

## Chapter Six

This new chapter passes seamlessly from the previous one, Jesus, of course, still on the mountain with the *ochlos* or crowd. Note the directness with which the verb *prosecho* (S *chor*: to look, behold) leads off, literally to have-toward or in the direction toward-which, *pros-*. Jesus is cautioning not to manifest one's piety, *dikaiosune* + more properly as righteousness. That is, it's best to avoid being seen, *theaomai* more as to behold in the sense of taking it all in. Failure to heed the directness of *prosecho* will preclude receiving a reward offered by one's Father in heaven. Note the verb *echo*, the same root as in *prosecho* and is accompanied with the preposition *para*. It's with regard to the reward or *misthos* + which comes from beside the Father, if you will. This intimates both directness and a certain remoteness, the two acting simultaneously.

This example implies that the temptation to be seen or *theaomai* is an unfortunate illusion. Despite the many times one may engage in making a show of piety—righteousness as noted above or perhaps better, self-righteousness—it doesn't register where it should. The person doing it is aware that something is missing, that he won't get a divine recompense. That feeling, of course, can have a beneficial outcome provided it makes him aware of how foolish his action truly are. Even those who are recipients of his piety as through almsgiving and various good deeds can pick up that something isn't quite right.

Vs. 2 begins with *otan oun*, “thus when” and represents a shift where Jesus moves to speak of true almsgiving, *eleemosune* as meeting a basic need. It is to be done in complete silence, that is, without broadcasting the fact and without a desire to be seen, *theaomai* as in the previous verse. In other words, hypocrites favor *theaomai*, the noun *hupokrites* meaning one who pretends or dissembles. Adopting such a stance is a sign that one craves an audience, again *theaomai* coming into play.

Jesus picks out two of the most obvious places to show oneself off, the streets and synagogues. The former applies to everyone and the latter to observant Jews. Obviously showing off in the latter is bound to make the more lasting impression. Jesus acknowledges there's some shred of redemption in all this, that they do have their reward. After all, they're not doing anything manifestly evil which implies they will receive a reward. Those on the receiving end are getting much needed help, and this is what concerns Jesus. However, given the

circumstances, it'd be better not to inquire further into what that may be. That's intimated by a certain finality when Jesus says "amen," a dead give-away as it is in vs. 5. Indeed, those listening to him knew exactly what he meant by that.

Jesus takes this hiddenness a step further in vs. 3. One's left hand isn't to know what one's right hand is doing. Physically speaking this is impossible since by nature the two hands are coordinated and by necessity work together. Jesus recognizes the fact that we're disinclined to do charitable deeds quietly and out of the limelight which is why he takes the need for concealment to the extreme. An extreme tendency require an extreme antidote.

Vs. 4 is part of an extended sentence beginning with vs. 3, the first word being *hopos* or "so that." The purpose? To engage in almsgiving or *eleemosune* +. It's to be done without fanfare, *kruptos* connoting that which is unknown and just the opposite of what a hypocrite is fond of doing. So the whole gist of Jesus' words is to dispose oneself to the Father who sees in secret, *blepo* + (compare with *theaomai*). As for doing such alms in secret or *kruptos*, it will draw the Father who sees in *kruptos* to mete out a reward, this too not being specified but left deliberately as somewhat vague. Actually the person intent on doing the right thing is not concerned about a reward. For him it doesn't enter at all into the picture.

So if a person doesn't succumb to the innate though difficult to admit desire to show off publicly, something far better will happen to him. He will receive a reward from the Father who sees in a hidden manner. It's the way he operates, simple as that. Should he do it in dramatic fashion as he did coming down on Mount Sinai, people would be in awe initially, but it would wear off rather quickly. This preference for doing things in secret reveals a profound knowledge of human nature. Also it extends to his giving or *apodidomai*, the common verb *didomai* prefaced with the preposition *apo-* or from. However, the person receiving it does know what's going on and may require some sensitivity in getting accustomed to the way the Lord likes to keep things under wraps. Again, Jesus doesn't reveal what the Father metes out. All this talk about a reward, human or divine, shows that a person engages in charitable activity in order to gain a reward. It may not be out there for all to see as the hypocrites would have it; nevertheless, this desire is the primary motivating factor.

A quick note with regard to the Syriac translation of the two instances of *kruptos*. For both it's *kasa'*, also to veil. As for the Father giving a reward, it's with the added word *gelya'* or in open fashion which can mean that others will see it as well.

Vs. 5 begins with the conjunctive *kai* or “and” to show the connection between adopting a tacit or hidden approach to almsgiving and prayer, the two having an intimate affiliation. So the transition from one to the other is not radical but actually seamless. The verb for prayer is *proseuchomai* + with emphasis yet again upon the *pros*-ness of such prayer. This form of prayer as petition is not to be like that of the hypocrites as noted in vs. 2. The difference is that they love to make a display of their activities, street corners and synagogues, places with a high concentration of people. The verb is *phileo* which is akin to *agapao* but with a more focused or specialized interest, if you will.

As for these hypocrites, Jesus says that they too have their reward as the others mentioned in vs. 2. It seems these words concerning true almsgiving are intended to prime the listeners to what Jesus is about to say concerning prayer, *de* + or “but” being a clear indicator of this. *Proseuchomai* + is the verb which as has been pointed out, has to do with making petitions. In sum, this is the most basic form of prayer and obviously would appeal to Jesus' audience on the mountaintop in their desire for healing. Often *proseuchomai* is understood as having a public character, even a liturgical one. However, here Jesus associates it with going into one's room or *tameion* or better, a storeroom, not an especially comfortable place to be. Perhaps he has in mind a place for common use, a least likely spot to be discovered because it's out of the way. Given the time and culture, this *tameion* could be either a detached building or down in the cellar.

Jesus is serious about praying. He says that we should shut the door after which we are to pray to our Father in secret, *kruptos* +. This, of course, is the same word with regard to giving alms in vs. 3. In a sense, *kruptos* is ironic in that you'd normally associate being in the *tameion* as sufficient. Because it's a storeroom and despite being out of the way, there's the potential of someone barging in unexpectedly, most likely a servant. So we can take the shutting of the door as actually locking it.

Jesus drives home this secrecy by a second mention of it. First the Father is in secret, pure and simple. In addition, he sees (*blepo* +) in secret, this mentioned

in vs. 4 with regard to one giving alms in secret. There he will reward bestow a reward, *apodidomai* +. Part of the deal to accept this reward is that one must be aware of being watched, *blepo*. Without it there is no reward, this as in earlier instances is not elaborated upon but left to us guessing. As the content of the reward, nothing is said. One has to actually be in secret to discover it.

In vs. 7 Jesus comes off with some preliminary remarks about *proseuchomai* before presenting the well-know Our Father. He cautions against copying the Gentiles which include the Romans and longer established traditions of the Greeks and the influence they've had. Apparently they and perhaps other non-Israelites are by nature fond of heaping up not so much words but stock phrases which are empty, *polulogia* being a perfect way to describe this which corresponds to out various titles, etc., to the gods. *Battalgeo* is the verb at hand which means to image someone who's stammering or repeating the same words repeatedly. Such imitation won't be heard by the Lord, *eisakoueo*, the preposition *eis* as into, to hear-into. The biblical image that comes to mind are the prophets of Baal and Elijah: "And they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon" [1Kg 18.26].

In vs. 8 Jesus counsels not to be like the Gentiles just mentioned, they being well known to the local population as arrogant and often using their position to exploit those less fortunate. In truth, Jesus doesn't have to tell them not to be like them; they're universally disliked if not hated. The best part in this situation is that their Father—and by now the people listening to Jesus are getting used to this familial name as applied to the Lord—knows their needs even before they're on their hearts and mouths. The verb is *eido* + with respect to *chreia* (S the verb *baha'*, to seek, desire) or need. Although *kruptos* or a word indicative of such hiddenness isn't used, we can assume that God the Father is watching in this fashion, well aware of all the details.

Now at last in vss. 9-13 we have what has become known as the Our Father which Jesus introduces simply as "Pray then like this," *houtos oun* +. Although this is so familiar, at the time it was revolutionary to address the God of Israel in such a familiar way. Surely that alone was enough to grab the attention of the *ochlos* on the mountaintop. Any commotion or restlessness ceased immediately as Jesus continued speaking.

Although Jesus posits the Father in terms as belonging to us, that is, the Father who is ours, nevertheless he remains in heaven, literally “in the heavens” or *ouranos* +, his proper dwelling. Despite the presence of *houtos oun* or “then like this” which means he’s giving a kind of demonstration, he’s addressing “our” Father directly. His name—and this comes immediately after the one of Father—is to be hallowed. The verb *hagiazō* (S *qadash*) means to set aside or set apart which essentially is the Hebrew concept of holy. So despite the first person plural associated with Father, this very name is designated as being wholly other.

Although the Father is “our” as well as being in heaven, the gap between both can be bridged by wanting the following two which work as one. “Wanting” or similar words are awkward to apply in this situation since something far more mysterious is at work. That is, the kingdom or *basileia* + of the Father and his will to be done on earth as in heaven. Note that it’s the *basileia* plain and simple, not the one of heaven though the association is obvious. *Thelema* is the noun for will which is the way this *basileia* is managed; not in an authoritarian fashion but one where that which is currently in effect in heaven exerts its influence upon earth. The connection is bridged by the two words *hos* and *epi*, “as” and “upon.” The first applies to heaven and suggests an active exercise of *basileia* whereas it’s still somewhat problematic for the latter. For *basileia* to take effect there will require more time, something that doesn’t exist with regard to the former. Thus we could say that *hos* represents transcendence whereas *epi* existence or presence in space and time.

Vs. 11 gets concrete, asking for bread which is modified by *epiousios* (S *sunqam*: the thing needed) rendered as “daily” which seems a strange way of putting it in light of “this day.” You’d think it would run as “Give us this day our bread” which would be suitable enough. One way of rendering it (the most likely one, it seems) is along the lines of “for the current day.” Literally it’s based on the *ousia* (being) prefaced with the preposition *epi*-, “upon the being.” Chances are it refers to bread as one of the most basic foods around and necessary for survival, especially among a large amount of people as is the case at hand with those assembled on the mountaintop.

Vs. 12 begins with the conjunctive *kai* (and) to show that the words Jesus is telling us to address to the Father have a close relationship with forgiveness. And so hopefully the Father will forgive us our trespasses, *aphiemi* (S *shavaq*, to

depart, leave) also as to dismiss or release. The noun *opheilema* (S *saklu*, transgression, folly) has a financial implication such as a debt in need of being paid off. Nice as this request might be, there's a catch to it. We are to exercise the exact same *aphiemi* as the Father. Jesus is well aware this is impossible and we can be fairly certain the Father is of the same mind. Still, such exaggerated words are to be taken in stride as showing what we can tend toward, that being the whole idea behind such strong words.

Just as vs. 12 begins with a conjunctive, so does vs. 13 meaning that the forgiveness of sins is tied in with a request not to be led into temptation. Note the two occurrences of the preposition *eis* or into: *eisphero* and *eis* with regard to *peirasmos*. The first is literally a bearing-into whereas the second is into with regard to being tempted, that not specified but put in a general way which gives it a certain flexibility. One approach is to request avoiding this double *eis*. It's followed immediately by a preposition opposite to it, *apo* or from with regard to *poneros* + or that which is evil. The connecting verb is *rhuomai*, to save or rescue. In sum, we're to ask the Father to avoid situations (signified by *eis*), but should we do not for various reasons, we are to ask for an *apo*. It appears that *peirasmos* and *poneros* are two different realities which can stay separated, for if joined, we have a real problem on our hands. It's precisely this joining the Father can work to prevent from happening.

Vss. 14-15 form one extended sentence where Jesus expounds on the forgiveness he just set forth with it's seemingly impossible goal. Actually it's a kind rehash of vs. 12 where we have the noun *opheilema* as trespass now surpassed by *paraptoma*, literally a stepping beside (*para-*). When you take both into consideration along with the demand by God to forgive or *aphiemi* both, the initial difficult can be overcome but not by human effort. Perhaps that's why in vs. 15 which brings to a close Jesus' discourse on the subject we find him saying that his Father (i.e., 'my Father') won't forgive your trespasses if you don't first do it. While this is a negative way of putting it, actually it's encouraging. Jesus is saying that once you forgive someone, the Father rushes in and takes over from there. Obviously the words *opheilema* and *paraptoma* cover a whole range of misdoings, some of which are quite horrendous. Still, the idea is to allow the Father to step in regardless.

In vs. 16 Jesus shifts gears to fasting which was held in high regard for religious reasons even among people who basically lived at the poverty level or just above

it, the verb being *nesteuo* +. Actually his take on it is quite positive, even revolutionary, by first contrasting it with the hypocrites who are the most noticeable ones engaged in this religious practice. They take pleasure in dirtying (S *kamar*, to be gloomy) their faces, *aphanizo* (S *chaval*: to be corrupt, depraved) so as to become unrecognizable by a change of appearance. The verb also means to cause something to disappear. One can't but have in mind the exact opposite image of a woman adorning herself with cosmetics designed to conceal her true appearance. Still, the desire to stand out is central, the verb *phaino* (S *chaza'* +) as to cause to appear, bring to light. Compare with *aphanizo*, the alpha privative. As with the above mentioned hypocrites, Jesus doesn't condemn such persons outrightly but simply says that they have their reward (S *'agar*: to hire). Again, one can't help but wonder what that reward might be. We know that it's better not to inquire but to leave it unanswered.

Vs. 17 contains similar advice but when you come down to it, anointing one's head and washing require considerable effort. Such care is designed to make one pass as unnoticed when fasting; essentially one's exterior look is to be identical as when you're not fasting. This can be seen in light of the Father (i.e., your Father) who is presented as being in secret, the adjective *kruphaios* (S *kasa'*, to conceal, veil). Where precisely this secret-ness happens to be is not given, rather, it's simply inferred. Nevertheless, the Father sees (*blepo* +) from that place, if you will, and will bestow his reward, *apodidomai* + (S *parah*, to spring up, to repay). The Father also is in secret and sees the hypocrites as well. If he didn't he wouldn't be able to reward them as it says in vs. 16.

