Apocr. Jn.* 1; *Asen.* 14.2/3; *Virg. Aen.* 9.20–21.

³⁷ Craig Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 132–33; *Gen.* 8:8–12; *4 Bar.* 7.8.

³⁸ On the concept and instance of *bath qol*: *Dan.* 4:31; *Jos. Ant.* 13.282–83; *Song Rab.* 8.9.3; *b. 'Abot* 6.2; *B. Bat.* 73b; 85b; *Mak.* 23b; *'Erub.* 54b; *Shab.* 33b; 88a; *Soṭa* 33a; *p. Soṭa* 7.5.5; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 11.16; 15.5; *Lev. Rab.* 19.5–6; *Deut. Rab.* 11.10; *Lam. Rab. Proem* 2, 23; *Lam. Rab.* 1.16.50; *Ruth Rab.* 6.4; *Qoh. Rab.* 7.12.1; *Sib. Or.* 1.127, 267, 275; Artapanus in Euseb. *P.E.* 9.27.36; *Dion. Hal.* 1.56.3; 5.16.2–3; 8.56.2–3; *Arrian, Alex.* 3.3.5; *Lucian, C.W.* 1.569–70; *Plutarch Isis* 12; *Mor.* 355E; *Mart. Pol.* 9. The *bath qol* was present in Israel before the spirit of prophecy departed (*b. Pesah.* 94a; *Hag.* 13a; *Sanh.* 39b) and a few sources give it future ramifications as well (*Lev. Rab.* 27.2; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 17.5).

Jesus' ministry extended John's. The Gospel of John records that John the Baptist repeatedly witnessed to Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29, 36). Some of John's disciples (including Andrew) become the earliest of Jesus' disciples (Jn. 1:35–40). This group of John's disciples gathered others who became Jesus' disciples with them (e.g., Jn. 1:40–42, Andrew called Peter). Jesus' disciples, in time began to baptize more into this Kingdom oriented Judaism than John had done (Jn. 3:26; 4:1–2). There are continuities of teaching between John and Jesus, and especially in the proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom (Mt. 3:2; 4:23; 10:7; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 10:9; 11:20; 21:31).³⁹ John and Jesus also taught their disciples appropriate prayer in light of the coming Kingdom (Lk. 11:1; developed later in this chapter).

When Jesus emerged as a public figure around 28 A.D.,⁴⁰ John's disciples were troubled about the diminishment of John. John counseled them that it was appropriate that the Messiah (he had pointed toward for the Kingdom) should increase.

You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ', but 'I have been sent before Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease. (Jn. 3:28–30).

After Herod had killed John, many Jews understood Jesus to be John raised from the dead, (Mt. 14:2; 16:14; Mk. 6:14, 16; 8:28; Lk. 9:7, 19). Even Herod thought of Jesus as John *redivivus*, that is, John resurrected.

Sermon on the Mount and Plain (Mt. 5-7; Lk. 6:20–49)

To demonstrate Jesus' Jewishness and continuity with John's kingdom ministry, it is helpful to examine the core of Jesus' teaching for its Jewishness. This section also explores Jesus as prophet, teacher and sage, each of which will be developed further in their own chapter later. Here, two of Jesus' characteristic sermons will be examined (the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain)⁴¹ which show this Jewish continuity with that of Jesus' basic teaching and prophecy about the Kingdom. Jesus has new things to say in these sermons but there is a great degree of continuity with second Temple Judaism as well. Both the new and the continuity will be highlighted throughout this section. The specific issue of Jesus and the Law will be side stepped in this chapter and examined at depth in the next chapter.

³⁹ There were some differences between John's and Jesus' ministry as in John and his disciples came fasting but Jesus and His disciples feasted because the bridegroom was in their midst (Mt. 11:18; Mk. 2:18; Lk. 5:33; 7:33–34). However, after Jesus was killed, His disciples would then also fast.

⁴⁰ Agreeing with this date: N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, p. 147; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. vol. 1. The Roots of the Problem and the Person*, pp. 372–433; and Harold Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977).

⁴¹ These two sermons are given historically at different times, since the miracle of healing the leper immediately follows the Sermon on the Mount, as Jesus is coming down from the mountain (Mt. 8:1–2) and precedes the Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 5:12–15; 6:20–49) and Luke identifies that he writes his gospel in consecutive order (Lk. 1:3). Additionally, the geography of mount and plain identify different locations (Mt. 5:1; Lk. 6:17).

Both the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain are addressed to Jesus' disciples (ie. students; Mt. 5:12; Lk. 6:20). Of course, the multitude overheard his teaching (Mt. 5:1; 7:28) but the thrust was for those already identified with Jesus as His learners.

Jesus' prophecy continues this two way approach unto the Kingdom in these sermons, much like second Temple Judaism and John had before Him.⁴² Both the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain follow this Jewish orientation as is apparent especially in the beginning and end of the sermons (Mt. 5:3–16; 7:13–27; Lk. 6:20–26). However, the clearest development of the two ways approach is in the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in which five illustrations portray the two ways: 1) gates and ways, 2) sheep versus wolf in sheep's clothing, 3) trees, 4) claims demonstrated, 5) and builders (Mt. 7:13–27). Each way has a goal to which it leads, either that of life and the Kingdom (Mt. 7:14, 21) or destruction (Mt. 7:13, 19, 27; 16:18). Jesus begins His exhortation to enter by the narrow gate⁴³ and the way that leads to life. Only one of the two-ways saves, the other damns. The narrowness of the strictured way (στενῆς and τεθλιμμένη) has implications that there are few who find it (Mt. 7:13–14; Lk. 13:23–25). While the breadth of the way that leads to destruction indicates that many will follow this way (Mt. 7:13, 22). The broad way includes those who take advantage of others like: wolves in sheep's clothing and false prophets. The basic way on which a person travels is evidenced by the consistent obedience in following Jesus and the Father's teaching (Mt. 7:21, 24, 26). However, this is not earning one's place in Kingdom, it is showing in a natural fruiting manner who has an intimate internalized discipleship relationship with the Son (Mt. 7:15, 17–19, 23). The Kingdom way is not shown in works like prophecy, exorcisms, or miracles (Mt. 7:15, 22). Rather, *the Kingdom way is shown in New Covenant obedience rather than Lawlessness.*⁴⁴ The good man or tree produces the good fruit and generous speech from within their heart (Mt. 7:16–20 with vs. 12; Lk. 6:43–45).⁴⁵ So their works show what kind of people that they are. Such a good man builds on the firm rock foundation of obedience to Jesus and the Father (Mt. 7:24–27; Lk. 6:46–49).⁴⁶ *Such strictured but wise living does not remove the troubles of life but enables one to survive them, because he has built upon the foundation of Jesus teachings.*

⁴² Second Temple Judaism develops a two ways view unto Kingdom especially from a wisdom and prophetic perspective (*Sir.* 35.11; 48.10; *Bar.* 4.37; 5.5; *2 Macc.* 1.27; 2.18; *Jub.* 1.15; *Ps. Sol.* 8.34; 11.2; 14.9–10; 15.10; 17.11–12, 28–31, 50; 18.6–9; *1QM* 2.2, 7; 3.13; 5.1; *11QT* 8.14–16; 57.5; *1QS* 3.18–4.26; *4Q228*; *4Q473* frag. 2 2–4; *Charter of a Jewish Sectarian Association* 9.21; *Asher* 1.3–5; 6.4–6; *Philo, Rewards* 164; *4 Ezra* 7.6–8).

W.D. Davies and Dale Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 1, pp. 439, 442–480 present these beatitudes as entrance requirements into the Kingdom.

⁴³ Luke 13:24 has narrow door instead of gate.

⁴⁴ Mt. 7:21–24, 26. The chapter on Jesus as a teacher of the Law develops this further.

⁴⁵ A similar good tree/bad tree comparison is made in the Jewish parables in *M. Aboth* 3.18; *ARNa* 22.2; *ARNb* 34.

⁴⁶ *ARNa* 24.1–4, 22 makes similar building materials and on rock or sand comparisons in a two-ways Jewish salvation.

Elsewhere, in the two ways soteriology, there is a way of light and a way of darkness (Mt. 7:22–23; Lk. 11:34–36).⁴⁷ In Judaism, God is seen to dwell in light (Ps. 104:2; Dan. 3:3–4; Hab. 3:3–4)⁴⁸ and thus He gives light to His people (Job 29:2–3; Pss. 4:6; 18:28; 48:3).⁴⁹ The eschatological hope is light (Isa. 60:20), but those who are God’s are even now illuminated by revelation light of life and wisdom (Pss. 27:1; 56:13; Hos. 10:12 LXX; Jn. 1:4, 9).⁵⁰ This illumination even impacts the righteous so that they are described as the people of the light (Isa. 42:6; 49:6; Mt. 5:14; 6:22; 1 Jn. 1:5–10).⁵¹ These “walk in the light of the Lord” (Isa. 2:5). The way of the light sees the issues and allegiances clearly, showing its sincere allegiance to God (Mt. 6:22; Lk. 11:34).⁵² The way of the darkness can not see clearly, it is duplicitous and is deceived, in that it is unaware that it can not see clearly, rendering it doubly blind, with soul darkened and separated from God (Job 18:5–6; 38:15; Mt. 6:23; Lk. 11:34–35; 1 Jn. 1:6, 8, 10).⁵³ Such a condition of Jewish “evil eye” is that of a miser and selfish, signifying intent and leaving one in the dark (Deut. 15:9; Pr. 23:6; 28:22).⁵⁴ Hell, which in spite of the fire is a dark place, and is the outcome of such darkened lives (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).⁵⁵

Beatitudes-Similitudes

Both the Sermon on the Mount⁵⁶ and the Sermon on the Plain begin with the beatitudes, and in Luke the two ways are more explicit by a section of curses following the beatitudes (Mt. 5:3–10; Lk. 6:20–26). Each of the beatitudes begins with the word “blessed,” serving as a repetitive⁵⁷ echo of the beneficial condition that a disciple can possess provided he meets the criterion of each verse. This means that the beatitudes are first blessings and show God’s grace, rather than requirements.⁵⁸ That is, the conditions

⁴⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, pp. 635–6 develop that the eye in ancient Judaism was viewed as a light source and that they embraced an extramission theory of vision, unlike modern empiricism which embraces an intromission theory of vision.

⁴⁸ *1 En.* 38.4; Josephus, *Asen.* 6.3.

⁴⁹ *1QS* 11.3; *2 Bar.* 38.1.

⁵⁰ *Sir.* 8.1; *Wisd.* 7.10, 26.

⁵¹ *1 En.* 104.2; *T. Levi* 14.3; *LAB* 51.6; *T. Job* 31.5; 53.3.

⁵² *Job* 1:1 *Aq.*; *Barn.* 19.2; *T. Levi* 13.1; *Ps. Phoc.* 50; *CR* col. 3 and 4.

⁵³ *T. Job* 43.5–6; *T. Sol.* 26.7.

⁵⁴ *Tob.* 4.7; *Sir.* 14.8; 26.11; *m. ’Abot* 2.9, 11; 5.19; *1QS* 4.9–11.

⁵⁵ *1QS* 2.8; *1 En.* 103.7.

⁵⁶ The mountain is treated as location with no development of polemic to Moses’ Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:3; 24:13, 18), though Jesus does comment on the Law in a New Covenant manner.

⁵⁷ While the O.T. beatitudes do not group more than two together (e.g., Ps. 84:4–5), the listing of nine beatitudes should not overwhelm the reader, since by second Temple Judaism an occasional list of beatitudes is as long (Mt. 5:3–11; five in *4Q525* including purity of heart and faithfulness to the Law; four in Luke 6:20–22). *2 Enoch* 52.1–14 has seven beatitudes and seven curses. Later, *The Gospel of Thomas* has ten beatitudes, some in series (7, 18–19, 49, 54–58, 68–69, 103). Additionally, the Matthew beatitudes may have parallels with Isaiah 61, quoted in Luke 4:18–19; cf. *Sir.* 14.20–27; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, v. 1, pp. 436–439.

⁵⁸ Beatitudes are found in Jewish wisdom (*Ben Sir.* 14.20–27) and prophetic texts (*2 En.* 52.1–14). As a genre, it is not really Law or covenant, even though these genres possess statements of blessing and curse, but not in beatitude form (e.g., Deut. 28–30).

evidence which disciples of Jesus will be so blessed. Or as Albert Schweitzer said it, the beatitudes “define the moral disposition which justifies admission into the Kingdom.”⁵⁹

The blessed conditions are to be understood as realized within the Kingdom. Matthew’s beatitudes begin and end with identifying the blessing with the Kingdom (Mt. 5:3–10).⁶⁰ The *inclusio*⁶¹ (or literary envelope; Mt. 5:3, 10) of mentioning the Kingdom serves to identify the other blessings as Kingdom benefits as well. Additionally, some of the benefits are only believably received in the Kingdom, such as the meek and gentle inheriting the earth (Mt. 5:5). Luke’s account begins with the Kingdom but does not quite complete an *inclusio* in its close of promising great reward in heaven, unless that reward is expected to come from heaven to earth (Lk. 6:23).

