

**The Gospel of Matthew**  
**Lesson 10**  
**Matthew 14:34 – Matthew 16:28**

**Back to Gennesaret**

**Matthew 14:**<sup>34</sup> When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. <sup>35</sup> And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent *word* into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick; <sup>36</sup> and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched *it* were cured.

The men of Gennesaret recognize Jesus because He has been there before. In Matthew 8:28-34, Jesus cast out of a man a legion of demons. After Jesus cast the demons into a herd of pigs, He sent the pigs into the river to die. The people heard of the man's healing and came to implore Jesus to leave the region immediately. The healed man begged Jesus to let him join the other followers, but Jesus made him stay in his own country as a testimony to His work. Jesus has returned to the region and it is now ready to accept the Lord and His ministry. Once Jesus is recognized, the word spreads and people come from all around to be healed by Him. This reception of Jesus and the salvation of many are the result of one man's testimony.

**Do Not Wash Hands - Do Not Honor Parents**

**Matthew 15:**<sup>1</sup> Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, <sup>2</sup> "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." <sup>3</sup> And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? <sup>4</sup> "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.'<sup>80</sup> <sup>5</sup> "But you say, 'Whoever says to *his* father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given *to God*," <sup>6</sup> he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And *by this* you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. <sup>7</sup> "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: <sup>8</sup> "THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. <sup>9</sup> 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"<sup>81</sup>

The feeding of the 5,000 occurred the night before, and when the apostles load the boats to cross the sea to Gennesaret, they carry the 12 baskets of leftovers with them. For two days the apostles eat from the baskets without properly washing. The envoy of strict Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem has followed them to the region and watched them eat. The strictest Pharisees make it a practice to wash before the meal, between each course and after the meal. The apostles have not washed their hands at all, either ritually or hygienically.

The apostles have broken a major tradition of the Pharisees. As mentioned earlier, this time in Jewish life tradition is more important in their religion than the actual Mosaic teaching found in the Scripture. Many times their traditions violate the Law. In defense of the rights of the apostles, Jesus questions the Pharisees' breaking of the Law. Jesus strikes at the heart of the Pharisees' sin by addressing their breaking of one of the Ten Commandments,

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<sup>80</sup>Exodus 20:12, 16

<sup>81</sup> Isaiah 29:13

that of honoring their parents. In Jewish life, honoring one's parents is mandatory. When a parent has a need, it is the adult child's responsibility to meet that need. The Pharisees have devised a way to get around the commandment with the use of the word, "Corbin," which means "It is given to God." When a parent has a need and the child does not want to help, he only has to say "Corbin" and he is free from the commandment. Once the parents have been told of this pledge to God, the child can then do with the provision as he wishes. Jesus has caught them in a hypocritical scenario and He uses the Isaiah passage to prove that they are living a religion according to the principles of men rather than truly worshipping God.

### What Defiles a Man

**Matthew 15:**<sup>10</sup> After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, "Hear and understand. <sup>11</sup> *It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.*" <sup>12</sup> Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" <sup>13</sup> But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. <sup>14</sup> "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." <sup>15</sup> Peter said to Him, "Explain the parable to us." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? <sup>17</sup> "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? <sup>18</sup> "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. <sup>19</sup> "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. <sup>20</sup> "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

With the envoy still present, Jesus calls the crowd closer to Him and tells them that nothing outside the body which goes into the stomach can defile the man; it is what proceeds out of the mouth that reveals the defilement birthed in the heart.

When the crowd leaves, the apostles ask Jesus to explain the story He has just told them. Food eaten with unclean hands goes into the stomach and is eliminated; it cannot go into the heart to defile it. The defilement of all evil thoughts, murder, theft, adulteries, deceit, envy, slander, pride and foolishness come from within the heart; these things defile the man.

### Faith of a Canaanite Woman

**Matthew 15:**<sup>21</sup> Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and *began* to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." <sup>23</sup> But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us." <sup>24</sup> But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." <sup>25</sup> But she came and *began* to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" <sup>26</sup> And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." <sup>27</sup> But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." <sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

From Gennesarat, Jesus returns to Peter's house and then leaves to minister in Tyre and Sidon about 30 miles west of Capernaum. Hearing that Jesus is near, a Gentile woman comes to Him and begs Him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. Jesus is there to minister to the Jews so He tells her to let the children be satisfied first. He then tells her

not to give their food to the dogs. She answers the Lord by saying, "but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Because of her answer, Jesus sends her on her way saying that her daughter is well. At home, she finds her daughter on the bed – well! Mark tells us that from Tyre, Jesus ministers throughout Sidon and then goes back to the Sea of Galilee.<sup>82</sup>