In vs. 19 Jesus counsels not laying up treasures on earth, *thesaurizo* (S *sayam*, to lay down, to set) being the verb which to those on the mountaintop wasn't a real problem due to their inherent poverty. Nevertheless, coveting even limited resources can be an issue, for thieves can steal those as well. And so covetousness isn't exclusive to persons who are well off. Regardless of their material resources, those listening to Jesus would concur more readily when he told them to lay up this *thesaurizo* in heaven, the noun being *thesauros* or treasure.

Figuring out how to do that is up to each person though obviously there are some general characteristics. First you have to have a clearer idea of what heaven is about. It is there that the Father lives as Jesus had stated. So if that's where he is located, your treasure will be in good hands, not on earth but away

from it. Then you have to figure out what to actually store up in that place on high. It has nothing to do with physical goods, so essentially it's invisible or if we take a cue from all the talk about being and doing in secret, it's done discreetly. Again, the Father is key to all this which means the *thesaurizo* actually turns out to be him. Clearly this is no place where a thief can break in nor does he have interest in doing so. Also it's immune to decay and rust. So once you realize this, you have something incomparable which is why Jesus says that the location of your treasure is in the same place as your heart, *thesauros* and *kardia* + being equivalent.

In vs. 22 Jesus equates the eye not just with a lamp but its relationship with the body, *luchnos* connoting a lamp that can be either stationary or portable. This eye-as-lamp has to be in good condition or *aplous* (S *pasahat*, to stretch forward, make straight), an adjective which connotes simplicity as well as single-mindedness. If the eye were the opposite, it would take in all sorts of images which is a genuine problem today as well as then. This simplicity enables the body to be flooded with light, the darkness being equivalent to a multitude of images. The adjective to describe this is *poneros* + (*beysha'*, evil) or downright worthless and *skoteinos*, fundamentally as full of gloom. Jesus ends his remarks with an exclamation, namely, that if the light in you is *skoteinos*—and this implies its complete absence—the darkness or *skotos* is overwhelmingly huge.

About now those on the mountaintop must have had trouble absorbing all that Jesus was communicating to them. Some of it was good and some of it was...well...not so good if not impossible to adopt. Jesus was aware of this yet continued. He wanted to get out as much teaching as possible, knowing full well that his words would be set down for future generations chiefly in the memory of his disciples, all of whom would have the same basic experience. It doesn't matter if they are poor like those at hand or relatively well off. Human nature is the same across time and space as well as various cultures.

In vs. 24 Jesus hits upon one subject and one alone, that a person cannot serve two masters, *douleo* (S *palach*: to labor, work, plow) often as being a slave or acting like one with regard to a person who has power or authority, *kurios*. This boils down to a choice represented by the following two pairs of verbs:

-*Miseo* and *apapao* + (S *sana'*: to be detestable and *racham*: to delight in, desire), to hate also in the sense of to neglect and to love or to have *agape*.

-*Antecho* and *kataphroneo* (S *yeqar:*, also as to be heavy and *shot*, to have contempt, neglect) or to have strong attachment and to look down upon (*kata-*), the verbal root being *phroneo* or to think, to have understanding. Note the two prepositions *anti-* and *kata-*, literally as to have against and to think down upon. Both are applicable to serving or *douleo* (S *palach*, both +) either God or *mammon*, the latter as wealth or property. In a sense, most of the people listening to Jesus didn't have to worry about *mammon*. They simply lacked it but could manifest greed in other ways.

In vs. 25 Jesus gets concrete, that is, he speaks directly to a matter that affects his listeners. *Dia touto* translated as “therefore” serves to both shift attention as well as signaling a request to pay close attention, *lego* + or to say in the sense of declaring. This makes what follows all the more attractive since it deals with the nitty-gritty details of daily life. At issue is anxiety about such basics as eating and drinking or essentially, what's necessary for daily sustenance. The verb is *merimnao* (S *'azaph:* also to take care of), to be apprehensive or unduly concerned and even pertains to one's body and life itself, the latter being *psuche* (S *naphesh*) often as soul. This is as basic as it gets by any standards. In fact, Jesus puts such concern in terms of a rhetorical question in order to relativize what we consider as absolutes. It's the first in a series of such questions he usually employs to make his listeners uncomfortable which is not the case here and right through the end of this chapter.

Next Jesus gives the famous example not just of birds but “birds of the air,” *ouranos* + also as heaven but of the sky. The verb at hand is *emblepo* (S *chor* +) meaning to look intently or with direction, *em-* or *en-* as “in.” When seeing them flying about from place to place, we're struck by the freedom they represent to us earth-bound creatures who are compelled to toil away. In truth, birds are concerned about survival just as much if not more than humans. Nevertheless, your Father (again, as belonging to the listeners) who is heavenly takes care of them. Note that he's described *ouranios* or belonging to the *ouranos*, the same realm as the birds though much higher above them. Thus the birds have a certain kinship with the Father by reason of flying about in *ouranos*. After stating this, Jesus comes off with another rhetorical question which centers around his listeners being of greater value, *diaphero* (S *yetar:* to have over and above) literally as to carry through or to differ to see the advantage of this difference.

In vs. 28 Jesus asks in a rhetorical sense why his listeners should be anxious about clothing, *merimnao* + followed by an answer, if you will. This turns out to be an invitation to consider the lilies of the field, *katamanthano* (S *baqa'*: to inquire into) consisting of the verbal root *manthano*, to learn to know, prefaced with the preposition *kata-* which here means in accord with. In essence, it means to pay close attention not so much to the lilies but how they grow, that is, the means by which they grow, the process involved. By comparison, humans have to toil or spin clothes, *kopiaio* (S: '*eley*, to take pains, to labor) being the verb for the former also as to become weary. And so focus upon the "how" precludes such work.

Jesus brings home the tendency to be anxious in vs. 29 by the legendary example of King Solomon's glory (*doxa* + S *shuvcha'*: also pride, pomp) which is inferior to just one lily. He doesn't mention beauty, but certainly it's inferred. As for the lilies, they enhance the grass of the field. Although the grass may be alive right now and adorned with the beauty of the lilies, on the next day it can be cut down and burned in an oven. This gives occasion for the rhetorical question where God...not the Father...will cloth his listeners who have little faith. So while they too are destined to be burned, their faith, even if little, can save them from such a fate.

In light of the transitory nature of life and what people value, in vs. 31 Jesus counsels not to bother worrying about nourishment, something that unduly occupies the minds of the Gentiles. Compared with them, the poor folk indeed worry about scrounging to get enough food for the day for their families. Indeed, those on the mountaintop are familiar with the Gentiles which makes the contrast between them and those over them all the greater. Despite their inherent poverty, the Father again identified with them as "your" knows that they need all such means of sustenance, *chrezo*.

Vs. 33 brings to a head all that Jesus said with regard to our tendency to be anxious about our lives. It begins with *de* + translated as "but" and is designed to put such concern into proper perspective. Jesus counsels...practically demands...his listeners to seek (*zeteo*; S *baha'*: to beseech, to desire) his kingdom, his being in reference to the kingdom or *basileia* + of his heavenly Father in the previous verse. This is accompanied with his righteousness or *dikaiousune* + or the means by which this kingdom is established. As a consequence, all things will be added, *prostithemi* (S *yasaph*: to give in addition) where the *pros-* or

direction towards-which are added as a kind of supplement. While such things are valuable in their own right, they pale in comparison to the divine *dikaiosune* (S *zedqa'*: due, portion).

In the concluding verse of Chapter Six for the third time Jesus tells his listeners not to be anxious about the morrow, *merimnao* +. Also he personifies tomorrow by saying it will have this same *merimnao* in and by itself, so let it be. In contrast to the future, Jesus says that any given day has sufficient trouble or *kakia* in and by itself, this noun fundamentally as evil. Indeed, anyone can identify with that.

## Chapter Seven

This new chapter continues seamlessly from what went before or from the beginning of Chapter Five, that is, Jesus teaching on the mountaintop and the *ochlos* or crowd listening in. Because this took place over an extended period of time, we can assume that people were constantly coming and going. Given the fact that Jesus wasn't engaged in healing, the crowds must have dwindled considerably, for that is why they had come in droves. Also it was quite crowded on the mountaintop with so little room to maneuver. Throughout all this hub-bub we haven't heard a peep from the apostles. However, someone—either them or a more learned person from the *ochlos*—thankfully was taking mental notes which contributed to the text at hand. Also there's a certain parallel between Jesus and Moses. The major physical difference, if you will, is that the *ochlos* was on the mountaintop with Jesus whereas in the case of Moses the people were at the mountain's base. That in and by itself is a significant shift while the two essentially remain as one.

In the first verse Jesus speaks somewhat forcefully, and we can assume he paused a bit so as to allow his words to sink into the ears of those present. The issue at hand is a common fault to which we're all prone, judging. *Krino* (S *don*) is a verb which indicates the desire to influence the lives of other people, usually in the negative sense, and with the intent to enhance our own position. Should we decide to engage in this *krino*—and Jesus is speaking of doing it both inwardly and outwardly—the same *krino* would come back as a haunting presence from which we couldn't escape.

Vs. 2 continues this theme, putting *krino* in the context of measuring. The verb *metreo* (S *kol*) connotes a sizing up and thus a guiding principle to direct the energy represented by *krino*. The combination of *krino* and *metreo* applies to both extreme as well as to minor cases. The force of the latter verb depends upon that of the former, of how strong and prejudiced a person happens to be. The silver lining in all this is that Jesus recognizes the fact that we can't eliminate *krino* and *metreo* completely. However, he infers that the best strategy is to minimize both as much as possible. He does this indirectly, of giving us the opportunity to insert a pause between awareness of our tendency to *krino* and to experience it first hand. In most cases that suffices to minimize the damage or avoid getting damaged in the first place.

In vs. 3 Jesus speaks of a way to lessen the impact of *krino* and *metreo*; not only that, to eliminate it completely. He comes off with a rhetorical question concerning something we do all the time but obviously are fearful to admit. Why do we pay attention to a speck in our brother's eye while failing to notice the log in our own? The two verbs are *blepo* + and *katanoeo* while the Syriac has *chaza'* + and *bachar*, the latter as to prove, ascertain. The former is the common verb to see as we'd do in any circumstance whereas the latter implies closer attention, the preposition *kata-* as in accord with and prefaced to *noeo* +, to perceive or to observe. The objects in question are two complete opposites, *karphos* and *dokos*, a small particle that causes irritation and a beam strong enough to bear weight as in a floor.

Immediately following this Jesus presents another rhetorical question which impinges directly upon our innate tendency to judge. He's speaking directly, using the second person singular with regard to being ready and eager to remove the speck from the eye of someone else while leaving or ignoring the log in one's own eye. Then he utters some rather harsh words, using the word hypocrite (*hupokrites* +) in the plural which is aimed more toward the scribes and Pharisees who, although not mentioned as being present, most likely are listening in. Both their attitude and posture was self-evident as they remained in the background which means in effect that they couldn't help but stand out. All along Jesus was noticing them which made them feel quite uncomfortable.

Jesus tears into these hypocrites by telling them to remove the speck from their own eyes in order to see clearly. Note the prepositions prefaced to the two verbs at hand: first comes the *ek-* or from prefaced to *exballo* followed by the *dia-* or

through prefaced to *diablepo* (S *bachar* +). As for the latter, this seeing-through will enable the hypocrites to have a change of heart which is inferred by a willingness to remove the speck. In other words, Jesus is holding out hope for such persons without putting them on the spot directly. As for the symbolism of a speck and beam, that's left up to how each person interprets them in their own lives. Such is one example where Jesus lays it out with a clarity that left no doubt in anyone's mind.

In vs. 6 Jesus speaks of not giving dogs what is holy and not casting pearls before swine. In other words, we have two contrasts which couldn't be sharper. First are dogs and that which is *hagios* (S *qodash*) or set apart, possibly food as from offerings made to the Lord. Next come pearls and swine. On the natural level, swine wouldn't be attracted to pearls because they're not edible. However, the brightness of pearls may catch their attention. As soon as they discover it isn't food, they'll turn at once in anger and trample the person who had cast them. Note the two verbs, *katpateo* and *rhegnnumi* (S *dosh* and *bazah*) also as to transgress and to pierce, to cleave. The *kata-* of the former is to be taken as as down or underfoot and the latter as literally to tear into pieces.

In vs. 7 Jesus comes out with three things we should do unhesitatingly, but he doesn't give a reference as to what they are. Some may view this lack of elaboration on how to comport oneself as frustrating, but it's his way of prodding us on to find out for ourselves. We, along with Jesus' listeners, are simply to go ahead and do them to see if there's any response. All three involve action in the present with the result in the future. The first is to ask or *aiteo* (S *sha'el*: also as to make a request, inquire) which is more along the lines of making a demand. What this consists of isn't fleshed out but as often is the case, left up to each individual to discover. Jesus is confident that the person will make the right *aiteo*. As for the response, it's the future passive of *didomai* (will be given), not now nor at any specific time but at a later time. It all depends upon the courage of the person. The request isn't given straight out but indirectly; it will appear on its own and in due time. So there's an interval—how long or how short Jesus doesn't say—but that will pass.

The second demand, if you will, is to seek or *zeteo* (S *baha'*: to inquire, endeavor) which will result in finding, *heurisko* (S *shaqachi* to meet with, to happen). Of the three, this one is not passive even though it's in the future. Given the relatively primitive conditions of the time, we can assume that this

seeking, along with asking and knocking, will be for the basics in life. Obviously healing is chief among them, the reason why so many followed Jesus up the mountain.

The third demand is to knock or *krouo* (S *naqash*: also to fix, to pitch), also as to deliver a blow and is the strongest and most vivid of the three when it comes to going after something. As with the verb *didomai*, *anoigo* is future passive, that it will open all on its own and reveal what lays behind it.

Vs. 9 begins with the one letter word *e* translated as “or” to show that an alternative exists with regard to *krouo*, *zeteo* and *anoigo*. On a number of occasions Jesus has spoken of the Father which, of course, implies the existence of a son. This son, if you will, is mentioned now in the context of a rhetorical question. For example, the son wants both bread and fish. The father—and let’s presume it’s the heavenly Father—complies instead of handing him a stone or a serpent. Vs. 10 has the second instance of the one letter word *e* translated as “or” regarding another rhetorical question which can be viewed as an extension of the previous verse, the two running into each other as one.