These Kingdom benefits have both present and future benefit in view. Matthew’s *inclusio* and Luke’s starting point of “theirs is the kingdom” evidences by its present tense verb, present Kingdom benefits already for those who meet the criteria (Mt. 5:3, 10; Lk. 6:20). The other beatitudes evidence by their future tense verb a future reward that is not yet received.

Thus the beatitudes must be taken together. No one benefit can be removed from the rest of the Kingdom framework, likewise no one quality can be lifted to promise Kingdom benefits. For example, merely because a person grieves or is gentle does not guarantee her involvement in the Kingdom. However, when a disciple of Jesus, who therefore has a relationship with Jesus, grieves or is gentle there is an appropriate reassurance that Kingdom blessings are hers to meet that need.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom” (Mt. 5:3). A recognition of poverty in a disciple’s spiritual condition identifies the disciple’s trust and dependence upon his master (Jas. 2:5).⁶² So it is not a spiritual benefit for the able and wealthy, but for those who recognize their need. This reverses the popular secular sentiment: “blessed are the rich.” Luke 6:20 simplifies the poverty to be material poverty which is more emphasized in Luke than any other synoptic gospel (Lk. 1:53; 4:18; 6:20; 7:22; 14:13, 21; 16:20, 22; 18:22; 19:8; 21:3).⁶³ This Lukan portrait is similar to

⁵⁹ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 53–54; *The Kingdom of God and Primitive Christianity* (New York: Seabury, 1968), pp. 93–101. Thus the liberal ethical approach (E.g., Adolf von Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums* [Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913] translated as *What is Christianity* [New York: Harper, 1957]; E. F. Scott, *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus* [New York: Macmillan, 1924]; L. H. Marshall, *The Challenge of New Testament Ethics* [New York: Macmillan, 1947]; Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* [New York: Macmillan, 1965] has ignored the Jewish eschatological Kingdom context for Jesus teaching.

⁶⁰ The Kingdom focus of these beatitudes is like the beatitudes of: *Ps. of Sol.* 17.44 or *1 En.* 58.2–3 “Blessed are you righteous and elect ones, for glorious is your portion. The righteous ones shall be in the light.”

⁶¹ Latin for inclosing in a literary envelope.

⁶² Such fiscal poverty was a positive religious designation in Judaism (*IQM* 11.9, 13; 13.14; 14.7; *IQpHab* 12.3, 6, 10; *4QpPs* 37 fr. 1, 2.10).

⁶³ This call to the poor is consistent with *4Q88* 9.13–14 and the *Passover Haggadah* which calls all the poor (using similar phrases to that of Jesus in Luke) to the Passover feast. *Gospel of Thomas* 54 follows Luke on *fiscal poverty* but Matthew on *third person plural (their)* with “Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” That is, Luke personalizes it further by the second person “*yours* is the Kingdom.” Additionally, the *Gospel of Thomas* 69.2 encourages that these hungry and thirsty will be satisfied.

Qumran's self-designation of the sect, as the poor.⁶⁴ Whether material poverty shows one to be in need of depending upon God or a recognition of one's spiritual nature of inadequacy, the results are the same. Both point to humility and dependence on God, as one admits to his own spiritual bankruptcy. Within Jewish tradition, such a reference to the poor refers to the meek, humiliated and oppressed people of God (Isa. 10:2; 26:6).⁶⁵ This sentiment affirms one sense of the Jewish tradition indicated in the *Sibylline Oracles* 8.208 "Blessed are the poor, for they shall be rich." This is rather telling for American Christianity. For, in the twenty first century, the world's 15% richest people are those who own a house that keeps the weather out and also own a car. Whereas, if you own two cars and some recreational equipment as well, then you are among the top 5% of the world's wealthy.⁶⁶ Luke warns those who receive comfort now, that their riches may indicate that they are not depending upon God and thus there are no more benefits to come (Lk. 6:24). Jewish tradition indicates that in the Kingdom age to come there will be no poverty.⁶⁷ Luke later goes on to illustrate this point with Jesus teaching on wealth, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19–31). Abraham in paradise summarized the point for the rich man as "during your life you received your good things and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony" (Lk. 16:25). However, for those whose dependence is on God, the present reality of the Kingdom is their very real possession.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Mt. 5:4; Lk. 6:21). Perhaps, picking up the Jewish traditional sentiment from Isaiah 61:1–2, quoted by Jesus as He begins His ministry in the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus provides real comfort in kingdom for the downtrodden and oppressed (Lk. 4:18–21).⁶⁸ Jewish tradition continued to emphasize that the Kingdom should be thought to be broadly comforting to us in our life of mourning (Isa. 60:20; 66:10; Jer. 31:13; Ps. 126:2–6).⁶⁹ The mourning (Matthew's emphasis) and weeping (Luke's emphasis) that occur in this life are in contrast to the comfort and laughing which will come upon all who are beneficiaries of the Kingdom in the future. The mourning refers to a sorrow with the world as it is. Mathew uses "mourning" in one other place to indicate the inappropriateness of mourning when the disciples have Jesus with them, but Jesus reminds them that He will be taken away (Mt. 9:15).⁷⁰ When Jesus is removed, mourning their loss is quite appropriate. However, this concept of mourning could be much broader, like sorrow for sin in one's life or context (Mt. 25:75; Lk. 7:38–48; 22:62).⁷¹ This weeping could occur within areas of lack such as

⁶⁴ *IQpHab* 12.2–10; *IQM* 11.9, 13; 13.14; *IQH* 2.32; 3.25; 5.16, 18, 22, ; *4QpPs* 37 1.9; 2.10; *4Q88* 9.13–14; with only the *Damascus Document* using the term in the more common sense of poor people; cf. James Dunn, *The Christ & the Spirit, Volume 1 Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 110.

⁶⁵ *Ps. Sol.* 5.2, 11; 10.6; 15.1–3; 18:2; *5 Apoc Syr. Ps.* 2:18; *IQpHab.* 12.3; *IQM* 14.7 where such poverty might mean fainthearted; *IQH* 5.13–14; *4QpPs* 2.9–10.

⁶⁶ My attempt to conceptualize *U.N. Human Development Report 2003* (New York: U.N. Programme, 2003) as summarized by www.trentu.ca/said/povertystats.html which for example lists the salary average of the richest fifth of the world population to be on average \$31,000 per capita per year in 1993 dollars, while the poorest fifth of the world population lives on less than \$1 per capita per day.

⁶⁷ *Sib. Or.* 3.378; *T. Jud.* 25.4; *b. Pesh.* 50 in contrast to *b. Šabb.* 151b and *Sipre* on Deut. 15:11.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Sir.* 48.24.

⁶⁹ *Thanksgiving Scroll* 13.14–15; *Bar.* 4.23; *IQH* 18.14–15; *11QMelch* 2.20; perhaps also Ps. 126:2–6.

⁷⁰ While not in inspired Scripture as the earliest, nor the best manuscript, Mark 16:10 shows one example of how mourning and comfort surround the death and resurrection of Christ.

⁷¹ *Tob.* 13.14; *Pesiq. R.* 28.3.

hunger or the lack of love (Lk. 6:21–22). Mourning can include loss of loved ones and the futility of wasted life (Mt. 2:18; Lk. 5:38). Jesus grieves over Jerusalem, that is rejecting Him, and urges them to grieve as well (Lk. 19:41; 22:28). For those who grieve in any of these ways, real comfort will be theirs in future Kingdom benefits. Jesus’ present Kingdom healing even undoes the cause for grief for some now, in the promise of raising loved ones from the dead (Mk. 5:34; Lk. 7:13; 8:52). Luke warns those who laugh now and do not take to heart the present context of grief, that they shall mourn and weep in their destruction as they miss future Kingdom benefits being poured out (Lk. 6:25).

“Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth” (Mt. 5:5). The quality of *πραεις* is meekness, absence of pretension and gentleness. As such, this meek gentleness is a synonym to poverty of material and in spirit (Mt. 5:3; Lk. 6:20). In this statement, Jesus echoes the Jewish tradition⁷² evident in 2 *Enoch* 50.2, “In patience and meekness spend the number of your days so that you may inherit everlasting life.” This meekness is a quality Jesus displayed in His humble offering of rest for the disciples (Mt. 11:29). It is also a quality predicted of Him by Zechariah 9:9, which indicates Jesus peaceful intention in coming to Jerusalem on a colt of a donkey, to offer them the Kingdom if they would have Him as King (Mt. 21:5). Those, like Jesus, who display this quality in relationship with Him, shall inherit the whole earth, and not merely a part of the land (cf. *γης* in Mt. 5:5, 13). This hope of land inheritance also reflects the Jewish hope for the Kingdom (Isa. 60:21–22; 61:7; Rom. 4:13).⁷³ This eschatological reversal is a common Jewish hope (e.g., Lk. 1:50–53).⁷⁴

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Mt. 5:6).⁷⁵ Those with a desire for appropriate living to be developed in their lives and contexts will have their need amply met. This quality of righteousness is developed in the next section, but here Jesus sentiment also reflects Jewish traditional expectations (Pss. 42:2; 63:1; 143:6; Amos 8:11).⁷⁶ This longing is the same sentiment as seeking above all else God’s Kingdom and His righteousness, to which virtue there is real encouragement that Jesus’ disciples needs will be met (Mt. 6:33). Luke describes one who hungers for food, thus identifying the hungry with the poor, who may be oppressed (Lk. 6:21 and connecting it by synonymy to Mt. 5:3–5, 10–12). Especially, the Lukan version resonates with the Jewish tradition of eschatological reversal (Pss. 37:19; 107:5–9; 132:15; Isa. 25:6–8; 32:1, 16–17; 49:10–13; 55:1–2; 65:13).⁷⁷

⁷² The praise of meekness and gentleness is also evident in Jewish tradition through (Deut. 4:1; Ps. 37:11; Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.279; Josephus, *Ant.* 19.330; *m. Sota* 9.15; *ARN* 7; *b. Sota* 40a, 49b; *b. Šabb.* 30b; *b. Ned.* 38a; *4QPs* 2.9–11) and in classical works as well (Plato, *Crit.* 120E; *Rep.* 375C; Lucian, *Somnium* 10; *Ep. Arist.* 257, 263).

⁷³ *Jub.* 32.18–19; 2 *En.* 5.7; *11QTemple* 59.11–13; *4QpPs* 2.9–12; *4QPs* 37; 2 *Bar.* 51.3; *m. Qidd.* 1.10.

⁷⁴ *Sir.* 35; *Wis.* 5.1–20.

⁷⁵ The *Gospel of Thomas* 69.2 takes this beatitude with reference to poverty, hungering and thirsting in need will be satisfied.

⁷⁶ *Wis.* 5.15; Philo, *Poster C.* 172; *Fug.* 139; *b. Sanh.* 100a; *m. ‘Abot* 2.2; *Sifra A.M.* par. 8.193.1.11; *Sifra Behuq.* pg. 2.262.19; *b. Qidd* 396; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah. Sup.* 2.1; *Deut. Rab.* 7.9.

⁷⁷ *1 En.* 58.4; 62.14; 2 *Bar.* 29.6; *Par. Jer.* 9.20; *IQSa*; *T. Levi* 13.5. This theme is continued in 2 *Pet.* 3.13 and *Gos. Thom.* 5.6; 69b.