### Feeding of the 4,000

**Matthew 15:**<sup>29</sup> Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there.<sup>30</sup> And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them *those who were* lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them.<sup>31</sup> So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.<sup>32</sup> And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way."<sup>33</sup> The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in *this* desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?"<sup>34</sup> And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish."<sup>35</sup> And He directed the people to sit down on the ground;<sup>36</sup> and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the people.<sup>37</sup> And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.<sup>38</sup> And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

As Jesus ministers on the mountain, time passes and the crowd has been with Him for three days with nothing to eat. "Where can we buy food?" the apostles ask. The apostles have seven loaves and a few small fish among them. Jesus tells the multitude to sit down and He breaks up the food. Then the apostles feed the people. The seven baskets of leftovers are picked up. This time only 4,000 people are fed, including men, women and children. Many have stopped following Jesus because He has claimed to be God and because of the pressure of the Pharisees.

### Pharisees Seek a Sign in Magadan

**Matthew 15:**<sup>39</sup> And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan.<sup>16:1</sup> The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.<sup>2</sup> But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, '*It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.*'"<sup>3</sup> "And in the morning, '*There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.*' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot *discern* the signs of the times?"<sup>4</sup> "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away.

When Jesus is ministering on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, a Pharisee from Dalmanutha comes to Him asking for a sign. Jesus sighs and says that no sign will be given to this generation.

Dalmanutha is the Greek name for the city of Magadan on the western edge of the Sea of Galilee. In Magadan, the Pharisees, as well as the Herodians who have joined them in their ambition to stop the ministry of Jesus, begin to question Him. The Matthew text adds the Sadducees to this group, showing the growing unity of the entire Sanhedrin at this point. As an argument, they seek a sign from heaven to prove His authority from God. Have they

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<sup>82</sup> Mark 7:31-37

been blind to all the miracles He had performed in the past two and a half years? Have they ignored the feeding of the multitudes? Have they not spoken with the synagogue official whose daughter was raised from the dead? Now they ask for a sign from heaven. Are not all the miracles signs from heaven? Jesus' deep sigh comes from the depth of His being. He is not going to give them any signs other than what He does in His normal ministry.

### **Beware of the Leaven**

**Matthew 16:**<sup>5</sup> And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. <sup>16</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>7</sup> They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "He said that because we did not bring any bread." <sup>8</sup> But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? <sup>9</sup> "Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? <sup>10</sup> "Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? <sup>11</sup> "How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>12</sup> Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

This time the seven baskets of leftover food are not put in the boats for the journey across the Sea of Galilee. Jesus knows what they are thinking, but He has an important message to deliver to them about the Pharisees and the followers of Herod. His warning is to watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Leaven is used in the same sense that Paul uses the word in 1 Cor. 5:6. "Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?"

Leaven always represents sin to the Jews and the Pharisees and Herodians are set in their sinful ways. Just a little leaven will bloat the entire lump of dough. All the disciples have been raised in the religious world of the Pharisees as well as the political world of Herod. Jesus is concerned that the sinful influence of the Pharisees and Herodians will permeate the lives of the disciples, nullifying what they have learned from the Lord. The Lord says to watch out for the leaven or bad politics of Herod. He also says to watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees which includes both bad politics and bad theology.

### **Who Do They Say**

**Matthew 16:**<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Caesarea Philippi stands on the slopes of Mount Hermon. It is controlled by Herod Philip, not Herod Antipas who beheaded John the Baptist. At this northern location, Jesus is out of the reach of the Pharisees and Sadducees as well as the political power of the Herodians. In Caesarea Philippi, Jesus can begin teaching His disciples about His coming death, hiding none of the details from them. In the Mark passage we find that He is speaking to His inner circle when He asks them not to tell anyone about Him in Caesarea.<sup>83</sup> He wants time to instruct them about the events of the next six months without the distraction of people seeking a miracle or healing. In other words, the Lord wants private time to instruct His closest followers.