Now in vs. 11 Jesus calls his listeners evil or *poneros* + which sounds quite harsh. Taken at face value it implies that everyone on the mountaintop is degenerate and downright despicable. Instead of this being a blanket statement or an across the board judgment, Jesus is speaking in a general sort of way to make his listeners reflect on their own behavior. Although it’s the second person plural, the way Jesus phrases it seems to be that some...not all...among the listeners are *poneros*. It’s up to each person to figure if he or she is as such. For some readers this can be disconcerting. It’s an instance where Jesus doesn’t elaborate on why he spoke as such.

Even those whom Jesus deems evil have a redeeming quality. That is to say, he sets up a contrast between those who are *poneros* yet know how to give good gifts to their children. Next he contrasts this with your Father in heaven...second person plural...who gives good things to those asking him. The human measure is familial whereas the divine is all-inclusive.

In vs. 12 Jesus wishes to resolve this sticky situation. He does so by taking direct action, doing (*poieo* +) to others what you’d like them to do. In other words, he levels the playing field by appealing to our self-centeredness.

Although that's essentially unattractive, it has the potential of being transformed. Again, Jesus leaves the measure with which this is done as unspecified which can leave some of his listeners on edge. The consolation? Jesus takes the burden off himself by referring to the law or *Torah* and the prophets. Both sources cover how a member of the nation of Israel is to behave but are rooted in the well-known quote from Deuteronomy: "Here, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" [6.4-5]. Except for one's children in vs. 6, technically speaking these verses don't apply to human relationships but certainly are the springboard for them.

In vs. 13 Jesus speaks of two types of gates or *pule* which he doesn't define but whose very mention conjures up images of a sizable city to his listeners. Most of them lived in small rural communities which couldn't afford such protection. If and when they entered a city with a *pule* it was a sure sign of its importance and worth protecting. Of course there comes to mind the capitol, Jerusalem. Jesus exhorts people to enter through (*eiserchomai* +) the gate which is narrow or *stenos*, the Syriac verb being *hal*, also to advance, come; the adjective is 'elaz, to be pressing. The verb is prefaced with the preposition *eis* or into along with *dia* or through, "enter into through" as it reads literally.

As for the gate, it's designed to be narrow so as to exercise control over those who are entering the city. The chief advantage is to allow close scrutiny of each person as well as to keep an account of how many are entering and leaving. However, it's especially difficult if you're bringing in goods to sell, let alone purchase in the city as you make your way out. Although inconvenient, this bottleneck has the added advantage to detect any infiltrators as well as preventing an enemy from making a sneak assault. Jesus leaves the reason why his listeners should opt for this up to them after he mentions a second type of gate.

As for the second gate, it's wide and easy or *platus* and *eurochoros*, the first adjective connoting breadth and the second ease of access, *eu-* being the adverbial form of *agathos* or good. When speaking of both, Jesus must have had in mind several concrete examples. He'd hear of locals complain of towns with such narrow gates with people waiting in line to squeeze through compared with those having broader, less fortified entrances. Obviously the second gate was the city's weakest point of access, the one an enemy would seek to exploit.

It was easy to pick out because people came and went as they pleased with little or no inspection.

Jesus favors entering the first gate which is *stenos*. The Syriac is *qatn*, narrow in the sense of contracted; compare with ‘*elaz* of vs. 13 which connotes pressing. In addition to the gate being so confining, Jesus speaks of the way or *hodos* leading to life. At first you’d think that since life is involved, the gate and way to it would be wide and welcoming, not narrow and hard. However, the ease of access is deceptive. It leads to destruction, *apoleia* more as total annihilation and the exact opposite of life. As for life, Jesus has in mind something more than *zoe* in the physical sense.

Presumably the *hodos* at hand is the one that actually approaches and passes through the narrow gate. The verb is *apago* (S ‘*arach*, to depart, withdraw), literally as leading from (*apo-*) somewhere and going into somewhere else. Compare with *eiserchomai* of vs. 13 where Jesus speaks in general fashion with regard to entering (*eis-*, into) the narrow gate. Concerning the former, emphasis is as noted more with regard to coming from and going to whereas the latter is just going into. As for the nature of this *hodos*, Jesus says it’s hard or *thlibo* meaning to press and suggests the stone walls closing in on those passing through the gate.

In vs. 15 Jesus puts his listeners on guard as he warns against prophets who are false, *pseudes* (S *dagal*: also as vain, deceitful) prefaced to *prophetes* which also means lying. *Prosecho* + is the verb, that one is to be especially attentive, *pros-* or direction-towards signifying this. As for *pros*, it’s used with this verb as “to (towards) you” or the false prophets who are such because they specialize in deceiving people. Such shady characters must have been familiar to the locals, especially those propounding political freedom in the context of religion. Obviously it was super-dangerous when it came to fomenting revolt against the Roman authorities. The *pseudes* is reflected in the clothing of sheep, *enduma* referring to any type of clothing which has a gentle and soft exterior. Nevertheless, the intent is to create havoc after the fashion of wolves which are ravenous, *haparx* (S *chataph*: to take by force) also rapacious or like a robber. Use of the adverb *esothen* (S *gao*: the inside) describes the inner attitude of *haparx* and mirrors the outer one of *pseudes*.

The distinction between sheep and wolves, two classical extremes familiar to Jesus' listeners, some of whom must have been shepherds, becomes evident by their fruits, the verb being *epiginosko* (S *yedah* +), literally a knowing upon or *epi-*. Implied is a view-from-above enabling one to look down upon the *karpos* or fruit which ravenous wolves produce, that being, of course, mayhem.

On the heels of this Jesus posits a rhetorical question with regard to grapes from thorns, figs from thistles. In other words, a tree which is good or *agathos* + (S *tavah*) yields fruit which is literally beautiful or *kalos* + (S *shapher*: fair, lovely, excellent). The same applies but inversely to a bad tree, *poneros* + (S *beyshe'*) yielding fruit which is *sapros* meaning of poor quality. It's to be cut down and cast in the fire, the verb *ballo* + (S *naphal*: also to fall) added for emphasis. And so Jesus concludes his words about this matter by *ara* or "thus." In sum, a person will have this knowledge-upon, *epiginosko* + as it pertains to their fruits, the fruit of each tree.

The **RSV** by Ignatius Press has a good heading worth mentioning to describe the next three verses because it captures the spirit expressed here, *Concerning Self-Deception*. For the first time in these verses Jesus uses some pretty strong language concerning his identity. He figured, might as well get it out now after the people have heard the bulk of his teaching. At this point they may or may not be ready to accept his words.

For the first time (vs. 24) Jesus puts himself in a position of authority and speaks as though he were divine or bordering upon it. This really must have astounded those listening to words clear and as plain as they could be. As for talk about being divine, Jesus calls himself *Kurios* claiming to have special authority from the Lord with regard to anyone who wishes to enter the kingdom of heaven. To any listener that's as clear as it could ever be. *Eiserchomai* + is the verb along with the preposition *eis-* as 'into;' the Syriac is *hal*: to go up, ascend. The last time this phrase was used is 5.20 with regards to one's righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees.

And so towards the end of this lengthy teaching which takes place on a mountaintop Jesus comes across as a kind of gatekeeper. He figures that he might as well come out with what he really was to say which represents a dramatic shift with his relationship with the *ochlos* or crowd. Only the person who does the will or *thelema* + (S *zevyan*: also as desire, delight) of his Father

who is in heaven can enter the kingdom of heaven. If the Father is in heaven and a person can enter the kingdom of heaven, the two will share the same living space. By any standards this indeed is an extraordinary claim. Note that Jesus uses such words for the very first time compared with those instances where he says “your Father.” Are there two Fathers? It’s a question that ran through the minds of many and set them to wonder. Also, how does one know he or she is doing the will of this Father who lives in heaven? Like so much of what Jesus says, that boils down to a question which remains unanswerable. All in all some if not most people find this downright disconcerting.

Vs. 22 has Jesus shifting from the present to “that day” which lays in the unspecified future. Actually it has the preposition *en*, literally as “in that day.” So it seems that those calling out “Lord, Lord” to Jesus in order to obtain his favor will obtain a response but are in for a rude awakening. Indeed, they had prophesied, cast out demons and did a lot of mighty works. They took care to carry them out in Jesus’ name, *onoma* suggesting a relationship of representing the person bearing it. And so these people were carrying around the *onoma* Jesus, if you will, supposedly using it for a multitude of good purposes. In actuality such persons were acting in their own name, using that of Jesus for personal gain.

However—and that’s a good way to render the conjunctive *kai* of vs. 23—Jesus hits back unexpectedly hard to this manifestation of supposed good will. In the case at hand Jesus uses the verb *homologeo* + (S *yada'*: to confess, believe) which literally means to speak together, to show a common mind and thus has solemn air of pronouncement about it. This will take place in the future or as noted above literally “in that day.” Despite the objectively good deeds done by those who cried out “Lord, Lord,” Jesus says coldly yet in a magisterial fashion that he doesn’t just not know (*ginosko*, S *yedah* +) them but never—at no time whatsoever—knew them, *oudepote*. I.e., despite their threefold use of Jesus’ name, it had absolutely no effect.

Jesus calls such people *evildoers* which consists of the verb *ergazomai* meaning to work or to labor at something, not just to do it, the object being *anomia*. This noun is suggestive not just of outright evil but a state or condition where wickedness is firmly established. Jesus tells these people simply to depart from him, *apochoreo* (S *rachaq*: also as to avoid, abstain), the verbal root *choreo* meaning a real separation made all the more dramatic by the preposition *apo-*,

from. To those who were on the receiving end of such good works they must have been shocked when hearing that the ones who did them on their behalf were so roundly condemned. It would make them wary as to any future manifestation of charitable deeds. That's not articulated here but is a genuine concern on the part of Jesus.

The previous few sentences leave everyone's mouths hanging. That means in vs. 24 Jesus finds himself in an awkward position to do some quick explaining. From here almost to the end of this chapter he uses the example of a house built upon rock. Note the contrast: the apparently fleeting nature of words (*logos* +, S *melata'* or *melal*) and the permanence of rock, *petra*. What effects a transition between the two is the person hearing not so much Jesus but as he puts it, "these *logoi* of mine." In a way, such words have a certain independence from him which means they have authority. As for this linkage, Jesus considers the person making it as wise, *phronimos* (S *chakeym*) which connotes uniting wisdom with understanding. This is reflected in his ability to take into account foul weather which will beat upon the house yet leave it undisturbed by reason of it being founded upon rock, *themelioo*.

In vs. 26 Jesus contrasts the person who is *phronimos* when it comes to constructing a house with another person also hearing "these words (*logos* + S *melata'* or *melal*) of mine." In both instances we have the verb *poieo* + (S *havad*) or to do the *logoi*, to follow them through. Use of this verb suggests concrete action, something Jesus not only expects but demands. Unfortunately the person at hand is *moros* +, foolish or in a nutshell, downright stupid. He builds his house on sand which is loose and easily subjected to collapse when the weather turns bad. Not only that, chances are the house had slipped considerably on its foundation, priming it for a dramatic fall. Jesus favors the verb *proskopto* (S *tara'*, also as to drive away), the verbal root meaning to strike emphasized by the preposition *pros-*, indicative of direct, forceful action.

The last verse of this chapter begins with the conjunctive *kai* which gathers up everything Jesus had said going back to his ascent of the mountain beginning with Chapter Five. Actually he communicates quite a lot—perhaps too much for the type of audience at hand—but was keenly aware that it was being recorded for future reference. Most likely that was done by one or more of the disciples who must have consulted some of the people present with them. With

regard to this rapid fire manner of teaching we have the verb *teleo* (S *shelam*: to conclude, fulfill) meaning to complete in the sense of bringing to conclusion.

Obviously the crowds (again, plural of *ochlos* +) couldn't help but be astonished, *ekplesso* (S *tahar*: also as to marvel, delight). The preposition *ek-* or from prefaced to the root *plesso* (to strike) brings this home in a forceful manner. Not only that, we have the preposition *epi* or upon with regard to the object of this striking-from, that is to say, Jesus' teaching in the sense of giving instruction, *didache* (S *yolphana'*: also doctrine, dogma). People flocked to Jesus and followed him up the mountain in a desire to be healed of various ills and instead got instructed. That transition alone suffices to make his teaching stand out with authority. The verb is *didasko* + from which is derived the noun *didache* (S *yelaph*: to learn, inform) and is done with authority or *exousia* (S *shalat*: verbal root as to rule, govern).

In conclusion we can say that the people were certainly used to local religious authorities doing their thing in the synagogues and elsewhere. They are enthralled by a man who not only comes out of the clear blue and interprets the basic teachings of the *Torah* as they should be interpreted but goes a step further by concluding his teaching in reference to himself. If Jesus had begun that way, to be sure he'd be stoned. Now with some basic teaching having been offered, words with regard to himself came together in a harmonious fashion. That's why Chapter Seven concludes with a dig at the scribes, that Jesus didn't teach like them. Surely among the crowds some didn't agree and reported this to the local religious authorities. And so without formal mention of the scribes or Pharisees we have here the beginning when the seeds for Jesus' demise are sown.

## Chapter Eight

Compare the following two verses: "Seeing the crowd, he went up on the mountain." "When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him." The first is from the beginning of Chapter Five and the second begins the chapter at hand. They are cited because in this space Jesus had put forth a wide variety of teachings in a marathon-like fashion. As for the crowds or plural of *ochlos* + noted so often, it comes as no surprise that they followed Jesus, *akoloutheo* + down the mountain. Apparently his words has stirred them deeply,

and they wanted to hear more. Also, the desire for healing never was far from their minds.

As noted earlier, the top of this mountain couldn't support that many people. So when Jesus spoke, he directed his voice downward and as well as 360 degrees or in a circular fashion. This was an easy yet brilliant way to handle the situation. All he had to do was to remain in one position and from time to time rotate himself. Most likely the disciples who were about him took up positions slightly down the mountain. In this way they helped spread his words to those who were out of hearing range. As for Jesus' descent, compare him and the people with Moses coming down from Mount Horeb alone and to the people below. There at the base he instructed the people compared to Jesus doing the same on the top. And so the three chapters devoted to Jesus teaching come to an apparently successful conclusion. The crowds ascended with the hope of obtaining cures for their affliction. Instead, they had received an abundance of teachings both old and new which, though initially disappointing, would have a more lasting effect.