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy” (Mt. 5:7). Jesus’ teaching reflects the sentiment of rabbis elsewhere.⁷⁸ The merciful are the benefactors who attempt to meet other’s needs.⁷⁹ The dominant expression of mercy in the synoptics is the healing done by the Son of David (Mt. 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30–31; Mk. 5:19; 10:47–48; Lk. 1:58; 17:13; 18:38–39). Whereas, in Jewish tradition, the primarily merciful One is God (1 Sam. 23:21; Ps. 72:13; Pr. 14:21; Mic. 6:8).⁸⁰ Mercy is one of the weightier matters of the Law and unfortunately was neglected by the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 23:23). One form of the Jewish neglect of mercy was their restrictiveness to their own Jewish group.⁸¹ Jesus’ disciples must have mercy in ministering to sinners and forgiving others without judging them (Mt. 6:12–15; 7:1–5; 9:13; 12:7; 18:21–35; Mk. 11:25). The good Samaritan exemplifies mercy in meeting his neighbor’s and even enemies needs (Mt. 5:44–47; Lk. 10:37). This sentiment of showing mercy universally was also a factor in some forms of Jewish tradition.⁸² The merciful shall receive mercy (Mt. 5:7). The future mercy to be received could be in this life or the Kingdom beyond.⁸³ Praise is given to God for His mercy unfolding in His salvation plan (Lk. 1:50, 54, 72, 78). Jesus, through Luke 16:24 warns us that those who do not give mercy, such as the rich man’s abuse of Lazarus, will not receive mercy in the afterlife.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Mt. 5:8). The pure are the clean who recognize God alone is their hope (Ps. 24:3–4; Mt. 23:26; 27:59).⁸⁴ The kind of purity described is one of whole moral purity. Such a person is sincere and not divided against himself. Examples of internal anger and adultery are developed as contrast to this purity in this context (Mt. 5:22, 28). Such a commitment to purity of heart reflects some Jewish tradition (Gen. 20:5–6; Ps. 24:3–4; Isa. 61:1 “broken hearted” as in responsive from one’s heart to God).⁸⁵ The privilege of the pure in heart in Jewish tradition is to see or know God in the Kingdom (Job 19:26; Ps. 11:7; 17:15; Isa. 52:6; 60:16; Jer. 24:7; 31:31–34).⁸⁶ Jewish tradition developed that such sight of God at the present tended to be beyond normal expectation,⁸⁷ so that it remained an eschatological hope.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Mt. 5:9). The peacemaker is one who reconciles humans into peaceful relationships as is evident in Matthew 5:23–26 and Mark 9:50. Such peacemaking is affirmed by Jewish tradition (Ps.

⁷⁸ This is parallel in *b. Šabb.* 151b, “He who has mercy on people obtains mercy from heaven;” also *t. B. Qam.* 9.30, “As long as you are merciful, the Merciful One is merciful to you;” *T. Sim.* 4.4; Josephus, *Ant.* 10.41. Additionally, the rabbis identified that God judged the world by two measures: justice and mercy (*Lev. R.* 29.3), so that following a verse about righteousness it is appropriate to develop the theme of mercy. This sentiment continues in early Christianity, *1 Clem.* 13.2; Polycarp, *Ep.* 2.3.

⁷⁹ E.g., *Test. Jud.* 18.3–4; *Epict. Disc.* 1.18.4.

⁸⁰ *T. Zeb.* 5.1, 3; 7.1–8.6; Philo, *Spec. leg.* 4.72, 76–77.

⁸¹ For example, Qumran, the Essenes and other Jews maintained a mercy within the community and a hate to outsiders (*IQS* 1.4, 10–11; 2.4–9; 9:21–23; *IQM* 4.1–2; 15.6; *IQH* 5.4; *b. Ber.* 33a; *b. Sanh.* 92a; Josephus, *Bell.* 2.139).

⁸² A commitment to universal mercy is present in rabbinic Judaism (e.g. *Sipra* on Lev. 19:18 and *Mek.* on Ex. 21:35) and outside the Jewish tradition (Polybius 18.37.7; Hesiod, *Op.* 342–3, Solon, frag. 1.3–5; Plato, *Tim.* 17d–18a; *Rep.* 375c; *Meno* 71e; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5–6).

⁸³ 2 Tim. 1:18; Jude 21; *1 Clem.* 28.1.

⁸⁴ 2 Bar. 9.1; 2 En. 45.3.1; *Test. Jos.* 4.6; *Benj.* 8.2; *4QBeat.*

⁸⁵ *T. Naph.* 3.1; *T. Jos.* 4.6. Cf. 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22; Heb. 10:22.

⁸⁶ 4 Ezra 7.98; *b. B. Bat.* 10a; *SB* 1; *b. Sanh.* 98b; Philo, *Vit. cont.* 11–12; *Abr.* 57–59; *Mut. nom.* 81–82. Cf. Mt. 16:27; 24:30; 26:64; Mk. 13:26; 14:62; 1 Cor. 13.12; Heb. 12:14; 1 Jn. 3:2; Rev. 1:7; 22:4.

⁸⁷ Ex. 3.6; 19:21; 33:20, 23; Jn. 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:15–16; *Sipre* on Num. 12:8.

34:14; Pr. 10:10).⁸⁸ A peacemaker will not force God’s Kingdom but will humbly wait for it (Isa. 25:6–9; 26:8; 30:15, 18; 40:30–31; 49:23; 50:10–11; 57:13; 64:4; Lam. 3:22–26; Mic. 7:7; Jas. 5:7–9). A peacemaker is one who demonstrates that he is a son of the Father by generously loving and praying for his enemies that persecute him (Mt. 5:39–45). Such peacemaking may be at significant cost or loss. Such peacemaking may require letting an abuse go, in forgiving one’s abuser. However, this peacemaking is not to be at the expense of denying Jesus as the Son, that is, the King. Associating oneself to Jesus’ teachings may in fact separate one from others and work against peace (Mt. 10:34). In maintaining a relationship with Jesus as the Messiah, we should work for peace and thereby identify ourselves as sons of God (Mt. 5:9, 45; Lk. 6:35; 20:36). Here, “sons of God” would imply that God has something of the same quality of loving and working toward peace, that peacemakers as sons would have. A model for sons of God is Jesus, *the* Son of God, who by His mandate in the Davidic Covenant, works for peace (1 Chr. 22:9–10; Mt. 3:17; 4:3; 17:5; 27:9, 40, 43, 54). Being a son of God would identify one as a son of the Kingdom (Mt. 13:38). This hope of becoming “sons of God” is one which Jewish tradition held out for the Kingdom.⁸⁹

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom” (Mt. 5:10–12; Lk. 6:22).⁹⁰ “Those who have been persecuted” is a perfect participle which emphasizes that we are dealing with qualities which in this case we have little control over. This kind of persecution includes: hatred, ostracism, insults, spurning through defamation, excommunicating⁹¹ and saying all kinds of evil against one falsely on account of Jesus (Mt. 5:11; Lk. 6:22). Such persecution is essentially for those who have identified with Jesus and maintain obedient, righteous character. This is consistent with the Jewish traditional expectation that the righteous will suffer persecution.⁹² Such persecution has the potential of devastating a person so that they fall away (Mt. 13:21; Mk. 4:17). Such persecution identifies Jesus’ disciples with the prophets who were persecuted by the religious leaders before them. This virtually guarantees the certainty of the religious leaders persecuting the disciples (Mt. 10:23, 38–39; 16:21, 24–26; 23:34–35; Mk. 8:31, 34–38; 10:30; Lk. 9:21–24; 21:12). Second temple Jewish tradition identified that the fate of God’s prophets was that of martyrdom.⁹³ In this context it is a bad sign if all speak well of you for this is the way the religious leaders’ fathers treated the false prophets (Lk. 6:26). To be identified with God’s prophets, and with the Son, in persecution is a cause for rejoicing because it indicates that you will be blessed with life and reward in the Kingdom (Mt. 5:11–12; 16:24–27; Mk. 8:35–38; Lk. 9:24–26). This joy in suffering resonates with a Jewish traditional approach,⁹⁴ but more clearly provides

⁸⁸ 2 *En.* 52.11–15; *m. ’Abot* 1.12; *m. Pe’a* 1.1; *Mek.* on Ex. 20:25.

⁸⁹ *Ps. Sol.* 17.27; *Sib. Or.* 3.702. Everlasting reward is promised for peacemaking (*m. ’Abot* 2.8; *Pe’a* 1.1; *ARN* 40A).

⁹⁰ 1 Peter 3:14 and *Gos. Thom.* 68 retain the same sentiment. Cf. Polycarp, *Ep.* 2.3; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 4.6.

⁹¹ Perhaps implied by a wooden reading of the text in Matthew 5:11 and Luke 6:22, namely, “cast out your name as evil on account of the Son of Man,” which probably has beneath it a Semitic expression “to cause an ill name to go out.” Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, v. 1, p. 462.

⁹² Cf. *Wisd.* 1.16–5.23.

⁹³ *Jub.* 1.12; *4QpHos* 2.3–6; Josephus, *Ant.* 10.38; *Asc. Isa.* 2.16; 5.1–14; *Par. Jer.* 9.21–32; *Tg.* on Isa. 28:1.

⁹⁴ *Jdt.* 8.25; 2 *Macc.* 6.28–30; 2 *Bar.* 48.48–50; 52.5–7; *b. Sanh.* 101a. Cf. Acts 5:41; Rom. 5:3–5; Phil. 4:10–13; Jas. 1:2, 12; 1 Pet. 1:6; 4:13–14.

the Kingdom rationale for such gladness. It is in this way of identifying with God's prophets that Jesus teaching resonates with the Jewish revelation heritage. Other than this, persecution in the O.T. is not developed as a condition of blessing. This encouragement to joy is rather unusual for Matthew's more somber character in his persecution environment, in contrast to Luke who writes at great length about rejoicing, which Luke normally identifies with Kingdom realizations occurring and the lost being saved (Lk. 1:14, 47; 2:10, 13, 20; 10:20; 15:5, 7, 10, 24, 32; 24:41, 52). Perhaps, it is in this Lukan joy (when present Kingdom benefits get realized), that Matthew identifies that blessing is also expressed by a *present* benefit of having the Kingdom now (Mt. 5:10). However, Matthew's joy goes further, in that it realizes that suffering now for Christ identifies one as a beneficiary of greater Kingdom benefit from heaven in the future as well (Mt. 5:12).

"You are the salt of the earth" (Mt. 5:13). Salt was gathered from evaporation pools or from the edge of the Dead Sea (Ezek. 47:9–11; Zeph. 2:9).⁹⁵ Salt was a primary implement in keeping food from putrefying (Ex. 30:35).⁹⁶ It was also used as a condiment to season food (Job 6:6; Isa. 30:24) and was a mandatory accompaniment in some sacrifices (Lev. 2:13; Ezra 6:9; Ezek. 43:24).⁹⁷ As such, salt was considered one of the valuable staples of life along with oil and wine.⁹⁸ For example, Antiochus IV gave salt, oil and wine to all the Jews who aided him against Ptolemy Philopater (c.a. 170 B.C.). None of the synoptics describes an ethical meaning to this salt description, as though we had a salty task to perform. In fact, since the statement is a descriptive comment of being, "You are salt," there is no charge at all to do some salty purpose like preserving the world. Rather, as a descriptive comment, it recognizes these disciples to be valuable as they are identifying with these beatitude traits. The contextual emphasis of Jesus and all the synoptics is to take this condition of saltiness as something that instead unfortunately can be lost (Mt. 5:13; Mk. 9:50; Lk. 14:34). That is, salt is more soluble than the impurities contained within it, so the salt could be leached out leaving a non-productive soil worthy only to be trod upon by feet.⁹⁹ This loss of salt (μωρανθη) is elsewhere taken as an ethical condition of becoming fools (μωρανθη; Mt. 5:13; Lk. 14:34; Rom. 1:22; 1 Cor. 1:20).¹⁰⁰ Here is where the ethical charge lays. In the same way that salt can leach out and become unrecoverable unproductive soil, so too could the disciples depart from their beatitude traits and be rejected from the Kingdom program already begun with them. The exhortation is to stay true to the beatitudes as qualities of one's being for in being that way indicates the blessing of the Kingdom.

"You are the light of the world" (Mt. 5:14). Again, this is a declaration of a quality of being. Jewish tradition developed that people could be light (Isa. 42:6; 49:6; Dan. 12:3).¹⁰¹ The disciples in their beatitude traits are like light. Here the emphasis is

⁹⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* 13.128.

⁹⁶ E.g., Ignatius, *Magn.* 10; Diogenes Laertius 8.1.35.

⁹⁷ *Jub.* 21.11; *11QTemple* 20; *m. Mid.* 5.3.

⁹⁸ *Sir.* 39.26; Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 31.102; *m. Sota* 9.15.

⁹⁹ Pliny, *Nat. hist.* 31.82.

¹⁰⁰ This allusion also works in Aramaic and Hebrew, further underscoring that loss of salt and foolishness are related.

¹⁰¹ *1 En.* 104.2; *2 Bar.* 77.13–16; *T. Levi* 14.3–4; *T. Job* 31.5; *Par. Jer.* 9.14; *Apoc. Adam* 83.3–4; *b. Sanh.* 14a; *b. B. Bat.* 4a; *ARN* 25; *IQS* 3.3, 19–22; *IQM* 13.5–6, 14–15; *Test. Job* 43.6/4; *Sib. Or.* fr. 1.26–27.

not on the losing of the quality of being (like salt) but on doing what light does. A lit up city is visible at night on a hill, so also oil lamps that are lit are used to shine light to their whole environment, not to be under a basket (Mt. 5:14–15; Mk. 4:21; Lk. 8:16; 11:33).¹⁰² The disciple is to let this light quality of his life be visible to others *by doing good works reflective of the beatitude virtues* (Mt. 5:16). The purpose (ὅπως) of being light is so that others may see our good works and praise the Father as a result.