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<sup>83</sup> Mark 8:27-30

This passage reveals a variety of opinions about Jesus and His earthly ministry. Some say He is John the Baptist. Some say that He is Elijah and some say He is one of the old prophets risen from the grave. All of these opinions agree on one thing; the Lord's teaching is not like any other teacher of the law and Pharisees. They all see in Him a bold witness against the evil in the world. We must never be surprised to find the same variety of opinions about Christ today. Notice in this passage the knowledge and faith that the apostle Peter displays. We read that when our Lord says to his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" Peter answers, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Today we find it hard to appreciate a confession like this. To fully appreciate it, we must put ourselves in the shoes of one of Christ's disciples. We should remember that the leadership of the cities in Israel do not see anything royal about the Lord. He has no crown, no army, and to them, no earthly power. They see a man who often has nowhere to sleep at night. And yet it is at this time and under these circumstances that Peter boldly declares his belief that Jesus is the Christ of God. Truly, this statement indicates a great faith.

### **Peter's Blessing**

**Matthew 16:**<sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. <sup>19</sup> "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." <sup>20</sup> Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

In this passage, Jesus is bestowing on Peter a blessing in heaven and the power to "bind on earth" what will be bound in heaven and the power to "loose on earth" what will be loosed in heaven. It is a promise to Peter and does not apply to anyone else.

Peter's Hebrew name is Simon Barjona or Simon the son of Jona. Cephas is the same name in Arabic and Peter is the Greek word meaning "chip off the rock." Jesus uses a pun on his name to draw attention to what He is about to say. The Lord is announcing that He will build His church on "this rock," the earth. The church does not exist anywhere else. It is a new organization. Even though it is mentioned in the Old Testament as the mystery to come, no one of the past has any concept of the church, its structure or its function. It is an organization that the "gates of Hades" will not overpower. The apostles have to be confused at this point. They understand that Hades is the place where the dead go when they die. The godly go to the Bosom of Abraham and the evil foe to the place of torment. Everyone goes to one of the two compartments of Hades when he dies. How can it be that the "gates" of Hades will not prevail against the church? The gates are the entry doors to the afterlife; everyone must enter it through the gates. Here, Jesus mentions the first change in the afterlife system. Although it is not mentioned here, the letters of the New Testament which establish the structure, function, and order of the church reveal that those who belong to the church will not enter through the gates of Hades to wait for a resurrection. At death, those who belong to the church because they belong to the Lord will go to be with Him in heaven immediately at the time of death. Surely, the apostles can not understand the eternal truths in the Lord's words and surely they have no understanding of His plan at his time.

The blessing comes to Peter because the Lord gives him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Peter will have the honor of opening the door to heaven for all who belong to the church. While Jesus is on earth, He is making all the necessary arrangements for the establishment of His church, but the inauguration day will not occur until 40 days after His ascension on the day of Pentecost. On that day, Peter is privileged to preach the first message to the

church and unlock the door to heaven, binding the first members into the church. No longer will God's people have to enter through the gates of Hades and the portion called the Bosom of Abraham. No longer will there be a peaceful sleep before seeing the Lord; it will be an immediate transformation.

Additionally, Peter will direct the church's organizational structure after the departure of the Lord. Only Peter will be able to speak for the Lord in the early years as the chief spokesman for the church.<sup>84</sup>

### Headed to Jerusalem

**Matthew 16:**<sup>21</sup> From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

The very first week after Jesus came out of the wilderness, He mentioned His death, burial, and resurrection. When He spoke about the tearing down of the temple and raising it up on the third day, He was speaking of His ultimate purpose. When He spoke of the sign of Jonah – the theme was the same. Now, just six months from His death he begins to make it a vivid and frequent topic. This time Peter stands to rebuke Jesus for the words.

### Get Behind Me Satan

**Matthew 16:**<sup>22</sup> Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You."<sup>23</sup> But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."<sup>25</sup> "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."<sup>26</sup> "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"<sup>27</sup> "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS."<sup>28</sup> "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Somehow, Peter must have determined that it is his responsibility to stop the Lord from teaching such pessimistic lessons about the future. Peter probably stands up and turns the Lord around to rebuke Him. Notice that Jesus turns back to the disciples and then rebukes Peter, calling him Satan. Jesus does not mean that he is the real Satan. Peter is being selfish, not wanting the Lord to complete His mission on earth. Peter wants their lives to continue just as they are, to go on forever, if possible. Jesus has heard words like this before from Satan after the forty days in the wilderness just three years before. Satan is not interested in the things of God. Likewise, Peter does not care about God's plan for the Lord. From here on out, the road will be difficult for those who want to follow Jesus. Each one of them will have to take up his own cross to follow the Lord.

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<sup>84</sup> Eighteen years later, Paul will become a co-spokesman for the church.

<sup>85</sup> Daniel 7:13-14; Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12; Jeremiah 17:10; Jeremiah 32:19; Ezekiel 18:30; Zech. 14:5