As for the healing which had prompted most people to seek from Jesus, he begins or recommences this as soon as he reached the bottom of the mountain. A single leper approached him, the *pros-* of *proserchomai* + indicative of directness. Actually this solitary leper stands out sharply compared with the "great crowds" still accompanying Jesus. According to custom, everyone stayed a healthy distance away, but the leper wasn't deterred in his *proserchomai*. We can just see the people automatically giving way as this man advanced. Perhaps that's why *idou* + or "behold" is inserted, a way of conveying astonishment.

What stands out with this man—and lest we forget, leprosy was a dreadful disease, a living death—is that he exhibited a certain indifference as to his plight. This is manifest in his words *ean theles*, "if you will" meaning it's okay if Jesus does not wish to make him clean, *katharizo* (S *daka'*) implying to heal. The two meanings are right to the point with such a disease. The leper was also dirty in the sense of not being allowed to contact other people but forced to live pretty much in isolation. He made his petition kneeling which in itself must have been quite painful.

Without responding, immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and touched (*apto* also as to take hold of; S *qerav*: to draw near) the leper, an absolute no-no.

Just before he made him clean he said “I will.” This is the most direct response Jesus could give when struck by the incredible indifference of a man so afflicted. It’s as though he couldn’t heal him quickly enough. That’s why the adverb *eutheos* is inserted, “immediately.”

You have to read vs. 4 tongue-in-cheek when Jesus tells the cured leper not to speak about what had just happened. Who couldn’t stop blabbing about such an incredible cure? Besides, it was done in the presence of the great crowds noted in vs. 1. Should the man who had been cured obeyed Jesus’ wish, people from the crowd would be more than willing to publish the cure for him. So if ever there’s a sure-fire way to make oneself known, it’s to do precisely what Jesus had just done. As for the man who had just been cured, we have no reaction which you’d think would have been the case. In a sense, this absence concurred with Jesus’ wish. Also we have no reaction from the people who had witnessed this.

The exception Jesus makes is that the man show himself to the priest, *deiknumi* + (S *chua'*: also to manifest) also as to point out, to make known. Then he will offer a gift in accord to what Moses had commanded. Note the following two verbs with the preposition *pros-* prefaced to them. They are indicative of direction towards-which as well as urgency: *prosphero* with *doron* or gift (*qarev* + and *qorvana'*) and *prostasso*, to offer and to command or literally to carry-towards and to command-towards. The Syriac is *qarev* + with *qorvana'* and *paqad*, the second word being derived from the first and the third verb as to visit.

As for the double *pros-*, if you will, it is to be “into a witness to them,” *eis* along with *marturion* + (S *sahdu*: also as clear evidence). As for the cleansing of lepers, refer to the rather extended ritual beginning with Chapter Fourteen of Leviticus. Perhaps its long and drawn out by reason of the uniqueness of being freed from such a disease. Chances are that it was rarely implemented. We can assume that the man hadn’t a clue about this, certainly the process involved which would restore him to a functioning member of the community.

In vs. 5 Jesus heads for Capernaum last mentioned in 4.13 in reference to the quote from Is 9.1-2 about the people who have walked in darkness but now have seen a great light. Surely he had these verses in mind once again, for we have no other reason other than this for going there. Regardless, the Isaiah quote fits in

perfectly with his overall mission. No mention is made of the great crowds following him but in light of his recent cure of the leper, we can assume that even more people tagged along hoping for a cure of whatever ailments that were bothering them.

As short as was the trek to Capernaum, the sight of such a throng must have caused a commotion, so much that the local centurion came out to meet Jesus. Apparently he got word of his healing power as well as marveling at the stream of people going up and down the mountain which he saw in the distance. He had sent word there to find out what was happening, always having in mind the possibility that it might be the beginning of a revolt against Roman authority of which he was a local representative. However, he found out it was harmless, politically speaking. And so he decided to go out and meet Jesus, another example of *pros-* as in *proserchomai*.

This man...a foreigner...was in a way the local ruler which made him begging Jesus to heal his servant quite unusual, the verb being *parakaleo* + (S *baha'* + here with *meneh* or 'from him'), literally to summon beside. The request must have taken Jesus off guard as well as his disciples and others who certainly were familiar with him. His disciples felt comfortable in the presence of this centurion because they knew from personal experience that he was sympathetic toward the local population. They assured Jesus that he was a God-faring man whose face showed that he was clearly troubled. What's remarkable is that the person paralyzed was a servant, not a family member. *Paralutikos* can also mean lame, and *pais* (S *telaya'*: an unmarried youth) is the common noun for a child with the verb *ballo* +. This verb means to cast inferring that the man was cast or thrown onto a bed. We get a clear sense that the slave has a certain intimacy with his master, hence the reason for the manifestation of great distress, *deinos* being an adverb meaning terribly with the verb *basanizo* or to torment. The Syriac has *beysha'yth* or badly with *shanaq*, to inflict severe pain.

The familiarity between master and slave suggests that the latter had held an important position in the centurion's household such as raising his children, managing domestic affairs or both. Also the centurion was away quite frequently, even on occasion to Rome itself. We can assume that the servant was not from nearby but either a Roman or from some other place in the empire. Obviously the relationship between the two made a deep impression on

the local population. In light of all this Jesus promptly said that he'd come and heal the servant, the verb *therapeuo* (S 'asa' +) also involving restoration.

Vs. 8 begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as "but" and shows hesitation on the centurion's part even though Jesus readily agrees to heal his servant. While there's no doubt that he wishes this to happen, he claims to be unworthy or lacking *hikanos* + (S *shao'*: also to be equal, sufficient) also meaning sufficient, adequate but used here with the negative. At the same time the centurion unhesitatingly addresses Jesus with the title *Kurios* + or Lord. As for not being worthy, the centurion continues by saying that Jesus shouldn't enter his house or as the text puts it, enter under the roof of his house which infers a sense of greater hospitality. Those standing nearby and being witness to this dialogue must have been impressed to no end. Indeed, they showed tremendous deference to both the centurion and his servant long after this incident.

In vs. 9 the centurion gives an explanation for his position, namely, that he is a man under authority (*exousia* +) who can boss around soldiers at will. "Under authority" also suggests his boss is Pontius Pilate. He plays this out, if you will, by giving a few simple examples of his authority not to make an impression but essentially laying bare the fact that his *exousia* is inferior to that which belongs to Jesus. He does this in a direct, unpretentious fashion which affected Jesus so much that he marveled at him, *thaumazo* also as to impress.

Before actually healing the servant, Jesus makes some disconcerting remarks which reveal a lot about his mission. That is to say, he praises not just a foreigner over an Israelite but someone who's a powerful representative of the oppressive power of Rome. In essence, Jesus is saying that this man has impressed him the most by reason of his simplicity and trust. Apart from the distinction of alien/Israelite which includes a lot of people, we have the countless number on the mountain as well as his disciples. And so Jesus uses the centurion as an example to those following him, presumably the great crowds of vs. 1. He utters the expression "amen" found last in 6.16 in instances where something has struck him as outstanding. Obviously some if not quite a few who had followed Jesus up the mountain had great faith along with great need and could qualify as receiving this "amen."

As for the centurion, he was in need but not like those who were afflicted with various illnesses. What makes him stand apart is his detachment or indifference

as to whether or not his servant is healed. It can be argued that yes, the servant is not a family member. The centurion wouldn't be as detached if it were his son, wife or the like. While that may hold some weight, it doesn't appear to be as such. The centurion is a battle-hardened soldier stationed at the extreme end of the empire and in essence, has seen it all. Throughout it all he has retained his composure and above all, recognized Jesus' authority and better, the ability to have a discreet distance between him willing or not willing to exert it as through healing his slave.

Vs. 11 begins with Jesus saying "I tell you" which is akin to "behold," "amen" or "truly" and is indicative that he's speaking with a certain authority requiring close attention. He says that the centurion's faith has surpassed anything he has seen in Israel. Furthermore, many will come from the east and the west and sit at table with the three patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, *anaklino* (S *samak*: to rest, to support) as to lay down or recline when at a meal. A footnote in the Greek critical edition refers to Ps 107.1-2 which is appropriate here: "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom he has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south." The directions north and south are mentioned compared with the text at hand which does not include them.

Thus the cardinal directions of the earth fade away in comparison with being in the kingdom of heaven. At the same time another "place" exists which doesn't belong to the cardinal directions as well as to the kingdom of heaven. That realm is the outer darkness, *skotos* also as gloom modified by *exoteros* which pertains to an area outside a particular boundary. It suggests a place of total darkness not unlike the *tohu* and *bohu* of Gn 1.2. Both represent the lack of form and presence of a void, that is always present surrounding and threatening to envelope all creation. Also it brings to mind the flood associated with Noah. As for the kingdom of heaven, it's totally immune to any threats from *tohu* and *bohu*. The Syriac verb is *naphaq* or to go out along with *cheshok* as darkness and *bar*, the latter as belonging to open country.

Nevertheless, into that foreboding yet mysterious darkness, the sons of the kingdom will be cast, *ekballo* with the preposition *ek-* or from prefaced to the verbal root. The same noun *basileia* + is used for two types of kingdoms Jesus speaks of in one breath. That is, of heaven and of the outer darkness. In the latter those members of the kingdom established by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

will create a constant din all the more troubling by reason of it coming from the *skotos* which is *exoteros*. So we have a complete reversal here.

As for the centurion, we don't hear any more from him though given his position, he must have been privy to information about Jesus' arrest and crucifixion. This could have come from Pontius Pilate himself who may have had some suspicions as to the centurions under his authority. After all, these powerful men taken together could threaten to overthrow him. Also we can be almost certain that he and the other centurion named Cornelius were in contact with each other, especially after the latter's conversion recounted in Chapter Ten of Acts. The same could apply to the centurion who pierced Jesus side. Thus all three were sympathetic to Israel in one way or another. Initially they may have felt hostile towards the locals but in time grew to respect them, especially their religious practices.

After this short discourse, in vs. 13 Jesus addresses the centurion telling him to return home, the request for healing his servant having been granted. It was done in accord with his belief, the verb *pisteuo* (S 'aymen) also as to consider something as being true. As for the healing, it took place literally "at that hour" or *hora* also as an undefined or general time of the day. Thus both the centurion, a representative of Roman rule, and his servant who possibly was foreign-born, were shown special favor. This must have outraged some locals, especially Jesus' words about how non-Israelites are not just excluded but subject to being cast into the outer darkness. We don't hear any report of this, for Matthew considered it would be inappropriate to insert in his account.

The conjunctive *kai* which begins vs. 14 as "and" shows virtually no time of transition from Jesus and the centurion to entering Peter's house. Up to this point we haven't heard from this disciple who'd become leader of the apostles except for the fact that Jesus had chosen him. Because a mother-in-law is involved, Jesus must have entered the house with some hesitation. We can assume that not long ago he had a less than pleasant contact with Peter's wife who similarly remains as anonymous. She isn't mentioned as being present perhaps in disgust at having been abandoned by her husband. Both she and her mother had some justification for being angry with Jesus whom Peter followed willingly and at once (cf. 4.19). Apparently this stranger who came on the scene was responsible for leaving her to own resources. The same held true with wives of the other disciples. Chances are these woman formed a bond and in a

sense were relieved at Jesus' apparent ultimate demise. Now that he was dead, their husbands will fly back home.

Fortunately Peter's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever which meant she was too ill to rebuke Jesus. As for Peter, there's no mention of him being present. Given what we know as to how later he'd betray his master, even at this early stage he was too chicken to accompany Jesus. Instead, he preferred to hover in nearby as he did standing outside the high priest's residence (cf. Jn 18.16). Jesus did heal Peter's mother-in-law who got up and served him, *diakoneo* (S *shamash*: also to administer to) which also means to function as an intermediary. Obviously she was grateful and if she treated Jesus well, she just might win back her husband. That's not the end of this story, for we can assume that she informed Peter's wife. However, things didn't work out for them both. Peter continued to remain with Jesus which meant the two woman had to fend for themselves, a difficult thing to do in those days. And so their resentment continued for the rest of their lives.

Jesus remained with Peter's mother-in-law until evening, trying to explain why Peter left her in the lurch. We're not privy to that conversation but can assume some hard feelings remained between the two. Perhaps Jesus used his contact with the centurion whose servant he had healed. Being in a position of authority, the centurion could offer some financial support to both the mother-in-law and Peter's wife. After all his sudden desertion amounted to something akin to a divorce...more than a divorce, in actuality an outright abandonment that could be subject to prosecution. Again, the centurion could step in and smooth things over.

Jesus intended to go off somewhere and rest after this tense confrontation once he informed Peter that he had cured mother-in-law. It'd come as no surprise that Peter secretly wished that Jesus hadn't done this, that she had died, for that would be one less thing to worry about. Now he's faced with both her and his own wife, both of whom he had basically deserted. Peter's mother-in-law detained Jesus for longer than he had expected, so by the time they finished their conversation it was evening. While grateful for the cure, she'd find it awkward to invite him to spend the night. That indeed would rouse suspicion among the locals.

As the light began to fade, people who had followed Jesus from the mountaintop to the centurion's house and now to the house of Peter began to grow impatient. They had brought a number of relatives and friends who were possessed with demons which must have been quite a scene in the dim twilight. The ones possessed made all sorts of dreadful noises, causing those in their power to flail this way and that. If it were broad daylight, it'd be a different story. This semi-light, if you will, where people could see in part made for a situation that was more scary. When word reached them that Jesus had cured Peter's mother-in-law, they just about stormed the house. To prevent what could quickly become an all-out riot, Jesus decides to step outside and assist them before it became dark. Once darkness fell, the demons would be in their native environment, free to do whatever they wanted. That indeed was a chilling prospect, and the people knew it, including Jesus.

As for those who were possessed, the verb is *daimonizomai* (S *dayun*) and applies to a hostile spirit which here goes unspecified. Such a being is also known as a *pneuma* + or spirit which Jesus cast out (*ekballo* +) by means of a *logos* + (S *melata'* or *melal*). What that *logos* is we have no record of but can surmise it took the form of a sharp, direct command. The primary goal was to get these malignant beings out of the possessed so they could head directly for the gathering darkness and hopefully remain there. Although they are essentially invisible, nevertheless they left a residual wake in the atmosphere that was palpable. Peter's mother-in-law was viewing this from inside her house. Perhaps in light of this dramatic incident she was beginning to have second thoughts about her husband having left her. If Peter associated with Jesus and learned to do the same, he could return home and make a killing by employing this new-found skill.