This look at the beatitudes and similitudes has provided a brief overview of the way to obtain the Kingdom. It is a virtue salvation in disciple relationship with Jesus, that is, possessing beatitude qualities of behavior or character, while aligned with Jesus. For example, evangelicals tend to emphasize salvation by faith. Jesus in the gospel of John would recognize faith as the critical salvation virtue. However, this discussion currently is unpacking the Sermons on the Mount and Plain, which neither deny nor develop faith in that manner. Actually synoptic gospels identify faith with obtaining healing, as was clear in the chapter on “Kingdom miracle worker.” So this virtue salvation is dependent upon a relationship with Jesus, which obtains, retains, and exhibits these Beatitude qualities evidenced through good works. Loss of these qualities spells a rejection from the Kingdom. Continuation in these qualities as a disciple of Jesus indicates great blessing in the Kingdom.

Excursus on Righteousness in the Synoptics

Righteousness is central to Jesus’ Kingdom program in Matthew. Matthew ties with Paul for the most instances of δικαίος in any N.T. authors (17 times). Luke also reflects the emphasis of righteousness but not to Matthew’s extent (11 times). For Mark the quality is peripheral (2 times). The word δικαίος means one who does right. The related word δικαιοσύνη expresses the quality of righteousness. Matthew (6 times) dominates Luke (1 time in gospel, though 4 times in Acts) in using this word but Paul controls the N.T. emphasis with 60 times. The related word δικαιοῶ means justify or vindicate. Luke (5 times in gospel and 2 times in Acts) dominates Matthew in using the word but Paul controls the N.T. emphasis with 26 times. The following instances are δικαίος unless otherwise indicated.

Righteousness is grounded in the Law. Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism identified righteousness as conformity to the Law.¹⁰³ Therefore, there is great continuity between second Temple Judaism and the synoptic presentation of Judaism. For example, Luke identifies the blameless walk keeping God’s commandments as righteousness (Lk. 1:6). In fact, the Law is so identified with righteousness as to let the cognate δικαιομα mean commandments (Lk. 1:6). Matthew retains Jesus’ identification that loving one’s neighbor is a righteousness in keeping the Law (Mt. 5:43, 45). The righteous conform themselves with the Law in opposition to sin (Mt. 9:13; Mk. 2:17; Lk. 1:17; 5:32; 15:7; also see the next chapter, “Jesus the Teacher of the Law”). These sinners need to repent to become identified with righteousness.

Righteousness extends beyond the Law to include any appropriate action when viewed from the perspective of integrity, thus continuity with what was considered appropriate in second temple Judaism is also the issue in righteousness. Joseph is described characteristically as a righteous man even though in mercy he violates the Law by not exposing Mary for adultery which he thought she must have done in order to be pregnant with Jesus (Mt. 1:19). This reference expands righteousness to appropriate integrity. So that if a person trusts a man of integrity for an appropriate wage, it will be a righteous wage (Mt. 20:4). Furthermore, the ones who generously meet needs are righteous, for they are ones who do what is appropriate (Mt. 25:37). In this way righteousness becomes synonymous with “holy,” “devout,” and “good” (Mk. 6:20; Lk. 1:75 δικαιοσύνη; 2:25; 23:50).

¹⁰² A similar point is made in *Gos. Thom.* 33b about preaching instead of good deeds.

¹⁰³ Cf. chapter on “Jesus as Sacrifice.”

Luke emphasizes that righteousness includes a correct assessment or vindication. Making a correct judgment is righteousness (Lk. 12:57). God is acknowledged to be righteous (δικαιω) by those who acknowledge John's baptism (Lk. 7:29). Wisdom is vindicated (δικαιω) by the lives of its children (Mt. 11:19; Lk. 7:35). The following are declared to be righteous: Jesus, John the Baptist, Joseph, Abel, Zechariah son of Berechiah, Zacharias, Elizabeth, and Simeon (Mt. 1:19; 10:41; 13:17; 21:32; 23:29, 35; 27:19 and maybe 27:24; Mk. 6:20; Lk. 1:6; 2:25).

Pursuit of the Kingdom is a pursuit of righteousness. This appropriate way to live is identified with God's Kingdom to the extent that to pursue God's kingdom is to pursue God's righteousness (Mt. 7:33; δικαιούνη). Such pursuit is a desire, investigation, striving after, a living for and praying for appropriate living (Mt. 6:32, 33; 7:7–8). When one is living appropriately he is living in the way of righteousness (Mt. 21:32; δικαιούνη). Even sinners can recognize the way of righteousness when it is fleshed out and taught by someone like John the Baptist. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He desired to do everything appropriately, "fulfilling all righteousness" (Mt. 3:2; 21:32). Jesus then calls His disciples into the way of righteousness. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness in their own lives and the society about them will be satisfied (Mt. 5:6). For example, a sinner who admits sin to God is vindicated by God, for God has mercy on him (Lk. 18:14). This Lukan reference is perhaps the only synoptic reference that approximates a Pauline legal justification and it actually is still very oriented to relational vindication from humility to exaltation. Whereas, in Matthew both the view of Paul's legal justification and Luke's one instance of relational vindication are foreign. A hungering and thirsting for righteousness would be a commitment to appropriate living as defined by the rest of the beatitudes (Mt. 5:10, 20). Hungering and thirsting are not different levels of desiring righteousness, for each of the beatitudes calls the disciples to one commitment of a virtue and provides one benefit to meet the virtue's need. The only split beatitude, Matthew 5:10–12 "persecuted for the sake of righteousness," is also actually unified as well. Verse ten states it simply, and verse eleven and twelve respectively explores kinds of persecution and the reward of obtaining the Kingdom benefits, with its present joy. Persecution for righteousness' sake is any form of persecution that includes insults and false accusations; it need not be merely religious persecution, nor doing some right deed, though these could be included. The hungering and thirsting are then descriptive terms which nicely resolve together in mealtime imagery of being filled to satisfaction. These who are righteous will be eventually separated from the sinners, so that they will shine in the Kingdom with everlasting life (Mt. 13:43, 49; 25:46; Lk. 14:14).

The righteous who can expect to enter into the Kingdom are required to have righteousness surpassing the scribes and Pharisees (Mt. 5:20; cf. chapter on "Jesus, the Teacher of the Law"). The religious leaders attempted to vindicate (δικαιω) themselves before men but God knows their hearts (Lk. 10:29; 16:15). For all their legal and religious fastidiousness, the scribes and Pharisees are excoriated by Jesus for their hypocrisy and Lawlessness living (Mt. 23:28). Their righteousness consists of self trust and pretense (Lk. 18:9; 20:20). Jesus' disciples must rise above this brand of righteousness to that of sincere appropriate living if they are to be Kingdom bound.

The rest of the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain explain the core of Jesus' teaching, His teaching on the Law (which will be examined in the next chapter) and the sincerity of internal Kingdom virtues. Both chapters reflect a New Covenantal approach to the Kingdom. All of this New Covenant oriented material strongly identifies Jesus with second Temple Judaism.¹⁰⁴

The Sincere Internal Kingdom Focus (Mt. 6:1–7:12)

Jesus' beatitudes surfaced an internal sincere Kingdom focus which is explained in the rest of the sermon. The development of the New Covenant approach to the Law

¹⁰⁴ As in Jeremiah 31:31–34 and Ezek. 36:24–37:28 so too in: *Jub.* 1:22–25; *IQ3* 4, 5; *IQH* 4, 5, 18; *4Q Shir Shalb*; *CD 4Q266* frag. 2 1.6–8; B 19.12–13; *IQpHab* 2.3; 11.13; *4Q434* frag. 1 1.4; *4Q437* frag. 1 1.14.

will occur in the next chapter, however, the proper orientation toward the Kingdom is evident in religious issues (of alms, prayer and fasting) and additional life concerns (of wealth, worry and speech). These religious issues follow the New Covenant approach to the Law and thus retain especially Jewish concerns of: alms, prayer and fasting.¹⁰⁵ No particular rationale explains the order in Matthew.¹⁰⁶ However, the primary issue is one that continues to develop the internal purity of the New Covenant approach begun in the beatitudes and continued in Jesus' teaching of the Law (developed in my next chapter). Jewish tradition would label this principled approach a *kělāl*, which would then be further developed by a variety of examples.¹⁰⁷ Which means that this section of the sermon is particularly taking issue with a hypocrisy that plays to externals for the purpose so that others would notice (Mt. 6:1–6, 16–18). Therefore, personal righteousness is true internal piety. The internal emphasis of right intention rather than right deed alone is very Jewish (e.g., Ps. 51:16–17).¹⁰⁸ Because in such a Jewish context, it is believed that God sees what goes on in the dark and in human hearts, and that is what matters (e.g., 1 Sam. 16:7).¹⁰⁹

Charitable Giving (Mt. 6:1–4). Jesus supports the Jewish tradition of giving alms or charitable giving (e.g., Deut. 15:11),¹¹⁰ but attacks the misuse of such giving of alms for self-aggrandizement (cf. Lk.6:24). The “therefore” (οὖν) identifies that this example depends upon the general principle of verse one. The sounding of the trumpet is probably a picturesque way to indicate the announcing of one's gift, because trumpets were blown on fast days and when alms were requested (e.g., Joel 2:15).¹¹¹ Perhaps, this could also refer to the alms giving process in the temple. In the temple, there was also a trumpet shaped mouth to the treasury box which would resonate like a cymbal if the coins were dumped onto it. Jesus later sat in the treasury area of the Temple and noticed many rich people putting large sums into this trumpet (Mk. 12:41–44; Lk. 21: 1–4; Jn. 8:20). However, Jesus did not call attention to these, except to say that their reward of being honored by man was the full reward that they would receive. In Jewish tradition, even the poor were allowed to give alms.¹¹² Jesus called attention to a poor woman who gave all that she had, two small copper coins (Mk. 12:42–44; Lk. 21:2–4). She gave everything, which is a significantly greater gift than the rich, who only gave out of their

¹⁰⁵ *Tob.* 12.8 presents a Jewish ordering of prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

¹⁰⁶ *Gos. of Thom.* 6 has the disciples asking a series of questions in the order of: fasting, then prayer and then almsgiving, however the Jesus of the *Gospel of Thomas* 14 finds no value in these practices, such that that presentation contradicts the discussion of Matthew 6:1–18. 2 *Clement* 16 explains a rationale of the order of increasing difficulty: alms, then prayer, then fasting. However, 2 *Clement* 16 also ranks these under a priority of fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving is better than both.

¹⁰⁷ Examples of Jewish *kělāl* teaching include: *m. B. Qam.* 8.1; *m. 'Ed.* 3.1; *b. Hag.* 6a–b; *Ecclus* 3.1–9; *IQS* 3.13–4.26; *Mt.* 5:17–48; and perhaps: *Gen.* 5:1–32; *Lev.* 18:1–23; and *Barn.* 18–20.

¹⁰⁸ This is exemplified by the rabbinic *kawwānā*, as in *b. Meg.* 20a.

¹⁰⁹ *Sir.* 17.15; 23.19; 39.19. No Jewish tradition develops what Christians added in a theology of merit. For example, Boethius, *de Consolatione* 1.4: “For as often as a man receives the reward of fame for his boasting, the conscience that indulges in self congratulation loses something of its secret merit.”

¹¹⁰ LXX of *Ps.* 102.6; *Sir.* 7.10; 29.8; *Tob.* 1.3, 16; 4.7, 16; 12.1–3, 8; 29.8; *T. Job.* 9.8; *m. 'Abot* 5.13; *m. B. Qam.* 10.1; *Tg. Yer.* II for *Deut.* 7:10; *Ps.-Phoc.* 23; *Sib. Or.* 2.78–80; which charitable giving continues in the early church: e.g. *Acts* 3:2–3; 4:32–37; 9:36; *Did.* 1.6.

¹¹¹ *m. Ta'an.* 2.5; *b. Ber.* 6b; *b. Sanh.* 35a; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.294.

¹¹² *b. Git.* 7b.

excess. Jesus identifies that the issue here is secrecy so that others do not know. In this way the only reward is what comes from the Father in His association with the Kingdom (Mt. 6:3–4).

Prayer (Mt. 6:5-15; 7:7–11). With regard to prayer, Jewish tradition included at least morning, afternoon (around 3 p.m.) and evening prayers (Dan. 6:10; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30).¹¹³ The foundational prayer for these three daily Jewish prayer times developed into the *Tefillah*, also known as the *Eighteen Benedictions*. So Jesus first calls His disciples' attention to a very Jewish theme of sincerity in prayer (Mt. 6:6–7).¹¹⁴ To aid in this sincerity, Jesus prefers His disciples to pray in secret. Jewish tradition supported such private prayer (e.g., 2 Kgs. 4:33–34).¹¹⁵ Likewise, Jesus prayed in solitude (Mk. 1:35; 6:46; 14:32–42; Lk. 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28–29). Now this emphasis does not ban public prayer (Mt. 11:25; Mk. 6:41; Lk. 11:1; Jn. 11:41–42; 17:1–26), but does put the priority on private prayer, and it does ban ostentatious and repetitive public prayers. In line with this, some Jewish tradition prefers short simple prayers.¹¹⁶ It was a Pharisee who in Luke 18:9–14 stood alone in the temple and prayed aloud an ostentatious prayer, “I thank God that I am not like other people, swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.” Such a public attempt to show himself superior over others held in contempt was despicable. In contrast to this, the tax-gatherer beat himself and prayed a simple prayer, “be merciful to me a sinner” (Lk. 18:13–14). God justified the tax-gatherer with his simple sincere prayer, but God will humble this Pharisee for his self-exaltation in prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is a pattern prayer that Jesus teaches His disciples to pray. Jesus presents it on His initiative and He also responds with this same pattern when the disciples ask for guidance on how to pray (Mt. 6:8–13; Lk. 11:1–4). Joseph Jacobs points out that the Lord's Prayer is particularly Jewish in that, “His special prayer is merely a shortened form of the third, fifth, sixth, ninth and fifteenth of the *Eighteen Benedictions*.”¹¹⁷ While this particular form of the *Eighteen Benedictions* was reformulated at the Jewish council of Jamnia at the end of the first century, there were some shortened forms of the *Benedictions* that existed in Jesus' day.¹¹⁸ So Jesus' “Lord's prayer” is right in line with developing Judaism of His day. Additionally, the first few

¹¹³ *t. Ber.* 3.6; *Did.* 8.3. At the time of the afternoon sacrifice occurred a trumpet was blown and everyone was to put down what they were doing and pray (*Ecclus.* 50.16; *m. Sukk.* 5.5; *m. Tamid.* 7.5. Jewish prayer posture was normally standing (1 Sam. 1:26; Neh. 9:4; Jer. 18:20; Mk. 11:25; Josephus, *Ant.* 10.255), but on solemn occasions or during times of distress Jews might bend their knee or prostrate themselves (1 Kgs. 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Mk. 14:32–35; Acts 20:36; 21:5).

¹¹⁴ *Sipre* on Deut. 11:13; *m. Ber.* 5.1; *b. Ta'an.* 8a; *b. Ber.* 30b; *t. Ber.* 3.18; *Midr. Ps.* on Ps. 108:1.

¹¹⁵ *b. Ta'an.* 23b; *T. Jos.* 3.3; *T. Jacob* 1.9; Philo, *Vit. cont.* 25.

¹¹⁶ *2 Bar.* 48.26; *Ecclus.* 5.2; 7.14; *b. Ber.* 32b–33b; 61a; *m. Ber.* 3.5; 4.4; *Mek.* on Ex. 15:25; some see a contrasting voice in *y. Ber.* 4.7b, but I think that this text is not expanding a prayer but arguing for multiplying repeated asking, as in persistence in prayer, which would also resonate with Jesus teaching (Mt. 7:7–11; Lk. 11:5–13; 18:1–8).

¹¹⁷ Joseph Jacobs, “Jesus of Nazareth in History,” *Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1916), vol. 7, p. 102; Joachim Jeremias, “Abba as an Address to God,” *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (New York: Scribner's, 1971), pp. 62–63; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, p. 595–6.

¹¹⁸ *Shemoneh 'Esreh*; *m. Ber.* 4.1, 3–4; *m. 'Abot* 2.13; *b. Ber.* 16b–17a; 29a, 34a; *t. Ber.* 3.5; *Sipre* on Num. 12.13; *Mek.* on Ex. 15.25 probably copying Matthew and Luke: *Did.* 8.2; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:595–600.

lines of the prayer are also a shortened form of the traditional prayer, the *Kaddish*, which was prayed in second Temple synagogues after the sermon.¹¹⁹ The particular form of the Lord's Prayer is especially an eschatological prayer, which also has some precedence in second Temple Judaism.¹²⁰ Israel had entered the land but the full benefits of Kingdom had never been realized, so this Lord's Prayer can be seen making requests concerning this full realization of Kingdom. N. T. Wright overplays the Exodus theme in this prayer,¹²¹ for there is no near context development of Exodus and as a theme the Exodus could only fit in two ways: 1) as a prophetic theme about the re-gathering into Kingdom like Isaiah 40 develops, or 2) as Jesus' community of disciples follow the narrow way unto Kingdom. However, the Kingdom theme is clear in the prayer and among similar synagogue prayers where there may be some cross pollination.

The prayer is a corporate prayer and begins with the unusual relational, "Our Father" but it is not unheard of in Jewish references (Deut. 32:6; Ps. 103:13; Isa. 63:16; Mal. 2:10).¹²² Matthew's account adds, "who art in heaven," which would tend to fit with the Jewish emphasis in prayer of God's transcendence. God is holy, so the petition in the prayer reflects the Isaianic emphasis of God's name standing in as a symbol for God and asks that it be treated by us as holy (Ex. 20:8; Lev. 19:2, 32; Isa. 4:1; 26:8; 52:6; Ezek. 36:23). The request for God's Kingdom to come longs and asks for the era of beatitude blessing to be realized to end the present difficulties (Mt. 5:3–11; 6:10). Matthew's account adds further explanation and an additional petition with "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," which is reminiscent of an Aramaic version of the *Kaddish*, present before the first century A.D.

Exalted and holy be His great name in the world which He created according to His will, May He let His kingdom rule in your lifetime and in your days, and in the lifetime of the whole house of Israel, speedily and soon. Praised be His great name from everlasting to everlasting. And to this, say amen.¹²³

At this point the Lord's prayer includes personal petitions to spell out particulars of what God's will on earth is desired to be, which fits the Jewish pattern of adding personal petitions following the *Eighteen Benedictions*.¹²⁴ The repeated "and" links the last three requests together as outworking expressions of God's will on earth. For example, in the first century the day laborers were paid one day at a time. So the request

¹¹⁹ The *Kaddish* prayer is cited in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:595.

¹²⁰ Cf. 2 *Bar.* 21.19–25.

¹²¹ N. T. Wright, "The Lord's Prayer as a Paradigm of Christian Prayer," In *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the N. T.* edited by R. N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 132–3, 138–54.

¹²² *Sir.* 23.1, 4; 51.1, 10; *Wis.* 2.16; 14:3; *Tob.* 13.4; 3 *Macc.* 5.7; 6.3, 8; *Jub.* 1.24; *4Q372*; *1QH* 9.34–35; Josephus, *Ant.* 5.93; *T. of Job* 33.3, 9; 40.2; *Mekh* on Ex. 20.6; *mBer* 5.1; *b. Ta'an.* 23b; *Sifra* on Lev. (as cited by Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud* [Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977], pp. 189–90); Aramaic *Kaddish* (as cited by Geza Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993], p. 178, but pp. 179–183 are relevant as an analysis of Joachim Jeremias' argument for Jesus' uniqueness; in contrast see: Joachim Jeremias, "Abba as an Address to God," *New Testament Theology*, pp. 62–68).

¹²³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, p. 595.

¹²⁴ *b. 'Abod. Zar.* 7b; also claimed by Tertullian, *De orat.* 10; cf. Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth: A Study of their Background, their Halachic and Midrashic Teachings, the Similarities and Differences* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), p. 115.

is “give us our bread for the coming day” or in light of Luke’s “each day,” the request would then be give us the food we need. Perhaps, it is a hope that the manna of the Exodus would return, because this is a second Temple Jewish expectation for Israel’s regathering into the Kingdom.¹²⁵ If this was the case, then the request would be for a Sabbath provision of manna, since it is providing for the next day, which might symbolize the provision moving into the Kingdom as the age of Sabbath rest (Ex. 16:22–30; Heb. 4:1–10).¹²⁶ Jesus’ petition certainly means at least a request for the food we need.

The request to “forgive our debts” is reminiscent of the Jubilee or Sabbatical year which Jesus announced as at the center of His freeing ministry and thus to be expected in Jesus’ disciples prayer (Lk. 4:18–19). The word “debts” (ὀφειλήματα) is a rare word which is present in the LXX Jubilee account, but Jesus also extends it to refer to sins as well (Deut. 24:10; Lk. 11:4).¹²⁷ The prayerful response is not to justify oneself in prayer before God and others, for such speech is essentially only to oneself, but the sinner left the pattern to humbly ask for forgiveness from God (Lk. 18:9–14). Such humility in requesting forgiveness will be exalted by God.

However, the shocking thing for evangelicals about the extent of the forgiveness requested of God is that it is *in the same pattern and to the same extent* that (ὡς) “as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Mt. 6:12). Thus, *the request for divine forgiveness is made in a context in which human forgiveness is already accomplished toward one’s debtors*, as evident by the aorist tense, within this prayer so dominated by eschatological requests. To make sure that His disciples understood this point Jesus emphasizes this point further through His teaching after the prayer, “For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” (Mt. 6:14–15).¹²⁸ Additionally, Mark 11:25 identifies that disciples forgiving others in prayer is imperative “so that” (ὡς) your Father in heaven may forgive your transgressions. Such prayers for forgiveness reflects the Jewish pattern,¹²⁹ from at least the second century B.C. as *Ben Sirah* 28.2–5 enumerates,

Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. Does a man harbor anger against another, and yet seek healing from the Lord? Does he have no mercy toward a man like himself, and yet pray for his own sins? If he himself, being flesh, maintains wrath, who will make expiation for his sins?

Jesus prayer ends¹³⁰ with, “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one¹³¹” (Mt. 6:13; Lk. 11:4).¹³² When the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at His

¹²⁵ 2 Bar. 29.8; Sib. Or. frag. 3, 49; 3.746 (with Ex. 16:31); 7.149; Mek. on Ex. 16:25.

¹²⁶ Barn. 15.

¹²⁷ 1 Esd. 3.20; 1 Macc. 15.8.

¹²⁸ The same point is made by Byzantine addition of Mark 11:26.

¹²⁹ Other parallels include: *b. Šabb.* 151b; *T. Zeb.* 5.3; 8.1–2; *T. Jos.* 18.2; *m. Yoma* 8.9; *t. B. Qam.* 9.29; *b. Meg.* 28a; *Polyc.* 6.2; cf. section on forgiveness within the chapter “Discipler.” In contrast, the prayer for forgiveness in the *Eighteen Benedictions* does not have a condition.

¹³⁰ The longer endings of the prayer are not supported by the earliest and best manuscripts.

baptism, anointing Him for kingdom, the Spirit lead Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Mt. 4:1; Lk. 4:1–2). For the disciples contemplating and praying for the coming Kingdom, such temptations would become particularly acute in the Messianic woes, which are encroaching into this life in persecutions for Christ’s sake (e.g., Mt. 5:10–12; 24:5–31).¹³³ Even a moment before, Jesus had urged His disciples to pray for their persecutors, which is a pattern that Jesus Himself emulates as He forgives His crucifiers (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 23:34).

Persistence in prayer is a repeated point of Jesus’ teaching (Mt. 7:7–11; Lk. 11:5–13; 18:1–8). For example, Jesus repeatedly states His thesis for His disciples, “ask and it will be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you” (Mt. 7:7; Lk. 11:9).¹³⁴ Jesus develops the basis for this persistence by underscoring that the ones who ask receive (Mt. 7:8; Lk. 11:10). Jesus goes on to illustrate the point twice in the pattern: if a son asks for a good thing, his father will not give him something that frustrates or harms (Mt. 7:9–10; Lk. 11:11–12). Luke emphasizes the issue of persistence more fully by further illustrations such as a man’s persistence in knocking at a friend’s house so that bread might be given to meet a need and a widow’s persistence in requesting an unjust judge to give her legal protection (Lk. 11:5–8). These illustrations of persistence show that at all times we ought to pray and not lose heart (Lk. 18:1). The discussion concludes with an inference that because God is better than we evil men, so much more will He give what is good to those who ask Him! (Mt. 7:11). Luke especially turns this prayer to the generosity of the heavenly Father to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Lk. 11:13).

John develops Jesus’ theme of asking in Jesus’ name or authority (Jn. 14:13; 15:7; 16:23). That is, in a context of obedience to Messiah and love of the brethren (such as faithfulness to Christ in the narrow way) there is a demonstrated connectedness to the root of the vine, Jesus as Messiah that God will grant these requests which we ask in His name.

Additionally, specific prayers are urged by Jesus in a variety of contexts, but they will be developed in those contexts.