Vs. 17 puts this drama in perspective because it fulfilled (*pleroo* +) what was spoken by Isaiah (53.4). We have two quotes, the first from the text at hand and the one from the Book of Isaiah itself:

“He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.” As soon as we hear this there comes to mind Jesus' recent healing of the leper, Peter's mother-in-law, the centurion's servant and the casting out of demons. Two types of affliction are noted in the Isaiah verse, *asthenia* or a debilitating kind of illness and *nosos* or a physical malady. As for the two verbs, they are *lambano* and *bastazo*, to take and to bear in the sense of to sustain a burden. Technically speaking, Jesus did

not do this in the sense of willingly assume suffering. Rather, Isaiah's taking and bearing can be seen in light of Jesus going about to cure people both physically and spiritually.

“Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted.” The original is more descriptive of the mysterious suffering servant. Yes, it can apply to him later on but not now. ‘*Akan* or surely is a strong affirmative with regard to what the servant is doing, *nasa'* and *saval*; the former means to lift up and the latter often applies to heavy burdens. Because of this, the first person plural—a direct and personal way of speaking—is used in order to consider him as *nagah*, *makah* and *hanah* by God. The verb *chashav* translated as “esteemed” connotes having such and such an opinion which here may not concur with what God is doing to the suffering servant. That puts the objectively real afflictions he's bearing into perspective. To the people it is dreadful but from God's point of view, it's something beyond their comprehension.

The **RSV** of vs. 18 begins with “now” which is the translation of the conjunctive *de +*. It shows both a continuation and differentiation from what had come before, namely, Jesus casting out demons near the house of Peter. It seems that from now on or for the rest of his life these “great crowds” (*ochlos +*) are destined to accompany him, giving him virtually no privacy. Naturally Jesus is conflicted. On one hand, he has come to be of service to people but may not have anticipated it would wear him down so quickly and thoroughly. With this in mind, Jesus orders his disciples to make ready a boat in order to cross the lake. Those following him watched every move he made but don't seem to have set out as well. They lived by the lake all their lives and knew its moods inside out. In other words, they could feel a storm brewing. The same applied to the disciples, but to their credit, they trusted in Jesus even though he had no knowledge of the lake's varying moods.

As Jesus was about to embark, a scribe approached (*proserchomai +*) Jesus addressing him as Teacher or *Didaskalos*. That must have taken Jesus by surprise, for a scribe is representative of the Jewish religious authorities and normally wouldn't address an upstart teacher as such. Probably this man was struck by Jesus claiming that the centurion had more faith than anyone in Israel and wouldn't rest until Jesus fleshed it out for him. The scribe said that he'd follow Jesus wherever he'd go, *aperchomai* being the verb. It's prefaced with the

preposition *apo-* (from) to the verbal root *erchomai* and means moving from one given point to another.

Jesus gives a somewhat terse, even blunt response, showing a certain indifference which must have surprised the scribe. By saying that foxes and birds (*kataskenoo*: literally, to pitch a tent in accord with, *kata-*) have their own places to live, that is, out in the wild, the Son of man lacks this most basic need for shelter. Actually this is the first time Jesus applies this title to himself which adds a sense of mystery as to his person. That is, as Son he identifies himself with all humanity. On the other hand, Son of man is not especially a king-like title. Jesus was fully aware that some of the crowd might want to establish him as their ruler as a means of standing up against the all-powerful Roman rule. In their view his miraculous touch qualified him for this position.

Most likely when speaking of himself as Son of man Jesus had in mind two scriptural references with different connotations. The first is Dn 7.13: "I saw in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him." The second is the same title the Lord uses when addressing the prophet Ezekiel, this totaling a little over ninety times. The first is in Ezk 2.1: "And he said to me, 'Son of man, stand upon your feet, and I will speak with you.'"

The verse from Daniel refers to a more divine-like figure and his relationship with the Ancient of Days whereas the second to Ezekiel's humanity with respect to the transcendent Lord in his dealings with him. Being an educated man, surely the scribe was able to make an association of the title with these two verses. Unfortunately nothing seemed to have come of the encounter which ended abruptly then and there. The scribe didn't join Jesus in the boat but went his own way. Who knows...perhaps later becoming a member of the early church. When Jesus had these encounters we tend to think that they had no lasting impact on him. On the contrary, they must have registered and made him wonder eventually happened to them. It'd come as no surprise if he had his disciples or their contacts follow through on them as much as humanly possible.

In both vs. 19 and vs. 21 we have two quick encounters which show a certain harshness of Jesus' teaching. The first is a scribe, one who is quite learned compared with the crowd following Jesus around. He blurted out a declaration of intended loyalty, if you will, of willing to follow Jesus wherever he goes, the

two verbs being *akoloutheo* + and *aperchomai*, the latter as to go from (*apo-*) one place to another. Jesus sees right through him, that is, he's sincere but lacks the willingness to follow through on his declaration. That's why Jesus compares himself to a fox or bird which have their own dwelling place whereas he doesn't even have a place to lay his head. There's some truth to that though given that Jesus had done so much for so many people, they were willing...actually clamoring...to have him stay with them. Thus Jesus is telling the scribe that he'd have to adopt to a life style marked by continuous wandering. That would be exactly opposite to his sedentary life now as a scribe, one who needs to have access to scrolls and legal documents pertaining to religious practices, etc. And so we're left hanging as to the scribe but are pretty much certain he opted out.

Immediately after this we have in vs. 21 "another of the disciples," *mathetes* as one who engages in learning from instruction. He goes unnamed and must have enjoyed a close association with Jesus and his more immediate disciples. That means he was with them for some time. Apparently this disciple didn't hear what Jesus told the scribe, of not having a place of his own. However, the disciple could tell by the look on the man's face that he was disappointed as he walked away. That should have been a warning, but the disciple decided to go ahead and make what seems to be a legitimate request. That consists of burying his father. It seems that the father had died while the disciple was in the service of Jesus. So he decided it's be no problem to interrupt following Jesus for what seems a perfectly reasonable request. However, he gets a real shock. Jesus tells him that the dead should bury their own dead. We have no response but are pretty much certain this disciple said to himself enough is enough. The group of closer associates belonging to Jesus is now one member less. We can imagine that once he left to bury his father, his family and friends were quite angry with Jesus. Later they weren't surprised to find out that he ended up as he did, condemned and crucified.

The disciples certainly witnessed all this right before their eyes. Each man must have questioned himself, whether he was doing the right thing or not. Was following this man the equivalent of a wild goose chase? Judging by the way he treats people willing to follow him or those already in his service, this observation holds some truth. All in all being a disciple of Jesus boils down to the interplay of two verbs in vs. 23 or when the disciples pile into a boat with Jesus, *akoloutheo* + and *aphiemi*, to follow and to let go. The former means active involvement and the latter a precondition for this involvement. Each of the

disciples couldn't help but be caught in between them both. Actually the ambiguity is deliberate, one almost gnawing at the other, so that quickly they will realize what they've gotten themselves into.

Notice that vs. 23 begins with the conjunctive *kai* or "and" which shows the close connection between the previous two incidents and Jesus wanting to move on. We can be fairly certain the scribe and former disciple didn't hang around to see Jesus off. Now he gets into a boat, *embaino* connoting an embarking followed by his disciples. While this was going on, everyone on the shore had their eyes glued on which direction they would go. Surely Jesus and those in the boat with him saw a certain hesitancy on the faces of everyone, including the disciples. Being locals and familiar with varying moods of the lake, they knew a storm was brewing and refrained from hopping into boats to accompany him. They hoped Jesus and his disciples would fare well and if so, they'd catch up with them later on.

As for the storm inferred in the paragraph above, indeed it did come and hit hard. *Seismos* is the noun which more precisely means a shaking or commotion, almost like an earthquake. The Syriac *zoaha'* is similar, a shaking. The disciples were familiar with such conditions since they made their livelihood by fishing on this same lake. They knew it was coming, just like those on shore did, but decided to follow Jesus' instructions. This showed faith in him even though essentially he's a land-lubber. Hopefully they would make for a nearby bay and find shelter from both the approaching storm and from being pressed in so relentlessly by the crowds.

During this *seismos* Jesus was asleep. Chances are he was faking it, for let's face it. Who could sleep during such a violent shaking in addition to being drenched with wave after wave of water? Indeed, we can assume that Jesus was using this as a ruse to listen in on the disciples as they were getting more and more panicked. Also he wanted to see how long they'd wait for him to calm the water but wanted to allow the crisis to play out as long as possible. The verb *apollumi* + aptly describes how the disciples were feeling, this basically meaning to wipe off the face of the earth as a result of the storm.

When Jesus was roused from his "sleep," he wasted no time in rebuking his disciples calling them *oligopistos* or having little faith. The Syriac is *haymanutha'* modified by the adjective *zahor*. Actually his rebuke was in the form of a

rhetorical question. As soon as they heard it—and this was over the almost deafening *seisimos* threatening to engulf them—the disciple came close to throwing Jesus overboard in their anger. No sensible person would treat these seasoned fishermen in such an off-handed manner. Perhaps one or more of them thought of the sailors who did cast the Jonah overboard but didn't want to go down that road even though it was tempting. After all, the sea did quiet down once Jonah was thrown out, a thought hard to get out of their minds.

Then Jesus did what he had planned all along. He rose and rebuked the winds which were causing the *seisimos*. The verb is *epitimaō* (S *ca'a'*), also as to censure, the root being *timaō* or to honor, to estimate with the preposition *epi-* (on) prefaced to it. The result? Suddenly there came upon the lake a great calm, *galene* (S *shelya'*: also as stillness, stupor) also as serenity. This too could apply to how the disciples felt. Just a moment ago they were at the point of despair and ready to do in Jesus. As for the crowds on the shore, they watched with horror as the boat disappeared into the storm clouds fearing it wouldn't emerge. In a way Jesus was delighted, for it gave him time to be alone with his disciples. As the modern expression goes, they could spend some quality time together before coming to the opposite shore. Soon they realized word would get out that all was well, and people would start streaming toward him more than ever.

The conjunctive *kai* beginning vs. 28 shows a connection between the drama just delineated and Jesus arriving on the other side of the lake with his disciples. Indeed, as fishermen familiar with the weather they had learned their lesson the hard way and were glad to be on land. Now they disembarked in the country of the Gadarenes, the very name itself conveying an alien presence compared with the other side of the lake. It's made even more ominous by reason of two demoniacs (*daimonizomai* as in vs. 16) having come out to meet Jesus. They must have seen the ship coming and thought it was a golden opportunity. Soon they would have in their grip several innocent men who had been blown off course. As for the disciples, as men who made their living on the lake, certainly were aware of these demoniacs and stayed a healthy distance away from getting too close to that side of the lake.

What makes these two demoniacs so frightful or *chalepos* (also as hard to bear or grievous) is that they lived in tombs meaning they were outcasts from society and associated with the dead. The Syriac is *beyshe' dtav*, literally “evil of good,” the latter in this case indicative of abundance. Interestingly they recognized

Jesus, calling him Son of God just as the devil had done in 4.3. The reason for this recognition? Perhaps the two men had become hosts of those demons Jesus had cast out recently as recounted in vs. 9. They needed a place to live so they decided to cross the lake and take up residence with these two. They wanted to protect their newly won territory which is why vs. 28 says that no one could pass that way, the verb *ischuo* meaning to have the strength to go ahead and take the chance. If anyone did, that person would end up firmly in their grip. *Chalepos* and *daimonizomai* basically are the same. However, automatically the spirits within the two men realized they were defeated and acknowledged it was time to move on again. This movement from place to place may work for the short term but is destined to fail over the long haul. They can move on only so much before events catch up with them.

To be sure, the spirits possessing the two men aren't dumb. They have a limited time and know it, trying to make the most of the situation. That's why they mention time or *kairos*, a special or proper occasion when Christ—and they use the second person singular—will torment them, *basanizo* +. These spirits are identified as demons or *daimon* which are identified as evil compared with the customary Greek notion of beings who exist midway between God and humans. The next stop for them? It so happened that a herd of swine was not far away and asked Jesus to send them there. He simply said “go” or *hupago* +, the preposition *hupo-* or from under suggestive of pulling out from under which of course means the two men.

As soon as this *hupago* took place, the entire herd of swine ran headlong over the cliff into the water below, *thalassa* commonly referring to the sea or ocean. End of story for the pigs but not for the *daimones* who enjoy a certain invulnerability. Where they went is unknown. Perhaps we'll encounter them later in this Gospel narrative because the *kairos* of their *basanizo* torment is still off in the future and known to Jesus alone.

Jesus, his disciples, the two men and two *daimones* weren't alone. Nearby were the herdsmen of the swine who upon seeing what had happened, were dismayed. That's putting it mildly. Right before their eyes they saw this stranger from the other side of the lake ruining their livelihood in one fell swoop. Such a job belonged to Gentiles, not Jews, so they inferred (rightly) that man who had done this was Jewish. Without wasting a second, they rushed off

to tell what they had witnessed, bringing the city's entire population out who begged Jesus to leave, *parakaleo* + or literally to summon beside being the verb.

In sum, Jesus' visit was a mixed bag. On one hand Jesus rid the area of demons while on the other, caused long term havoc economically speaking. He did oblige to leave. If it weren't for casting out the *daimones*, the locals would have stoned him on the spot. To make certain he and his disciples got going, they watched and weren't satisfied until they got into the boat and pulled away. Without realizing it, they were on the same cliff over which the swine rushed. A moment later they caught themselves as being in that place and quickly moved away. With some justification they were fearful that Jesus might cause them—the entire population of the local city—to fall headlong into the sea. Despite this, everyone's attention remained riveted upon the boat until it disappeared from sight. As for the two men who had been possessed, they stood their ground, overcome as they were with gratitude for having been set free. In light of the lost swine, one wonders how the locals felt towards them. After all, it was they who were responsible for what was an economic disaster.