Fasting (Mt. 6:16–18). Fasting was commanded for the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:24–31) and in the exile fasts were a regular occurrence (e.g., Zech. 7:3–5; 8:19). Fasting was also used on a personal voluntary level for self humiliation, confession of sins, for prayer, and for longing for the kingdom (Neh. 1:4; Esth. 4:3; Dan. 9:3; Mk. 2:18; Lk. 5:33).¹³⁵ The Pharisees fasted twice a week (presumably on Monday and Thursday; Lk. 18:12).¹³⁶ These same Pharisees had a problem with Jesus and His disciples because they did not fast (Mt. 9:14–15; Mk. 2:18–20; Lk. 5:33–35). However, Jesus explained that they do not fast because they have the bridegroom, Himself, with them. This bridegroom

¹³¹ The addition of the article before “evil” normally indicates a person.

¹³² *11QPs* 24.10; *b. Ber.* 60b.

¹³³ E.g., *Berk. 60b*; C. Marvin Pate and Douglas Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet: The New Testament and the Great Tribulation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 302–325, 401–469; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:594.

¹³⁴ This persistence in seeking is echoed in *Gos. Thom.* 2 and *P. Oxy.* 654.1.

¹³⁵ Fasting was often coupled with prayer: Mt. 6:7–18; 1 Sam. 7:5–6; Neh. 1:4; Acts 13:3; *Tob.* 12.8; Philo, *Spec. leg.* 2.203; Polycarp, *Ep. 7*; *Apoc. Zeph.* 7.6; T. Jacob 7.17.

¹³⁶ *m. Taanith* 1.4–7; 2.9 cf. *Did.* 8.1; Suetonius, *Aug.* 76 and Chrysostom, *Hom. adv. Jud.* 1.1.

reference is enigmatic, maybe hinting of Kingdom (Joel 2:16; Rev. 19:7, 9), but certainly indicating that Jesus presence is to be celebrated, not fasted. However, there will be a time that when He will be taken from them, then they will fast. The Byzantine manuscripts have more references to fasting than this but they are not the earliest and best manuscripts. So fasting is assumed in the Sermon on the Mount, to occur for the disciples (Mt. 6:16–18), especially when Jesus will be taken away from them (Mt. 9:15; Mk. 2:20; Lk. 5:35). It should be evident that the general point being worked is a genuine sincerity in religious duty, which is also consistent with second Temple Jewish fasting.¹³⁷ When a disciple fasts, he should make sure that such fasting is done for internally pure reasons, rather than for show (Mt. 6:16–18). For if one neglects his appearance then he is doing it for human reward, and God considers such things to be a waste.¹³⁸ Whereas, if one’s head is anointed and face washed, that is, the normal steps of hygiene are practiced, no one can tell if you are fasting, then your Father will take notice and repay you.

The Kingdom as your Treasure (Mt. 6:19–24). The allegiance to God excludes one’s allegiance to money and vice versa. “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the love of money” (Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13).¹³⁹ That is, behind appearances and possessions is the issue of serving a master. The essence of slavery is that there was a single ownership and full time service. Either God is served devotedly or not at all. This does not demonize commerce, as does the *Gospel of Thomas* 64, but raises the issue of loyalty. That is, divided loyalty reveals a deep seated idolatry, not just partial commitment to discipleship. It is like the parable of the steward squandering his master’s possessions (Lk. 16:1–13).¹⁴⁰ The steward is commended for his shrewd use of money to work gain for his allegiance, his own gain. The parable is then applied to the disciples, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the love of money” (Lk. 16:13; Mt. 6:24). That is, the cares of this world distract one from a loyalty to God (Mt. 6:24–25; Lk. 16:9–13).¹⁴¹ The disciples are to use their wealth for Kingdom purposes and everlasting gain of those who enter into Kingdom (Lk. 16:8–9). In light of this, “do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,” or since it is a present tense it could be translated as “stop laying up for yourselves treasures on earth” (Mt. 6:19; Lk. 12:33–34).¹⁴² As a Jewish sentiment, this reminds us that such treasures do not last, they are destroyed, devoured, or stolen (Mt. 6:19–20; Jas. 5:2–3).¹⁴³ Instead, we should lay up

¹³⁷ *Sir.* 34:26; *T. Asher* 2.8; *Apoc. Elijah* 1.18–19; *m. Ta’an.* 2.1; *t. Ta’an.* 1.8; *b. Ta’an.* 16a.

¹³⁸ I suspect that this is not addressing fasting in significant times of mourning, which is often accompanied with sackcloth and ashes (Dan. 9:3; Jon. 3:5; *Jdt.* 8.5; *I Macc.* 3.47; Josephus, *Bell.* 20.89.

¹³⁹ *Gos. Thom.* 47.

¹⁴⁰ A similar parable of Rabbi Jose the Priest occurs in *B.T. Rosh Hashanah* 17b–18a.

¹⁴¹ Also, *Gos. Thom.* 36.

¹⁴² Likewise, *Gos. Thom.* 110 urges those who have riches to “renounce the world” to find the truly valuable riches of God.

¹⁴³ *Sir.* 29.10–11; cf. 19.3; 42.13; and Job 4:19; 13:28; Isa. 33:1 LXX; 50:9; 51:8; Hos. 5:12; *Sir.* 29.11; *Ps.—Phoc.* 27; and echoed in early Christian writing: Justin, *I Apol.* 15.

treasure in heaven, because where a person's personal treasure is, there resides that same person's heart focus (Mt. 7:21; Lk. 12:34).¹⁴⁴

Likewise, where your treasure is indicates your destiny (Lk. 16:19–31). Jesus told the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (whose name means “God helps”) to indicate that the way you use wealth indicates your destiny in the afterlife. This parable is similar to the Jewish parable of a rich tax collector named Bar Majan and a poor teacher of the Law who reversed fortunes in the afterlife.¹⁴⁵ The rich man had opportunity but no concern for a poor man who laid immediately outside his gate. Even dogs (an unclean animal) licked the poor man's sores. In life, wealth was kept away from the poor man but his longing was for basic sustenance. When poor Lazarus died, he was carried by angels to the blessing of Abraham's lap, having received bad things in life the afterlife provided comfort (Lk. 16:25). However, the rich man in death was buried and found himself in torment in Hades, and the torment was made more acute in that he could see Lazarus in blessing at a distance. Such judgment agony was just in that the rich man had squandered the good things of this life on himself and not met the needs in his context (Lk. 16:25). Such a miser condition is that of Jewish “evil eye,” signifying intent and leaving one in the dark of judgment (Deut. 15:9; Pr. 23:6; 28:22).¹⁴⁶ In spite of the fire, Hell is a dark place, and is the outcome of such darkened lives (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).¹⁴⁷ Such agony is not released in the afterlife, since the blessed are not permitted to travel to aid the damned (Lk. 16:26). Likewise, neither the blessed nor the damned of the afterlife can appear to rescue from damnation loved ones who have not died, as Jacob Marley did for Scrooge in Charles Dickens' novel *A Christmas Carol*.¹⁴⁸ The Mosaic Law and the prophets are sufficient to warn an individual to have their loyalty completely with God instead of money. Luke ends the parable with a hint that Jesus' (or Lazarus') resurrection would be ineffective in persuading those who serve money, from the error of their way (Lk. 16:31).

The Kingdom is itself a treasure (Mt. 6:33; 13:44).¹⁴⁹ Luke has Jesus explain that this is accomplished by selling one's possessions and giving to charity to meet real needs of people for the Kingdom (Lk. 12:33). This is in contrast to the greedy attitude that someone from the crowd had in wanting Jesus to arbitrate an inheritance settlement (Lk. 12:13–15). Jesus told a parable of a wealthy farmer who hoarded his riches and planned to tear down his barns to build bigger ones to continue the hoarding (Lk. 12:16–21).¹⁵⁰ Such a miser presumed that he would keep living, which makes him to be a fool who was not rich toward God.¹⁵¹ That is, *whatever captivates your thought life, your emotions and*

¹⁴⁴ *T. Job* 33.4–5; *Tob.* 4.8–9; *Sir* 29.10–13; *Ps. Sol.* 9.5, 9; 2 *Bar.* 14.12; 24.1; 44.8; *T. Levi* 13.5; Philo, *Praem.* 104; 4 *Ezra* 7.77; *m. Pe'a* 1.1; *b. B. Bat.* 11a; *Tosefta Peah* 4.18; *Gos. Thom.* 76.

¹⁴⁵ A similar parable particularly in regard to the rich man's afterlife conversation is present in *Ruth Rab.* 3.3 and *Eccl. Rab.* 1.15.1. There is also an Egyptian story of a man with royal linen and a poor man on a mat who reversed fortunes in the afterlife, cf. J. M. Creed, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1930), pp. 209–210; Darrel Bock, *Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), vol. 2, p. 1362.

¹⁴⁶ *Tob.* 4.7; *Sir.* 14.8; 26.11; *m. Abot* 2.9, 11; 5.19; *IQS* 4.9–11.

¹⁴⁷ *IQS* 2.8; *1 En.* 103.7.

¹⁴⁸ Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol and Other Stories* (Roslyn: Walter J. Black, 1932), pp. 14–22.

¹⁴⁹ *T. Job.* 26.3; *Gos. Thom.* 109.

¹⁵⁰ Some similarities are in the scrooge of *Pesikta de Rab Kahana* 10.3 who continued to hoard treasure without paying the tithe.

¹⁵¹ Similar to: *Isa.* 22:13–14 or *Sir.* 11:18–19.

your choices, controls you and thus the use of wealth is reflective of the core commitments of your very being.

When this exclusive servanthood of God is pressed against the Pharisees, Luke calls them “lovers of money” (Lk. 16:14). Jesus reminds them that God knows their hearts and has other values than men have, namely the Kingdom. People are forcing their way into the Kingdom but it is governed by a Law that can not fail, which will exclude them as violators (Lk. 16:16–18).

Let the Pursuit of Kingdom Dispel Worry (Mt. 6:25–34). Because a person can not serve two masters, and thus must serve God, one should not be anxious (Mt. 6:25, 31, 34). Again because this command is in the present tense it could be saying “stop being anxious.” Using the deliberative subjunctive, Jesus asks about the absurdity of being anxious about: life, food, drink, body shape, and clothes (Mt. 6:25; Lk. 12:22). In Matthew, Jesus addresses worry outright as an important Kingdom theme. In Luke, the discussion is in response to a request for Jesus to arbitrate a family will (Lk. 12:13). Jesus approaches the discussion from the vantage point of a sage giving wise counsel and providing reasons to help motivate our action.

The Lukan account begins with a parable which warns of greed, for life does not consist of possessions (Lk. 12:15). This context ties the issue of worry together with the previous concern that the Kingdom should be our treasure. The parable is of the rich farmer who decides to tear down his barns in order to build larger ones (Lk. 12:16–21). God’s evaluation of such a miser is “You fool! This night your life is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared? So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” So domination by a concern for riches is the other side of anxiety. To be anxious about life or body shape or other trivialities is to call God’s generous gift into question, for we owe all this to Him.

Such Jewish wisdom argues for contentment and the confidence that God will provide. Since God has given us the more important things like life and body therefore He will give us the things we need that are also important (Ps. 127:2; Isa. 32:17; Mt. 6:25; Lk. 12:23). Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai also affirmed the sentiment that God looks after those who serve Him and not mammon, so that they need have no anxiety about life’s basic needs.¹⁵² Jesus’ wisdom strategy resonates with this form of Judaism; don’t worry, for the Father is more committed to Jesus’ disciples whom He values than the birds (even the ritually unclean raven) who He feeds generously (Mt. 6:26; Lk. 12:24).¹⁵³ Jesus emphasizes the “you” as He asks the question, “are YOU not worth much more than they?” Furthermore anxiety does not add to height, or body shape, or prolong life span (Mt. 6:27; Lk. 12:25–26). Additionally, don’t be anxious about clothing but trust God, who values you over time more than the simple flowers of the field which He arrays

¹⁵² *Mek.* on Ex. 16:4; While the O.T. has scant evidence for Jews depending upon God through the Sabbath year rest, second Temple Judaism has widespread evidence for the return of this practice (*I Macc.* 6.49, 53–54; *IQS* 10.7–8; *IQM* 2.6; Josephus, *Ant.* 11.338–343; 14.202–210; *m. Šebu’ot*; cf. S. Safrai, “The Rechof Inscription,” *Immanuel* 8[1978]: 48–57; B. Z. Wacholder, “The Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles during the Second Temple and Early Rabbinic Period,” *HUCA* 44[1973]: 98–116). Hillel is purported to have quoted Psalm 68:19 “blessed is the Lord day by day” to support his conviction that God would provide sufficiently for sabbatical year (*b. Besa* 16a).