## Chapter Nine

This new chapter begins appropriately enough with the conjunctive *kai* translated as “and” in that it fulfills what the Gadarenes so earnestly desired, to see Jesus get in his boat with his disciples and sail away hopefully never to return. Returning to his “own city” or *polis* isn't as such in the modern sense but more like a village. Use of the possessive suggests that quickly Jesus had become accepted in Capernaum chiefly by reason of his healing ministry. Another interpretation of “own city” can be taken as a contrast between the two sides of Sea of Galilee which for all intensive purposes, are worlds apart. As for the trip back across the lake, the conversation must have been quite interesting. Not only did they discuss their dramatic encounter with the two men who had been possessed but the calming of the storm. After all, they were crossing near the same place where it had happened so recently.

To their great relief, people on the shore saw the boat coming closer and recognized that Jesus and those with him had survived the storm. It caused a near riot as they rushed to greet him. This time they brought a paralytic—just one, not the usual crowd—because Jesus' arrival was unexpected. If they knew

about it in advance, surely a lot more people in need of healing would have shown up. The paralytic was on his bed or *kline* inferring that they snatched him up almost without him knowing it and rushed down to the shore. Jesus couldn't refuse tending to this man's needs, being touched by the sight of his friends hastening to to the water's edge as though bearing a stretcher. That was enough to bring out the local population *en masse*. The first words out of his mouth? *Tharseo* (S *lavav*) or to take courage or more colloquially, cheer up. Not only that, Jesus added the familial "my son" or *teknon*.

When the paralytic and those nearby heard this they thought they were about to witness something dramatic. Certainly the stage was set for it. To everyone's surprise Jesus immediately told the man that his sins were forgiven. It so happened that some scribes were present who exclaimed aloud so everyone present could hear them. Who, indeed, is this man claiming to have such authority? One of the scribes could have been the same fellow in 8.19, having been somewhat miffed at the way Jesus had blown him off. And so these learned men banded together saying among themselves that Jesus was blaspheming, *blasphemeo* (S *gadaph*) meaning to speak irreverently. Note, however, that they didn't say this openly for fear of being jostled by the crowd.

Jesus turned to the scribes and at once recognized the one he dealt with just a short time ago. This glance obviously reminded the scribe of the rebuke he had suffered. For this reason he tried to cover his shame by being one of the more vehement of the group denouncing Jesus. When the text says that Jesus knew (*eido* +, also to see) their thoughts, the scribe indeed felt Jesus' penetrating gaze pierce his soul. *Enthumesis* (S *macharshavatha'*) is the noun which also means consideration or what is in (*en-*) one's *thumos*. This translates as intense desire and fits in well here, given the strong feelings involved. That's why it's related to *kardia* + or heart, the verbal root *enthumeomai* and associated with evil (*poneros* +).

Jesus didn't hesitate a moment to offer a rebuke in the form of a rhetorical question. He's forcing the scribes to ask which is easier or *eukopos*: to forgive sins or to cure the paralytic. The adjective consists of the root *kopos*, a striking or toil prefaced with the adverbial form *eu-* or well. Consider the unusual nature of this situation. While all this was transpiring the paralytic was lying on his bed in their midst of two opposing sides. Quickly he has become irrelevant, the subject of a debate. The same applied to those who had brought him to the

shore. As for the sin involved, one wonders what that means to a peasant confined to his bed for a long time. All he and his companions wanted was to end this verbal dual at once and have Jesus do the healing. At the same time the man on his bed may have felt quite special to be the object of such a debate as from on the ground he looked up to see these people arguing away. So in a way, all this proved to be a rather humorous scene.

Jesus himself feels the growing frustration and wants to get on with it. His next move is to tell the scribes in no uncertain terms that he has the authority or *exousia* + (S *shultana*’) to forgive sins. Note that he specifies such authority is “upon earth” which infers that the Father has his authority in heaven. Thus divine *exousia* covers both realms. Finally—at long last or so thought the paralytic—the issue is settled. Now please get with the healing! Jesus does so, and the paralytic goes home at once. He didn’t hang around nor thank Jesus because he was so glad to get away from being the subject of a sharp argument. Indeed, he was grateful for the ability to walk away under his own power. Run might be a better way to put it. To him the argument between healing of the body and forgiveness of sins was beyond his ken as well as those friends who had brought him to Jesus.

Once home, he pretty much stayed to himself, not wanting to be an object of curiosity but simply go about his business. At the same time he had to deal with all sorts of people coming and asking endless questions. As for the crowds (note the plural of *ochlos* +), they expressed fear as well as glorified God, *phobeo* and *doxazo* (both +), the two working hand-in-hand. Included, of course, were those who had brought the paralytic to Jesus. While this was going on, the scribes just stood there pretty much dumbfounded. Despite having suffered defeat, they knew that in the long run they’d trip up Jesus but needed help from the other religious authorities.

Next comes the call of Matthew in vs. 9 which begins with the typical conjunctive *kai* translated as “as.” The verb *parago* or to pass on along with *ekeithen* or “from there” puts into perspective the confrontation between Jesus and the scribes. Indeed, Jesus was delighted to do this *parago* or to make good his escape...to pass *para-* or from beside the scribes...to somewhere else. However, he knew for sure that the scribes wouldn’t let the matter go but report it to their superiors. Also, the paralytic who had been cured just might be

the object of scrutiny by those higher up and get into unwanted trouble, including those who had brought him to Jesus.

The text says that Jesus found Matthew in or near Capernaum collecting taxes as was his job. With the same authority and suddenness Jesus had exhibited when choosing Peter and Andrew and then James and John, he simply said to Matthew, "Follow me." The verb is *akoloutheo* + as in the other two instances. Matthew was not cut from the same cloth as these four who were fishermen. Rather, he was of a higher class though disliked...hated...by reason of his job. Not only that, the disciples felt uncomfortable with this fellow tagging along. Nevertheless, like them, Matthew dropped everything and complied. At the same time he didn't want to leave behind a line of people waiting to hand over their hard-earned cash. If he did this, there could be severe repercussions. The best solution was to put an assistant in charge, telling him tongue-in-cheek that he'd return shortly. In this way the Roman authorities wouldn't go after him for having abandoned his job on the spot. Even worse, he wouldn't be accused of having stolen any tax revenue he had collected thus far.

Later that day Jesus decides to eat at Matthew's house, *anaklino* being the verb as in 8.11 or fundamentally to recline, to take a meal and possibly refers to supper. In the time beforehand Jesus introduced Matthew to his core disciples and perhaps others who had been tagging along. In these circumstances Jesus never explained why he chose such persons, just the fact that he had done so. Each of them remained somewhat in the dark but not totally. Jesus deemed best to let things ride and see how they would develop over time. At least they had each other for support. As noted above, Matthew was the odd man out but was a valuable contribution because of his education and experience in money matters. Clearly he should have been in charge of the common purse, not Judas.

For the meal with Jesus, Matthew decided to invite his fellow tax collectors and most likely the assistant who filled in for him, having made up some kind of excuse for quitting then and there. Hopefully this man would vouch for Matthew should the authorities question him. Note too that sinners are invited, possibly those tied in with the collecting of taxes and who are hated by everyone. Indeed, the disciples felt even more uncomfortable yet remained with Jesus despite being in the company of such undesirables. What made the situation awkward was that their friends and neighbors might recognize them

actually eating with those whom everyone despises. Indeed, a very awkward situation.

Nothing escapes the eyes of the Pharisees. In vs. 11 we have them nearby, ever on the watch and more so by reason of Jesus' recent confrontation with the scribes. However, like everyone else they were curious as to why he ate with the most hated people in society. They worked for Rome and were among the least trustworthy of them all. Note that the Pharisees inquired of the disciples about these tax collectors, not Jesus. When he heard of this he responded by giving what to them was a lame excuse, that they were ill and in need of a physician. This is expressed nicely by the verb *echo* + or to have with the adverb *kakos*, literally "to have it bad."

Obviously Jesus was speaking of the Pharisees, the ones making the inquiry but in a barely disguised insidious way. Jesus uses this opportunity to quote from Hosea, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" [6.6]. The original runs in full as: "For I desire mercy (*eleos*; S *chanan*) and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." The verse begins with the small but important word *ky* or "for," an indication that the Lord gets straight to the issue at hand. The verb *chaphets* has a spontaneous, almost erotic air about it suggestive of delight. It's tied in with two pairs of opposites, love vs. sacrifice and knowledge of God vs. burnt offerings: *chesed* vs. *zavach* and *dahath* vs. *meholoth*. Jesus knew exactly where to hit the Pharisees the most, their adherence to proper observance rather than to put what it signifies into practice.

No doubt the Pharisees were familiar with the passage from Hosea but were completely blind to it. They were too focused on tripping up Jesus and had their chance when he said that he had come to call not the righteous (*dikaioi* +; S *zadequ*) but sinners. Indeed, these words provide a perfect opportunity to get Jesus into trouble. He was fully aware of this fact but was compelled to get out into the open the truth about himself. In other words, silence is not an option.

It has been a while since Jesus was baptized by John and in the interim he has gained a reputation as both a teacher and healer. All along John has been following his cousin's progress while remaining at the Jordan River doing his thing as usual. In light of reports about Jesus, John was starting to question his own work. Those coming to him for baptism as well as his disciples saw a gradual change. They could see in his face that he was distracted, losing interest

and didn't have his full heart into it. With this in mind, some of his disciples decided to take their own initiative and check up on Jesus' activity. They didn't want to inform John right away by seeing for themselves. In that way later on they could break the news in a more gentle fashion. Actually it turned out they were more upset than John himself. Such is the reason why in vs. 14 John's disciples approached Jesus, *proserch;lomai* + being the verb, *pros-* indicative of directness and urgency.

You'd think John's disciples would have asked if Jesus had done any baptisms. Such is not the case. Instead, they ask about his disciples who had gained the reputation of not fasting, *nesteuo* (S *zom*). That issue is something you'd expect coming from a stickler concerning religious observances. After all, those asking the question do it just like the Pharisees, fasters *par excellence*. This is one of the reasons why the religious authorities didn't bother shutting down John's operation. He was functioning wholly within Jewish religious observances whereas Jesus was a borderline case.

To their question Jesus responds in vs. 15 with another question which is rhetorical in nature and took John's disciples by surprise. Guests at a wedding don't mourn while the bridegroom is with them, *pentheo* (S *zom* +) also as to experience sadness. In other words, mourning equals sadness equals fasting. However, a time is coming when the bridegroom will be taken away (*apairo*) which will result first in mourning followed by fasting. Jesus doesn't let on what the *apairo* is about, just that it will happen to the most important person at the wedding. Inferred is that the bride will be left as bereft. Those asking Jesus had a general idea of what he meant. He will be *apairo* while his disciples will be left to mourn. Indeed, not good news for John, so we can imagine they didn't inform him.

Vs. 16 begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as "and" inferring that Jesus continues to speak with John's disciples. He changes the topic at once but essentially has the same message with two further examples. The first is the image of a piece of cloth that hasn't been shrunken when sown on an old garment. If so, it will tear away making the garment useless. The second example is new wine in old wine skins. If it's put in, the old skins will burst. On the other hand, new wine is put into new skins. Note the two verbs *airo* and *rhegnumi*, to tear and to burst. Both are strong, even violent. That means the

*apairo* or taking away of the bridegroom will be like that. The message, of course, is to be prepared and not be surprised when it happens.

Such is what the disciples of John heard, not what they had expected. After having exchanged some awkward pleasantries and having informed Jesus of his cousin, they left. Everyone knew that John's mission was nearing its end but finding the appropriate language was difficult. So the disciples departed with an impending sense of gloom both for their master as well as trying to figure out what Jesus was saying by the three examples he left with them. That would bother them to no end on their journey as well as how they comported themselves once back at the Jordan River. Both sides knew, of course, what was involved but never discussed it. As for Jesus and John, the only thing they could do was to carry on with their work at hand. Also both would suffer the same fate as the bridegroom as inferred by the other two examples.

Apparently the conversation between Jesus and John's disciples was interrupted by an unidentified ruler or *archon*, this term apparently applicable to someone in the local synagogue. According to a footnote in the NIV he's identified with Jairus though here his name isn't mentioned. This man didn't interrupt out of rudeness but out of desperation. It was written all over his face, so nobody was upset at his sudden intervention. As for the actual encounter, he simply knelt before Jesus, *proskuneo* also as to do obeisance with the preposition *pros-* indicative of the distress at hand.

After composing himself, the ruler who apparently came by himself implored Jesus to lay his hand upon his daughter that she may live. It seems she was ill and to all who were present, gave the distinct impression that she had died. Without missing a beat Jesus rose and followed him, his disciples tagging along. As for those of John, they decided to come as well. In that way they'd be first hand witnesses to one of Jesus' healings. En route a woman who suffered (S *shana'*: fundamentally, to change) from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up (*proserchomai* +) from behind, stealth-like. She had the intention of being made well (*sozo* and S '*asa'*: both +) from her affliction and is recorded as saying to herself that touching (*hapto*) his garment will do the job. We get that information from Matthew who must have been in contact with her, he just now having decided to follow Jesus.

This account of the woman's state of mind makes us pause a moment and consider the way we read through the various accounts of Jesus' activities. We have the tendency to think of them as generally isolated from each other. This comes in part from hearing them read during various liturgical celebrations. We come away with the impression that they're pretty much chopped up into neat little segments. On the other hand, much of what's recorded takes place within a limited geographical area and in a close-knit society where people were either related to each other or knew each other. Thus information was shared more quickly and readily.

Getting back to the woman with the hemorrhage, as soon as she touched Jesus—and a woman with a flow of blood under any circumstances must have been deeply frowned upon—Jesus turned at once. It happened so suddenly that those accompanying him didn't realize it. If they had anticipated her move, they would have shoved the woman aside. She was aware of this which is why she was watching and waiting for the right moment by first tagging along after the group and gradually moving up step by step. Obviously no one took notice, all eyes focused upon Jesus.

When the woman finally touched Jesus' garment she didn't know what would happen, really. It was all or nothing. Jesus turned at once and told her to take heart, *tharseo* (S *lavev*: also as to console, exhort) as he had done with the paralytic in 9.2. Interestingly he spoke in the past tense. That is to say, the woman's faith has saved her (*sozo* +; S *chaya'*: to live, give life) which implies that Jesus knew this woman had joined the entourage some time ago and could see into her thoughts about touching his garment. Indeed, she was taken by surprise, having expected a sharp rebuke. Now it was simply a matter of time for the healing to take effect. The **RSV** has "immediately" for the Greek "in that hour" which is a more inclusive way of putting it, that is, all those present were somehow tied in with the healing.

We get the impression that neither Jesus nor those with him paused more than a second after healing the woman but moved on, actually rushed forward, because of the ruler's urgent request to restore life to his daughter. It's interesting to observe that Jesus complies with full knowledge that the girl will be perfectly fine. To act otherwise would be out of character. When he arrived—and the impression is that the ruler's house was some distance away—he saw flute players and a crowd (*ochlos* +) making a tumult or *thorubeo* also as to throw

into disorder, to make an emotional display. These people were mourning the death of the ruler's daughter, some of whom were professionals and others present in order to make a good impression by being seen.

At once Jesus attempted to dismiss (*anachoreo* +) everyone outside which came to no avail. The ruler rushed inside, his mind focused only on his daughter figuring that Jesus was right behind him. It should be noted that this incident makes no word of his wife. So Jesus was left outside alone when he became the source of ridicule and laughter (*katagelao*: also to ridicule; S *gachak*: to deride) because he claimed that the girl wasn't dead but sleeping. Nevertheless, the text says that the crowd was put outside which infers that some people from within the house decided enough was enough. Jesus couldn't handle this by himself. He felt the need not to rebuke anyone, knowing full well it wasn't worth the bother.

What follows is very simple and straight-forward. Jesus walks in, takes the girl by the hand after which she got up. That's it. Nothing more to say. However, report (*pheme* or news; S *tevah*: tidings, fame) of this spread literally "into all the land" starting, of course, with the crowd outside which despite having been dismissed, moved back further. They were too curious to go home. Although we have no reaction from them, we can assume that the flute players changed their tune from mourning into joy with everyone joining in. As for the father who approached Jesus with such despair, he simply vanishes from the scene. However, he must have been profoundly grateful and tried to assist Jesus. Jesus refused and passed on as he had done with other such incidents. He's on a mission and that mission is to reach as many people as he could, for he knew time was short.

By saying that Jesus "passed on from there," vs. 27 has in mind the just mentioned sense of mission, that he's constantly on the move. It's difficult to say whether crowds followed him or not. Perhaps the ruler whose daughter Jesus had just revived was sensitive to this and waited a while for things to calm down before sending Jesus on his way. Nevertheless, two blind men followed him, *proserchomai* + being the verb. Obviously they didn't do this on their own but were guided by friends or relatives who were laying in wait for Jesus to leave the ruler's house.

Although they couldn't see Jesus, they had a sense that he was near, hence their crying out to him, *krazo* also as to shriek, the very sound of which conveys intensity. They called Jesus "Son of David" which is found next in 15.22 by a Canaanite woman. Actually it's in the very first verse of the Gospel. The two who were either blind from birth or lost their sight later in life had heard reports about what Jesus had done. They came to the conclusion that if he comes near, they would approach him. They had nothing to lose. Then they heard the commotion outside the ruler's house, for as vs. 28 infers, they lived nearby and knew that Jesus was present.

As for the title Son of David, it was uttered out of desperation, certainly not having been primed by others to impress Jesus. So on the spot Jesus decides to come to their assistance. He enters a house which seems to be where the two lived, this apparently close to the ruler. Next they entered pretty much on their own because they were familiar with every square inch of the place. Jesus preferred to deal with them alone, so he dismissed anyone else for privacy.

Once this had been done, he asked the two whether or not he's able to cure them or to put it in their own words, to have mercy on them, *eleeo* + (*S rachem*: infers desire from the heart). Right away they responded *nai* which is indicative of certainty. This prompted Jesus to touch their eyes and restore their sight, simple as that. Before they could utter a word...any word...Jesus not only charged them but did so sternly. The verb (and adverb) is *embrimaomai* which connotes insistence in the strongest possible way. When he really slams it into them not to tell anyone, they could barely hold back their laughter, looking at him straight in the face with their newly recovered sight. How could anyone in their right minds make such a request? What on earth does this man have in mind? The same happened in 8.4 with regard to the leper. Although we can understand this now, to someone just cured of blindness, Jesus' request to keep it quiet doesn't even register.

Vs. 31 comes almost as an afterthought and begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as "and" to bring this home. Easily we can imagine the two men running outside and spreading word of what had happened to them literally "in all that land" or in all that surrounding neighborhood. One of the first to hear about it was the ruler who lived nearby. He must have contacted them, he plus the little girl who had been healed having a lot in common. As for the verb *diaphemizo*, the root as to utter a voice and with the preposition *dia-* or "through"

prefaced to it, speaking of their cure unceasingly. As for Jesus, he remained in the house, just sitting there. While essentially he was correct in telling the two men to keep their cure quiet, he should have known better. At least with the leper alluded to in the last paragraph he went to the priest which was, if you will, a legitimate way of announcing his cure. Perhaps Jesus could have come up with something similar concerning the two men but apparently there was nothing in Jewish religious observance pertaining to their situation. Indeed, Jesus was disappointed and knew he had to adjust his *modus operandi* else he'd turn out to be a failure.

The next three verses come as a kind of summary thus far of Jesus' ministry in preparation for giving his disciples fuller authority. Vs. 35 conveys this by the conjunctive *kai* where Jesus makes the rounds of cities and villages, *periago* + suggestive of this constant motion. Vs. 35 puts it well and easy to remember: teaching, preaching and healing or *didasko*, *kerusso* and *therapeuo* (all three +). As for the teaching, Jesus was reiterating what he had said on the mountaintop only this time in local synagogues. That infers a much smaller audience where his message has the chance of registering more deeply. As for *kerusso*, it's put as "gospel of the kingdom," *euaggelion* with respect to *basileia* (both +) which is one of four instances of this phrase.

Vs. 36 gives good insight in Jesus' mind. It says that upon seeing the crowds (*ochlos* +) he had compassion or *splagchnizomai* which is like saying that he poured out his bowels, his very seat of emotions. The reason? He realized full well that despite their severe limitations, they were both harassed and helpless, *skullo* and *rhipto*. The former also means to be troubled and the latter to be cast down. A lot is contained in these two words. In addition to being under Rome's yoke, Jesus had in mind the Jewish religious authorities who in addition to this foreign rule, continued to burden the people.

Awareness of this made Jesus turn to his disciples who obviously could be included among them and said that the harvest is plentiful while laborers are few, *polus* and *oligos*. It must have come as a surprise to hear the *ochlos* being called such. They've been with Jesus some time now and were firsthand witnesses to his preaching and healing. When you take into account all that Jesus had done to date, you wonder how this had affected the disciples. If it had no other effect than keeping them by his side, that was success enough. As for the harvest of the *ochlos*, Jesus asks them to pray that the Lord sends out

laborers. The verb is *deomai*, also as to plead. In a way, this was a bit awkward. Why should they pray when the Lord of the harvest is right there with them? On that note Chapter Nine comes to a close. Again the disciples are left hanging, not quite knowing what Jesus means, yet they remained with him.

## Chapter Ten

This new chapter begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as “and” which has a direct connection with Jesus’ words about praying for laborers to take in the harvest. Also it represents a time when Jesus had managed to elude the crowds so as to focus upon those closest to him. As for these men so often called disciples, here for the very first time they are numbered as twelve. Jesus decides it’s time to summon them and send them off on their first real mission. However, it’s necessary to present them with some instructions or what today we’d call guidelines as how to behave and what to expect. The verb is *kaleo* + or to summon but prefaced with the more direct and urgent *pros-*, to call in a direct manner, *proskaleo* (S *qara*’). This calling which is *pros-* is in response to the harvest of those described as harassed and helpless. As for what Jesus is about to say, he has to establish a firm basis for any such work before others can pray for more laborers. So when the disciples get wind of this, naturally they are excited. As we read through the chapter at hand, we can feel this excitement starting to evaporate and fear that some if not all will simply walk away and return home.

Before dispatching the disciples, Jesus gives them authority or *exousia* (S *shultana*’, both +) not so much over unclean spirits but literally “of unclean spirits” which makes it more direct. The noun for such beings is *pneuma* + described as *akthartos* (S *taneph*, also as foul), implying that which is prevented from coming in contact with anything divine. In a way, it infers isolation. As for how such authority is transmitted from Jesus to the twelve, we have no explanation except simply that he gave it, *didomai* +. Such is one of a number of instances where the mechanics of how it’s done is lacking, leaving that to our imagination. At the same time such informing by the Holy Spirit is quite clear when you read the text in the spirit of *lectio divina*.

After casting out (*ekballo* +) such unclean spirits, the apostles are to engage in healing or *therapeuo* + (S *asa*’ +, also as to restore) which covers all diseases and

ailments, *nosos* and *malakia*, both applying more to physical suffering. The former is more general whereas the latter, infers debility or weakness. Then vs. 2 proceeds to give the names of all twelve disciples, some of whom were singled out earlier. Last we have Judas described ominously as the one who betrayed Jesus, *paradidomai* (S *shalam* +) literally as to hand over or beside (*para*-).

Vs. 1 has Jesus calling his disciples whereas vs. 5 has him sending them, *apostello* (S *shadar*: to send away, dismiss). Note the contrast between the two prepositions prefaced to each verb, *pros*- as direction towards-which and *apo*- or from. Both are required for any mission to prosper. However, Jesus lays down some pretty strict guidelines, *paraggello* (S *paqad* +) also as to make an announcement, the verbal root *aggello* or to tell. It's prefaced with the preposition *para*- which can be taken as beside, to tell or announce beside. That is to say, the disciples are to go only among the lost sheep of the house of Israel, not among the Gentiles nor Samaritans. Jesus calls his own people lost or *apollumi* +, quite a powerful and bold statement, meaning that they have become subject to utter destruction.

As for the lost sheep image, it corresponds with the above mentioned harassed and helpless whom Jesus notices in 9.36. While the disciples are going out among their own, they couldn't help but observe the favorable way Jesus had dealt with non-Jews. Indeed, this must have been confusing for them. However, their doubt was put at rest by the excitement of being able to cure people which would make them appear as gods among those they went, so the heck with any distinction. It'd come as no surprise that each disciple would practice or act out how they would do it. In a way, it must have been comical. After all, Jesus told them that they would do something completely beyond their ability as fishermen. At the same time, those whom Jesus had called by the lake must have remembered him saying they'd be fishers of men. So if healing is part of the package, there's no reason why not go ahead and see what would come of it. Yet after this first flush of confidence, the twelve must have had some hesitancy. What would happen if they didn't heal anyone? The crowds that had gathered would ridicule them all the way back and into the Sea of Galilee.

If Jesus were sending his disciples to the Gentiles and Samaritans, that would be a different story. Most likely they were strangers and didn't know that they had been fishermen. As for going to the Jews, practically speaking that's the

equivalent of going right next door to one's own folk, relatives and kinsmen. Without a doubt the twelve would encounter some hostility from their relatives for having abandoned their families. Indeed, a very difficult situation to handle. What Jesus is about to say later holds true in this regard: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves" [vs. 15]. And so Jesus goes on in some detail preparing these disciples knowing full well that they would experience the greatest challenge from their family and friends. As for the result, we have nothing which could infer that their missionary experience was either a disaster or a success.

Vs. 7 has the present participle of *poreuo* (to go, to travel) along with the command to preach, *kerusso* (S *karaz*, both +) which suggests the two are being carried out as one. More appropriately, it infers that the disciples are always to be on the move which makes the awkward situation of dealing with their own kind a bit more palatable. The message? It's identical to Jesus when he started out in 4:7: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As for the text at hand, it runs as "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," *eggizo* as to be near or to draw near (S *qarev*, both +). How could you elaborate on that? Jesus doesn't give any guidelines, letting the disciples to figure it out for themselves which means they would have to access their memories as best as possible with regard to what he had said to the crowds.

As far as the disciples are concerned, healing and raising from the dead is what matters along with cleansing lepers and casting out demons. Such talk obviously made the disciples nervous. Okay to heal the sick and to cleanse lepers but to raise the dead? Chances are not one of the twelve went that route nor even dared. If they were dispatched among the Gentiles and Samaritans, they might reconsider but not to people of their own kind. To this Jesus adds that the disciples had received without pay and should give without pay, *dorea* (S *magan*: without expense) that is, as a gift or bounty.

In vss. 9-10 Jesus advises...actually commands...not to take the usual necessities for a journey. The reason? The twelve are laborers (*ergates*) and thus are deserving of food for their efforts, *axios* (S *shaoa'*: also to be worthy, agree with) being the adjective. Obviously they will have to stay somewhere, so Jesus tells them to seek out someone who is *axios* or worthy, the verb *exetazo* (S *sha'el* +: to ask) suggestive of close (the *ex-* or from) examination, the root *tasso*, to arrange, put in order. Jesus puts a premium on this and continues to speak about it

through vs. 15. Staying with the right person will provide temporary shelter if not a place of refuge in case things go wrong. At the same time Jesus leaves it up to his disciples to ask around for such a person or family. Chances are they would do that by attending a local synagogue. Consider Paul and Barnabas. They made a big splash when they entered a synagogue and surely had no trouble finding people with whom to stay for the duration (cf. Acts 13.14+).

In vs. 12 Jesus presupposes that his disciples had found the right house or family. Surely he doesn't mean that all twelve should crowd into one home but are to break up into smaller bands and spread out where they're going to visit. At the same time, they're not to go too far astray from each other because they must return and give a report to Jesus. This isn't mentioned in the text but presupposed. After all, the disciples were winging it. When entering (*eiserchomai* + with *eis*; i.e., a double into, if you will) a house they are to salute it as the **RSV** says, *aspazomai* better put as to greet or to welcome. The Syriac puts it well, *shelam* + which is not unlike the well-known Hebrew *shalom*. Should the household not be worthy or *axios* +, the peace or *eirene* (*shalam* +) will return upon (*erchomai* with *epi*) them. I.e., this *eirene*, held in high honor in the local culture and is not to be taken lightly. One's reputation is held in the balance as well, for to violate it is almost criminal. As for who is *axios* and who is not is strictly from the point of view of the twelve disciples which shows a certain bias.