¹⁵³ “Will not God who created humans, create for him his food?” *Pesiq. R. Kah.* 91a.

with Solomon¹⁵⁴ surpassing glory only to be destroyed the next day (Mt. 6:28–30; Lk. 12:27–28).¹⁵⁵ They grow without toil (the man’s work) or spinning (the woman’s labor).

Do not take on the common Gentile worry about all these things, rather seek first God’s Kingdom and all these things will be added to you (Mt. 6:31–33; Lk. 12:30–31). That is, seeking the Kingdom and God’s righteousness becomes a condition which enables us to find the Kingdom life as well as these inconsequential things we worry about as well (Mt. 5:6; 6:33; 7:8; Lk. 10:28; 12:31). This fits the rabbinical pattern of doing the will of God unto Kingdom.¹⁵⁶ One example of this Kingdom seeking is shown in the Lord’s prayer that places Kingdom concerns first but also prays for daily food (Mt. 6:9–11, 33; 7:7–8).

Furthermore, Jesus reminds us, “do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom” (Lk. 12:32). Therefore, do not be anxious because: 1) tomorrow will take care of itself, and 2) each day has sufficient misfortune, persecutions and troubles to render foolish an approach which borrows future concerns for today (Mt. 6:34).¹⁵⁷ Luke records Jesus’ ending to this discussion in a way that reminds us that anxiety is the other side of the issue of wealth and allegiance (the previous section); that is don’t be anxious, “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Lk. 12:34).

Don’t Condemn Others; Generosity in Speech Identifies With Kingdom (Mt. 7:1–6, 12).

Jesus as sage, calls His disciples to not judge lest you be judged in return (Mt. 7:1–2; Lk. 6:37–38). Perhaps, this is said reflecting that the Pharisees and implicating them (in the synoptic tradition) as so often wrongly passing judgment on others (Mt. 9:10–13; 12:1–8; Lk. 7:39; 15:1–2; 18:9–14). However, Jewish rabbinical instruction reminds us that, we should “not assume the place of God by deciding you have the right to stand in judgment over all, do not do it, I say in order to avoid being called to account by the God whose place you usurp.”¹⁵⁸ The Jewish wisdom theme of reaping what you sow, the retribution principle, is here applied by Jesus, to remind His disciples that they will be judged after the same measure that they do to others (Job 4:8; 5:1–16; Pr. 11:18; 22:8; Mt. 7:1; Lk. 6:37).¹⁵⁹ According to the rabbis, God judged the world by two measures: mercy and justice.¹⁶⁰ The merciful will receive mercy and those concerned about righteousness will receive satisfaction (Mt. 5:6–7).¹⁶¹ Luke more strongly warns “do not condemn or you shall be condemned.” However, Luke then encourages generosity in the forms of pardoning and giving, “for whatever measure you deal out, it shall be dealt to you in return.” Mark uses this retribution principle in a novel way, to instead underscore the parable of the soils, “be careful what you listen to and apply...for whoever has, to him

¹⁵⁴ Solomon’s splendor is an obvious Jewish metaphor for elaborate beauty (1 Kgs. 9:26–10:29; 2 Chr. 9:13–28; *Sir.* 2:1–11; *1 Esdr.* 1.5; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.39–41; Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 2.10.102).

¹⁵⁵ Echoed in *Gos. Thom.* 36.

¹⁵⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:660.

¹⁵⁷ *b. Sanh.* 100b; *b. Yeb.* 63b.

¹⁵⁸ *b. Šabb.* 127b; 151b; *m. Sotah* 1.7; *b. Baba Metzia* 59b; *b. Roš. Hoš.* 16b.

¹⁵⁹ *Sir.* 16.14; *2 En.* 44.5; *Mek.* on Ex. 13:19, 21; 14:25; 15:3, 5, 8; 17:14; *m. Sota* 1.7; *t. Sota* 3.1; *Tg. Ps.—J.* on Gen. 38:26; *b. Šabb.* 105b; *b. Sanh.* 100a; *b. Sota* 8b; *T. Zeb.* 5.3; *Tg. Isa.* on 27.8.

¹⁶⁰ *Lev. Rab.* 29.3.

¹⁶¹ *t. B. Qam.* 9.30; *y. B. Qam.* 8.10.6c.

more will be given” (Mk. 4:24–25).¹⁶² That is, those applying the Kingdom message will have further Kingdom blessings. However, Jesus, in Matthew and Luke, then applies this issue with colorful imagery much like the rabbis did, “why do you get fixated on the speck¹⁶³ in your brother’s eye and do not notice the log in your own eye?” (Mt. 7:3–4; Lk. 6:41–42).¹⁶⁴ The issue is hypocrisy, which is a greater “log” in one’s own eye (Mt. 5:5; Lk. 6:42). However, when a brother in a meek and self-judging spirit, removes the log from his own eye, he has the responsibility for helping his brother remove his speck (Mt. 5:5; Lk. 6:42).

Imbedded within teaching on the retribution principle in Luke is a warning that a blind man can not guide a blind man, for both will fall into a pit (Lk. 6:39).¹⁶⁵ Likewise, a student “is not above his teacher; but after he has been fully trained he can be like his teacher” (Lk. 6:40). This reminds us that Jesus’ is calling His disciples to the very practice of non-judging mercy which He emulates.

Jesus reminds His disciples that they should only help those who they think will be receptive to their instruction (Mt. 7:6).¹⁶⁶ This is reflective of Proverbs 9:8 “Do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you, reprove a wise man, and he will love you.”¹⁶⁷ Matthew 7:6 continues in this Jewish proverbial tradition; “do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.” The “holy” and “pearls” are the valuable and sacred in contrast to the “dogs” and “swine,” which are wild unclean animals capable of savage actions (1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Kgs. 8:13; Job 30:1). If you try to correct the foolish or the scoffer, they may become violent and try to harm you (Mt. 7:6, “tear you to pieces”). Likewise, the Jewish tradition urged, “Let not sacred words enter a place of uncleanness.”¹⁶⁸ Therefore, be wise about whom you instruct and try to correct. That is, receptivity to correction would indicate that they would likely be heading towards the Kingdom. So correction should be limited to these and not those on the broad way toward destruction.

The section concludes with the golden rule (Mt. 7:12).¹⁶⁹ Probably the “therefore” is summarizing the whole sermon, including its Law section (Mt. 5:17–48, which I will develop in the next chapter). There are many statements of a negative form of the golden rule in second Temple Judaism.¹⁷⁰ For example, about 20 A.D. rabbi Hillel was challenged to summarize the Law in the time it would take a Gentile to stand on one leg. Hillel responded, “What is hateful to you, do not do to anyone else. This is the

¹⁶² *m. Sotah* 1.7 is even more different.

¹⁶³ κάρφος means a small piece of foreign matter, Gen. 8:11 LXX.

¹⁶⁴ Similar to Rom. 2:1; *bArakh.* 16b; *Baba Bathra* 15b; Sextus, *Sent.* 90; *b. Qidd.* 70a; *b. B. Mes.* 107b; *b. Sanh.* 18a, 19b; *Gos. Thom.* 26b.

¹⁶⁵ Matthew 15:14 takes this saying to be one of judgment on the Pharisees who resist Jesus’ Kingdom ministry.

¹⁶⁶ *Gos. Thom.* 93.

¹⁶⁷ Also said in: Pr. 23:9; *b. Sanh.* 90b; *m. Tem.* 6.5; *b. Bek.* 15a; *b. Pesah.* 29a; *b. Šebu.* 11b; *b. Tem.* 117a, 130b.

¹⁶⁸ This is a quote of *b. Šabb.* 127b; which might raise the impropriety of such critique being said to a Gentile who does not know the Law, cf. *b. Hag.* 13a; *b. Ketub.* 111a.

¹⁶⁹ *Gos. Thom.* 6.

¹⁷⁰ *b. Šabb.* 31a; *T. Naph.* 1.6; 2 *En.* 61.1–2; *Tg. Yer.* 1 to Lev. 19:18; *ARN* 15; *Sent. Syr. Men.* 250–251; cf. Sextus, *Sent.* 89; *Did.* 1.2; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.7.6 (358d).

whole Law; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.”¹⁷¹ Jesus shows His continuity with this point of view, but goes further by putting the golden rule into the positive. “Therefore, however you want people to treat you so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Mt. 7:12).

Conclusion

Much of Jesus teaching reflects second Temple Judaism, as has been developed in this chapter (and especially further in the chapter on Jesus teaching the Law). Within this coloring Jesus adds His unique nuance and Kingdom New Covenant emphasis. Thus, Jesus calls all of His disciples to live the narrow way that leads toward this Kingdom.

Echoed in the Arts

The Jewishness of Jesus is a rare theme for the arts, since most artistic presentations either show Jesus to be idealized in a classical pattern or to reflect our own existential context. For example, millions of copies of the Anglo presentation of Jesus praying by Warnes Salman were carried by American servicemen as they went overseas during the second World War. Our own and the world’s Sunday school literature follows this existential pattern of reproducing Jesus after our likeness. However, Rembrandt did take into account Jesus’ Jewishness by using Jewish models for inspiration as he painted events in Christ’s life and death. For example, in his *Raising of the Cross* a Jewish Jesus hangs from the cross as Rembrandt has included himself as one who is at the base of the cross assisting with causing His death. Likewise, in his *Descent of Christ*, Jesus is being lowered into the arms of a young Rembrandt, whose face presses in love against the descending abdomen of Jesus.



However, the only other artist I know who took Jesus Jewishness seriously was Chagal. In a painting of Jesus on a white cross Christ is presented in an oasis of calm barely wrapped in a Jewish prayer shawl. A menorah stands at the base of the cross. Horrible suffering surrounds the cross with a variety of oppressions which men have continued to do to their fellow humans.



The spiritual life view of the Two Ways is most apparent in the spirituality of Jews, Orthodox Christians,¹⁷² Catholics, Anglicans and Episcopalians. Occasionally one can find individuals of other traditions who hold this view as well. For example, the Southern Baptist, Dallas Willard especially developed the view in *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*,¹⁷³ but the approach is also occasionally apparent in his more popular work, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*:

¹⁷² That is, Greek, Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox.

¹⁷³ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1998).

Understanding How God Changes Lives.¹⁷⁴ However, the most influential classical evangelical protestant spirituality in this Two Ways pattern is John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*,¹⁷⁵ where he allegorizes Christian and then his wife through the narrow way to the celestial city. The following is a sample of Hope and Christian journeying on and off the narrow way to life. This section shows the importance of remaining faithful to the narrow way that leads to life, by showing some of the precarious consequences for those who wander from this narrow way.

I saw then, that they went on their way to a pleasant river; which *David* the King called *the river of God*; but *John*, *the river of the Water of Life*. Now their Way lay just upon the bank of this River: Here therefore *Christian* and his companion walked with great delight; they drank also of the water of the River, which was pleasant and enlivening to their weary spirits. Besides, on the banks of this River, on either side, were *green Trees*, that bore all manner of fruit; and the leaves of the trees were good for Medicine; with the fruit of these trees they were also much delighted; and the leaves they eat to prevent Surfeits, and other diseases that are incident to those that heat their blood by Travels. On either side of the River was also a meadow, curiously beautified with lilies; and it was green all the year long. In this meadow they lay down and slept; for here they might *lie down safely*. When they awoke, they gathered again of the water of the River, and ten lay down again to sleep. Thus they did several days and nights. Then they sang:

*Behold ye, how these Crystal Streams do glide
(To comfort Pilgrims) by the Highway side.
The Meadows green, besides their fragrant smell,
Yield dainties for them: And he that can tell
What pleasant Fruit, yea, Leaves, these Trees do yield,
Will soon sell all, that he may buy this Field.*

So when they were disposed to go on, (for they were not as yet at their Journey's end), they eat and drank, and departed.

Now I beheld in my dream, that they had not journied far, but the River and the way for a time parted, at which were not a little sorry, yet they durst not go out of the Way. Now the way from the River was rough, and their feet tender by reason of their travels. *So the Soul of the Pilgrims were much discouraged, because of the way*. Wherefore still as they went on, they wished for better Way. Now a little before them, there was on the Left Hand of the road a *Meadow*, and a Stile to go over into it, and that meadow is called *By-Path-Meadow*. Then said *Christian* to his fellow, If this meadow lieth along by our Wayside, let us go over into it. Then he went to the Stile to see, and behold a path lay along by the Way

¹⁷⁴ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991).

¹⁷⁵ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress From this World to that Which is to Come* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977, reprinted from 1895 edition), pp. 124–136.

on the other side of the fence. 'Tis according to my wish, said Christian, here is the easiest going; come good *Hopeful*, and let us go over.

Hope. But how if this Path should lead us out of the Way?