Jesus applies the same notion of hospitality with respect to those who hear the disciples' words or *logos* +. Such *logoi* are their unique mode of hospitality which if rejected, will make them shake the dust off their feet, that is, from where they are standing. Should that happen, they're to do it in dramatic fashion when leaving the house or town. Without saying it aloud, Jesus could be thinking of the disciples' relatives still enraged at having been abandoned by them. Finally he sums up how to deal with people whom they are evangelizing by giving the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. On the day of judgment it will go easier with the inhabitants of those two places. *Anektos* (*S nuach* or to be at rest, to satisfy) is the adjective here translated as tolerable. That's as strong as it gets by any standards when dealing with the destruction by fire and brimstone of those two places obviously coming to mind. While Jesus may be getting a bit dramatic and for good reason, chances are that people wouldn't believe them and simply laugh them out of town.

In vs. 16 Jesus gets quite serious by seeking to tone down any expectations the twelve may have with regard to healing, raising the dead, cleansing lepers and casting out demons. The words he spoke so far certainly are tolerable. Now he cautions them, that they are going as sheep among wolves, the phrase being quite scary and reads literally as “in the midst of wolves,” *mesos* also as right in the middle of such ravenous animals. His advice in this regard has to do with another sharp contrast, serpents and doves. The disciples are to be both at once, that is, wise and innocent or *phronimos* (S *chakeym*, both +) and *akeraios*, the latter literally as unmixed.

The disciples are to beware of all men: note the two prepositions as work, if you will, *pros-* of *prosecho* + and *apo* or from. The former as towards-which prefaced to *echo* (to have) and the preposition from. The two work in opposite directions but produce the desired effect. Jesus says that invariably the twelve will suffer dire consequences by being summoned before all sorts of rulers and councils. Surely some of those hearing this must have questioned why, that is, in their naivete. Nobody does miraculous deeds such as Jesus told them to do and gets away with it. The first thing that pops into any ruler’s mind is fakery. It was a clever way of causing people to flock to them and therefore have the potential of creating political instability. Jesus mentions synagogues and Gentiles meaning that both will go after the disciples for giving testimony, literally “into testimony” or *marturion* (S *sahdu*, both +).

It seems the more Jesus goes on about instructing as well as warning his disciples, the heavier it gets. Now in vs. 19 he speaks of them being delivered up, *paradidomai* + or being handed over beside (*para-*) with regard to secular and religious authorities. If/when that happens, they are not to be anxious as to what to speak or say which is how the **RSV** puts it. However, the Greek simply has *laleo*, also to express oneself. Instead of wasting time with *merimnao* which also means to be unduly concerned, the right kind of *laleo* will be given to them in that hour, *hora* + pretty much here as *kairos* or occasion. Note the future passive of *didomai* +; that the disciples won’t know the source of their speaking but when it comes, they will do it automatically and with awareness of some other agent doing it for them.

In vs. 20 Jesus fleshes this out, for by now the twelve were experiencing some of that *merimnao* or undue concern he had cautioned against. When they speak or *laleo*, they are not the ones doing it; rather it’s the *Pneuma* + of the Father

doing it in them. *Pneuma*, of course, means breath which is invisible but at the same time can be felt in addition to being heard. So the Father is breathing out this *Pneuma*, taking over the function of lungs in the disciples if we can put it that way. So all they have to do is “breathe” which is what their *laleo* means in such occasions, that hour or *hora* noted above.

Jesus doesn't say that this breathing/speaking will let the disciples off the hook nor will have a favorable impact on those to whom it's directed. Actually he says the opposite, putting the ensuing conflict or strife not in a direct political or religious context but one that's worse, family members rising up against each other. In some cases it will even result literally “into death.” The reason for such murderous actions goes back to vs. 7, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” People will be insulted at such words coming from mere fishermen who to now have the audacity of preaching to them. The disciples will be hated—note how he interjects “all”--for the sake of his name. In a way, they've experienced this already and so are prepared. Hostility from their families turned out to be beneficial in the sense of an educative experience as well as having walked right off the job to follow Jesus.

However, in the same verse (that is, another sentence) Jesus holds out hope which he puts in direct, stark terms, namely, that those who endure to the end will be saved. The verb is *hupomeno* (S *shavar*: also as to believe, declare), literally to remain under, the preposition *hupo*- suggestive of endurance from below or from underneath. Such foundational remaining-with is a support coming from this invisible source and leads literally to being saved (*sozo*; S *chaya'*, both +) “into the end” or *telos* + (S *charata'*, also as extremity) which suggests completion.

Jesus is fully aware of the practical consequences of his words. If the disciples are persecuted (*dioko*; S *radaph*: also to banish, both +), they are to flee to the next town, this being quite a different response from vs. 14 where they are to shake the dust off their feet for not having been welcomed. There's a catch here. Jesus says that chances are all the places the twelve will visit will drive them away which essentially means they will drive him away only in their person. This seems to contradict his being on the mountain with the crowds plus subsequent healings. It's something the disciples were wrestling with and as of yet have not come to terms with it. Jesus concludes by saying rejection of the disciples' message will be so thorough that eventually it will bring about his

coming as Son of man. Thus an indefinite waiting period prefaced by almost continuous rejection will require that *hupomeno* spoken of in vs. 22. Again, these are rather enigmatic words quite difficult to understand but make light only in the acceptance or rejection of what the disciples are to do and to say.

Vs. 24 is a turning point from the stark warning Jesus gives to his twelve disciples to an eventual conclusion dealing with rewards. First, however, he feels the need that they understand their role which he puts in terms of two contrasts:

-Disciple or *mathetes* + (S *talmeyd*) who remains subordinate to his teacher or *didaskalos* + (S *rave'*).

-Servant or *doulos* (S *havda'*), actually a slave who is not above his master or *kurios* + (S *mare'*).

While this distinction has a role to play, service is what counts. The adjective *arketos* meaning sufficient or adequate shows the identity between disciple and servant in this regard. Next Jesus speaks of the master of a house or *oikodespotes* who could even be a slave delegated with this responsibility. Also it suggests a large estate or household. He uses the third person plural, that is, calling this man by the insulting title Beel-zebul or Lord of Flies which applies to demons. Actually Jesus is using the term *oikodespotes* as applicable to himself. Those so holding him in contempt call his disciples flies and are worthy of similar contempt. The Greek verb describing this attribution of malignancy is *epikaleo*, literally to call upon where the preposition *epi-* connotes disparagement.

In a way, *oun* or “thus” beginning vs. 26 is designed not just to show that Jesus is communicating to his disciples that they have no fear (*phobeo* + S *dekal*, also to stand in awe) but not to give it a thought. The reason? Those who are persecuting them at present are doing it in a manner even they don't comprehend. That's why Jesus says their reason is concealed. Nevertheless, a time will come when it's revealed. I.e., we have here an interplay between *kalupto* + and *anakalupto*, *krupto* and *ginosko* + (S *kasa'* and *galal*, *tasha'* and *yeda'* or to know): to hide and to uncover, to keep secret and to make known. Both *kalupto* and *krupto* are similar; one with regard to concealing, the adoption of a cover and the other with regard to the active gesture of hiding. The disciples might find this hard to comprehend and not to be of much comfort which is why Jesus continues to speak.

Out of a desire to put his disciples at ease as much as possible, Jesus is making a contrast similar to the one he had just given. Now in vs. 27 he comes off with two contrasts:

-*Lego* + and *eiron* or tell and to utter. The former also means to choose or to gather and pertains to recounting whereas the latter means to speak or to mention. The Syriac has *'emar* for both. *Lego* pertains to the dark or *skotia* +, also as gloom. *Eiron* pertains to the light or *phos* +.

-*Akouo* and *kerusso* (both +) or to hear and to proclaim. I.e., the second is dependent upon the former. The Syriac has *shamah* and *karaz* +. *Akouo* pertains to that which is whispered or literally “into the ear.” One is to go immediately to a housetop and *kerusso* it. Note that Jesus is the one who does the telling whereas “into the ear” is more passive by nature. And so we have two modes of communication from Jesus that will be going on despite the disciples being persecuted.

Vs. 28 begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as “and” to show the close connection between all this and a continuation of what Jesus is about to say. It is concerned with two modes of fear or *phobeo* +:

-Those persons who can kill the body, *apokteino* having the preposition *apo-* or from prefaced to it which implies a more thorough or intense killing if it could be rendered as such. Here the verb applies to the body or *soma*. However, it doesn't apply to the soul or *psuche* +.

-He who has the ability to bring a person to Gehenna + and there can destroy not only the body but the soul, the verb being *apollumi* + meaning that both will be brought to utter destruction. The person or entity who can do this isn't described but left unsaid. However, as everyone knows it refers to one entity alone, the devil.

Vs. 29 consists of a rhetorical question which Jesus inserts as he continues to hit the twelve with a barrage of instructions and information. It's all relative to their mission which he had given them at the beginning of this chapter. Despite the near worthless value of two sparrows sold for food, even the death of one doesn't happen without the Father allowing it. This reads literally as “without your Father.” Indeed, the disciples are worth more than many sparrows,

*diaphero* (S *yetar*: to have over and above, both +) literally as to carry through (*dia-*).

Insertion of *oun* + or “so” at the beginning of vs. 32 serves to bring Jesus’ words to a new level. That is to say, he pretty much lays out what happens to anyone who acknowledges him before others, the verb *homologeō* (S *yada*’: to confess, believe; both +) along with *emprosthen* (before, in the front of). Note that it consists of two prepositions: *em-* or *en-* and *pros-*, in and towards-which, so it’s very direct. As for this preposition, it’s used a second time, “my Father.” Also each *emprosthen* has *en* (‘in’), “in me” and “in him.” The point of all this in-ness? That the *homologeō* at hand is with regard the first one as pertaining to Jesus and the second one, the Father. In other words, both Jesus and the Father are on the same level.

Vs. 33 is a continuation of the previous verse joined to it with *de* + translated as “but.” Actually we have here the opposite of *homologeō*, which is *arneomai* or to refuse to give consent, again with regard to Jesus and the same pattern with regard to *emprosthen*, that is, at it pertains to men and to the Father. Still, small comfort to the disciples when people are attempting to murder them.

In vs. 34 Jesus shifts his tone in a radical fashion. That is to say, he speaks directly and forcefully about his mission, a way to steel his disciples for any difficulty they will encounter. Hopefully they can adopt the same stance if and when it’s demanded of them. Jesus wishes to put them on firm ground by telling them not to think in a particular way, *nomizo* (S *shavar* +: to believe, suppose) which literally means to follow a customary way (*nomos*) of thought. He uses the verb *ballo* + (S *rama*’: to put, place) or to cast in two ways: with regard to peace on earth and with regard to a sword. The very act of casting is abrupt and violent, upsetting the order of things.

As for what this sword or *machaira* represents, it’s more along the lines of a dagger: short and used for close, tight combat when you encounter the enemy face to face. And so this weapon is more threatening than a long, conventional sword which Jesus uses when he comes to set people against one another, including family members. That was certainly familiar to the disciples by this point. Although they hadn’t yet stepped into the wider world, to date they had enduring plenty of flak from their family members. Not just that, they were

filled with some regret and doubt as to whether they were doing the right thing for essentially having abandoned them on the spot.

As for these unsettling words, Jesus quotes from the prophet Micah, 7.6 but here vs. 5 is included because it forms part of an extended sentence: “Put no trust in a neighbor, have no confidence in a friend; guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom; for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.”

While that may be true, Jesus doesn't quote the verse which follows this: “But as for me, I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.” That's one of those verses that will come into clearer focus for the disciples after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Without it, they would be facing an impossible, unenviable task. Now Jesus' concluding words on the matter make more sense, namely, that if anyone loves father or mother more than he isn't worthy of him. The verb is not *agapao* or to have *agape* but *phileo* or love which has special interest in mind.

Jesus shifts to the taking up (*lambano* +) of one's cross which must have struck horror into the twelve and rightly so. Crucifixion was reserved for traitors, the worse of the worse, and imposed by the occupying Romans, not the Jews. Besides, it was an all too familiar sight, one that had been seared into the minds of everyone not just once but multiple times and is to be avoided at all costs. Jesus turns this around by saying that going en route to one's crucifixion...i.e., taking up one's cross...is the equivalent of being unworthy of him, *axios* + (S *sha'ua'*). That too was very familiar. Right away it's followed by Jesus positing the natural tendency to finding (*heurisko* +) one's life or *psuche* + which has the exact opposite, that is, of losing it, *apollumi* + more along the lines of complete destruction. Jesus reverses it: *apollumi* leads to *heurisko*. The switch is with regard to his sake, nothing else.

In vs. 40 Jesus gives a positive side to all this talk about following him which by now must have confused his disciples thoroughly. In fact, some must have entertained leaving him and came close to it. These verses are in a sense a play on two similar verbs, *dechomai* and *lambano*, both +. The former applies to something that has been offered and approved by having accepted it. The latter leans more to an aggressive type of grasping and bringing into one's personal

possession. Jesus applies *dechomai* to himself, not a symbol or some kind of representation. Along with this *dechomai* comes the one who sent (*apostello* +) Jesus, the Father who is unnamed. However, Jesus must have spoken frequently of the Father, so this was very clear to them. Jesus clarifies this idea of *dechomai* as it pertains to receiving (*lambano* +) a prophet, hence making it easier to understand. The same applies to someone who's righteous or *dikaios* (S *zadequ*, both +).

Jesus concludes this lengthy and somewhat controversial chapter with the example of giving a cup of cold water to his disciples whom he calls little ones, *mikros* also as small. It seems that such a term is one of endearment. Should anyone do this, he will receive a reward, *misthos* + which Jesus prefers to leave as unspecified. The impression the disciples come away with is that such small gestures will be far and few between.

It should be kept in mind that while the words of Jesus to his disciples are valuable, in essence they don't register or just barely. It will take intervention by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to bring this about, chiefly by the Spirit helping to clarify what they remember. The words of Jesus aren't to be remembered in the conventional way but through the faculty of *anamnesis*, a true presence-in of his words or *logoi*. Jesus can and does provide the framework for this. However, it takes another divine Person to effect it or insert it within a living person.

A quick note on Judas who certain was among the twelve sent out on a mission. While we have no information about him directly, we can assume that the more he listened to Jesus the more he became convinced he had to be stopped. Various reasons have been set forth as to why but still we remain unsatisfied. It's just that this succession of Jesus' teaching, instruction on how to act in the field and deal with obstacles triggered something in Judas which grew with a small, even fleeting idea into a full-fledged betrayal.