Chr. That's not likely, said the other; look, doth it not go along by the Wayside? So *Hopeful*, being persuaded by his fellow, went after him over the Stile. When they were gone over, and were got into the Path, they found it easy for their feet; and withal, they looking before them, espied a man walking as they did, (and his name was *Vain Confidence*), so they called after him, and asked him, wither that Way led? He said, to the Celestial Gate: Look, said *Christian*, did I not tell you so? By this you may see we are right; so they followed, and he went before them. But behold, the Night came on, and it grew very dark; so that they that were behind lost the sight of him that went before.

He therefore that went before (*Vain-Confidence* by name), not seeing the way before him, fell into a deep Pit, which was on purpose there made by the Prince of those grounds, to catch *vain-glorious* fools withal, and was dashed in pieces with his fall.

Now *Christian* and his fellow heard him fall. So they called to know the matter, but there was none to answer, only they heard groaning. Then said *Hopeful*, Where are we now? Then was his fellow silent, as mistrusting that he had led him out of the Way; and now it began to rain, and thunder and lighten in a very dreadful manner; and the water rose amain.

Then *Hopeful* groaned in himself, saying, *Oh that I had kept on my Way!*

Chr. Who could have thought that this Path should have led us out of the Way?

Hope. I was afraid on't at the very first, and therefore gave you that gentle caution. I would have spoke plainer, but that you are older than I.

Chr. Good brother, be not offended, I am sorry I have brought thee out of the way, and that I have put thee into such imminent Danger; pray, my brother, forgive me; I did not do it of an Evil Intent.

Hope. Be comforted, my brother, for I forgive thee; and believe too, that this shall be for our good.

Chr. I a, glad I have with me a merciful brother: But we must not stand thus; let's try to go back again.

Hope. But, good brother, let me go before.

Chr. No, if you please, let me go first; that if there be any danger, I may be first therein, because by my means we are both gone out of the way.

Hope. No, said *Hopeful*, you shall not go first; for your mind being troubled, may lead you out of the Way again. Then for their Encouragement, they heard the Voice of one, saying, *Let thine Heart be towards the Highway; even the Way that thou wentest, turn again*. But by this time the Waters were greatly risen, by reason of which, the Way going back was very dangerous. (Then I thought that it is easier going out of the way when we are in, than going in when we are out.) Yet they adventured to go back, but it was so dark, and the Flood was so high, that in their going back they had like to have been drowned nine or ten times.

Neither could they, with all the skill they had, get again to the Stile that night. Wherefore at last, lighting under a little shelter, they sat down there 'till the Day brake; but being weary, they fell asleep. Now there was, not far from the place where they lay, a castle, called *Doubting-Castle*, owner whereof was *Giant Despair*, and it was in his grounds they were now sleeping; wherefore he getting up in the morning early, and walking up and down in his fields, caught *Christian* and *Hopeful* asleep in his grounds: Then with a *grim* and *surly* voice, he bid them awake, and asked them whence they were, and what they did in his grounds.¹⁷⁶ They told him they were Pilgrims, and that they had lost their Way. Then said the *Giant*, You have this night trespassed on me, by trampling in and lying on my grounds, and therefore you must go along with me. So they were forced to go, because he was stronger than they. They also had but little to say, for they knew themselves in a Fault. The *Giant* therefore drove them before him, and put them into his castle, in a very dark *Dungeon*, nasty and stinking to the spirit of these two men: Here then they lay from *Wednesday* morning till *Saturday* night, without one bit of bread, or drop of drink, or Light, or any to ask how they did: They were therefore here in evil case, and were far from Friends and Acquaintance. Now in this place *Christian* had double sorrow, because 'twas through his unadvised haste that they were brought into this distress.

Now *Giant Despair* had a wife, and her name was *Diffidence*: So when he was gone to bed, he told his wife what he had done, to wit, That he had taken a couple of Prisoners, and cast them into his *Dungeon*, for trespassing on his grounds. Then he asked her also, what he had best to do further to them. So she asked him what they were, whence they came, and whither they were bound? And he told her. Then she counseled him, that when he arose in the morning, he should beat them without any mercy: So when he arose, he getteth him a grievous crab-tree cudgel, and goes down into the *Dungeon* to them, and there first falls to rating of them as if they were dogs, although they gave him never a word of distaste: Then he falls upon them, and beats them fearfully, in such sort, that they were not able to help themselves, or to turn them upon the floor. This done, he withdraws, and leaves them there to condole their misery, and to mourn under their distress: So all that day they spent the time in nothing but sighs and bitter Lamentations. The next night she talking with her husband about them further, and understanding that they were yet alive, did advise him to counsel them to make away themselves: So when morning was come, he goes to them in a surly manner, as before, and perceiving them to be very sore with the stripes that he had given them the day before, he told them, That since they were never like to come out of that place, their only way would be forthwith to make an end of themselves, either with Knife, Halter, or Poison: For why, said he, should you choose Life, seeing it is attended with so much Bitterness? But they desired him to let them go; with that he looked ugly upon them, and rushing to them had doubtless made an end of them himself, but that he fell into one of his fits (for he

¹⁷⁶ *The Pilgrims now, to gratify the Flesh,
Will seek its Ease; but oh! How they afresh
Do thereby plunge themselves new Griefs into!
Who seek to please the Flesh, themselves undo.*

sometimes in Sun-shine weather fell into one of his fits) and lost, for a time, the use of his hand: Wherefore he withdrew, and left them as before to consider what to do. Then did the Prisoners consult between themselves, whether t'was best to take his counsel or no; and thus they began to discourse:

Chr. Brother, said *Christian*, what shall we do? The life that we now live is miserable! For my part, I know not whether 'tis best to live thus, or to die out of hand. *My Soul chooseth Strangling rather than Life*, and the Grave is more easy for me than this Dungeon! Shall we be ruled by the Giant?

Hope. Indeed our present condition is dreadful, and death would be far more welcome to me, than thus forever to abide: But yet let us consider, the Lord of the Country to which we are going, hath said, Thou shalt do no Murder, no not to another man's person; much more then are we forbidden to take his counsel, to kill ourselves. Besides, he that kills another, can but commit murder upon his body: But for one to kill *himself*, is to kill Body and Soul at once. And moreover, my brother, thou talkest of ease in the grave, but hast thou forgotten the Hell, whither for certain the Murders go? For no Murderer hath Eternal Life, &c. And let us consider again, that all the Law is not in the hand of Giant Despair; others, so far as I can understand, have been taken by him, as well as we; and yet have escaped out of his hands. Who knows, but that God, who made the world, may cause that *Giant Despair* may die, or that, at some time or other, he may forget to lock us in; or but e may in short time have another of his fits before us, and may lose the use of his limbs? And if ever that should come to pass again, for my part I am resolved to pluck up the heart of a Man, and to try my utmost to get from under his hand. I was a fool that I did not try to do it before; but however, my brother, let's be patient, and endure a while, the time may come that may give us a happy release: But let us not be our own murderers. With these words *Hopeful* at present did moderate the mind of his brother; so they continued together (in the Dark) that day in their sad and doleful condition.

Well, towards evening the *Giant* goes down into the Dungeon again, to see if his prisoners had taken his counsel; but when he came there, he found them alive; and truly alive was all; for now, what for want of bread and water, and by reason of the Wounds they received when he beat them, they could do little but breathe. But I say, he found them alive; at which he fell into a grievous rage, and told them, that seeing they had disobeyed his counsel, it should be worse with them than if they had been born.

At this they trembled greatly, and I think that *Christian* fell into a Swoon; but coming a little to himself again, they renewed their discourse about the *Giant's* counsel, and whether yet they had best take it or no. Now *Christian* again seemed to be for doing it, but *Hopeful* made his second reply as followeth.

Hope. My Brother, said he, remembrest thou not, how valiant thou hast been heretofore? *Apollyon* could not crush thee, nor could all that thou didst hear, or see, or feel, in the valley of the Shadow of Death; what hardship, terror, and amazement hast thou already gone through, and art thou now nothing but Fear? Thou seest that I am in the Dungeon with thee, a far weaker man by nature than thou art; also this *Giant* has wounded me as well as thee, and hath also cut off the bread and water from my mouth, and with thee I mourn without the Light. But

let's exercise a little more patience; remember how thou playedst the Man at *Vanity Fair*, and was neither afraid of the chain nor cage, nor yet of bloody Death; wherefore let us (at least to avoid the Shame that becomes not a Christian to be found in) bear up with patience as well as we can.

Now night being come again, and the *Giant* and his wife being in bed, she asked him concerning the prisoners, and if they had taken his counsel: To which he replied; They are sturdy rogues, they choose rather to bear all hardships, than to make away themselves. Then said she; Take them into the castle-yard to-morrow, and shew them the *Bones* and *Skulls* of those that thou hast already dispatch'd and make them believe e're a week comes to an end, thou also wilt tear them in pieces, as thou hast done their fellows before them.

So when the mourning was come, the *Giant* goes to them again, and takes them into the castle-yard, and shews them as his wife had bidden him: These, said he, were Pilgrims as you are, once, and they trespassed in my grounds, as you have done; and when I thought fit, I tore them in pieces, and so within ten days I will do you; go get you down to your Den again; and with that he beat them all the way thither. They lay therefore all day on *Saturday* in a lamentable case, as before. Now, when night was come, and when Mrs. *Diffidence* and her husband the *Giant* were got to bed, they began to renew their discourse of their prisoners; and withal, the old *Giant* wondering that he could neither by his Blows nor Counsel bring them to an end. And with that his wife replied; I fear, said she, that they live in hope that some will come to relieve them, or that they have picklocks about them, by the means of which they hope to escape. And say'st thou so, my dear, said the *Giant*; I will therefore search them in the mourning.

Well, on *Saturday* about midnight they began to *pray*, and continued in Prayer till almost break of day.

Now, a little before it was Day, good *Christian*, as one half amazed, brake out in this passionate speech; What a Fool, quoth he, am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty? I have a key in my bosom, called *Promise*, that will I am persuaded open any lock in *Doubting-Castle*. Then said *Hopeful*, That's good news, good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom and try.

Then *Christian* pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt (as he turned the Key) gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and *Christian* and *Hopeful* both came out. Then he went to the outward door that leads into the *castle-yard*, and with his key opened that door also. After he went to the Iron Gate, for that must be opened too, but that lock went very hard, yet the Key did open it. Then they thrust open the gate to make their escape with speed; but that gate as it opened made such a creaking, that it waked *Giant Despair*, who hastily rising to pursue his prisoners, felt his limbs to fail, for his fits took him again, so that he could by no means go after them. Then they went on, and came to the King's Highway again, and so were safe, because they were out of his jurisdiction.

Now, when they were gone over the Stile, they began to contrive with themselves what they should do at that Stile, to prevent those that should come after from falling into the hands of *Giant Despair*. So they consented to erect there a pillar, and to engrave upon the side thereof this sentence; "Over this Stile

is the way to *Doubting-Castle*, which is kept by *Giant Despair*, who despiseth the King of the Celestial Country, and seeks to destroy his holy Pilgrims.” Many therefore that followed after, read what was written, and escaped the danger. This done, they sang as follows:

*Out of the Way we went, and then we found
What 'twas to tread upon forbidden ground.
And let them that come after have a care,
Lest heedlessness makes them as we to fare,
Lest they for trespassing, his Pris'ners are,
Whose Castle's Doubting, and whose name's Despair.*

They went then till they came to the *Delectable Mountains*;¹⁷⁷ which mountains belong to the Lord of that Hill, of which we have spoken before the Gardens and Orchards, the Vineyards, and Fountains of water; where also they drank and washed themselves, and did freely eat of the vineyards. Now there was on the tops of those mountains, Shepherds feeding their Flocks, and they stood by the Highway side. The Pilgrims therefore went to them, and leaning upon their staves, (as is common with weary Pilgrims, when they stand to talk with any by the way) they asked, *Whose Delectable Mountains are these? And whose be the Sheep that feed upon them?*

Shepherd. These mountains are *Emmanuel's Land*, and they are within sight of his City; and the Sheep also are his, and he laid down his Life for them.

Chr. Is this the Way to the Celestial City?

Shep. You are just in your Way.

Chr. How far is it thither?

Shep. Too far for any, but those that shall get thither indeed.

Chr. Is the Way safe or dangerous?

Shep. Safe for those for whom it is to be safe, *but Transgressors shall fall therein.*

Chr. Is there in this place any Relief, for Pilgrims that are weary, and faint in the Way?

Shep. The Lord of these mountains hath given us a Charge *not to be forgetful to entertain strangers*, therefore the Good of the place is even before you.

¹⁷⁷ *Mountains delectable they now ascend,
Where Shepherds be, which to them do commend
Alluring things, and things that Cautions are,
Pilgrims are steady kept, by Faith and Fear.*